



### OVERVIEW

### LOCATION

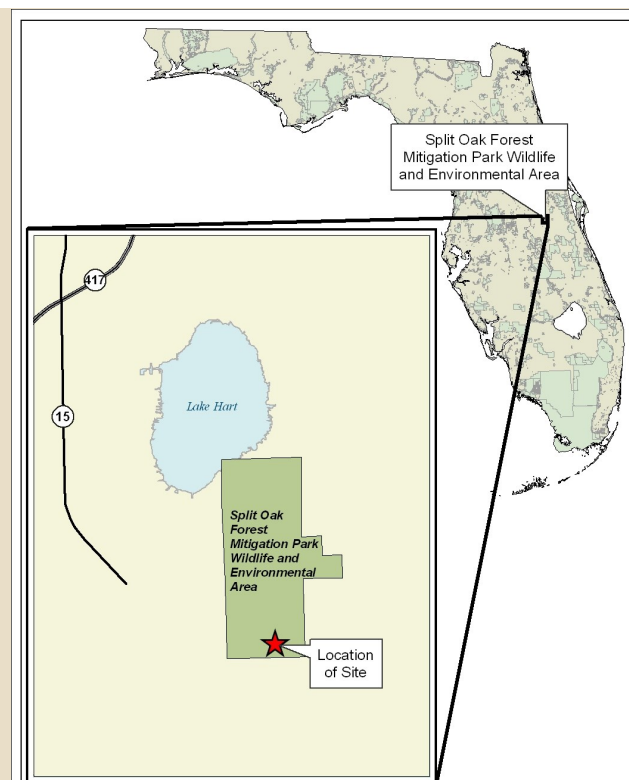
Osceola County

Latitude 28° 20' 10.3" N

Longitude 81° 12' 03.7" W

### COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) is within the Kissimmee Valley Province of the Eastern Flatwoods District characterized by seasonally flooded river swamps and prairies. The scrubby flatwoods reference site at Split Oak Forest Mitigation Park WEA is surrounded on the north, east and west sides by mesic flatwoods. It is just north of the southern boundary of the property. There is considera-



ble rural development just south of the site. The site is located at 75 feet above sea level on a ridge that is approximately 5 feet above the surrounding matrix of mesic flatwoods with baygall and basin marsh in the immediate area.

The canopy is dominated by sparse and scattered longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) to 18 inches dbh with some older flat topped trees. Longleaf pine regeneration is very sparse, consisting of just a few scattered individuals ranging from grass-stage to subcanopy height. At the edge of the scrubby flatwoods ridge, longleaf pine rapidly becomes much denser, possibly corresponding to a change in the soil and hydrology. The subcanopy is sparse and consists of longleaf pine and occasional sand live oak (*Quercus geminata*). The shrub layer is the dominant strata and is characterized by dense sand live oak, myrtle oak (*Q. myrtifolia*), Chapman's oak (*Q. chapmanii*), saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*), shiny blueberry (*Vaccinium myrsinites*), deerberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*), coastalplain staggerbush (*Lyonia fruticosa*), fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*), gopher apple (*Licania michauxii*), dwarf huckleberry (*Gaylussacia dumosa*), and blue huckleberry (*G. frondosa* var. *tomentosa*) with occasional pricklypear (*Opuntia humifusa*), netted pawpaw (*Asimina reticulata*), and turkey oak (*Q. laevis*) to two meters in height. Saw palmetto is equally as abundant as the scrub oaks. The shrub layer is interspersed with scattered small patches of exposed sand and herbs. The moderately dense herb layer is patchy and occupies the open areas between shrubs and dense areas of oak and pine litter. The dominant herbaceous species are wiregrass (*Aristida stricta* var. *beyrichiana*), sandyfield beaksedge (*Rhynchospora megalocarpa*), Elliott's milkpea (*Galactia elliotii*), capillary hairsedge (*Bulbostylis ciliatifolia*), with occasional queen's delight (*Stillingia sylvatica*), gayfeather (*Liatris* sp.), spurge (*Euphorbia* sp.), milkweed (*Asclepias* sp.), bluestem (*Andropogon* sp.), pinebarren beaksedge (*Rhynchospora intermedia*), and *Danthonia* sp. There were no rare species identified at the site.

The site has been roller chopped and there is potential for exotic species invasion due to its proximity to the southern boundary which has cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) along the access road. Data were originally collected at this site during April 2009, and a second data set was collected in October 2016.

### Date of Last Burn

April 16, 2013

### Notable Species Management Considerations

The structure and composition of this reference site matches recommended guidelines for good quality habitat for Florida scrub jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*). See the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's *Florida Wildlife Conservation Guide*: [http://fwcg.myfwc.com/docs/Scrub\\_Management\\_Guidelines\\_July2009.pdf](http://fwcg.myfwc.com/docs/Scrub_Management_Guidelines_July2009.pdf) and <http://myfwc.com/media/2286685/GT-Management-Plan.pdf>.

### STATISTICAL SUMMARY

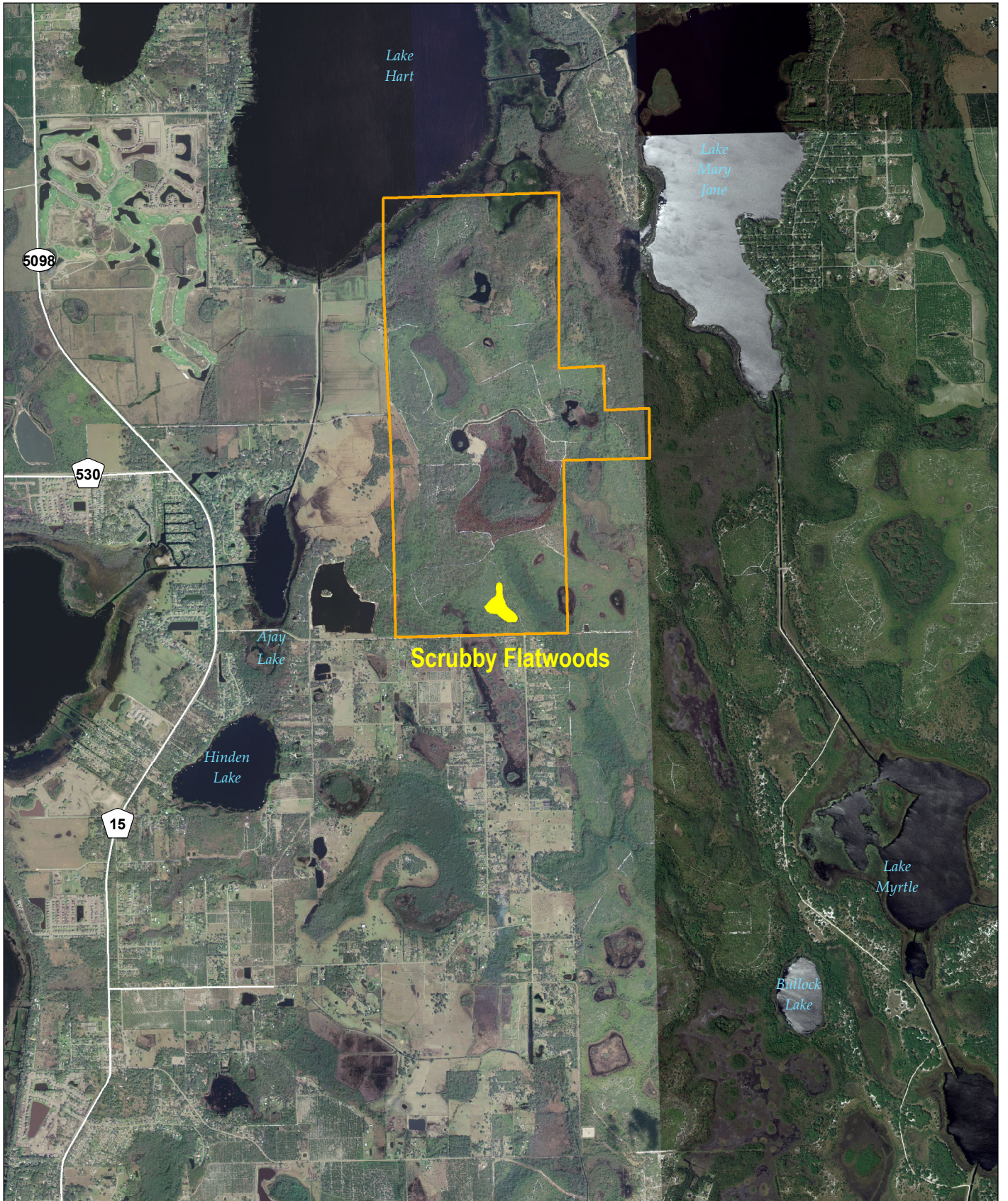
Metric	2009 Average Reference Site Value	2016 Average Reference Site Value	Recommended Range for Scrubby Flatwoods
Basal Area of Pine (sq ft per acre)	2.7	9.3	10-60
Pine Regeneration (stems within 7 m radius)	0.1	0.0	>0
Bare Ground (%)	11.2	7.4	5-30
Herb Cover (%)	5.8	4.0	1-10
Wiry Graminoid Cover (%)	3.7	3.4	1-10
Exotic Plant Cover (%)	0.0	0.0	0
Weedy Species Cover (%)	0.1	0.0	<2
Scrub Stem Density >3 ft	4.2	5.3	<1
Average Maximum Serenoa Height (ft)	1.7	2.3	<3
Serenoa Cover (%)	11.1	15.8	5-15
Serenoa Petiole Density >3 ft	0.0	0.2	0
Average Maximum Shrub Height (ft)	3.4	4.2	<3
Shrub Cover (%)	37.7	28.8	10-40
Shrub Stem Density >3 ft	4.5	5.7	<4
Maximum Shrub DBH (in)	0.1	0.2	<0.5
Non-Pine Stem Density (stems within 7 m radius)	0.0	0.0	<1
Overstory Cover (scrub communities)	7.3	NA	<30
Subcanopy (average stems per quadrat)	0.0	0.0	0

The Reference Natural Community project, including the identification and quantification of high quality reference sites comprising geographical and plant community variations of ten actively managed natural community types, is funded by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

For more information, contact:

Florida Natural Areas Inventory  
1018 Thomasville Road, Suite 200-C  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303  
(850) 224-8207  
[www.fnai.org](http://www.fnai.org)





**Location Map - Scrubby Flatwoods  
Split Oak Forest WEA**

Latitude 28.336191 Longitude -81.201034  
Osceola County, Florida

-  Reference Area
-  Split Oak Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area

