

Okeechobee Battlefield

Okeechobee County

Critical Historical Resources

Purpose for State Acquisition

Okeechobee Battlefield the site of one of Florida's most significant events during the Second Seminole War. On Christmas Day in 1837, more than 1,000 U.S. Army and Missouri Volunteer soldiers led by Colonel Zachary Taylor attacked several hundred Seminoles and Miccosukees north of Lake Okeechobee. Sam Jones, Alligator and Wildcat led the Indians, and the battle resulted in the loss of 26 U.S. forces killed and 112 wounded, while 14 Indians lost their lives. The battlefield, recorded in the Florida Master Site File as 8OB10, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in the 1960s and later became a National Historic Landmark.

The 55-acre project consists of improved pasture and freshwater marsh, and provides the backdrop for a yearly reenactment of the battle. State acquisition of Okeechobee Battlefield would meet Goal F of the Florida Forever program by adding a site listed in the Florida Master Site File. The battlefield site is described by the National Park Service as one of the 11 most endangered historic sites in the United States. This project may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses a number of Florida Forever project sites.

Manager

The Archeological and Historical Conservancy proposes to manage the property in cooperation with Okeechobee County and the Friends of the Okeechobee Battlefield, a Florida not-for-profit corporation.

General Description

This +211-acre project consists of improved pasture and freshwater marsh, and provides the backdrop for a yearly reenactment of the battle. The site is home to bald eagles, and offers potential habitat for the crested

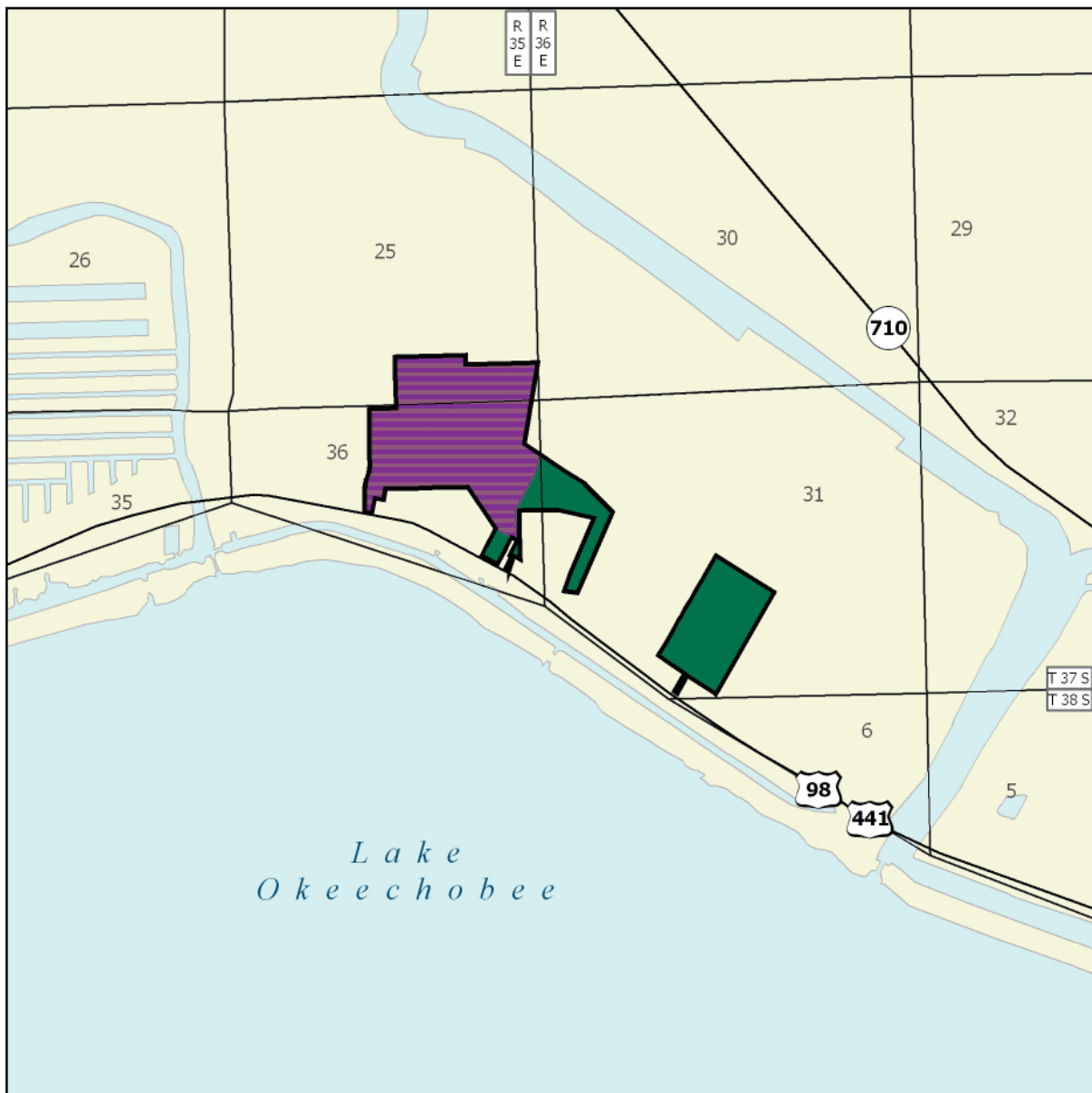
caracara and wood stork. The project is adjacent to U.S. Highway 441/98 along the northeastern rim of Lake Okeechobee, approximately five miles southeast of the town of Okeechobee in southern Okeechobee County. There are no adjacent or close by conservation lands in the FNAI database. However, the South Florida Water Management District lands of Paradise Run and Kissimmee River are approximately 8 and 12 miles to the west, respectively. St. Lucie County's Bluefield Ranch and St. Lucie Pinelands are approximately 8.5 miles to the east, and 12 miles to the northeast, respectively.

Public Use

The project is proposed as the site for an interpretive center/museum and a place to conduct a yearly commemorative re-enactment of the battle. The small size of the project limits the relative diversity and quantity of resource-based recreational opportunities. The site's importance is in its cultural significance as a smaller part of a larger battlefield site. Further study will be needed to determine the degree and nature of facilities suitable for the interpretation of the battle. Conceptually, management and development of the project could be similar to that of Olustee Battlefield State Historic Site with an interpretive facility and an annual enactment, but on a smaller scale. The ability to interpret and enhance enactment capabilities would be enhanced by bringing more of the battlefield site into the project. In addition to cultural interpretation and activities, picnicking would be a suitable secondary usage.

Okeechobee Battlefield FNAI Elements
no rare species are associated with the project

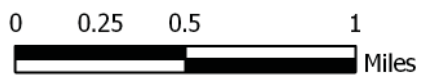
Placed on List	2001
Project Area (GIS Acres)	234
Acres Acquired (GIS)	146
at a Cost of	\$3,217,250
Acres Remaining (GIS)	89
with Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of	\$89,588



OKEECHOBEE BATTLEFIELD

OKEECHOBEE COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining



AUGUST 2006

Acquisition Planning

On December 6, 2001, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added the Okeechobee Battlefield project to Group A of the Florida Forever (FF) 2002 Priority list. This fee-simple project, sponsored by the Archeological and Historical Conservancy (AHC) and the First Bank of Indiantown, consisted of approximately 56 acres, a single owner, First Bank of Indiantown, and a 2001 taxable value of \$113,970.

On December 5, 2003, ARC approved a fee-simple addition of approximately 141 acres to the project boundary. The addition was sponsored by the AHC, had 3 owners, and a 2002 taxable value of \$172,442.

On December 14, 2007 ARC voted to move the Okeechobee Battlefield project to Group B of the 2008 Florida Forever priority list.

On December 10, 2010, ARC voted to move this project from the Critical Natural Lands category to a new category called, "Critical Historical Resources." It was continued in that category at the December 9, 2011 ARC meeting.

Coordination

Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, Inc; Friends of the Okeechobee Battlefield, and Okeechobee County are considered partners on this project. No alternative funding sources are available at this time.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Okeechobee Battlefield are to preserve a historical site of true state and national significance and the various archeological and environmental features associated with it. A secondary goal is to interpret the battlefield by providing controlled public access and living history events, establishing the battle site as a community educational resource and heritage tourist destination.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation The historical significance of the Okeechobee Battlefield is reflected by its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and by its "endangered" status as a National Landmark. Currently no portions of the battlefield are in public ownership.

Manager The Archeological and Historical Conservancy proposes to manage the property in cooperation with Okeechobee County and the Friends of the Okeechobee Battlefield, a Florida not-for-profit corporation.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The property is a low-need management area that emphasizes historic resource protection while allowing compatible public access and site interpretation.

Timetable for implementing management, and provisions for security and protection of infrastructure Within the first year after acquisition the management will concentrate on protection of cultural and environmental resources, and on developing a long-term management plan.

Cooperators in management activities Okeechobee County and the Friends of the Okeechobee Battlefield will cooperate in management activities, including developing and implementing a long-term plan for the battlefield site. The Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe will be included in all phases of planning for preservation, protection and appropriate improvement of the site for public use and benefit.

Management costs and sources of revenue The long-term plan is anticipated to include recurring costs for wetlands restoration and site development to be determined, based on available public and private resources.

Updated March 30, 2015

Management Cost Summary

	Startup	Recurring
Salary manager (half-time)	\$26,500	\$26,500
Maintenance	\$5,500	\$5,500

