

Catfish Creek

Polk County

Partnerships

Purpose for State Acquisition

The high, sandy Lake Wales Ridge, stretching south from near Orlando almost to Lake Okeechobee, was originally covered with a mosaic of scrub, flatwoods, wetlands, and lakes. The scrub is unique in the world—it is inhabited by many plants and animals found nowhere else—but it has almost completely been converted to citrus groves and housing developments. The Catfish Creek project, with its scrub ridges overlooking the nearly pristine shore of Lake Pierce, will protect an especially scenic example of Lake Wales Ridge scrub and its associated ecosystems and allow the public to enjoy camping, fishing, and swimming in this unique and beautiful natural area. It will also protect an important archaeological site on Lake Pierce. The Florida National Scenic Trail, a cross-Florida hiking and non-motorized trail, is also planned to cross this project. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

Manager

The Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will manage the project, less that portion known as Snodgrass Island.

General Description

Catfish Creek is a diverse natural area extending over

Catfish Creek FNAI Elements	
Florida Scrub-Jay	G2/S2
Gopher Tortoise	G3/S3
Morris' Tiny Sand-loving Scarab	G1/S1
Archbold Cebionid Beetle	G1G2/S1S2
Scrub Little Mole Scarab	G1G2/S1S2
<i>Florida Blazing Star</i>	G2/S2
Nocturnal Scrub Velvet Ant	G2/S2
Sand Skink	G2/S2
Sandyland Onthophagus Beetle	G2/S2
Florida Scrub Lizard	G2G3/S2S3
Highlands Tiger Beetle	G2G3/S2S3
<i>Lewton's Polygala</i>	G2G3/S2S3
37 rare species are associated with the project	

high scrub ridges, interspersed with lakes, next to the pristine shore of Lake Pierce. Natural communities include sandhill, scrub, scrubby flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, xeric hammock, bottomland hardwood forest, basin swamp, sandhill upland lake, wet flatwoods, blackwater stream, seepage slopes, and floodplain swamp, all in excellent condition. The tract harbors at least 19 rare plant and animal species state listed as endangered or threatened. Rare or endangered animal species include the bald eagle, wood stork, gopher tortoise, and scrub jay. The 1993 addition on Snodgrass Island contains a potentially important archaeological site. The project is threatened by agriculture and eventual residential development.

Public Use

This project is designated for use as a state preserve, with such uses as hiking, camping, fishing and nature study.

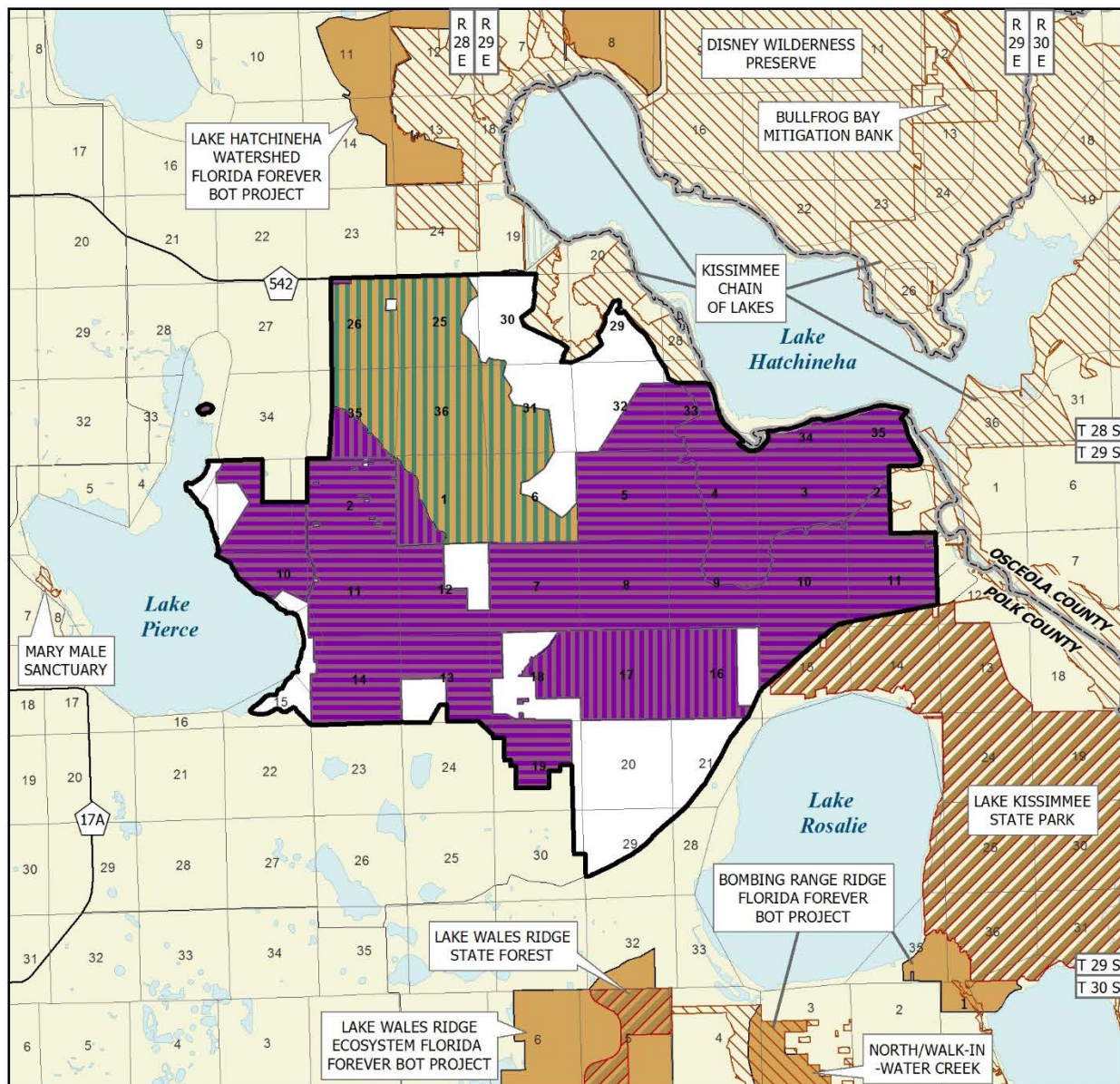
Acquisition Planning

Phase I: (essential) Rolling Meadows (acquired), TNC (acquired) and Palo Alto (acquired); Phase II: Imagination Farms, Progress Homes (acquired) and K-Rocker. Phase III: Section two which is subdivided (state has acquired all of section consolidated by Bowen). In 1992 The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acquired 68 acres in this project and in August 2007 donated it to the state.

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project in the Partnerships category.

Placed on List	1990
Project Area (GIS Acres)	19,429
Acres Acquired (GIS)	11,658*
at a Cost of	\$49,414,766
Acres Remaining (GIS)	7,771
Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of	\$13,586,636

* Includes a donation from TNC



CATFISH CREEK

POLK COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
-  TNC Owned Lands Within Project
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands

0 1 2 4
Miles



DECEMBER 2015

On October 21, 1999, the Council added 6,991 acres and designated it as essential. In August, 2002, the Council added the Rolling Meadows Ranch to the project. On December 5, 2002, the Council added the K-Rocker Tract to the project.

On December 5, 2003 the Council moved the project to the Group B list.

Coordination

TNC sponsored this project, assisted in providing information in the preparation of the project, and in discussions with some of the major landowners. TNC and SFWMD are considered acquisition partners for this project.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Catfish Creek project are conserving and protecting environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of this state or a larger geographic area. Also, the project can conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species, provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural-resource-based recreation; and preserve significant archaeological or historical sites.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation The sensitive resources in the Catfish Creek project—sandhills, a large lake, and high-quality scrub with its rare plants and animals—qualify it as a state preserve.

Manager The DRP, Department of Environmental Protection, is the manager of the project, less that portion known as Snodgrass Island.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The project is a low-need management area emphasizing resource protection while allowing compatible public recreational use and development.

Timetable for implementing management and provisions for security and protection of infrastructure Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural and cultural resource protection, and the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management.

Cooperators in management activities No local governments or others are recommended for management of this project area.

Revenue-generating potential No significant revenue is expected to be generated initially. After acquisition, it will probably be several years before any significant public use facilities are developed. The amount of any revenue generated will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities. With emphasis on resource protection, and with minimal public use, future generated revenues are not expected to be high.

Updated January 28, 2016

Management Cost Summary

Category	Startup
Source of Funds	CARL
Salary	\$22,167
OPS	\$0
Expense	\$5,712
OCO	\$6,978
FCO	\$8,640
TOTAL	\$43,497