



SUMMARY OF FLORIDA CONSERVATION LANDS

Including Less-than-fee Conservation Lands

February 2021

prepared by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory

with funding provided by Florida Department of Environmental Protection

	Fee simple Acres ^{1,2,3}	Less-than- fee Acres ^{4,5}
FEDERAL CONSERVATION LANDS		
USDA Forest Service	1,192,783	1,720
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service ⁶	0	126,217
USDI Fish and Wildlife Service	492,670	9,343
USDI National Park Service	1,724,788	1,337
US Dept. of Defense	658,760	0
US Other	976	0
TOTAL FEDERALLY MANAGED non-submerged lands	4,069,977	138,617
STATE CONSERVATION LANDS		
DACS Florida Forest Service	1,152,418	56,348
DEP Division of Recreation and Parks	682,266	0
DEP Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection	71,542	0
DEP Division of State Lands	0	159,528
DEP Northwest District	0	13,070
DEP Mining and Mitigation Program	7,190	14,669
Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	1,542,768	44,859
Dept. of Military Affairs	70,867	0
Dept. of Management Services	84	0
Agency for Persons with Disabilities	93	0
State Universities	15,148	68
Water Management Districts	1,464,196	448,358
<i>Undesignated State Lands⁷</i>	4,668	0
TOTAL STATE MANAGED non-submerged lands	5,011,239	736,900
LOCAL (COUNTY & MUNICIPAL) CONSERVATION LANDS	502,744	15,729
<i>TOTAL STATE, FEDERAL, AND LOCAL non-submerged lands</i>	9,583,960	891,247
Private Conservation Lands	127,863	74,670
Private Mitigation Banks	108,469	0

LAND AREA OF STATE OF FLORIDA: 34,721,280 acres⁸

PERCENT OF FLORIDA IN FEDERALLY MANAGED CONSERVATION LANDS	11.7%	0.4%
PERCENT OF FLORIDA IN STATE-MANAGED CONSERVATION LANDS	14.5%	2.5%
PERCENT OF FLORIDA IN LOCALLY MANAGED CONSERVATION LANDS	1.4%	0.05%

¹Acres may be different from previous years due to introduction of GIS acres being used to determine land and submerged acres.

²Acres are counted once under the primary managing agency even though there may be several owners and/or managers. For this reason, total acres for some agencies may be higher than the acres to which they hold title and others may be lower.

³Acres listed include terrestrial wetlands such as the Everglades but exclude 3,654,072 acres of submerged marine, lake, or river bottom (such as state aquatic preserves or Florida Bay) that are part of certain managed areas.

⁴Numbers include a total of 965,917 acres less-than-fee properties (9% of total conservation lands).

⁵Represents the less-than-fee lands included in the FNAI conservation lands database as of 1 February 2021. All properties are owned by either private individuals or private foundations or corporations. Lands are classified by the agency or organization that monitors the easement on the property. The same agency or organization usually holds title to the easement, but there are a few exceptions.

⁶Acres total includes all permanent easements (WRP, GRP, and Wetland Reserve Easements) held by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

⁷Lands owned by the State that are not currently leased to a governmental agency.

⁸Source: Atlas of Florida, 1996. E. A. Fernald and E. D. Purdum, eds., University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL

SUMMARY OF MANAGED CONSERVATION AREA ACREAGES February 2021
tracked by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Acreage figures are calculated from GIS boundary files. The acreage of each managed area may include some lands that are managed for purposes other than conservation. Non-submerged acres are the only acres considered in the previous fee simple/less-than-fee summary table.

<u>FEDERAL</u>	<u>combined acres</u>	<u>submerged acres</u>	<u>non-submerged acres</u>
Dept. of Agriculture: Forest Service	1,202,011	7,508	1,194,503
Dept. of Agriculture: NRCS	126,217	0	126,217
Fish and Wildlife Service ¹	996,416	494,403	502,013
National Park Service ^{2,3}	2,591,857	865,732	1,726,125
Dept. of Defense: Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps	663,093	4,333	658,760
Dept. of Agriculture (other)	368	0	368
Dept. of Commerce: NOAA	9	0	9
Dept. of Transportation: Coast Guard	277	0	277
Bureau of Land Management	325	3	322
	5,580,573	1,371,979	4,208,594
<u>STATE</u>			
DACS Florida Forest Service	1,210,748	1,982	1,208,766
DEP Division of Recreation & Parks	793,221	110,955	682,266
DEP Office of Resilience and Coastal Prot. ⁴	2,161,079	2,089,537	71,542
DEP Division of State Lands ⁵	159,531	3	159,528
DEP Northwest District ⁵	13,388	317	13,070
DEP Mining and Mitigation Program	21,859	0	21,859
Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	1,634,901	47,275	1,587,627
Dept. of Military Affairs	73,143	2,276	70,867
Dept. of Management Services	84	0	84
Agency for Persons with Disabilities	111	19	93
Universities	15,520	305	15,216
	6,083,585	2,252,668	3,830,917
<u>WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS</u>			<u>total acres</u>
Northwest Florida WMD			221,291
St. Johns River WMD			552,337
South Florida WMD			510,652
Southwest Florida WMD			352,209
Suwannee River WMD			276,066
			1,912,554
<u>STATE AND WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICTS (total non-submerged acres)</u>			5,743,471
<u>LOCAL (COUNTY & MUNICIPAL) GOVERNMENTS (total non-submerged acres)</u>			518,473
<u>PRIVATE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS (total non-submerged acres)</u>			202,534
<u>PRIVATE MITIGATION BANKS (total non-submerged acres)</u>			108,469

¹Submerged acres include, but are not exclusive to Key West NWR (207,963 acres), Great White Heron NWR/National Key Deer Refuge (198,748 acres), Merritt Island NWR (56,301 acres) and Ten Thousand Islands NWR (1,924 acres). Acreage total excludes lands within Merritt Island NWR that are managed solely by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

²Totals include private properties within official federally designated boundaries of National Park Service lands.

³Submerged acres include Everglades National Park (572,063 acres), Biscayne National Park (165,721 acres), Dry Tortugas National Park (64,667 acres), Gulf Islands National Seashore (45,975 acres), and Canaveral National Seashore (16,614 acres).

⁴Includes state aquatic preserves and national estuarine research reserves but not Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

⁵DEP Division of State Lands is the monitoring agency for most conservation easements (less-than-fee lands) held by the State of Florida. DEP Northwest District is responsible for monitoring several large state-held conservation easements in the Florida Panhandle.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

In 2021 FNAI changed the methodology for summarizing acreage that resulted in notable changes to the total acres reported. In previous years, the rationale was to use the acreages reported by the managing agencies as much as possible, but the interpretation of “total acres managed” and the assessment of submerged acres differ among agencies. To resolve this inconsistency, this summary uses the GIS-calculated acres from the boundaries provided by the agencies, and a single dataset to assess submerged lands across Florida. The shift to using GIS is intended to create a single clear standard that should produce transparent, consistent measures every year.

For the majority of managing agencies, the difference from last year’s acreage is likely due to this methodological change, rather than actual new (or removed) managed area land. However, there were actual lands added to the database this year, primarily under the management of Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Forest Service, DEP - Division of State Lands, DEP - Division of Recreation and Parks, St. Johns River WMD, South Florida WMD, Alachua County, and Volusia County. The summary only assesses lands managed for conservation as recorded in our database; it does not reflect recent acquisitions that have yet to come under the management of a public agency.

We recognize that use of GIS in this summary has inherent limitations. While there is some variation in the degree of precision of GIS boundaries for different managed areas, we expect boundaries will continue to be refined in the coming years. Some boundaries include lands that are not strictly conservation; for example, sports fields, buildings, parking lots, or airplane runways on military installations. FNAI plans to account for these in the future and GIS provides a means to do this.

Submerged lands are separated from non-submerged lands in this summary in an attempt to distinguish conservation lands that are owned by the State by virtue of statehood from those acquired by other means. However, there is no authoritative statewide layer available for sovereignty submerged lands. Recognizing that the history of water law in Florida is complicated and full of case specific exceptions, the submerged lands GIS layer FNAI uses can only be a best approximation. Efforts were also made to remove privately held (as per property appraiser data) submerged lands from the totals for state aquatic preserves and national estuarine research reserves.

Any questions or comments regarding the summary of conservation lands can be addressed to Nathan Pasco at npasco@fnai.fsu.edu.