

Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Charlotte and Lee Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1992
<i>Project Acres</i>	23,652
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	17,245
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$37,900,779
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	6,407
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$56,114,186

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project will protect an area with some of the largest and highest-quality slash pine flatwoods left in southwest Florida and connect the Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park with the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area, thus supporting the management of these areas and protecting the water quality of the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve.

General Description

The project encompasses the largest remaining tract of intact pine flatwoods in southwestern Florida. The old-growth South Florida slash pine forests within the project are home to at least 10 rare animals including red- cockaded woodpeckers, bald eagles and Florida panthers. The tract also provides important habitat for several rare plants, including the critically imperiled beautiful pawpaw. The project provides additional protection for the Outstanding Florida Waters of the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve and will connect Charlotte Harbor Preserve State Park to the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area. The upland site is particularly suited for development, especially considering the rapid growth of Charlotte and Lee counties. No archaeological sites are known from the project.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Red-cockaded woodpecker	G3/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Florida panther	G5T1/S1
<i>beautiful pawpaw</i>	G2/S2
Eastern indigo snake	G3/S2?
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3
Florida kingsnake	G2/S2
<i>Florida beargrass</i>	G3/S3
Wood stork	G4/S2
Bachman's sparrow	G3/S3
Roseate spoonbill	G5/S2



Public Use

The project is designated as a wildlife management area, with such uses as hiking, environmental education and hunting.

Acquisition Planning

Phase I

Phase I tracts include Ansin (essential – acquired), Zemel (essential – Phase I acquired), Bower (essential), Section 20 SE of Burnt Store Marina Road and Section 24.

1995

On July 14, 1995, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council added 135 acres to the project boundary.

1998

On October 15, 1998, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council removed 165 acres from the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project and added it to the Charlotte Harbor Estuary project (then called Charlotte Harbor) as part of a 490-acre increase of that project.

1999

On February 11, 1999, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 333 acres to the project boundary.

On October 21, 1999, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 1,793 acres as essential parcels to the project boundary.

2007

In June 2007, the 9-acre Honenberg parcel was purchased by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and added to the Yucca Pens Unit of the project.

2008

On December 12, 2008, the project boundary was modified to exclude the Zrev Farm, LLC property (2,410 acres) following a private citizen request.

2009

On February 26, 2009, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission purchased 37.63 acres (Yucca Pens) for \$298,000 from Allcoat, Inc. to add to Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area.

On June 12, 2009, the Acquisition and Restoration Council removed 3,035 acres (2,352 of ZREV at the owner's request and 683 isolated/disturbed acres) with a tax assessed value of \$43,524,121 from the project boundary.

2010

On February 19, 2010, the Acquisition and Restoration Council removed approximately 50 acres from the Charlotte Harbor Estuary project boundary and added those acres to the project boundary.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the Acquisition and Restoration Council placed the project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category.





2014

On August 15, 2014, the Acquisition and Restoration Council added Bond Ranch (670 acres) to the project boundary. The addition will help restore sheet-flow conditions in south Charlotte County.

2016

On October 21, 2016, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved the 557-acre Hog Branch/Bear Branch proposal as a new Florida Forever project with a tax assessed value of \$837,602. The area is east of Burnt Store Road in Charlotte County. This is part of an effort to restore traditional sheet flow of water in Charlotte County that was disrupted over the years by the roadbeds for railroads and highways, which flooded areas in adjoining Lee County and degraded the tidal creeks that are important to snook, redfish and tarpon. After approving as a Florida Forever project, the Acquisition and Restoration Council then added these lands to the boundary of Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project.

2019

On June 14, 2019, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved the addition of 142-acres to the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Florida Forever project located in Charlotte County with a 2019 tax assessed value of \$593,013. The amendment, called the Charlotte 580 amendment, was proposed to be acquired in fee simple and will provide water to the Yucca Pens area. The land within the approved boundary was designated essential. It would be managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission if acquired.

On October 18, 2019, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved adding the 2,752-acre (GIS) Stolle Ranch project proposed for fee simple acquisition in Charlotte and Lee counties to the 2020 Florida Forever Priority List, then moved to incorporate the lands within the Stolle Ranch project boundary into the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project boundary. The proposal had a 2019 tax assessed value of \$6,954,550. The proposal connects two managed areas – Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area is contiguous with the north and northwest boundaries of the property and Prairie Pines Preserve is located immediately southwest of the I-75 corridor – will contribute to connectivity as well as enhance wildlife habitat.

2020

In 2020, six parcels (Kaiser, Spreen – one parcel each; Willden, Slagle – two parcels each) containing 338.42 acres within the Yucca Pens Unit were acquired for \$652,500. The parcels will be managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as part of the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area.

In March 2020, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission acquired a 5-acre parcel from Bear Investments, LLC for \$13,400. The parcel was acquired using Florida Forever funds and will be managed as part of Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area.

2021

In 2021, DEP acquired 205.24 acres in fee simple within the Yucca Pens Unit from Jefferson Parnell. The property will be managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as part of the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area.

Coordination

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is acquiring small inholdings in the project.





Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project are to conserve and protect significant habitat for native and imperiled species; conserve, protect, manage or restore important ecosystems to enhance or protect significant natural resources; and provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural resource-based recreation.

Manager(s)

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is the recommended manager.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

The project meets the qualifications of a wildlife management area. This is due to the project’s size (more than 18,000 acres), location (adjacent to the Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area), outstanding wildlife habitat (the largest stand of undisturbed flatwoods in southwest Florida) and wildlife resources (red-cockaded woodpeckers, Florida panthers and Florida black bears, among others).

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Development, both surrounding and within the project, and the intense urbanization of southwest Florida suggest a broad array of management problems. Trash dumping, other illegal trespass and the presence of numerous inholdings will certainly increase the need for intensive and careful management. Law enforcement and fire control issues are expected to be at the forefront.

Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure

The first year of management activity will entail controlling public access with gates and/or fencing and controlling the littering and dumping problems. Additional emphasis will be placed on planning and on establishing an adequate and appropriate fire regime. Subsequent years should result in the project becoming an integral part of the management scheme for Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area.

Revenue-generating Potential

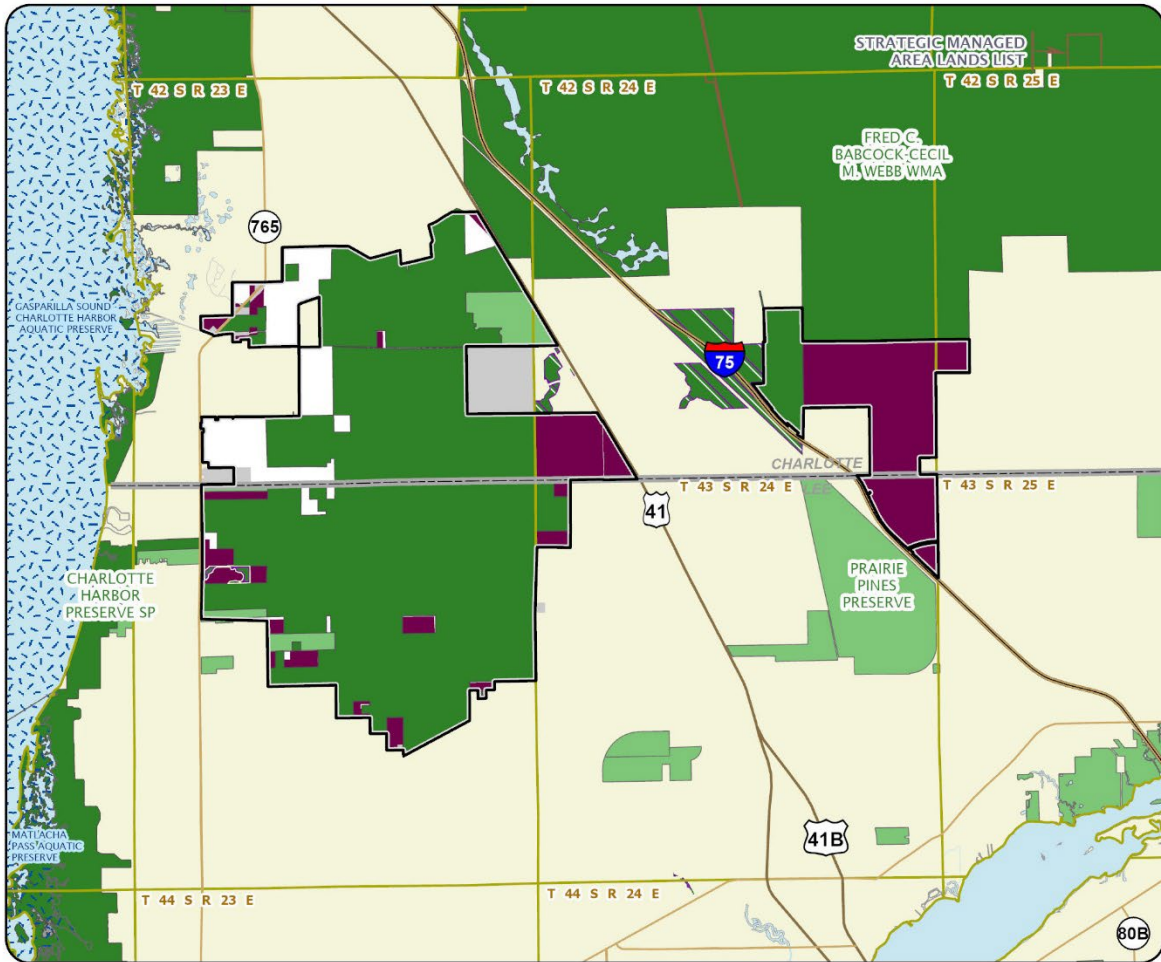
Though the property contains significant timber resources, the timber revenue potential is low. There is little or no market for timber in Southwest Florida (particularly South Florida Slash Pine). Nevertheless, the potential for generating recreational revenue is significant if new recreational user fees were to be implemented on the wildlife management area.

Management Cost Summary

FWC	CARL 1996/1997	CARL 1997/1998
Salary	\$54,200	\$54,200
OPS	\$0	\$0
Expense	\$10,000	\$10,000
OCO	\$0	\$0
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$64,200	\$64,200

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





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