

Shingle Creek

Orange and Osceola Counties

Area within planning boundary footprint	7,702 acres
District fee-simple ownership	2,431 acres
Other public fee-simple ownership	875 acres
Area under other regulatory restriction (conservation easement, platted preserve area, etc.)	
*acreages are estimates	997 acres

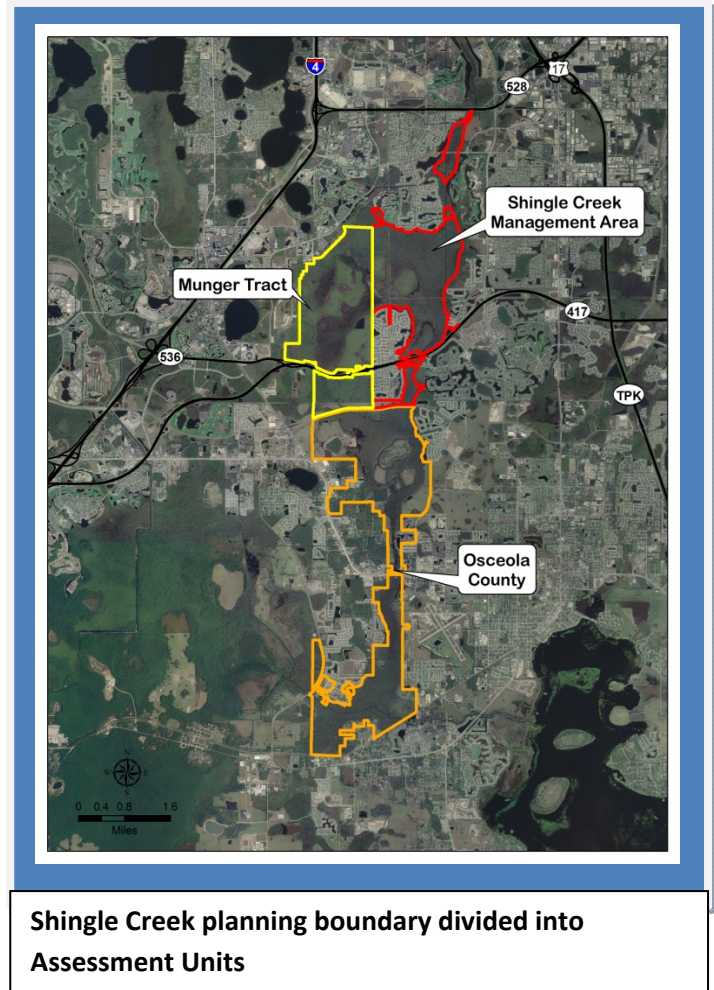
Site Overview

The Shingle Creek swamp is part of an historically extensive mosaic of forested wetlands, pine flatwoods, hardwood hammocks, and herbaceous wetlands. Today, the urbanization of greater Orlando has considerably reduced the presence of these native communities. Situated near the northernmost end of the Everglades watershed, the area is a significant feature of the Everglades headwaters.

The site was placed on the Save Our Rivers acquisition list in 1985. Acquisition has been ongoing since 1991. At the time it was listed, the water in the channelized creek was severely impaired by municipal wastewater effluent, and urban development was rapidly reducing the size of the natural floodplain.

Acquiring the floodplain and keeping it in its natural state and condition provides several benefits:

- stormwater treatment,
- flood hazard mitigation within the Shingle Creek floodplain,
- eliminating the risk from direct stormwater runoff over an 11 mile stretch of the creek,
- providing meaningful wetland mitigation opportunities for regional infrastructure projects,
- reducing residential exposure to wildfire,
- providing unique resource-based recreation in the heart of Orlando and less than 1 mile from SeaWorld ,
- providing a large area of wildlife habitat in an urban center with substantial corridor connectivity to the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes region,
- maintaining dispersed water storage capacity.



Shingle Creek planning boundary divided into Assessment Units

Assessment Units

Munger Tract

The Munger tract is made up of small, 1 to 5 acre non-contiguous parcels acquired to satisfy wetland mitigation for local public infrastructure projects. Many of the District-owned parcels were acquired by Orange County and donated to the District. Many other parcels are held privately.

Shingle Creek Management Area

A large area of consolidated District ownership that has been effectively maintained and undergoing restoration since the late 1990s. The site contains three pine “islands” surrounded by the Shingle Creek swamp.

Osceola County

Consists of lands that have been acquired in partnership with Osceola County and the City of Kissimmee. The District owns one 70 acre parcel in fee-simple, and 263 acres in conservation easements. This assessment addresses just the 70 acre fee-simple parcel.

Shingle Creek

Assessment Unit: Munger Tract

District fee-simple ownership – 591 acres

The Munger tract is a subdivided parcel of land east of International Drive and west of the Hunter’s Creek development. Parcels of land have been acquired to satisfy mitigation obligations of the Central Florida Beltway and the expansion of the Orange County Convention Center. The parcels that were owned by Orange County have been donated to the District. The District currently owns 591 acres of land within the Munger tract.

Core Mission Values

The parcels within the Munger tract were acquired to satisfy regulatory requirements for impacts to wetlands during the construction of the Orange County Convention Center and the Central Florida Beltway.

Other Resource Value

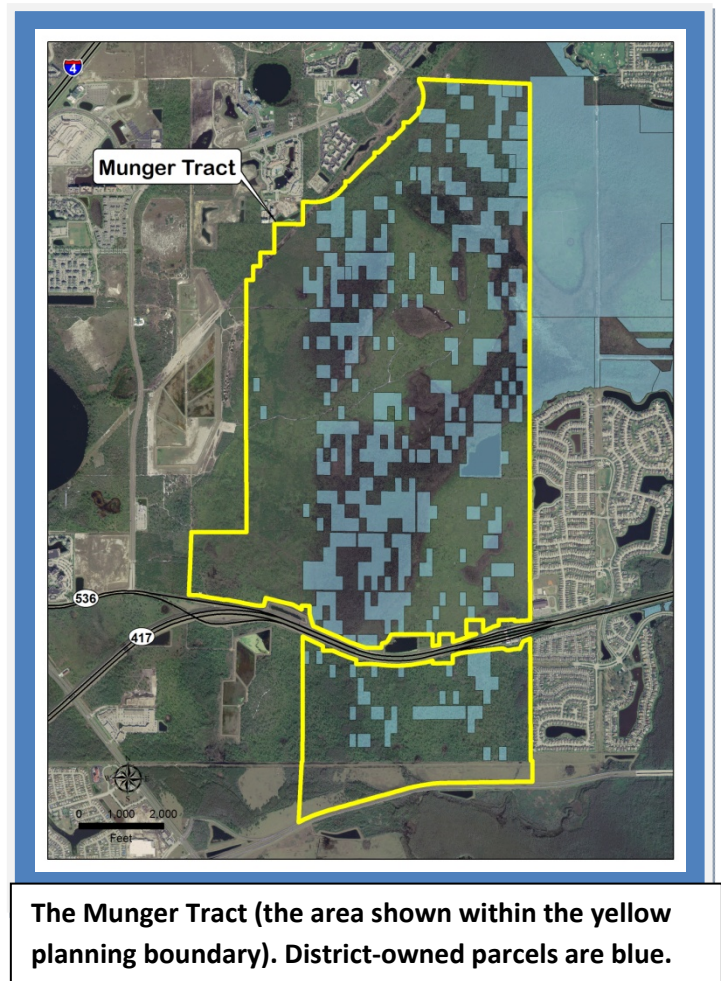
The area is predominantly a mosaic of hardwoods and cypress forests, with two pine/prairie islands (one island is in the middle of the Munger Tract, and one is on the southeastern corner of the area adjacent to the Hunter’s Creek community). The central pine/prairie island is unique because it is dominated by pond pines rather than south Florida slash pines. This is farther south than pond pine communities are typically found, and the only such occurrence within lands managed by the District.

Management Issues

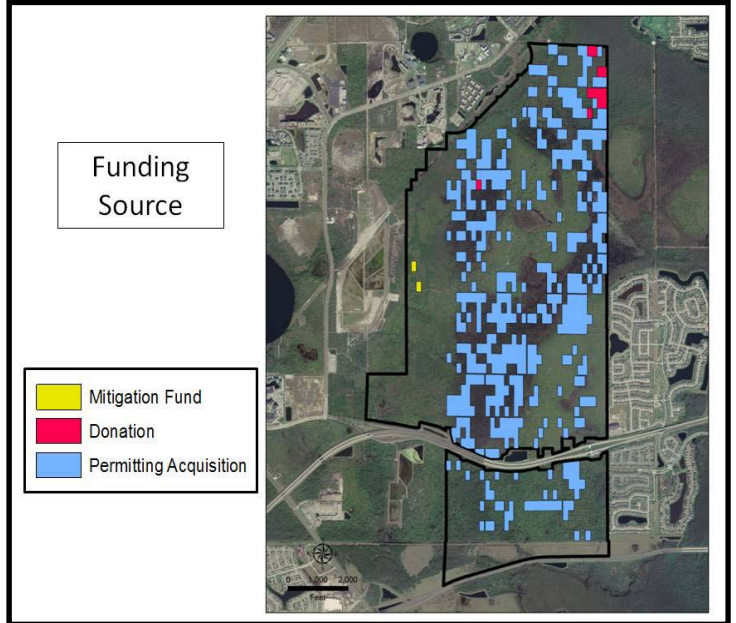
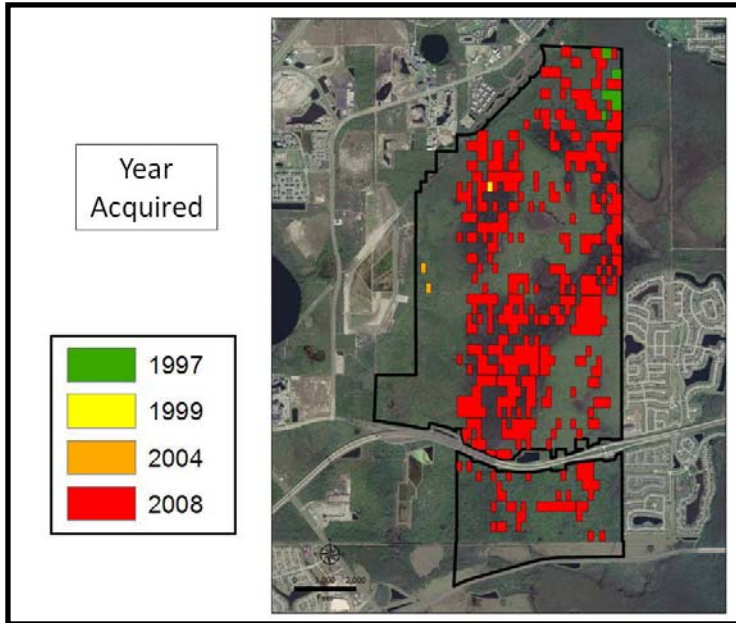
The non-contiguous ownership within the Munger tract contributes to the cost of managing the property.

Public Use and Recreation Value

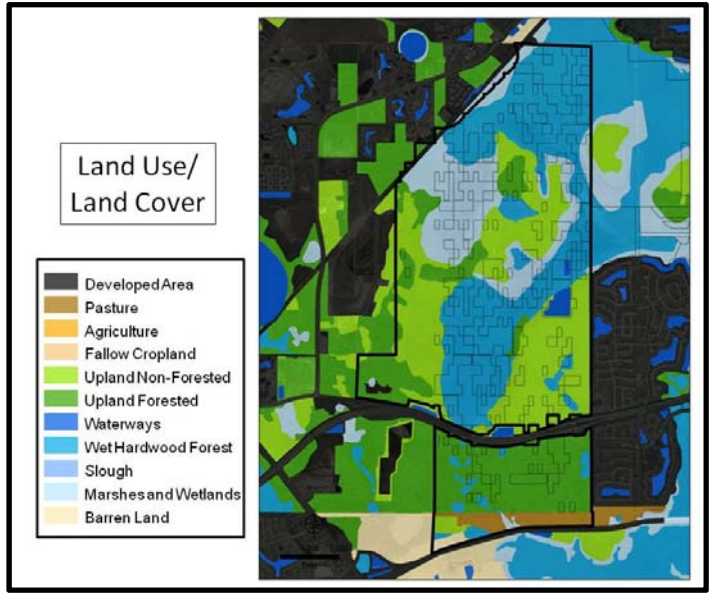
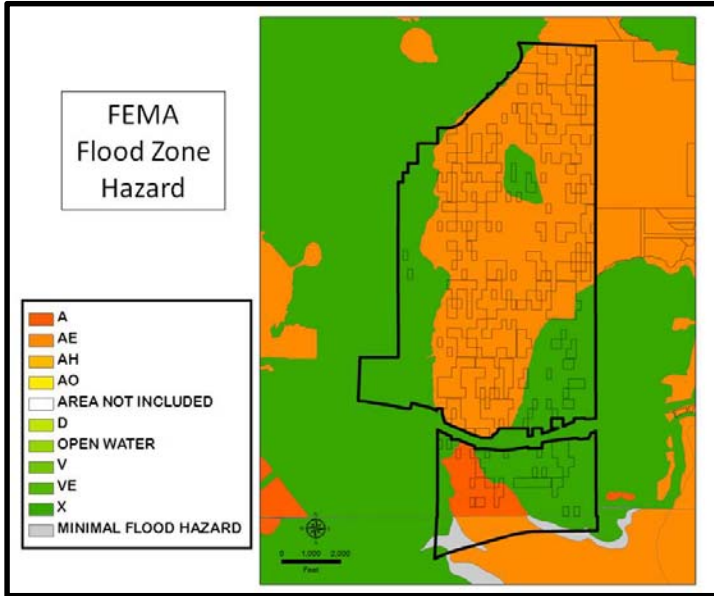
Because of the configuration of ownership in this area, there are currently no public use facilities within the Munger tract.



Shingle Creek: Munger Tract Land Acquisition



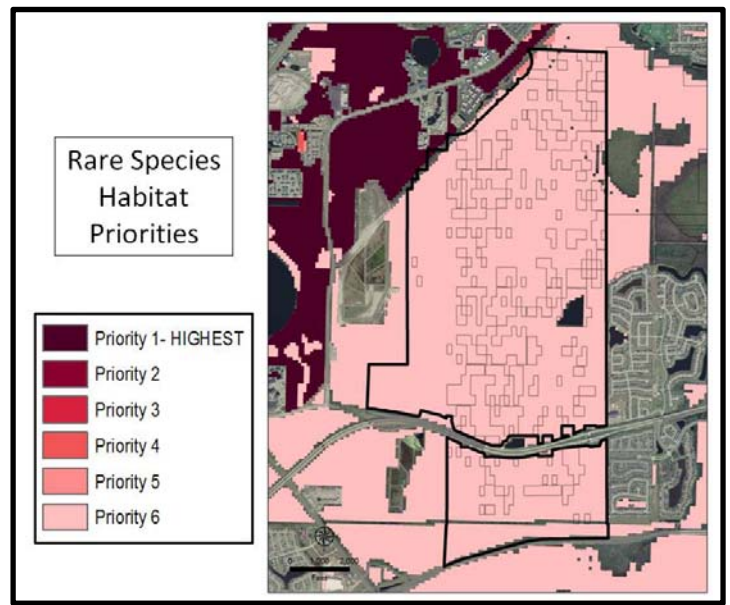
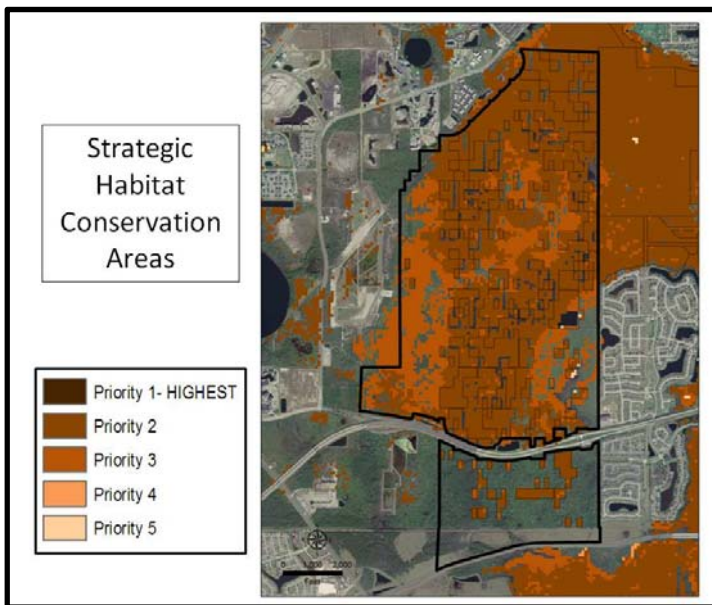
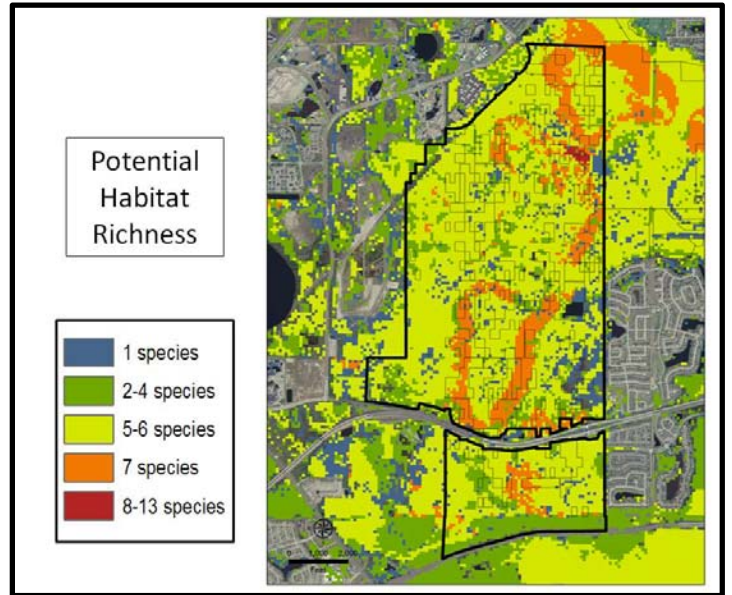
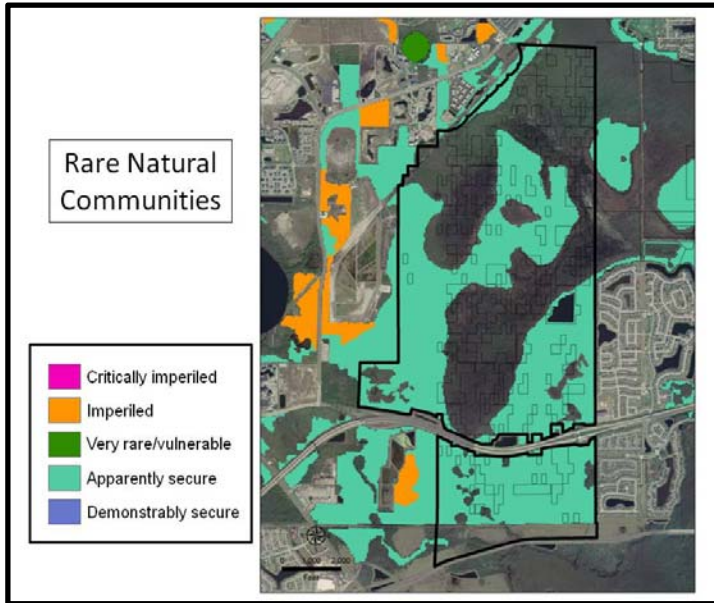
Shingle Creek: Munger Tract Land Character



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Shingle Creek: Munger Tract Land Character (Continued)



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Shingle Creek: Munger Tract Photos



Oblique Photo showing the mosaic of plant communities: cypress at the bottom, pine flatwood at the top. There is some trouble with unauthorized offroad vehicle use, but it is more-or-less limited to a single trail. (28 ° 22' 21"N, 81° 27' 58"W)



Oblique photo showing a mosaic of cypress, pine flatwood, and wet prairie. Fuel loads are an ongoing problem in Munger due to the scattered ownership inhibiting prescribed fire across the landscape. There have been very damaging periodic wildfires. (28 ° 22' 37"N, 81° 27' 41"W)

Shingle Creek: Munger Tract Photos



Typical ground view of the pine islands within the Munger tract.



Typical ground view of the swamp within the Munger tract. (pond pine at left, cypress at right)

Shingle Creek,

Assessment Unit: Shingle Creek Mgt. Area

District fee-simple ownership – 1,770 acres

Core Mission Value

The area receives water from the Valencia Water Control District (drainage from the surrounding area to the north) which sheet flows naturally across the swamp to Shingle Creek. Consequently, the site is important for flood attenuation, water supply, water quality enhancement, and wildlife habitat. The area functions as part of a larger wildlife corridor with connections to the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to the south.

Other Resource Value

Wetlands comprise approximately 60 percent of the Management Area, most of which are within the 100-year floodplain. There are also three pine islands, upland areas dominated by slash pines with a palmetto/wiregrass understory. The area is the largest natural area within the greater metropolitan Orlando area.

Current Use, Management Issues

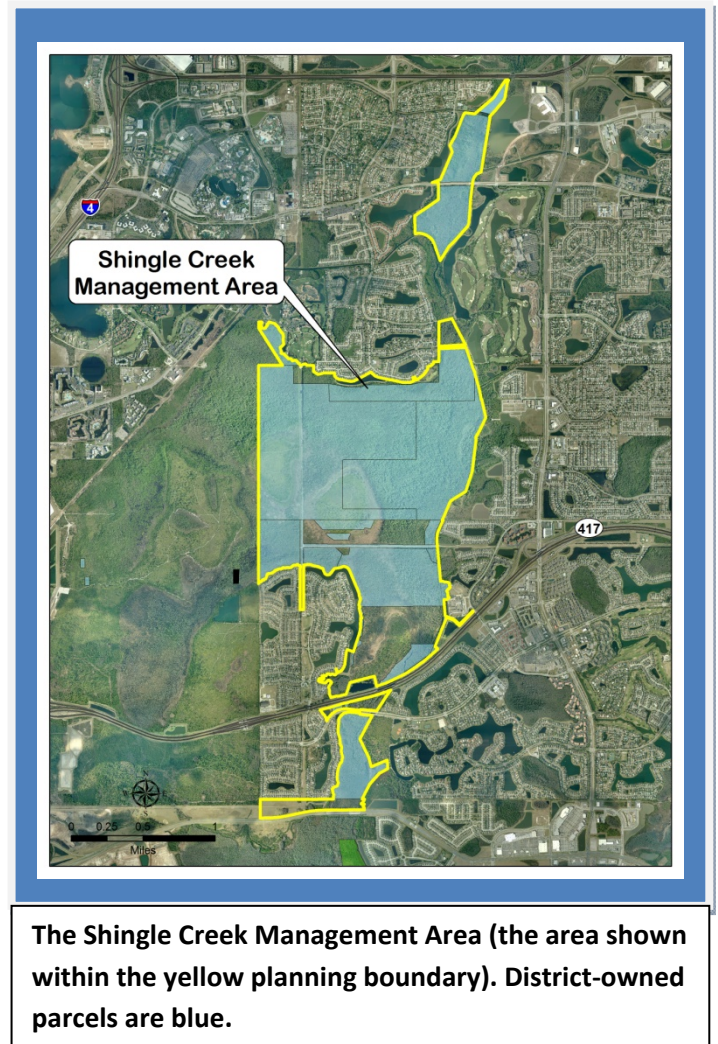
The site is being maintained in its natural state and condition. The primary funding source for the management of this area comes from Central Beltway mitigation. Over the last 15 years the site has undergone restoration efforts that have made the current management of the resources cost effective and sustainable through a yearly sweep of exotic plant species and periodic prescribed fire on the 3 small pine islands.

Public Use and Recreation Value

Several recreational activities are provided for and encouraged in the management area including hiking, fishing, birding, canoeing, nature appreciation, geocaching, and biking. The management area hosts two boardwalks, one at the north and one at the south, and are connected by trails that feature wooden foot bridges to traverse wet areas. The site also has a picnic shelter and a canoe/kayak launch.

There are three public access points: one near the Marriott resort on International Drive, one within the Hunter's Creek neighborhood, and one behind the Hunter's Creek middle school. There is a popular geocache on the site that draws international tourists seeking a quick diversion from nearby SeaWorld.

This area enjoys strong support from the Hunter's Creek community. In 2007 the District completed the Shingle Creek trail with the construction of a boardwalk and several foot bridges. There are middle school students from the neighborhood who walk or ride their bikes daily through the pinelands and along the creek to and from the Hunter's Creek middle school.



The Shingle Creek Management Area (the area shown within the yellow planning boundary). District-owned parcels are blue.

**Shingle Creek: Shingle Creek Management Area:
Restoration and Management**



When the District began acquisition efforts in the Shingle Creek Management Area the site was in very poor condition. The swamp and creek were a mess, with debris and poor water quality, there was too much ponding in the northern part of the swamp and too much drainage in the southern part. The pine islands were overgrown and fire suppressed, the palmettos were close to 10 feet high and shaded out everything else.

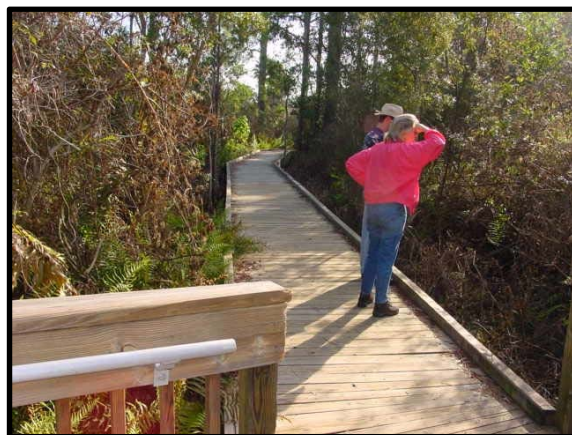


The first step in the restoration process was to remove the solid waste that had accumulated in the swamp.



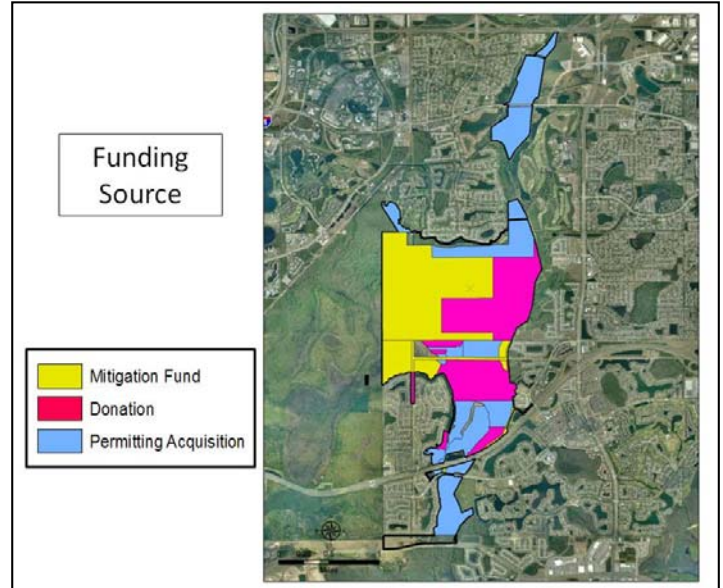
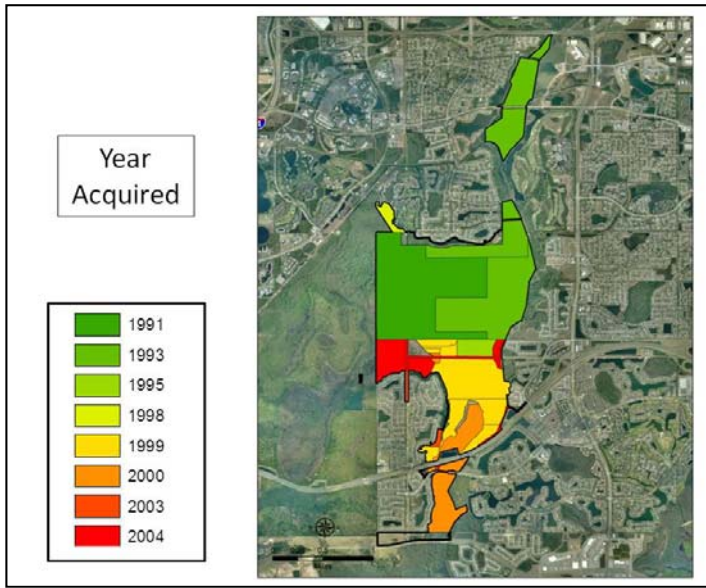
Restoration has involved cleaning the area, removing exotics, re-establishing hydrologic connectivity within the swamp (above) and between the swamp and the creek, and reintroducing the regular application of prescribed fire in the pine islands. These efforts have transformed the degraded system into a vibrant natural area, twice the size of New York City's Central Park, right in the heart of Orlando (below).



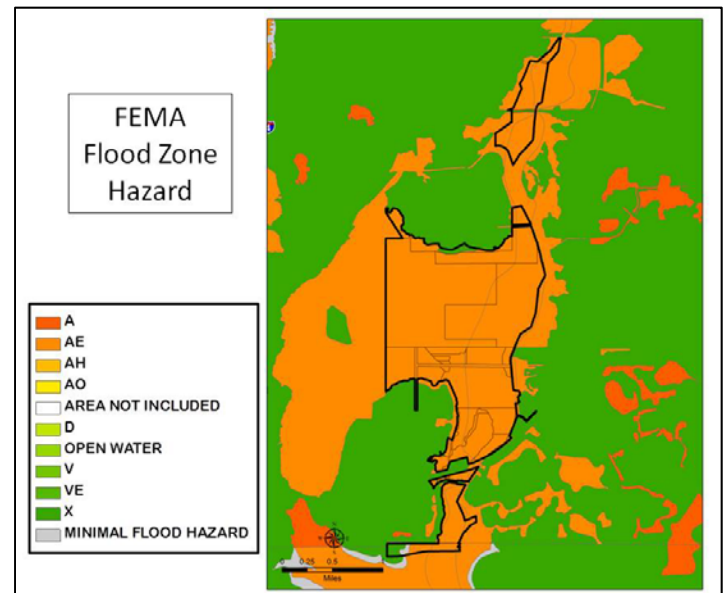
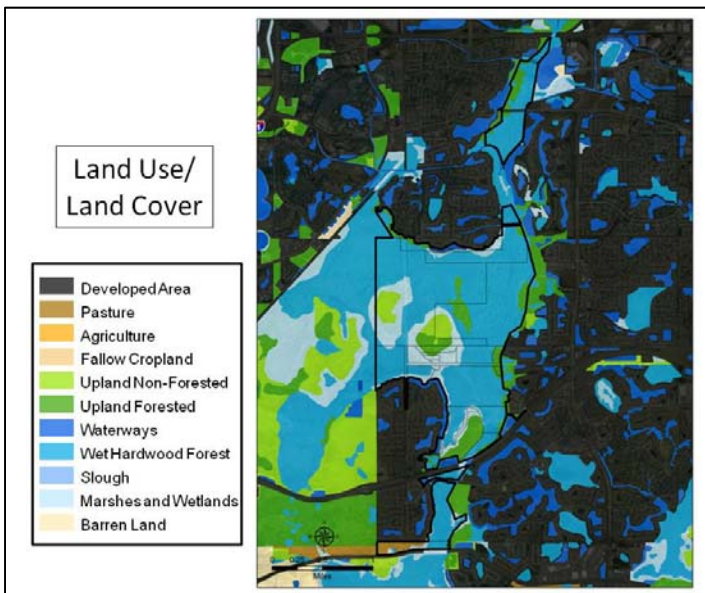


Public Use within the Shingle Creek Management Unit (clockwise from upper left) the creekside trail along Shingle Creek; the boardwalk entrance from the Marriott resort; joggers; picnic shelter near a pine island; the boardwalk entrance from Hunter's Creek Middle School; and middle school students on the District's hiking bridge watching kayakers in Shingle Creek. The route and conceptual design of an additional 3,000 foot boardwalk were completed, but there has not been funding available to proceed to construction.

Shingle Creek: Shingle Creek Management Area Acquisition



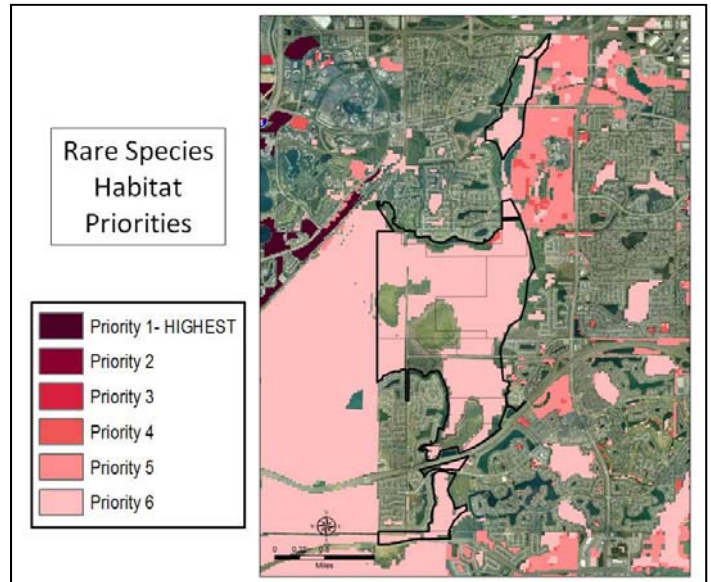
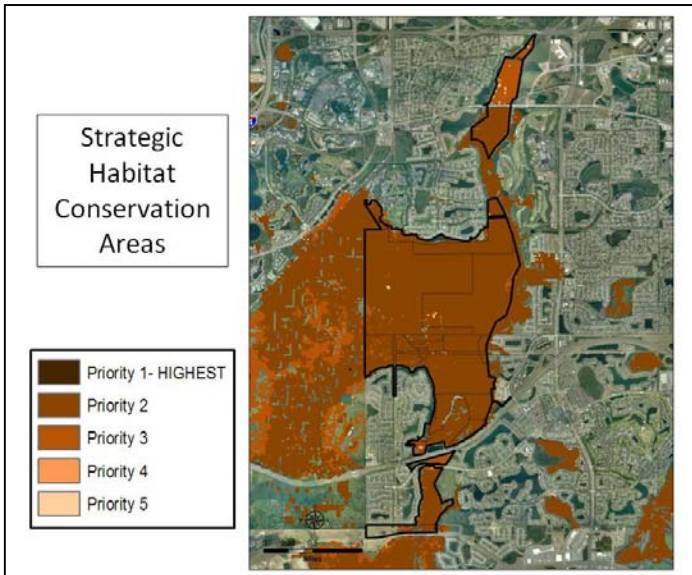
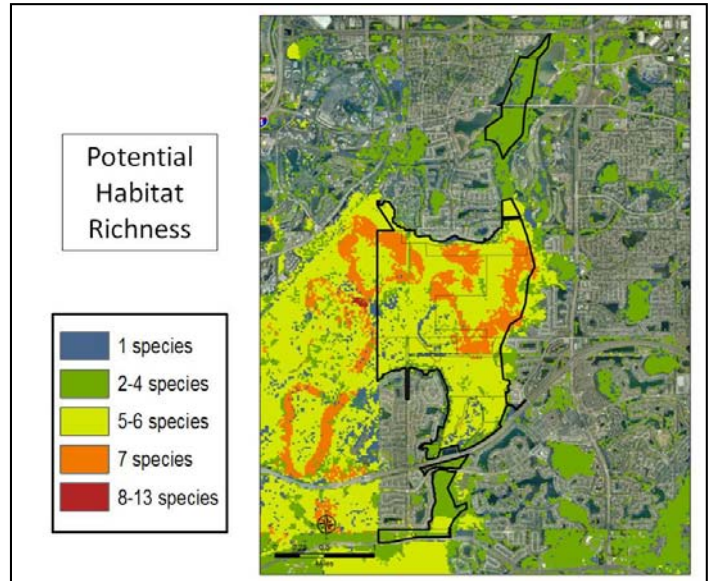
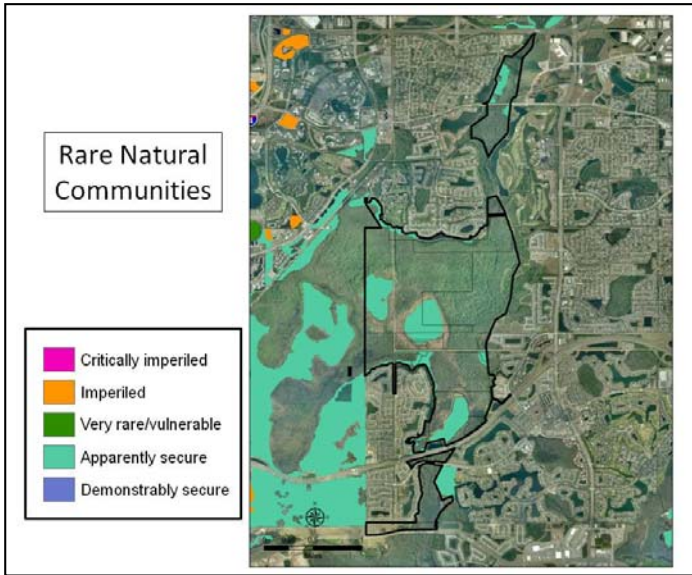
Shingle Creek: Shingle Creek Management Area Land Character



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Shingle Creek: Shingle Creek Management Area Land Character (Continued)



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Shingle Creek

Assessment Unit: Osceola County

District fee-simple ownership – 70 acres

Most of the Shingle Creek area that lies in Osceola County has been acquired utilizing funding from the City of Kissimmee, Osceola County, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Florida Communities Trust grant program, and the Central Florida Beltway mitigation fund. The last of these is administered by the District.

The District has entered into both management and acquisition agreements with the County and the City of Kissimmee.

The County manages this area as the Shingle Creek Regional Park. The District contributes up to \$100,000 annually in Beltway mitigation funds on a 50/50 cost share basis for resource management activities on these lands. The County is developing recreation facilities on the site according to a management plan that was prepared by the County following Florida Communities Trust guidelines.

The District participated in the acquisition on five parcels within the floodplain, totaling 263 acres. The District has retained a Conservation Easement interest over these lands, while the County has a lead role in the management. This assessment is only evaluating the use of land held by the District in fee-simple, so these easements are outside of the scope of the present assessment.

Poinciana Blvd. 70 Acre Parcel

The District holds fee-simple title to one 70 acre parcel (see map at right) located near the southwest corner of the assessment unit. It is bordered by the private Shingle Creek Mitigation Bank.

Core Mission Value

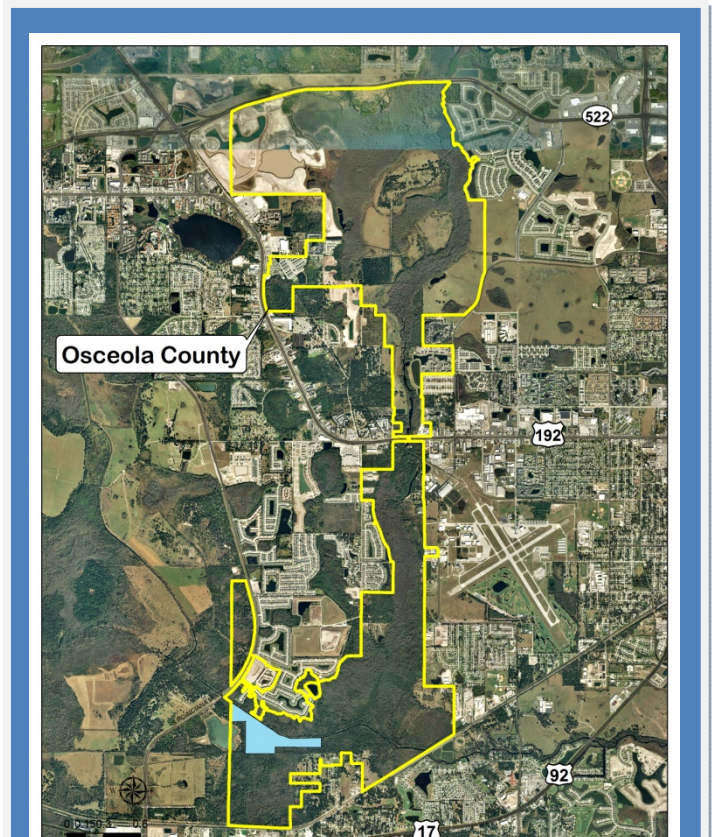
The site was acquired through the District’s regulatory program as mitigation for wetland impacts.

Other Resource Value

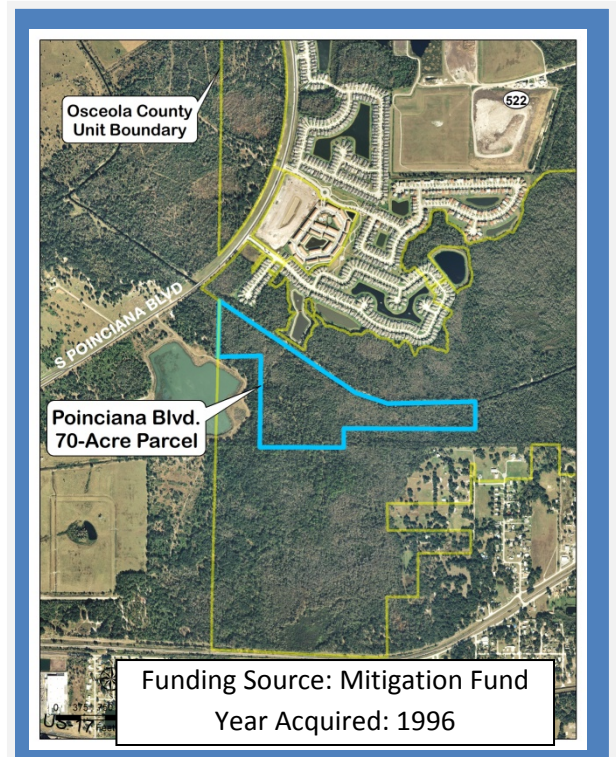
The site consists of mixed vegetation (pine / cypress / hardwoods). It is an important wildlife corridor parcel since it connects the northern reaches of the Shingle Creek floodplain to the forested wetlands of the Reedy Creek system to the west and southwest.

Current Use, Management Issues, Public Use Value

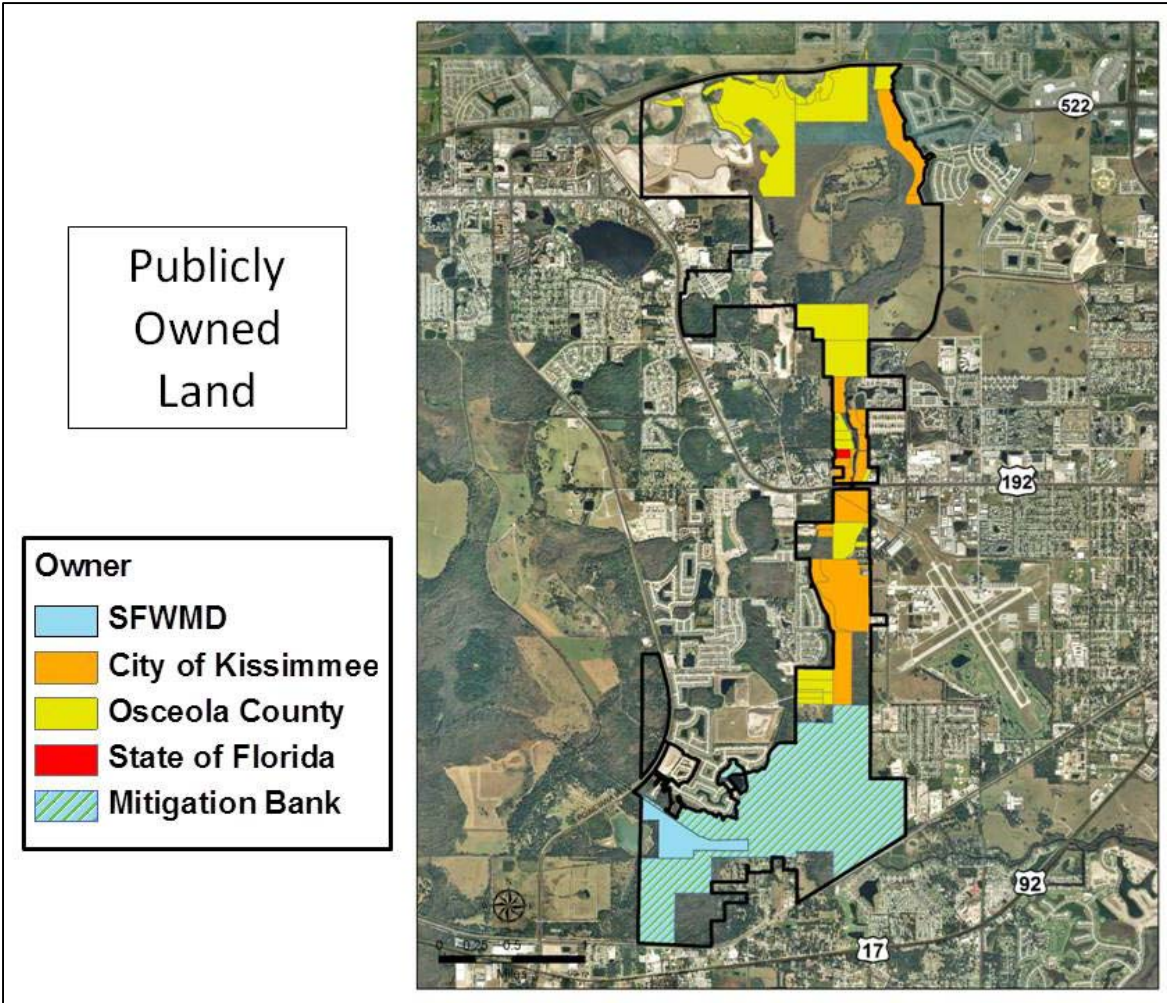
There is no practical access to the site and no road frontage; consequently it is not open for public use.



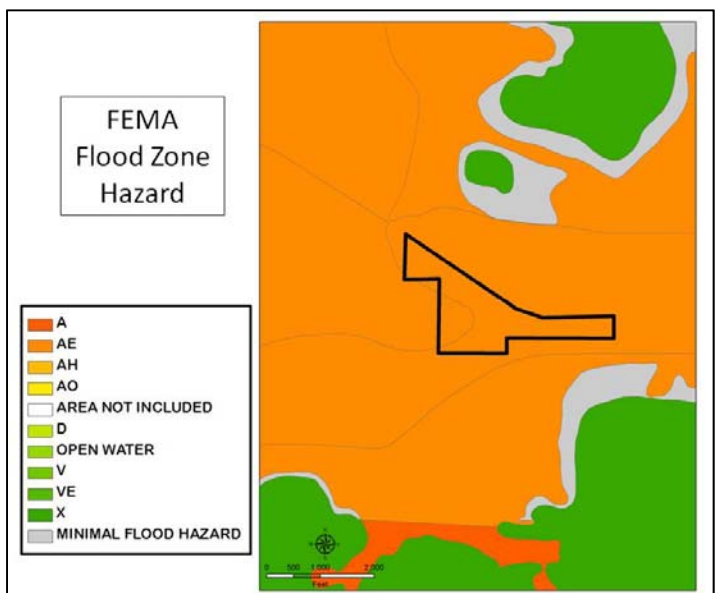
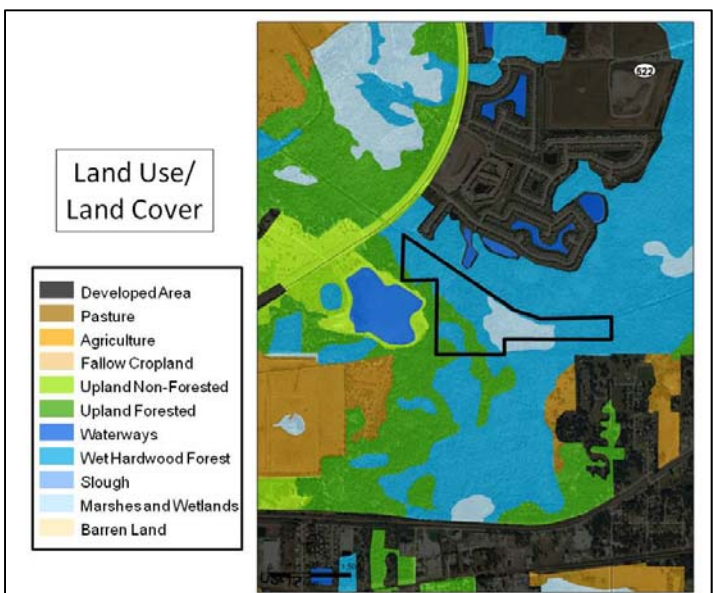
The Osceola County Tract (the area within the yellow planning boundary). District fee-simple parcel is blue.

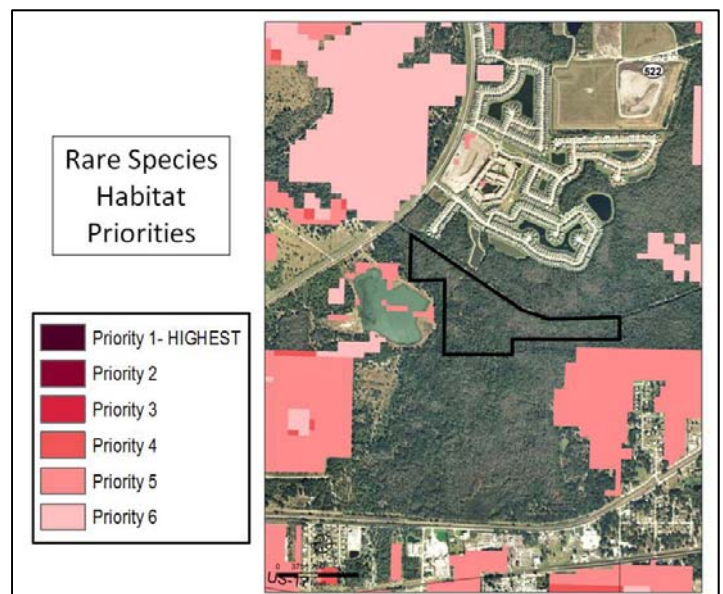
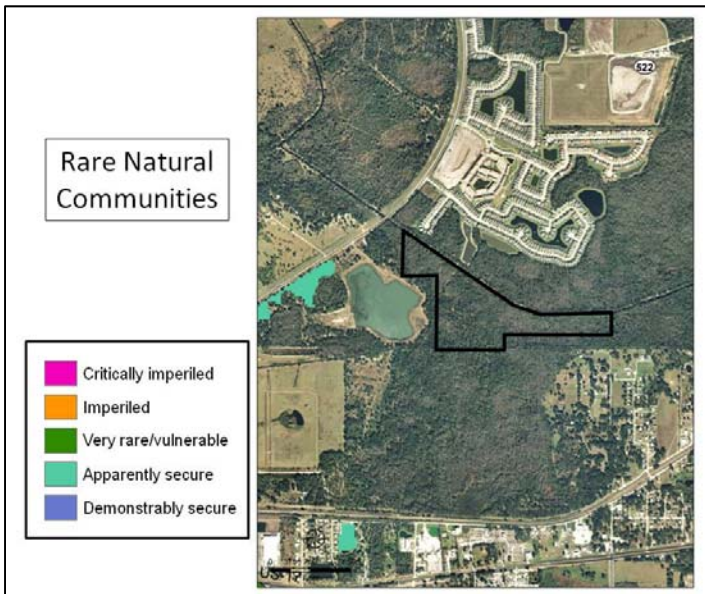
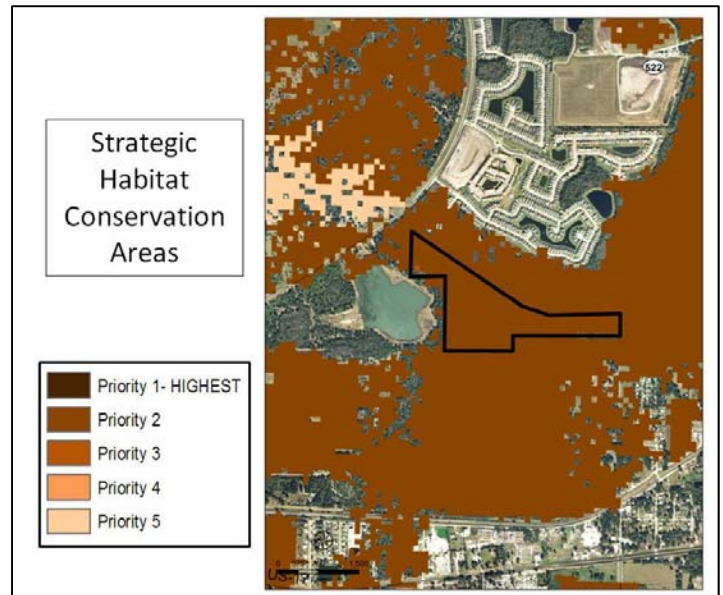
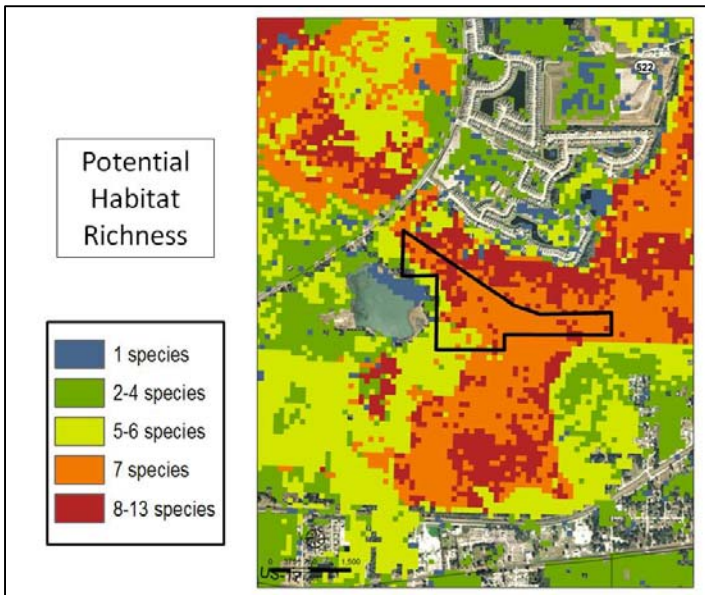


Location map of 70 acre parcel



Shingle Creek: Osceola County Unit, Poinciana Blvd. 70-Acre Tract Land Character





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**Shingle Creek: Osceola County Unit,
Poinciana Blvd. 70-Acre Tract Photos**



This photo is looking in from Poinciana Blvd. The 70 acre parcel does not front the road, rather it lies 400 feet in from the road, but the mixed vegetative community visible in the photo is characteristic of the vegetation on the 70 acre District-owned parcel.



An aerial view of the 70 acre site owned by the District in Shingle Creek, Osceola County. The site contains a mix of pine, hardwoods, and cypress. There is no practical access to the site for management or public access. (28 ° 16' 11"N, 81 ° 28' 17"W)