

Long-Term Habitat Management Plan

Prescribed burning will be utilized as feasible, but in areas where it is not a feasible management technique for the upland areas within the Conservation Habitat Network (CHN) and mitigation areas, mechanical treatment of the restoration areas, primarily uplands, will be used along with pine (*Pinus* sp.) tree thinning techniques.

Timber operations will be terminated within preserved and restored forested wetlands and uplands as these areas are placed under conservation easement. Natural plant communities within these habitats will regenerate, resulting in enhanced wetland/upland function and increased benefit to local and regional wildlife.

The Long-Term Habitat Management Plan is as follows:

1. Preserve large areas of wetland strands to protect native vegetation and wildlife habitats contained within the property.
2. Incorporate upland buffers around preserved wetlands to provide habitat for upland and wetland-dependent wildlife species, and provide a low-impact transition between natural areas and developed areas.
3. Incorporate a wildlife linkage (CHN) that provides for critical forage, habitat, and movement needs of indigenous listed and non-listed species.
4. Preserve and restore additional significant areas of uplands outside the 25-foot buffer within the CHN, to provide critical upland habitat for wetland-dependent wildlife species, as well as upland wildlife species.
5. Restore altered uplands (planted pine) to a natural pine flatwoods community type, beyond the uplands where 25-foot buffers only exists, by thinning the planted pines to natural stocking densities with a basal area ranging from 30 to 50 square feet (total cross-sectional area of trees at diameter at breast height per acre) in most cases and conducting mechanical techniques (roller chopping) to reduce the bedding to restore the natural grade and the native community type within the CHN and additional upland areas. Thinning plantations to a basal area of 30 to 50 square feet will open the stands, eliminate the plantation appearance, and mimic native pine flatwoods conditions. In areas where dense understory shrubs and saw palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) exist, mechanical treatment (roller chopping) will reduce fuel loads and planting beds. The planting beds will degrade over time as well and return to a natural topography.

6. Restore altered wetlands where silviculture activities have encroached into wetlands with dense planted pine stands primarily along the edges. The planted pines will be thinned to a natural density (30 to 50 square feet basal area) to mimic a hydric pine flatwoods community and wetland plant species will be allowed to naturally recruit into the area. Over time, the topography will be restored to a more natural grade and roller chopping will also be conducted to help restore the natural topography. Subsequent thinning cuts will be conducted at the appropriate time when growth of individual trees in the stand exceed the upper basal area limits prescribed for the stand.
7. Conduct maintenance of invasive, nuisance and/or exotic plant species that commonly become established in disturbed sites and contribute to degradation of native community types.
8. Maintain the majority of herbaceous wetlands on the property for continued use by listed wading birds.
9. Incorporate a stormwater management system designed to maintain pre-development water quality, volumes, and flows, and existing wetland hydroperiods on-site.
10. Gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) surveys will be conducted immediately prior to development of specific parcels, in accordance with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) *Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines*. The appropriate FWC permit will be obtained for gopher tortoises that occur within areas of the property that are proposed for development and will be relocated to an approved recipient area, prior to development, in accordance with FWC Permit Guidelines.

All wetlands and uplands preserved/restored will be protected with conservation easements to preclude future development or alterations to these areas.

Initial enhancement and restoration actions will be accomplished concurrently with site work and wetland impacts associated with implementation of portions of the project. Some restoration work may be conducted prior to the start of authorized development activities during routine timber harvesting operations. This schedule will ensure that restoration activities occur in conjunction with or prior to wetland impacts. Long-term management will occur in perpetuity as set forth in the approved and permitted mitigation plan.