

Proposed Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area

What is it?

This is a proposed land conservation partnership between federal, Tribal, State, and local governments; ranchers and other landowners; non-governmental conservation organizations; and other stakeholders to protect, restore, and conserve approximately 150,000+ acres of environmentally important natural habitat and associated wildlife in Florida.

Where is it located?

The proposed area is approximately 150,000+ acres in portions of Polk, Osceola, Indian River, Okeechobee, and Highlands counties in Central Florida, within a larger 4.5 million-acre landscape that extends from the southern outskirts of the Orlando metro area south through the Kissimmee River Valley to Lake Okeechobee, and southwest to Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and Big Cypress Preserve.

How would this be accomplished?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and partners would work with willing landowners to establish the proposed 150,000-acre Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area through several methods, including already-established conservation lands, fee simple purchases, conservation easements, leases, conservation and mitigation banks, lands set aside through habitat conservation plans, and/or cooperative agreements with landowners. The planning target is to work with partners and willing landowners to conserve approximately 50,000 acres in fee title acquisitions and 100,000 acres in less than fee title. The Service's policy is to work with willing landowners.

Who is leading this effort?

Numerous agencies, organizations, and landowners have been working for many years to conserve this landscape. The conversations surrounding this proposal to establish a new National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area have served as a catalyst for collaborative conservation discussions. The Service, as



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an equal partner, is serving to coordinate and facilitate communications in this collaborative effort.

How can the public get involved and/or be updated on the progress?

This proposal is in its infancy, so we're just getting started. Public scoping meetings are being planned for January and February and will be announced shortly. We know there will be a lot of questions and concerns, as well as meaningful input and we look forward to meeting and talking with you at these meetings. For more information or to get on the mailing list, please use the contact information listed below.

What is the proposed schedule for the project?

Conduct Public Scoping:
January-February 2011

Develop Draft Land Protection Plan & NEPA Document: March-May 2011

Conduct Public Review and Comment on Proposal: June 2011

Develop Final Plan:
August-September 2011

How to get more information or get on the mailing list?

Internet:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/greatereverglades>

Email:

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