

Wekiva River Mitigation Bank

PROJECT FEATURES

The Wekiva River Mitigation Bank is located in the northeastern portion of Lake County, Florida. The bank site is approximately 1,643 acres and is regionally significant as demonstrated by its ranking in the highest priority group on the Florida Forever acquisition list of sites. The Wekiva River Mitigation Bank site serves as a regionally significant headwater and tributary flow link to the Rock Springs Run flow way, which is a critical western tributary of the Wekiva River. In addition, the Wekiva River Mitigation Bank is bordered on three sides by existing conservation lands.

This project site was selected for its critical habitat composition and as an important ecological link (corridor) in the northern Rock Springs Run ecosystem. Significant habitat within the project site is suitable for and contains Florida Black Bear populations. This property is an important link in a wildlife corridor to increase the sustainability of the Florida Black Bear populations.

WRMB RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN

The primary focus of the WRMB will be the enhancement and restoration of the historic habitat community structure throughout the 1,643 acres. The restoration activities will include hydrologic hydric hammock enhancement as well as significant sandhill restoration. The property has been used extensively for silviculture and other agricultural operations. All of these operations will cease. Construction will include the removal of a 1.5 mile roadway that runs through the central and southern portions of the site in order to restore the historic hydroperiod. Areas of the property where tributary strands exist, a series of low water crossings and culverts will be installed. These structures will re-establish historic sheetflow distribution and equilibrate water levels.

In the northern portion of the property, within existing improved pasture areas, Sandhill and hydric flatwoods communities will be enhanced and restored. In addition, any necessary removal of nuisance or exotic plants throughout the property will be performed.