



Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods

Charlotte and Lee Counties
Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Project-at-a-Glance

<i>Placed on List</i>	1992
<i>Project Area (GIS acres)</i>	20,759
<i>Acres Acquired (GIS)</i>	16,317
<i>at a Cost of</i>	\$36,828,279
<i>Acres Remaining (GIS)</i>	4,442

Note: 2,352 acres were removed from the project at the landowner’s request plus 683 isolated/disturbed acres were removed in 2009.

Purpose for State Acquisition

Northwest of Fort Myers lies the largest and highest quality slash-pine flatwoods left in southwest Florida. The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project will protect these flatwoods and connect the Charlotte Harbor State Buffer Preserve with the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area, helping to protect these managed areas and the waters of the Aquatic Preserve.

Manager(s)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

General Description

This project encompasses the largest remaining tract of intact pine flatwoods in southwestern Florida. Old-growth South Florida slash pine forests on site 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, most notably a globally critically imperiled plant, the beautiful pawpaw, *Deeringothamnus pulchellus*. The project provides additional protection for the Outstanding Florida Waters of the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserve and will also connect the Charlotte Harbor State Buffer Preserve and the Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area. This 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.

Public Use

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

Acquisition Planning

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.

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



On February 11, 1999, the Council added 333 acres, and on October 21, 1999, added 1,793 acres as essential parcels. In June 2007 the 9-acre Honenberg Parcel was purchased by FWCC and added to the Yucca Pens Unit of the project.

Large essential parcels have been acquired. The Division of State Lands (DSL) is not active in this project.

On February 26, 2009 FWC purchased 37.63 acres (Yucca Pens) for \$298,000 from Allcoat, Inc. to add to Babcock Webb WMA. On June 12, 2009 ARC approved removal of 3,035 acres (2,352 of ZREV-owner's request-plus 683 isolated / disturbed acres) from the boundary with a tax assessed value of \$43,524,121.

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

On August 15, 2015, ARC approved adding Bond Ranch to the project. This increased the boundary by 670 acres and was added to help restore sheet-flow conditions in south Charlotte County.

At the December 15th and 16th 2016 ARC meeting, the members approved the 557-acre Hog Branch/Bear Branch proposal as a new Florida Forever project with a tax assessed value of \$837,602. This 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 this for Florida Forever, the ARC then added these lands to the boundary of Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods. After this most recent boundary change in 2016, the project had a combined, historic, estimated tax assessed value of \$9,373,652.

Coordination

The FWC 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 species or endangered and threatened species; to conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, in order to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs can adequately protect; and to provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural-resource-based recreation.



Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods project meets the qualifications of a wildlife management area, because of 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 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.

Timetable for implementing management and provisions for 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 this project becoming an integral part of the management scheme for Babcock-Webb WMA.

Revenue-generating potential

Though this property contains significant timber resources, the timber revenue potential is low. There is little or no market for South Florida Slash Pine timber in Southwest Florida (in fact, very little timber market at all). Nevertheless, the potential for generating recreational revenue is significant, if new recreational user fees were to be implemented on this WMA.

Information Updated January 30, 2018

Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Table 1

Project-at-a-Glance	Data
Placed on List	1992
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Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Table 2

Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods FNAI Elements	Score
Florida Black Bear	G5T2/S2
Red-cockaded Woodpecker	G3/S2
Beautiful Pawpaw	G1/S1
Florida Panther	G5T1/S1
Gopher Tortoise	G3/S3
Eastern Indigo Snake	G3Q/S3



Bald Eagle	G5/S3
Bachman's Sparrow	G3/S3
Florida Beargrass	G3/S3
Wood Stork	G4/S2
Sherman's Fox Squirrel	G5T3/S3
Florida Long-tailed Weasel	G5T3/S3

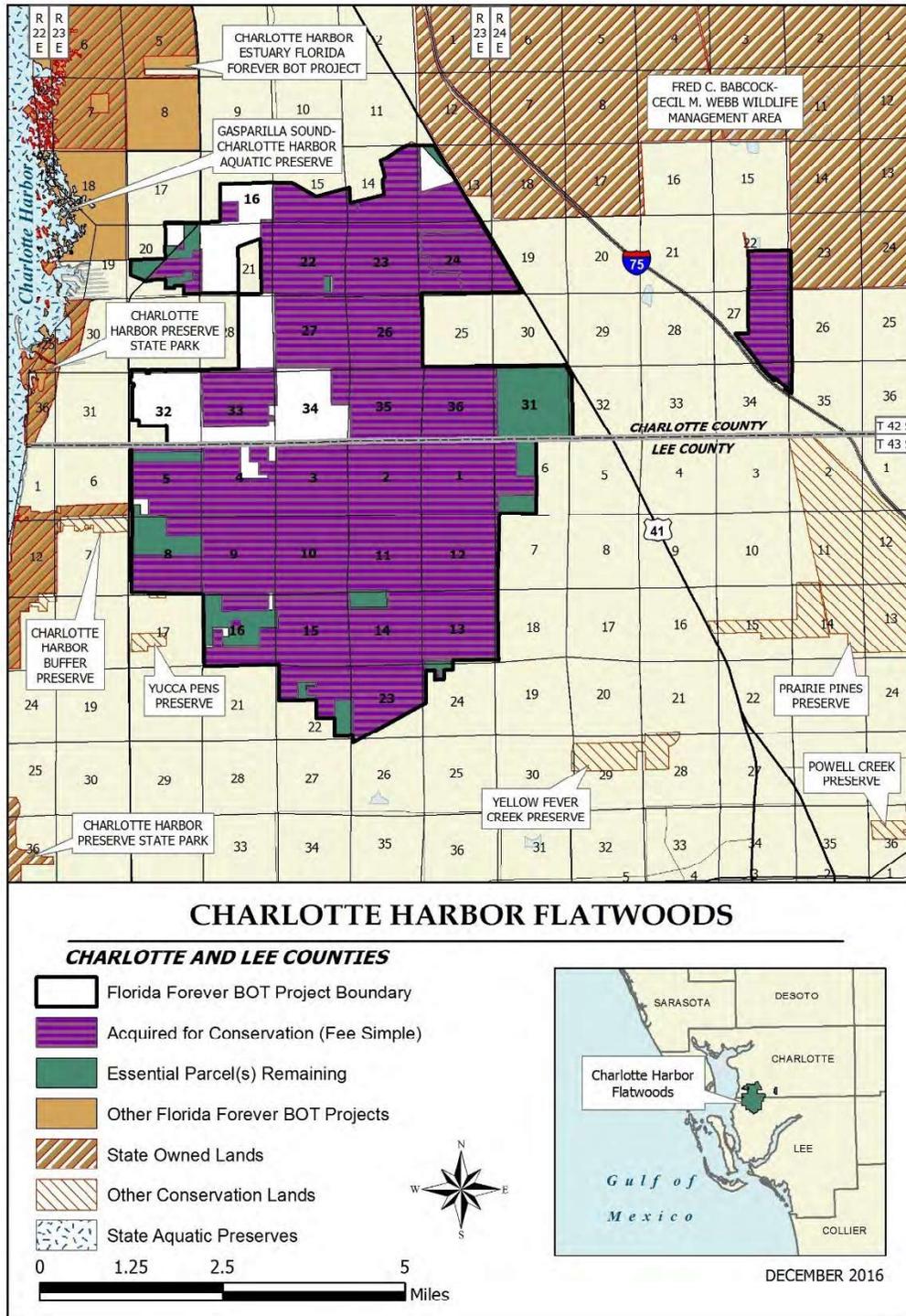
There are 16 rare species associated with the project.

Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Table 3

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	\$64,202	\$64,202



Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Map 37



Map of project with key attributes as provided by the FNAI - Florida Natural Areas Inventory