

**Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area
DRAFT Management Plan 2016 - 2026
Management Intent, Goals and Objectives,
Challenges and Strategies**

Managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Owned by the State of Florida

Title held by the FWC and the Board of Trustees of Internal Improvement Trust Fund

~1,689 acres, Orange and Osceola Counties, Florida



5. Continue to cooperate with FFS regarding conducting prescribed burning and prescribed burning training.
6. Cooperate with Orange and Osceola counties regarding the development and implementation of the Arthropod Control Plan.
7. Continue to cooperate with the North American Butterfly Association on conducting the annual butterfly count on the area.
8. Continue to cooperate and communicate with adjacent landowners regarding ongoing management activities, such as prescribed burning and exotic treatments.
9. Consider applying available and appropriate grant or other funding opportunities to enhance conservation and management on the area.

Long Term

10. Continue to cooperate with Orange and Osceola Counties with ongoing management in accordance with the Interagency Partnership Agreement.
11. Continue to cooperate with FDOT, Osceola Expressway Authority, and Orange and Osceola Counties on appropriate mitigation if the proposed extension of Osceola Parkway is approved to be routed on the area.
12. Continue to cooperate with Orange and Osceola counties and other law enforcement as appropriate regarding conducting first responder training on the area.
13. Continue to cooperate with DEP regarding compliance with FCT covenants and agreements.
14. Continue to cooperate with FFS regarding conducting prescribed burning and prescribed burning training.
15. Cooperate with Orange and Osceola counties regarding the development and implementation of the Arthropod Control Plan.
16. Continue to cooperate with the North American Butterfly Association on conducting the annual butterfly count on the area.
17. Continue to cooperate and communicate with adjacent landowners regarding ongoing management activities, such as prescribed burning and exotic treatments.
18. Consider applying available and appropriate grant or other funding opportunities to enhance conservation and management on the area.

4 Resource Management Challenges and Strategies

The following section identifies problems, further describes management needs and challenges associated with the SOFWEA, and provides solution strategies that will address these issues. These specific challenges are provided to supplement the broader management intent and goals and objectives sections of this management plan found above (Sections 2 - 3).

Challenge 1: Currently SOFWEA has insufficient habitat to sustain certain imperiled species and preclude biological isolation, such as the Florida Scrub Jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, and Indigo Snake.

Strategy: Pursue conservation efforts to increase potential viable habitat on surrounding lands for these species.

Strategy: Cooperate and coordinate with surrounding landowners to assist with the resource management activities.

Challenge 2: SOFWEA is not a widely known recreational destination.

Strategy: Work with Orange and Osceola counties' parks and recreation and tourism development groups to promote SOFWEA.

Strategy: Cross promote SOFWEA with other regional conservation lands.

Challenge 3: Potential future development on adjacent lands can result in incompatible land uses increasing management challenges for the area for continuing conducting management activities such as prescribed burning and exotic species treatments.

Strategy: Cooperate and work with Orange and Osceola Counties to ensure land use and zoning designations adjacent to SOFWEA will continue to be compatible with the management of the area.

Strategy: Incorporate a notification process to adjacent neighbors for management practices, and certain activities that have to occur such as prescribed burning and exotic species treatments.

Strategy: Continue to work with and support Orange and Osceola counties to ensure that any adjacent proposed developments will include covenants informing landowners of the need and requirement for ongoing resource management activities such as prescribed burning and exotic species treatments that will continue to be implemented on the area.

Challenge 4: The proposed extension of Osceola Parkway through SOFWEA will result in incompatible land uses, wildlife resource impacts, resource and operational impacts, and recreational management impacts and challenges for the area.

Strategy: Continue to cooperate and work with FDOT, Osceola Expressway Authority, and Orange and Osceola Counties to ensure any unavoidable impacts are minimized and sufficiently mitigated to maintain existing habitats and replace habitats eliminated by any development of the parkway on the area.

Strategy: Continue to cooperate with FDOT, Osceola Expressway Authority, and Orange and Osceola counties to ensure Drainage Retention Area (DRAs) are not developed on the area from the road development.

Strategy: Continue to cooperate with adjacent landowners to implement ongoing resource management activities on the area, such as prescribed burning and exotic species treatments.

Strategy: Ensure all FWC staff is directly involved with the Osceola Parkway road development plans.

Strategy: Explore various funding opportunities through roadway mitigation funds to assist in long term management of the area.

Challenge 5: Currently there is insufficient staffing for SOFWEA to maintain optimal resource and operational management of the area.

Strategy: Cooperate with other nearby FWC staff to assist when needed.

Strategy: Request additional funding for an additional position.

Strategy: Use contractual services for appropriate activities.

Strategy: Continue to work with Orange and Osceola staff to assist in management activities.

Challenge 6: Currently there are high densities of exotic species on adjacent lands including but not limited to old world climbing fern and tropical soda apple providing an extensive source of seed that disperses onto the SOFWEA.

Strategy: Coordinate with the local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA), FWC's Uplands Invasive Plant Species Section, and FWC's Landowner Assistance Program to work with adjacent landowners to control and manage exotic invasive plants on adjacent properties.

Strategy: Work with neighboring land owners through FWC private lands personnel to treat old world climbing fern.

Strategy: Coordinate with other governmental and private organizations to obtain resources to control and manage exotic invasive species on adjacent properties.

Challenge 7: Currently there is documented illegal use and activity ongoing on the area.

Strategy: Continue to work with FWC LE and Orange and Osceola Counties' law enforcement to patrol illegal uses on the area.

Challenge 8: Currently, law enforcement and management staffing is at insufficient levels for optimal management of SOFWEA.

Strategy: Pursue funding for increased law enforcement and management staffing and additional private sector contract services.

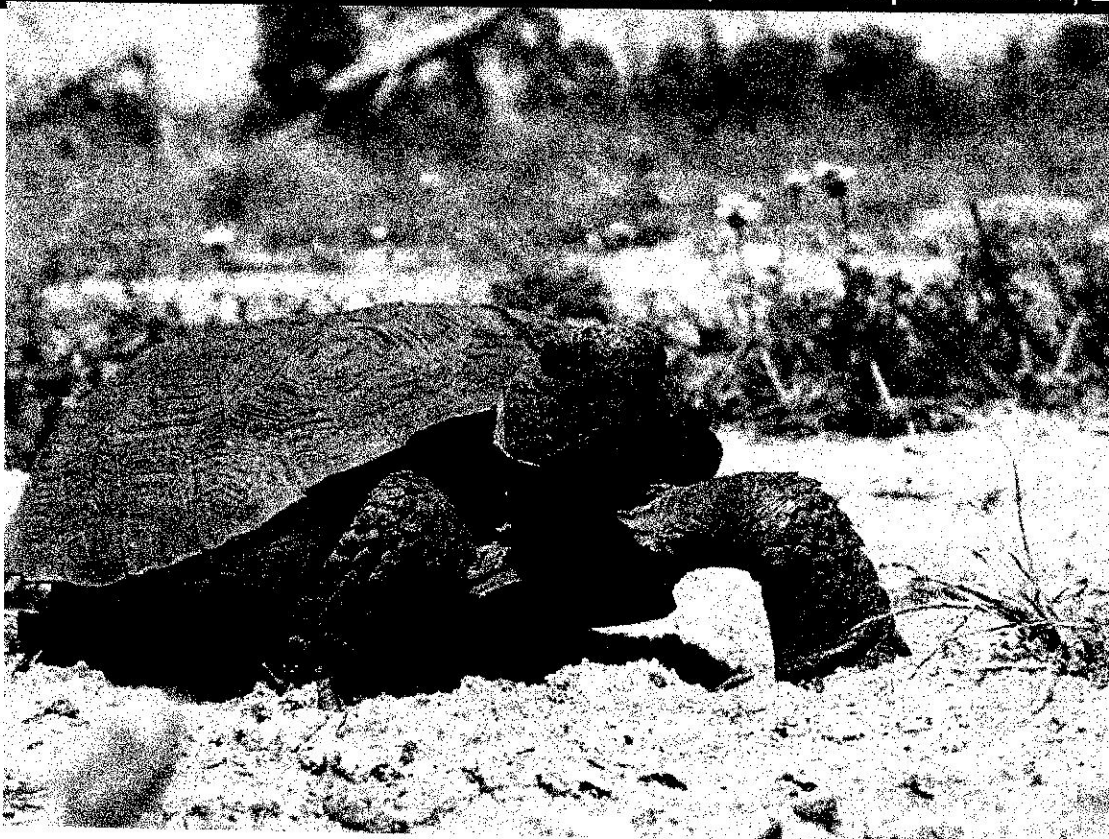
Strategy: Explore potential volunteer resources for assisting with management.

5 Endnotes

- ¹ Regulatory Negotiation Committee on Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas, Final Report (1999).
- ² Karl, T. R., J. M. Melillo, and T. C. Peterson (Eds.). 2009. *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States*. Cambridge University Press. New York, NY.
- ³ McCarty, J. P. 2001. Ecological consequences of recent climate change. *Conservation Biology* 15:320-331.
- ⁴ Walther, G. R., E. Post, P. Convey, A. Menzel, C. Parmesan, T. J. . Beebee, J. M. Fromentin, O. Hoegh-Guldberg, and F. Bairlein. 2002. Ecological responses to recent climate change. *Nature* 416:389-395.
- ⁵ Parmesan, C. 2006. Ecological and evolutionary responses to recent climate change. *Annual Review of Ecology, Evolution, and Systematics* 37:637-669.
- ⁶ Logan, J. A., and J. A. Powell. 2009. Ecological consequences of climate change altered forest insect disturbance regimes. In *Climate Warming in Western North America: Evidence and Environmental Effects* (F. H. Wagner, Ed.). University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, UT.
- ⁷ Stevenson, J. C., M. S. Kearney, and E. W. Koch. 2002. Impacts of sea level rise on tidal wetlands and shallow water habitats: A case study from Chesapeake Bay. *American Fisheries Society Symposium* 32:23-36.

**4th Annual Report
Candidate Conservation Agreement
for the Gopher Tortoise**

October 1, 2011 - September 30, 2012



**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
and the
Southeast Regional Partnership
for Planning and Sustainability**

Acreage reported is not the total acreage of the properties, but the acreage of gopher tortoise habitat acres within those properties.

FWC-managed land

Name of Property	Manager	Gopher tortoise habitat acres
Andrews	FWC	707.6
Apalachee WMA	FWC	2,254
Apalachicola River	FWC	263.9
Aucilla	FWC	96.5
Babcock Ranch Preserve	FWC	2,994.3
Babcock/Webb	FWC	10,080.2
Bell Ridge Longleaf Mitigation Park	FWC	721.9
Big Bend WMA	FWC	8,325.6
Box – R	FWC	241.1
Branan Field Mitigation Park	FWC	131.8
Bullfrog Creek Mitigation Park	FWC	261.7
Caravelle Ranch	FWC	758.0
Chassahowitzka	FWC	8,074.7
Chinsegut	FWC	599.6
Crooked Lake	FWC	591.5
Escribano Point	FWC	90.9
Fisheating Creek	FWC	298.1
Florida Keys	FWC	40.6
Fort White Mitigation Park	FWC	981.5
Guana River	FWC	879.7
Half Moon	FWC	1,397.4
Herky Huffman/Bull Creek	FWC	4,686.6
Hickey Creek Mitigation Park	FWC	581.8
Hilochee	FWC	3,193.7
J.W. Corbett	FWC	2,659.0
Janet Butterfield Brooks Preserve	FWC	185.9
Joe Budd	FWC	1,379.5
L. Kirk Edwards	FWC	6.6
L. Kirk Edwards, Wood Sink	FWC	446.8
Lafayette Forest Mitigation Park	FWC	454.7
Lake Wales Ridge	FWC	12,366.1
Little Gator Creek	FWC	29.7

Moody Branch Mitigation Park	FWC	568.8
Okaloacoochee Slough	FWC	1,540.8
Perry Oldenburg	FWC	338.6
Platt Branch Mitigation Park	FWC	254.8
Salt Lake	FWC	1,051.8
Spirit of the Wild	FWC	1,243.8
Split Oak Mitigation Park	FWC	1,005.7
Suwannee Ridge Mitigation Park	FWC	1,274.0
Three Lakes	FWC	30,767.2
Tosohatchee	FWC	334.6
Triple N Ranch	FWC	4,485.7
Watermelon Pond Mitigation Park	FWC	789.7
Total gopher tortoise acreage		109,437.1

Short-term Protected Recipient Sites

Recipient Site Name	County	Acreage	Gopher tortoise habitat acres
Seabranche Preserve State Park	Martin	40.0	40.0
Total gopher tortoise acreage			40.0

iii) Total estimated acreage of **unprotected** tortoise habitat. *Note: unprotected habitat is not acquired by any agency or program and represents undeveloped gopher tortoise habitat within the state of Florida. Therefore, the total acreage cannot be restricted to a date range and includes all potential habitat, regardless of time period in which the property was recorded. Total unprotected habitat may include some lands where a management plan exists, but no special protection status is designated. 1,913,635.0 acres*

iv) Total estimated acreage tortoise habitat without a designated special protection status, but included in a management plan that provides for the conservation of the gopher tortoise. **None during this reporting period.**

GEORGIA

i) Total estimated acreage of **long-term** protected tortoise habitat (either by public ownership or by easement)

The State permanently protects 31,716 acres of tortoise habitat on Wildlife Management Areas, Public Fishing Areas, State Parks, and Historic Sites. The table below breaks down the acreages by property. All state lands harboring tortoises are considered permanently protected. At this time we do not have