

Approval of Land Acquisition Projects



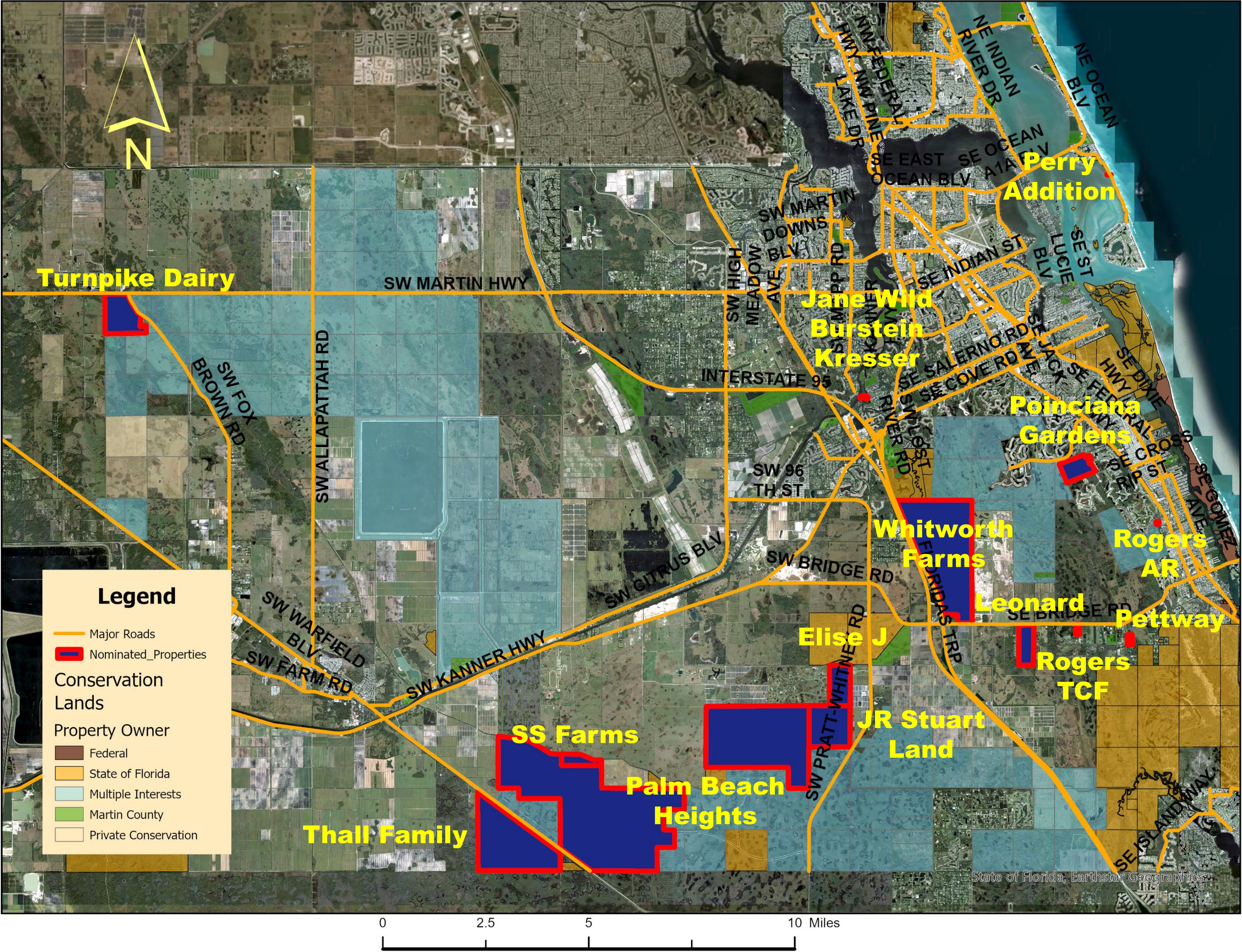
Michael Yustin
Senior Project Manager
Martin County Environmental Resources Division

INTRODUCTION



- **2024 Referendum authorizes a half cent sales tax for acquiring environmentally sensitive lands**
 - **Required formation of an Environmental Lands Oversight Committee (ELOC)**
 - **ELOC met on 9/5/25 and recommended acquisition of 16 properties**
 - **Staff seeking approval to authorize the use of sales tax funds**

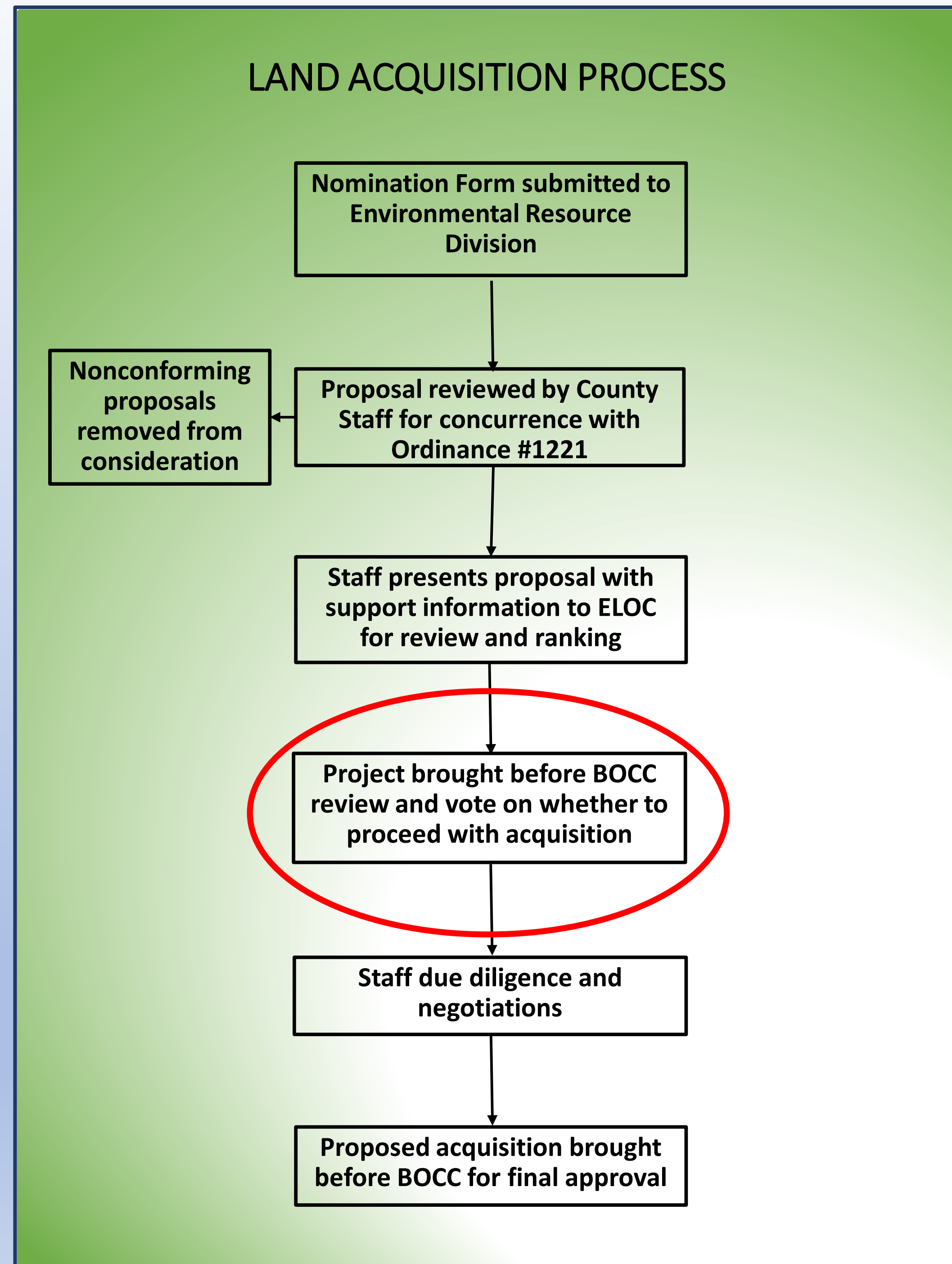
Properties Nominated For ELOC Consideration



NOMINATED PARCELS

- 16 properties containing over 9,000-acres of land up for consideration
- Properties represented from all 4 Acquisition Zones
- Acreage varies from 3,500-acres (Palm Beach Heights) to 1-acre (Perry Beach Add.)

REVIEW PROCESS





PURPOSE OF RANKING MEETING

- Review environmental information for nominated parcel
 - Fill in Project Ranking Form
- Make recommendations to the Martin County B.O.C.C on whether to move forward with acquisition



FLORIDA NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY (FNAI)

- **Part of Florida State University**
- **Conduct environmental assessments for the Florida Forever Program**
 - **Assisting the County in evaluating properties nominated for acquisition under the local program**
 - **Provide data on rare species, habitat quality, greenways and wildlife corridors, management needs of proposed acquisition properties and shoreline protection/access**

Martin County Environmental Lands Oversight Committee Project Ranking Form											
Evaluation Factors											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	RELATION TO CERP PROJECT	GREENWAY CORRIDOR	POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS	HABITAT QUALITY	MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	RARE OR LISTED SPECIES OR HABITATS	ESTIMATED COST PER ACRE	RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	WATERWAYS OR SHORELINES PROTECTION	
Project Score											
Weighting Unit	15	10	10	10	10	15	5	5	10	10	100%
Weighted Score	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Each Project Score for each Evaluation Factor is to be rated on a scale of 1-100 with 100 being the highest 2. Weighting unit is a percentage that will be applied to the Project Score. This will then produce the Weighted Score. For example, if the Project Score "Relation to CERP Project" is a 90, this times the Weighting Unit of 15(or 15%) will produce a weighted score of 13.5 (90x.15)											

This is the criteria that the ELOC members used to “score” properties
County staff tabulates results to produce a weighted score

Tabulation Sheet for ELOC Committee

Project Name: Palm Beach Heights

Committee Member	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	RELATION TO CERP PROJECT	GREENWAY CORRIDOR	POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS	HABITAT QUALITY	MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	RARE OR LISTED SPECIES OR HABITATS	ESTIMATED COST PER ACRE	RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	WATERWAYS OR SHORELINES PROTECTION
Beth Kacvinsky										
Dan Brady										
Havid Hafner										
James Snedeker										
John Keller										
Merritt Matheson										
Scott Turnbull										
Thomas Campenni										
Vicki Davis										
Total Per Category	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weighted Score	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Project Score	0									

We tabulated the results by category and ELOC Member to develop a total project score

RURAL AND FAMILY LANDS

Florida program established in 2001 (s. 570.71, F.S.)

- Uses perpetual agricultural conservation easements
- Statutorily defined as a type of 'conservation easement' under s. 704.06, F.S.
- Purpose: Protect working agricultural lands while also conserving natural resources
 - Land remains in private ownership and in production
- Easements are purchased by the state; approved by Governor & Cabinet
 - No public access requirement

COMPARING EASEMENT TYPES

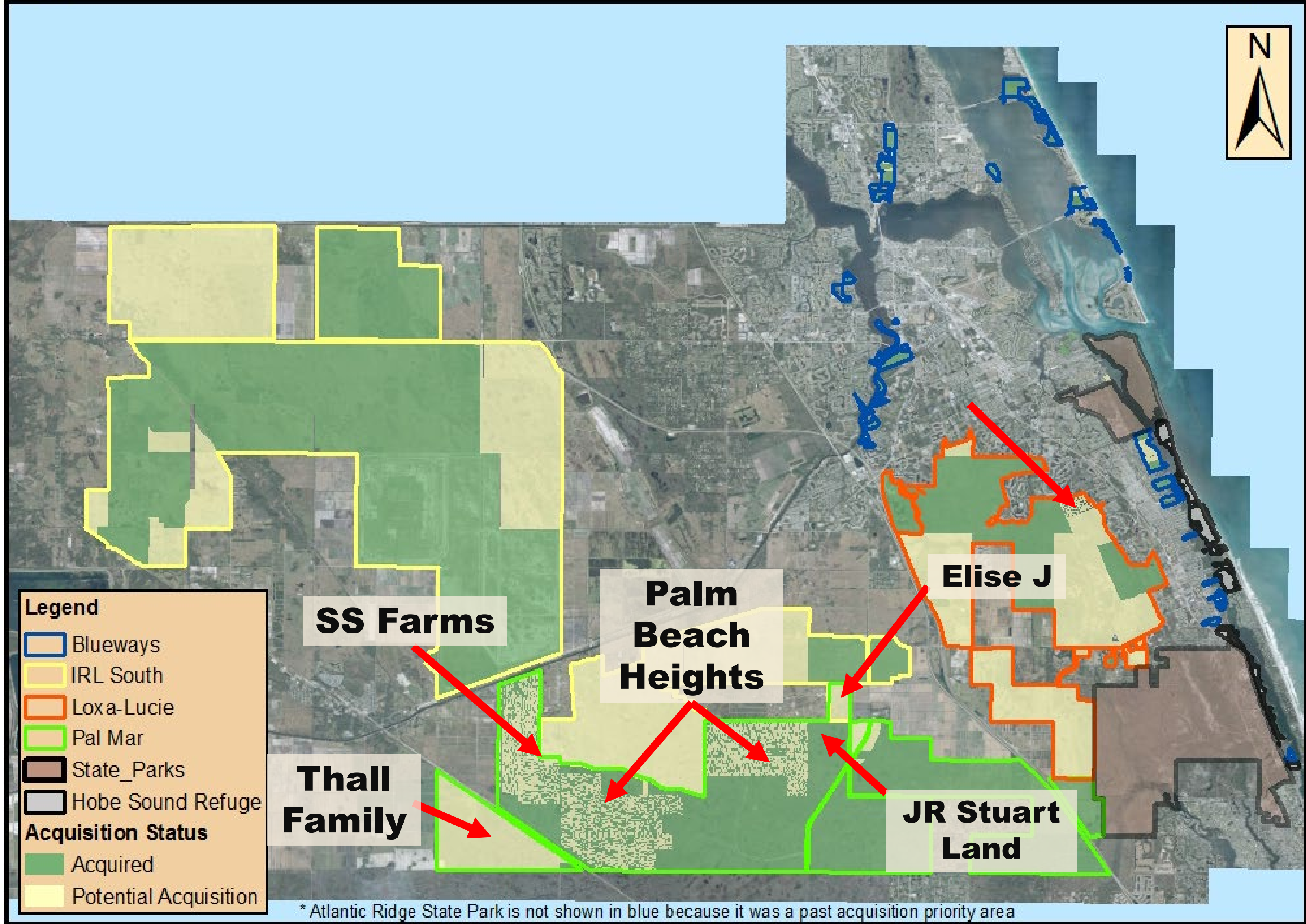
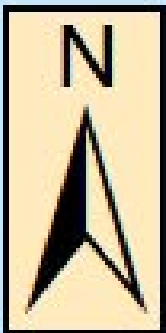
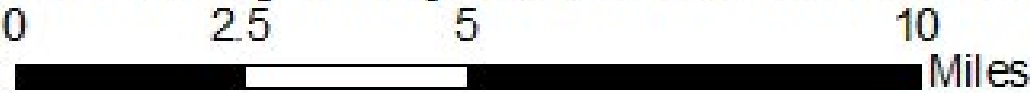
Category	RFLPP (Ag Easements)	Florida Forever
Primary Purpose	Keep ag lands in production + conserve resources	Protect natural resources, water, habitat, scenic & recreation
Administered By	FDACS; approved by Gov & Cabinet	DEP / Division of State Lands; ARC; approved by Gov & Cabinet
Acquisition Type	Perpetual agricultural conservation easements (no fee simple)	Mix of fee simple + conservation easements
Selection Criteria	Ag productivity, threat of conversion, compatibility with working lands	Resource protection, water, habitat, ecosystem connectivity, cultural/historic, recreation
Easement Terms	Allows ongoing ranching/farming; reserves building envelopes; prevents subdivision/non-ag uses	Often stricter on development to protect ecosystems/water recharge/scenic values
Public Access	Not required	Not required (but sometimes provided if public benefit)

PAL MAR ACQUISITION ZONE

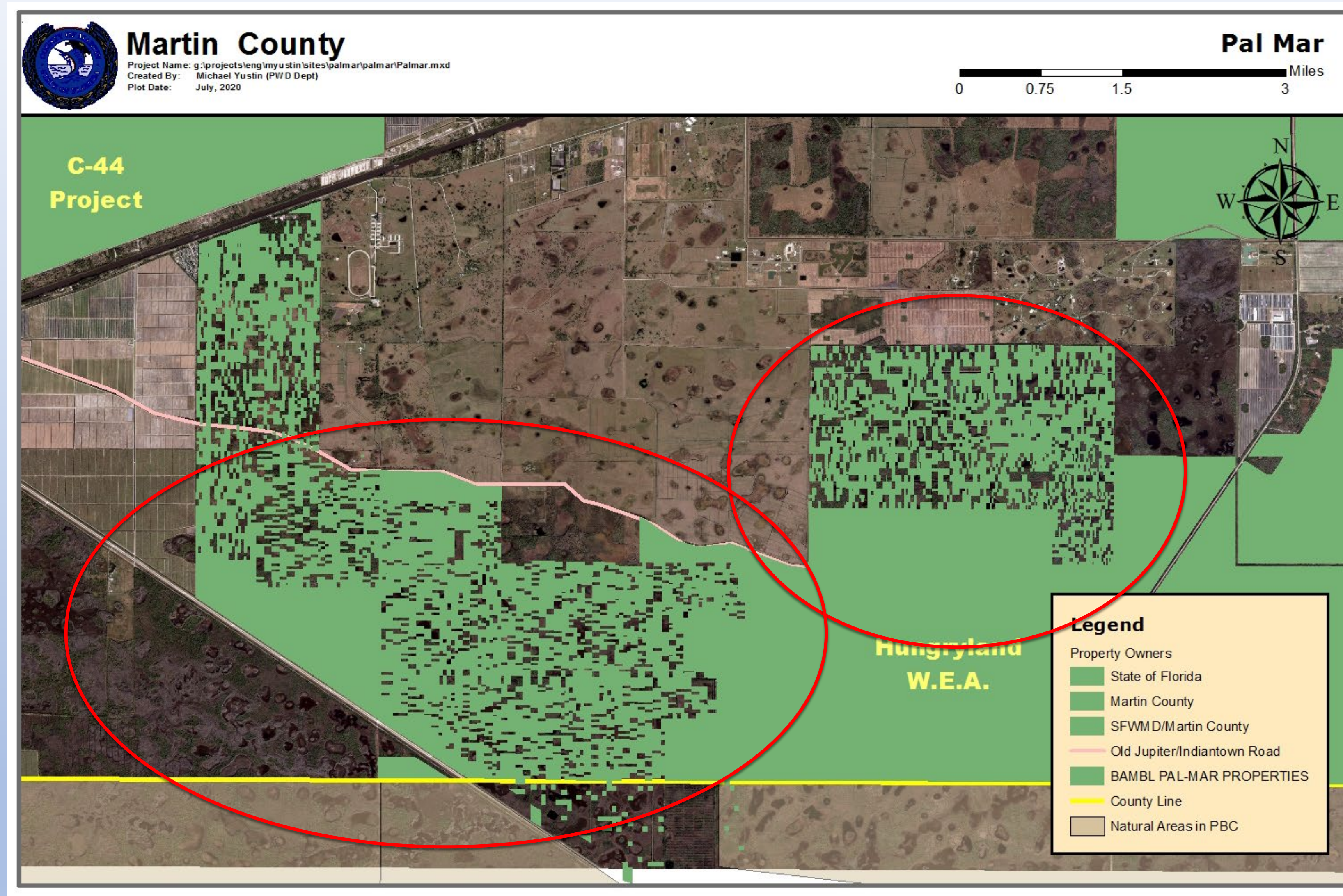


Martin County

Martin County Acquisition Status Map

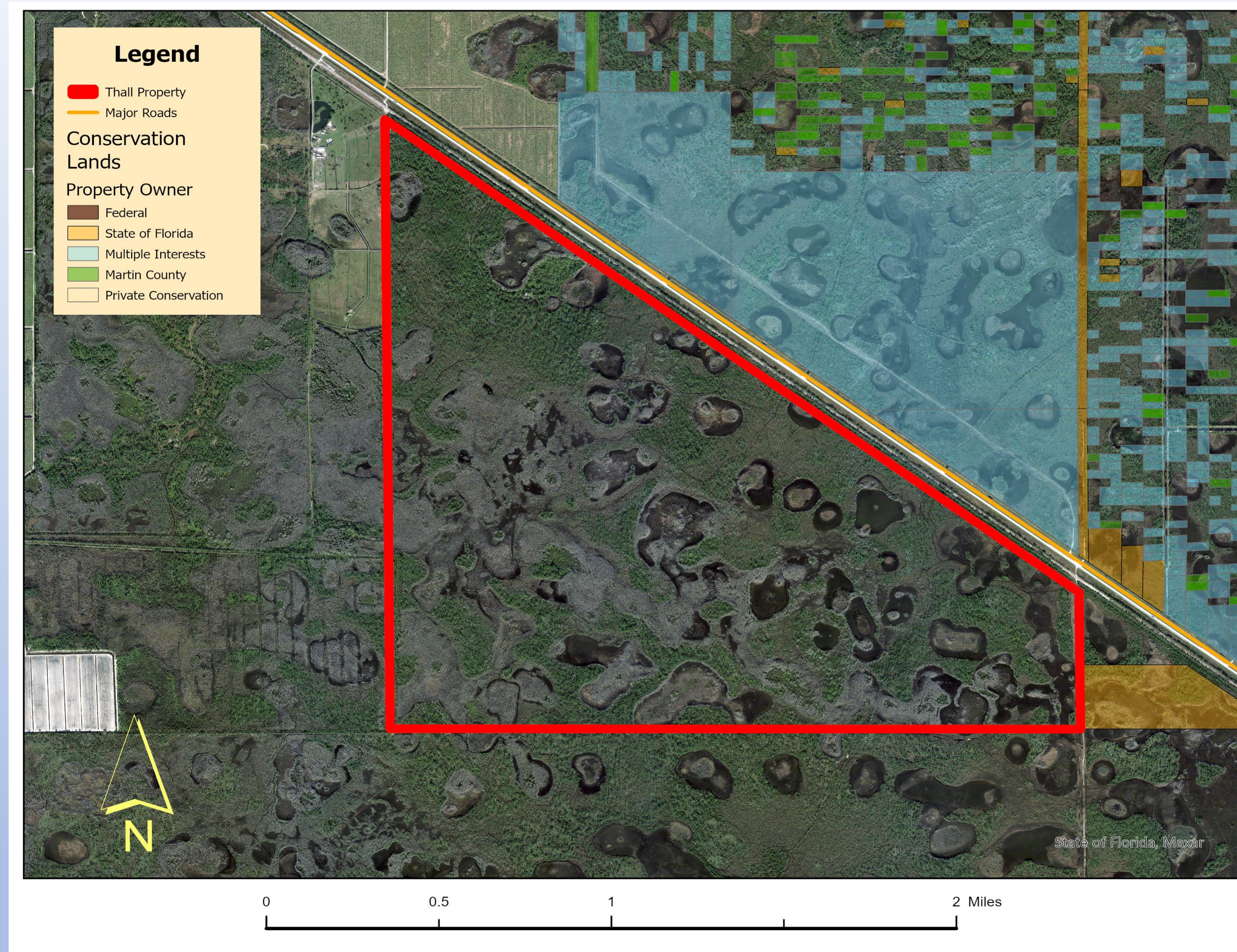


PALM BEACH HEIGHTS



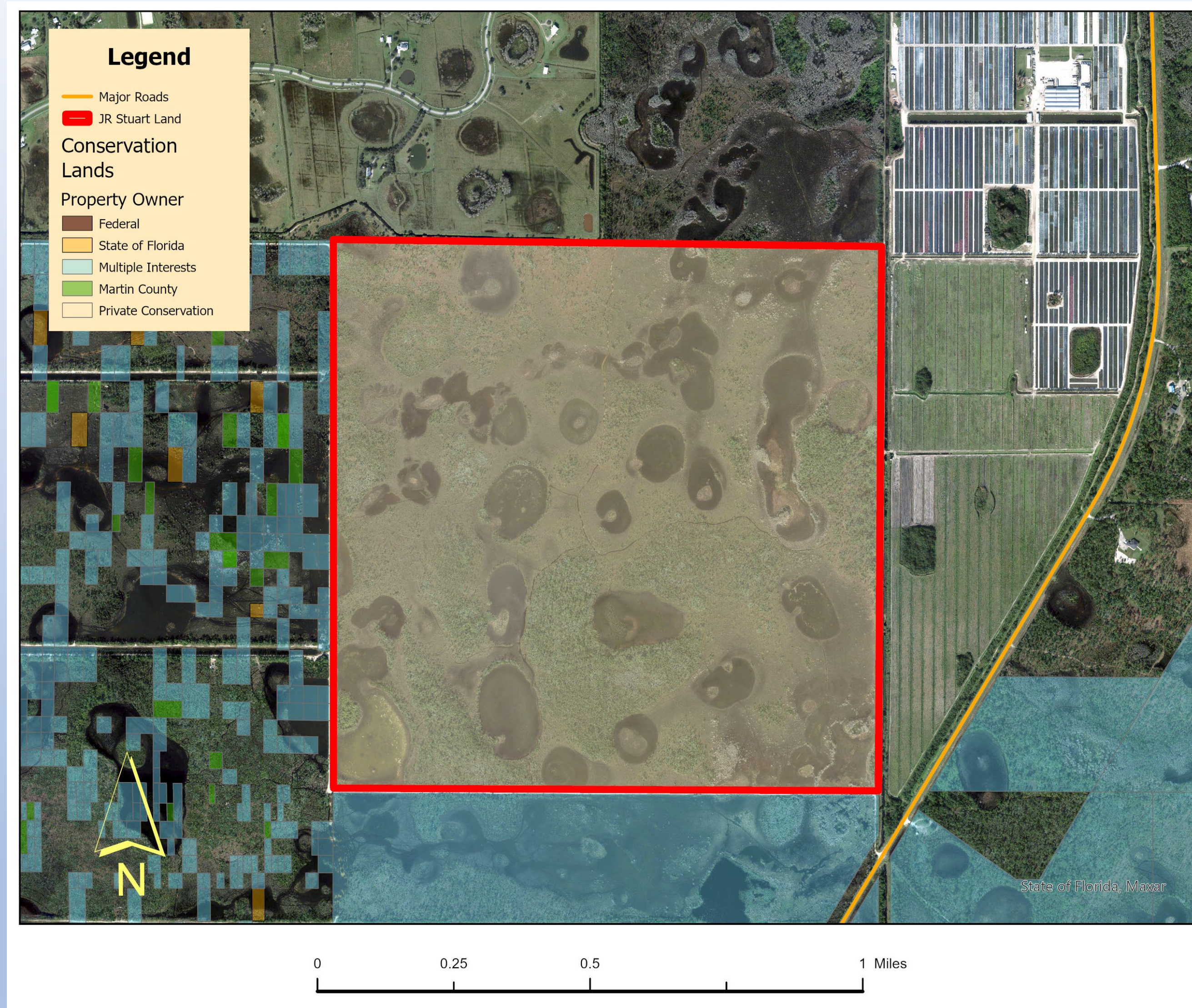
- Green area approximates what we own with recent settlement agreement. Areas without polygons are privately owned and what we will be looking to acquire with new funds.
 - Overall there are roughly 3,500-acres of potential acquisitions

THALL FAMILY PARTNERSHIP



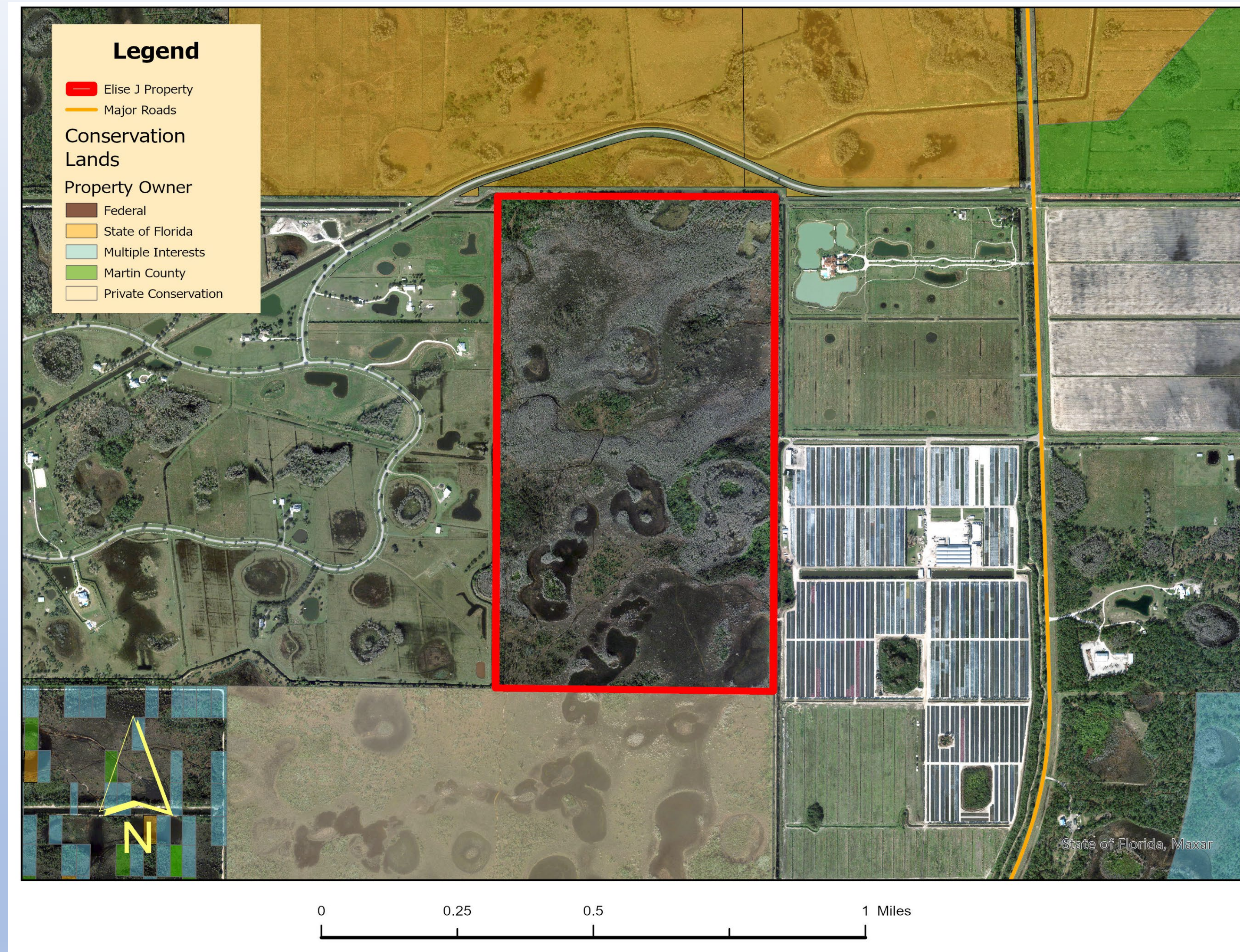
- 1,499-acre property with large cypress and slough wetland systems
- Part of a large (60,000-acre) interconnected system of conservation lands extending from the Indian River Lagoon to Lake Okeechobee
 - Missing link between Hungryland and Corbet

JR STUART LAND



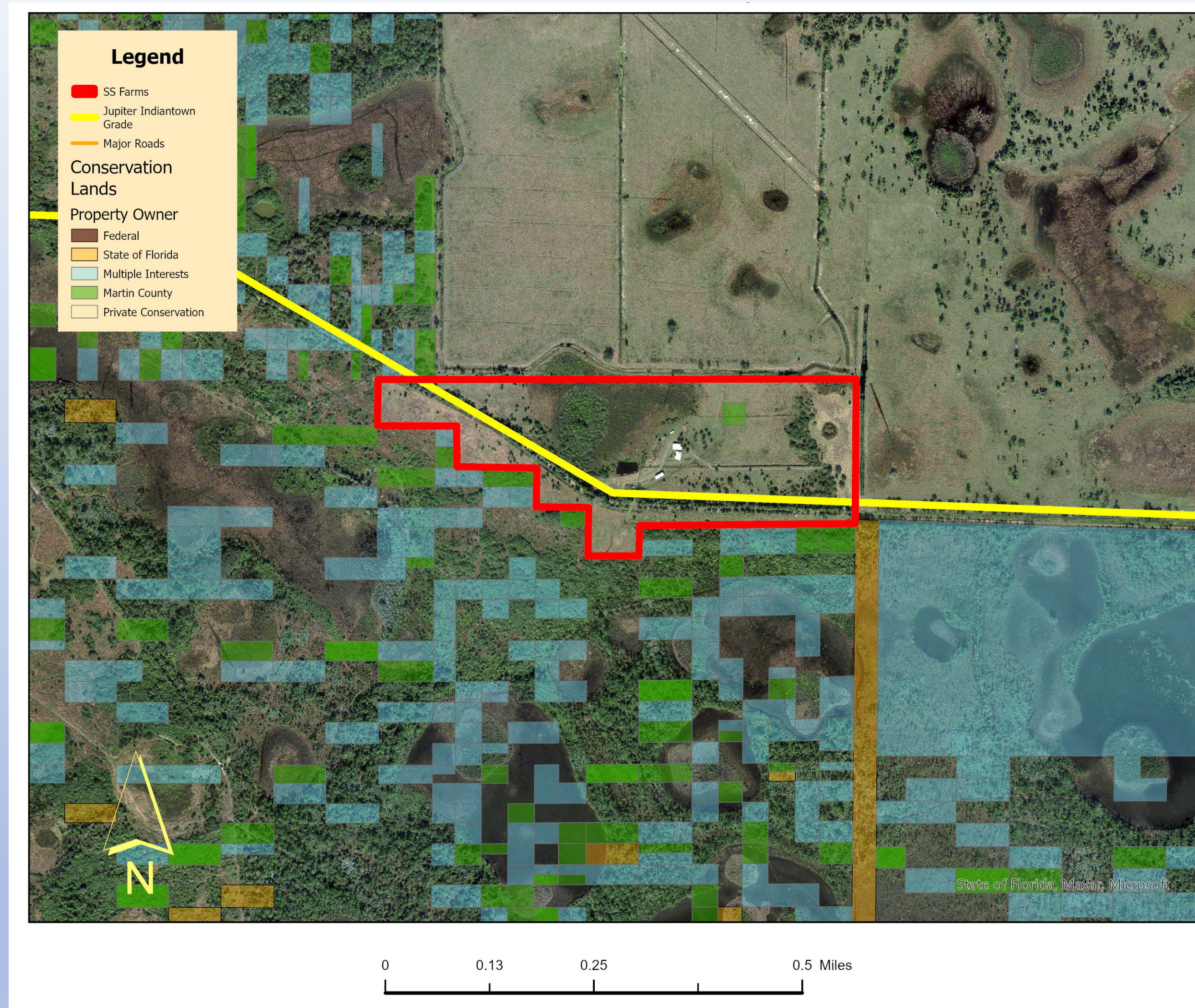
- 642-acre property with large cypress and slough wetland systems
- Property is under a conservation easement as a private mitigation bank
- If acquired the property could be managed as a part of Hungryland WEA

ELISE J PROPERTY



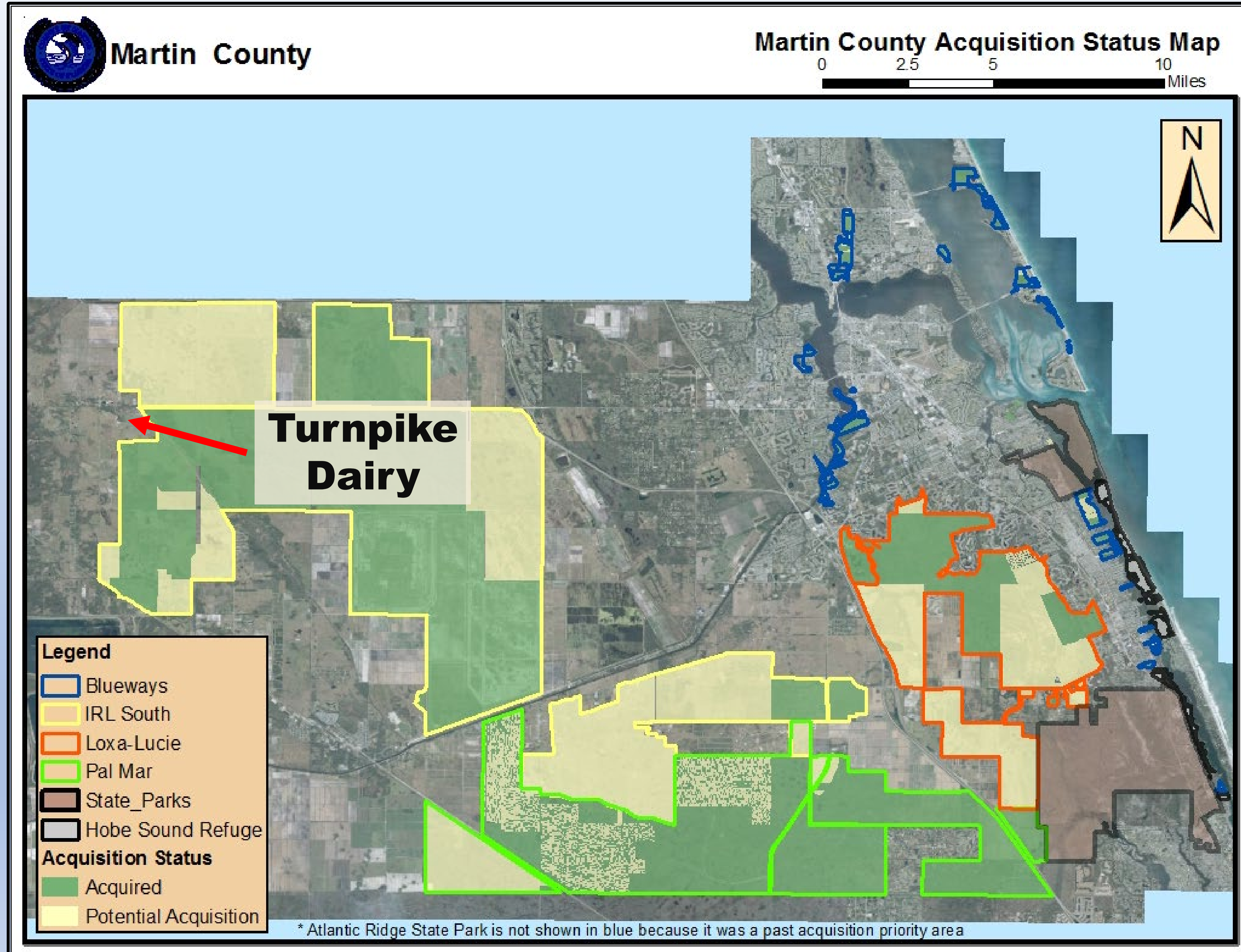
- 322-acre property with large cypress and slough wetland systems
- Important connector between Hungryland WEA and Harmony Ranch
- If acquired the property could be managed as a part of Hungryland WEA

SS FARMS

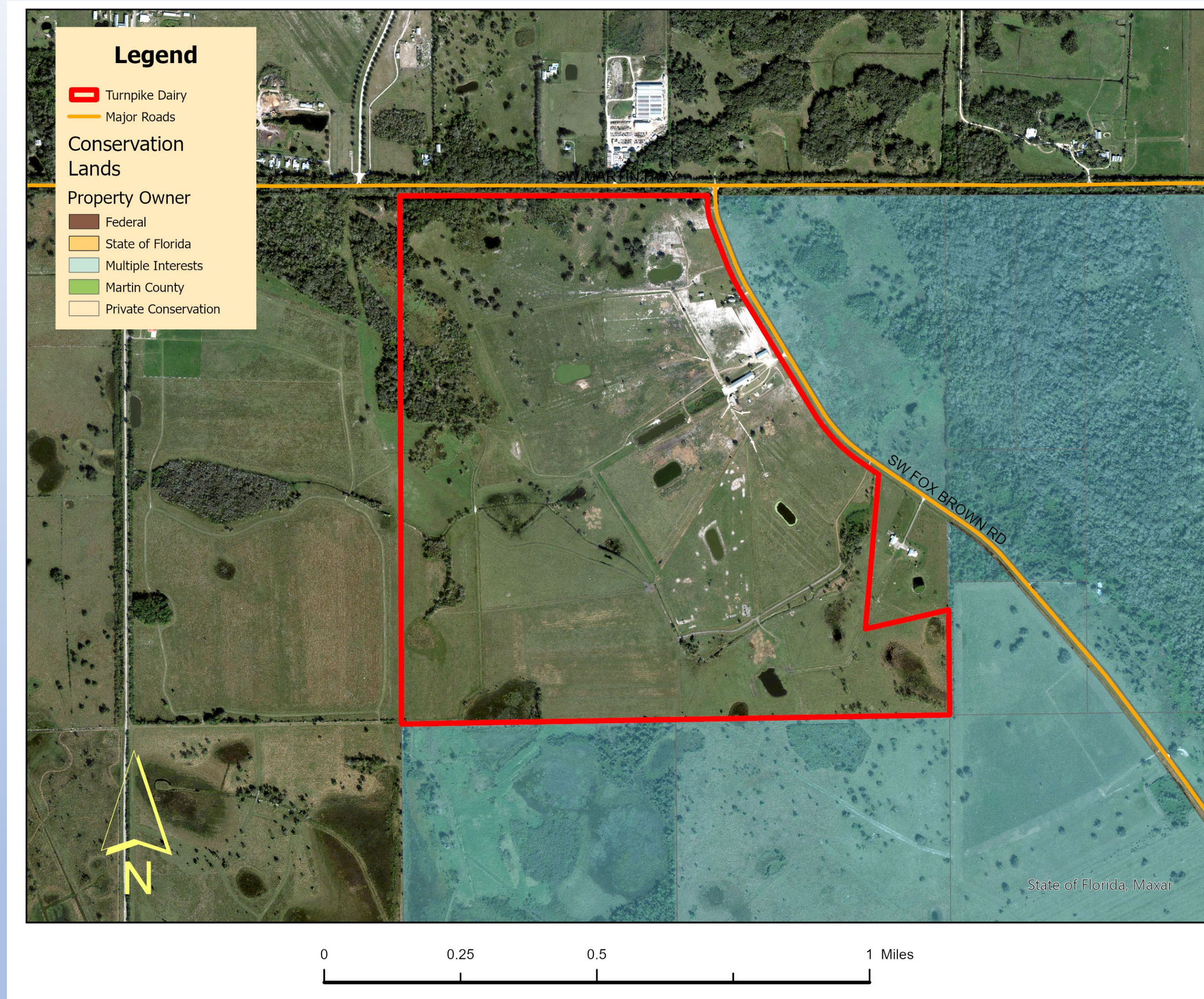


- **53-acre property that is primarily improved pasture and is actively ranched**
 - **This is for an agricultural easement with Rural and Family Lands**
- **The historic Jupiter Indiantown Grade bisects the property from east to west**

IRL SOUTH ACQUISITION ZONE

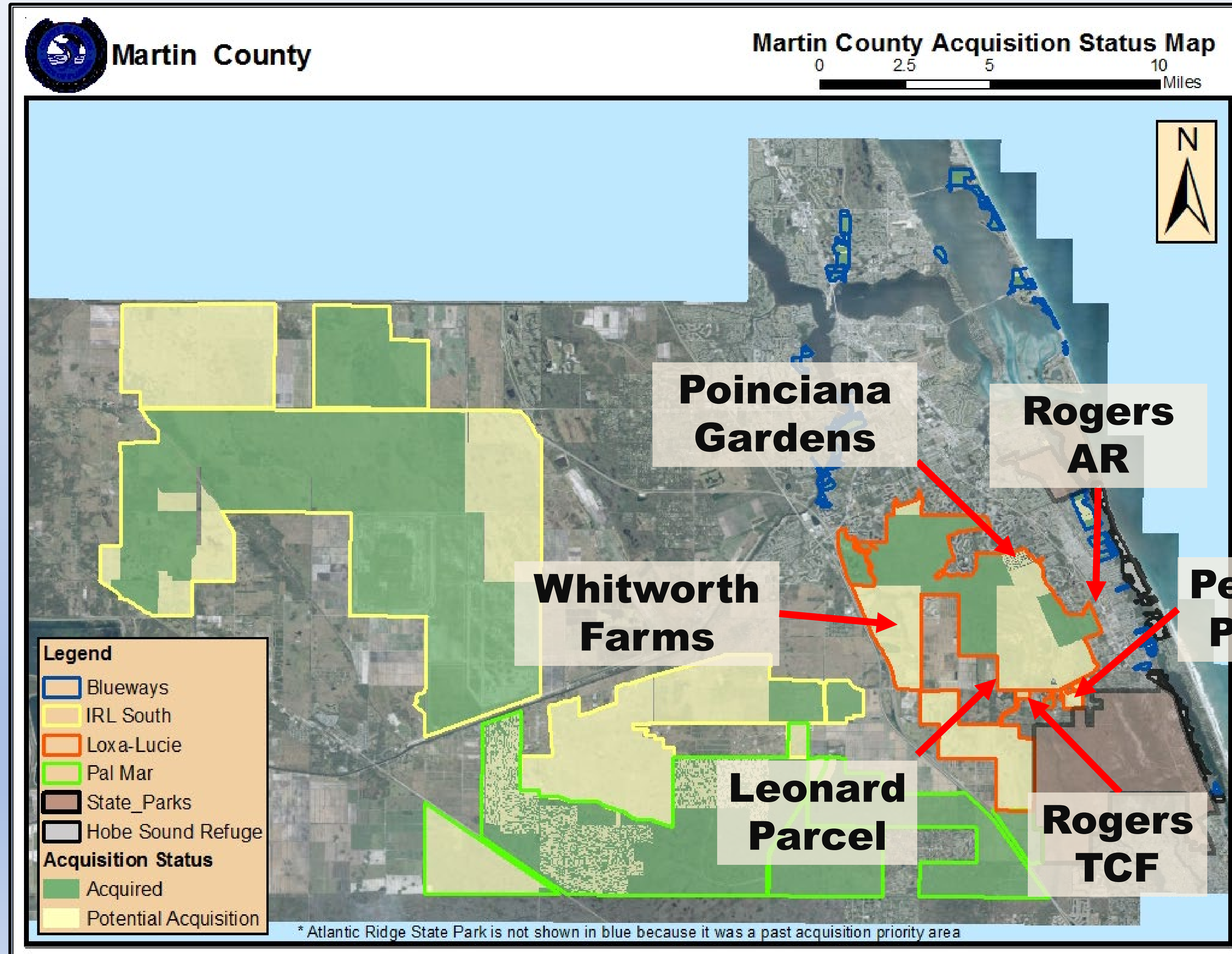


TURNPIKE DAIRY

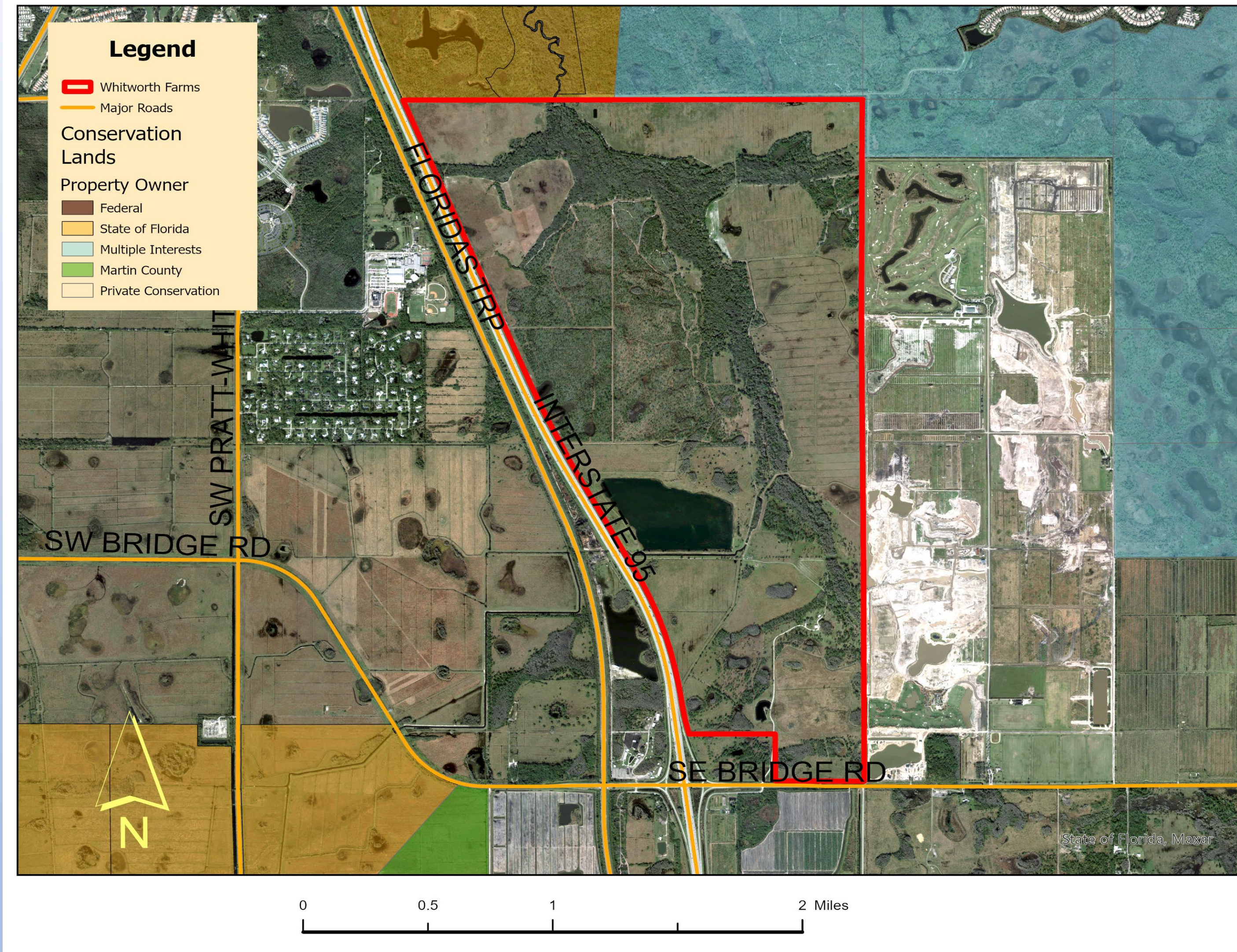


- 488-acre property that is primarily improved pasture (84% of the property)
 - This is for an agricultural easement with Rural and Family Lands
 - Property is adjacent to Allapattah Flats

LOXA-LUCIE ACQUISITION ZONE

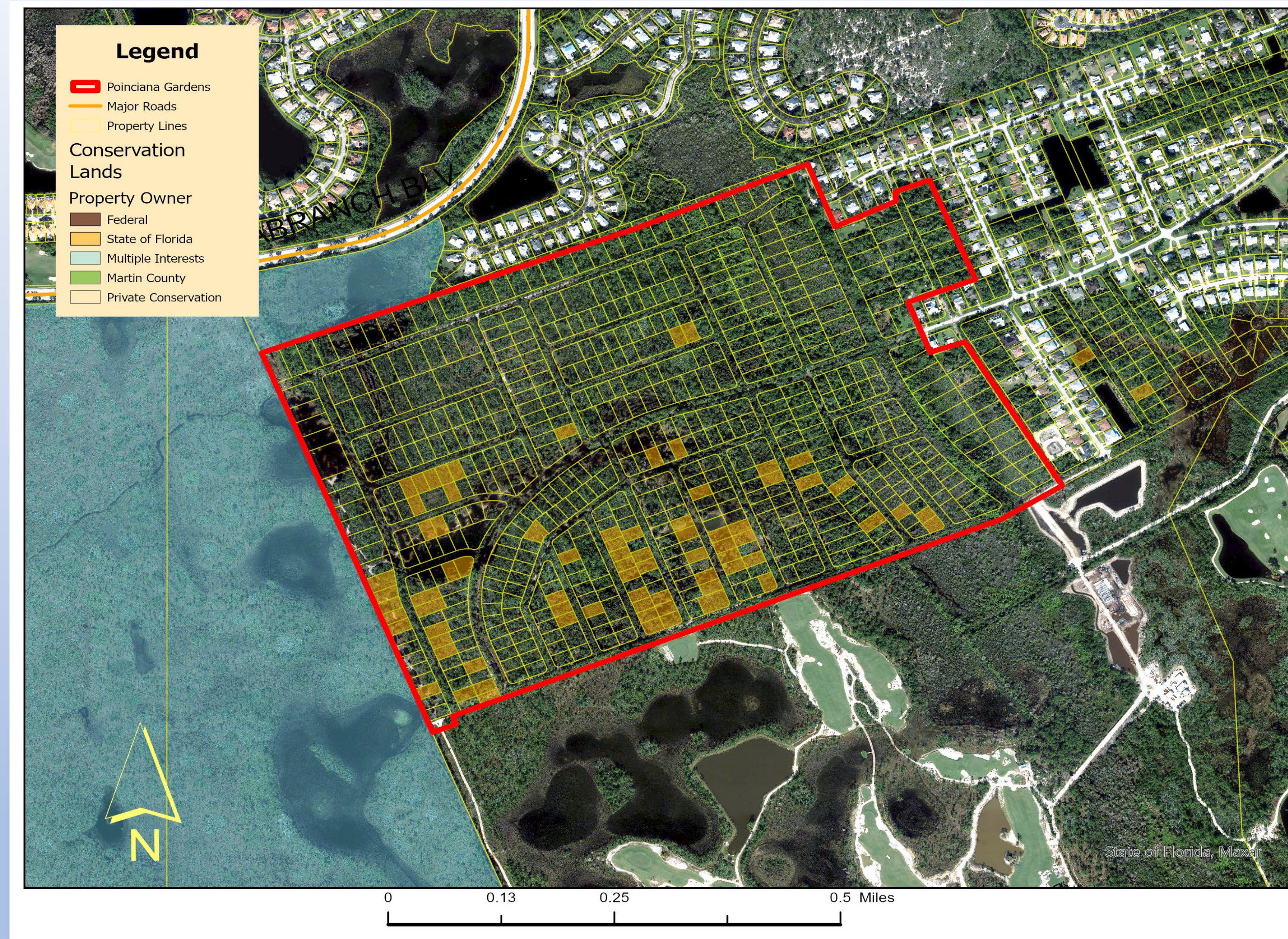


WHITWORTH FARMS



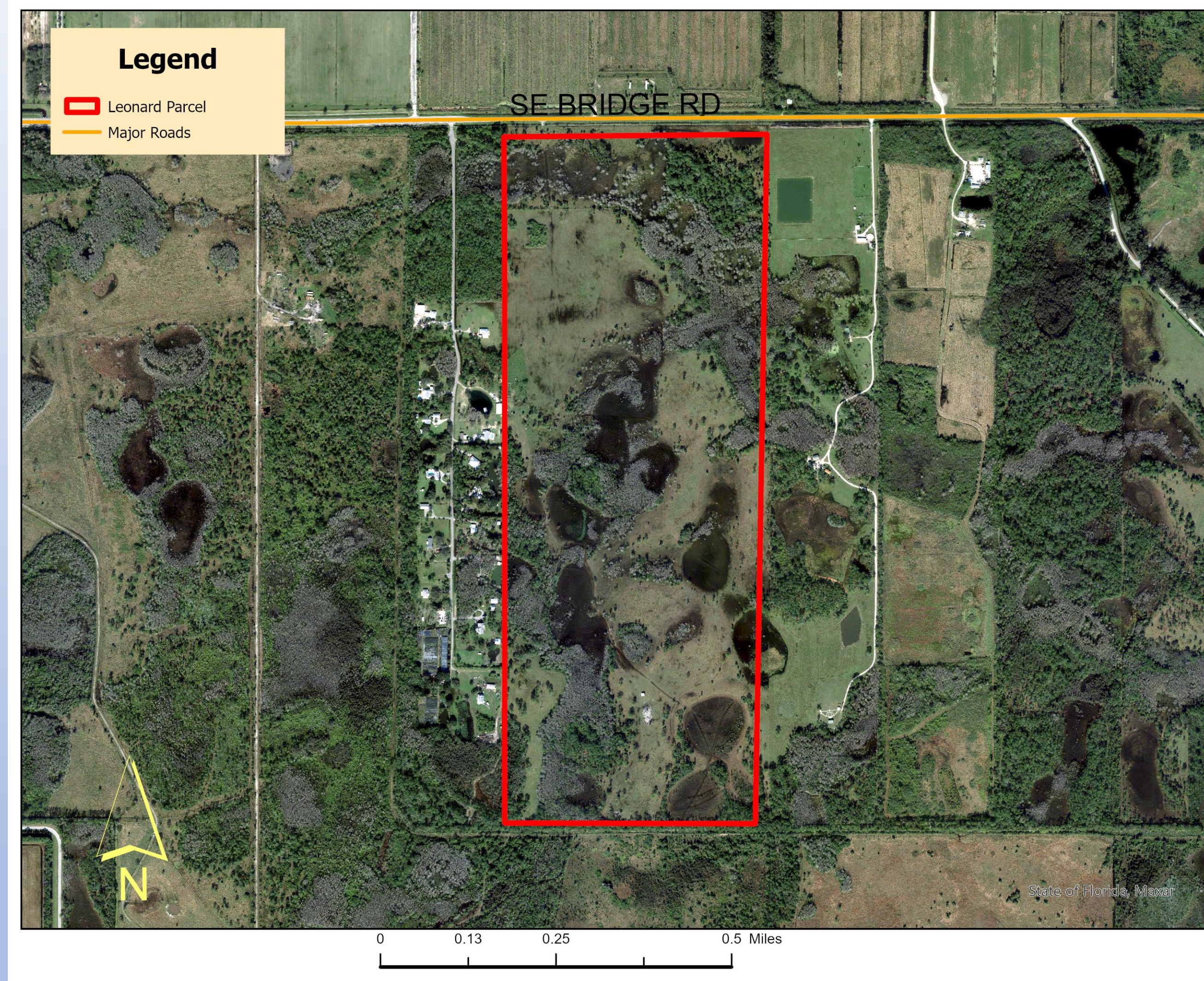
- 2,262-acre property is a mixture of pasture, pine flatwoods and hydric hammock
- Protected land corridor from Cove Rd to south County Line on east side of I95
 - Property is bisected by the South Fork of the St. Lucie River
- Would help create an ecological corridor and optimum boundary for State Parks

POINCIANA GARDENS



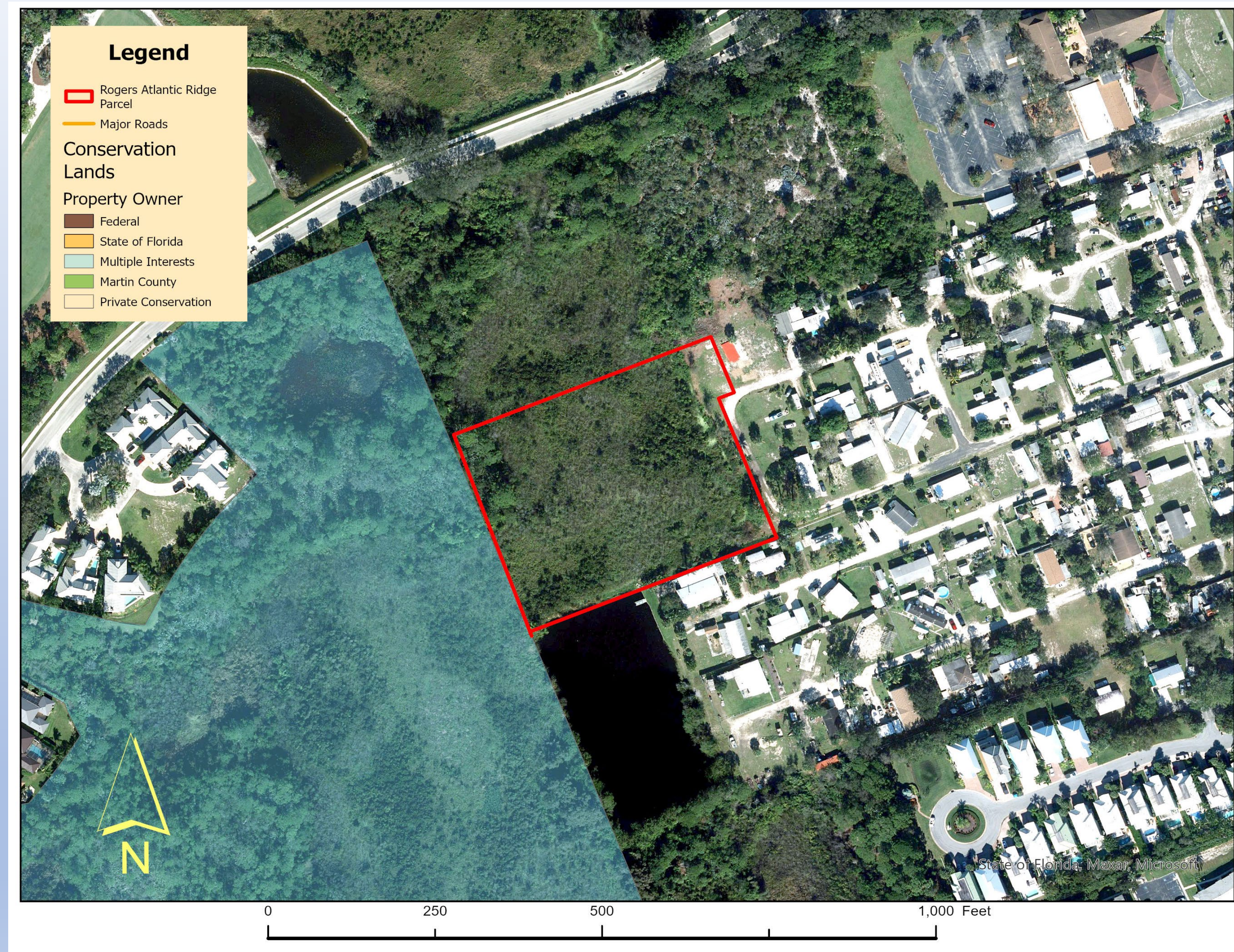
- 225-acres mix of government and privately owned lots
- Includes mesic flatwoods, depression marsh and a large slough wetland
- Helps buffer Atlantic Ridge State Park and hundreds of homes could be constructed

LEONARD PARCEL



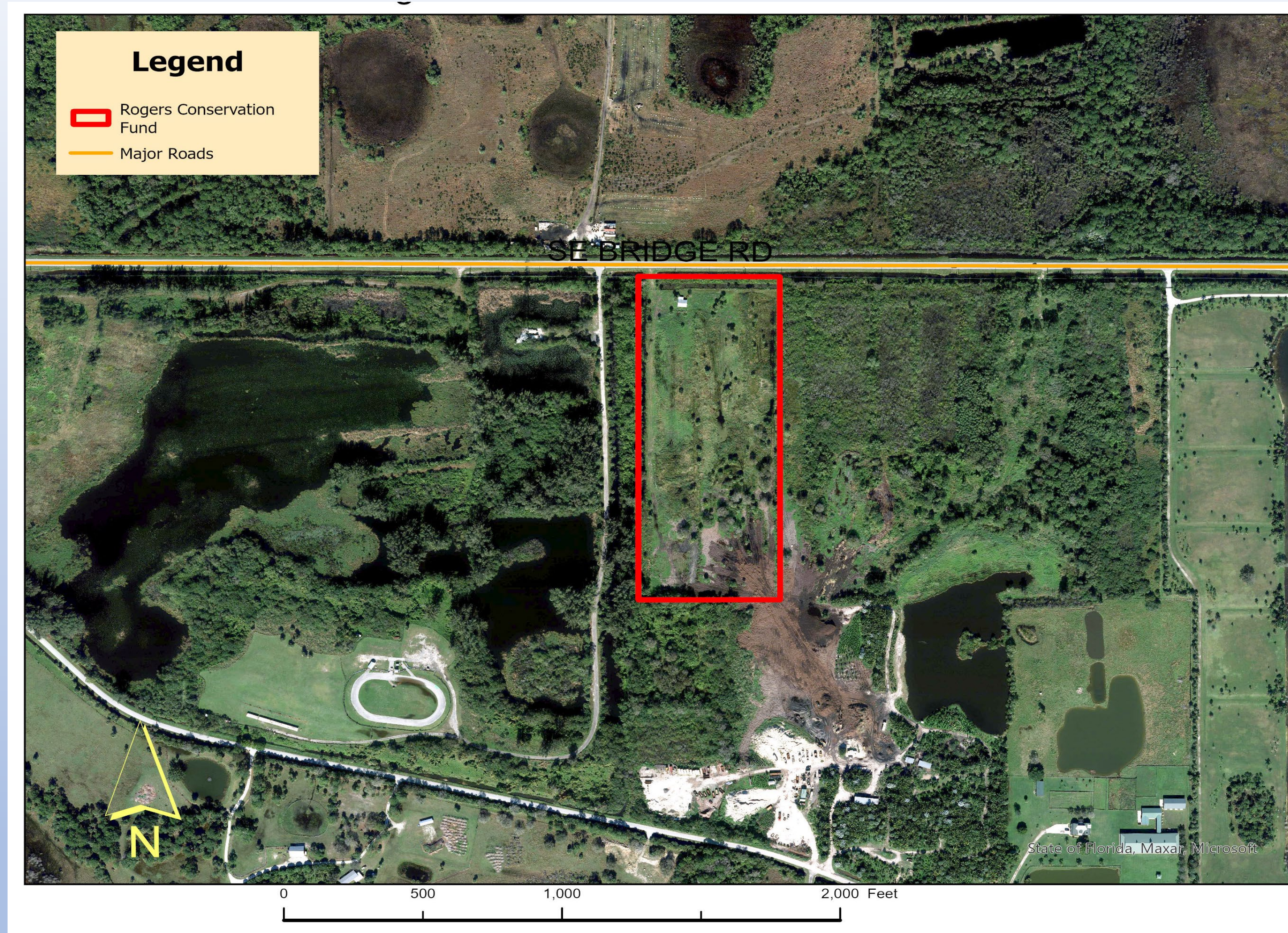
- 229-acre property that is a mix of pasture and large cypress sloughs
- This is an agricultural easement with active cattle ranching on the property
- Not contiguous to any public lands but could create a greenway to JDSP

ROGERS ATLANTIC RIDGE PARCEL



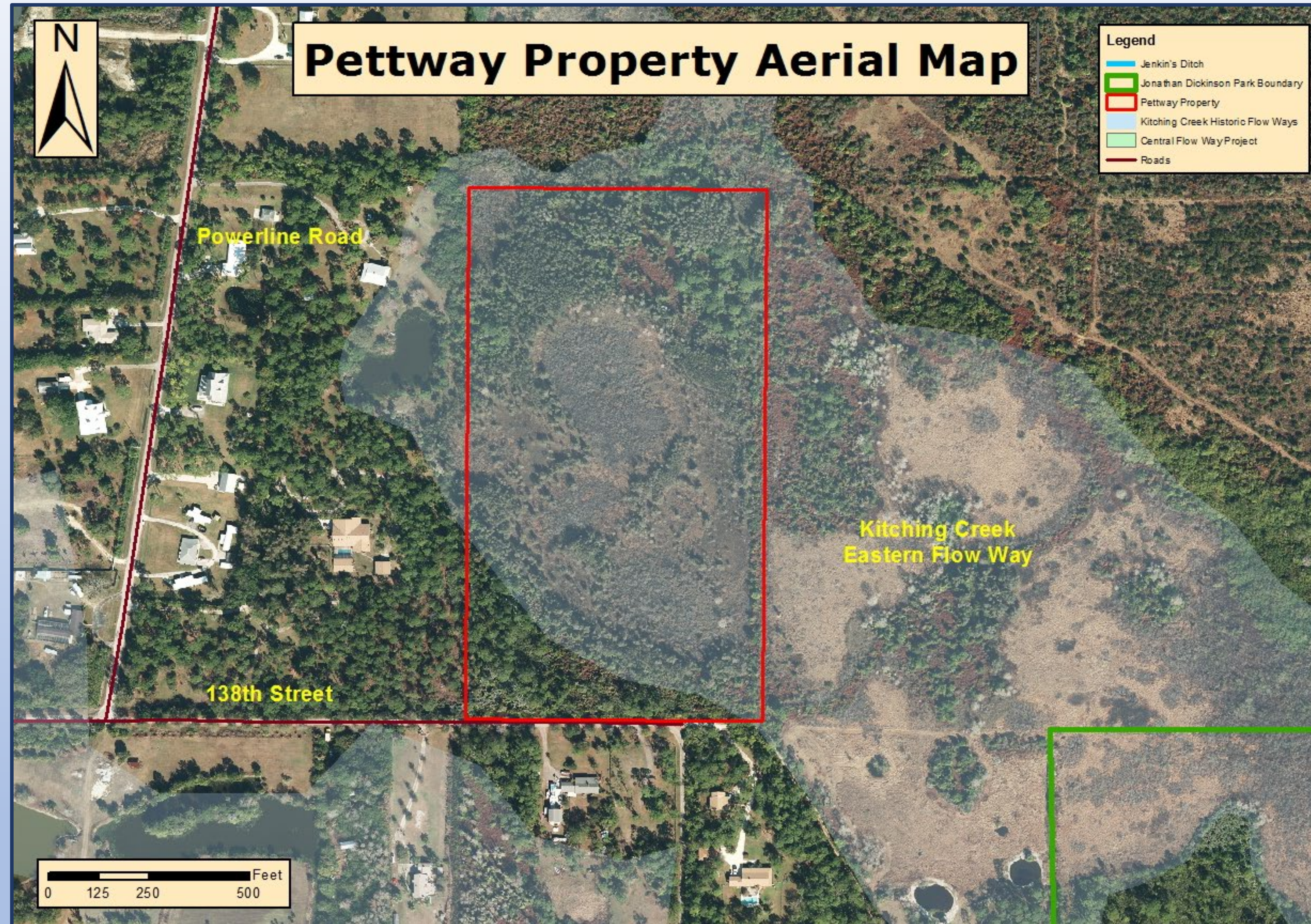
- 3-acre wetland dominant property adjacent to and could buffer Atlantic Ridge
- Primarily disturbed wetlands with a very small area of scrubby flatwoods

ROGERS CONSERVATION FUND PARCEL



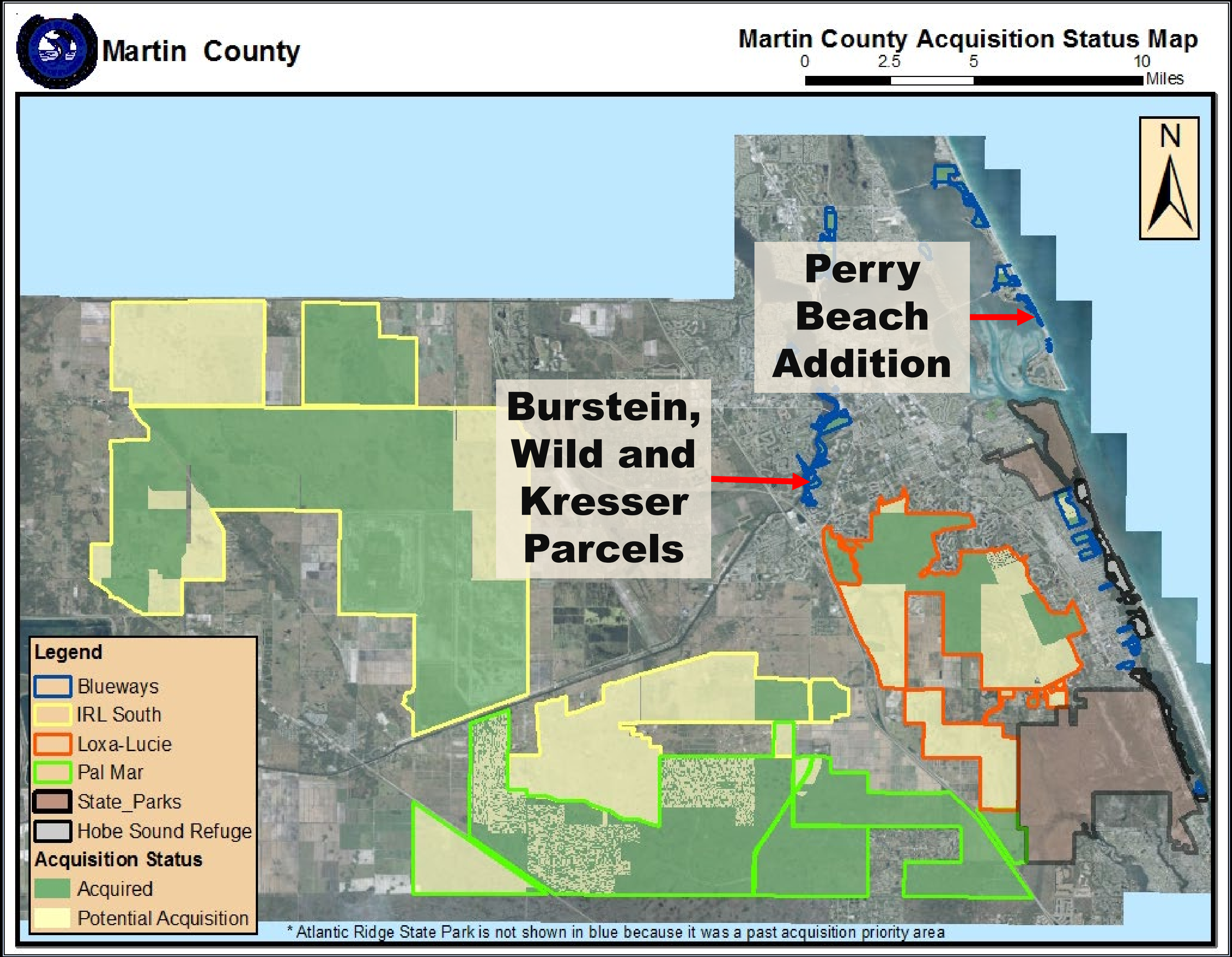
- 4.5-acre property that could help link Jonathan Dickinson and Atlantic Ridge State Parks
 - The property was acquired by the Conservation Fund a private land trust
 - Could also be used to support the restoration of Kitching Creek

PETTWAY PROPERTY

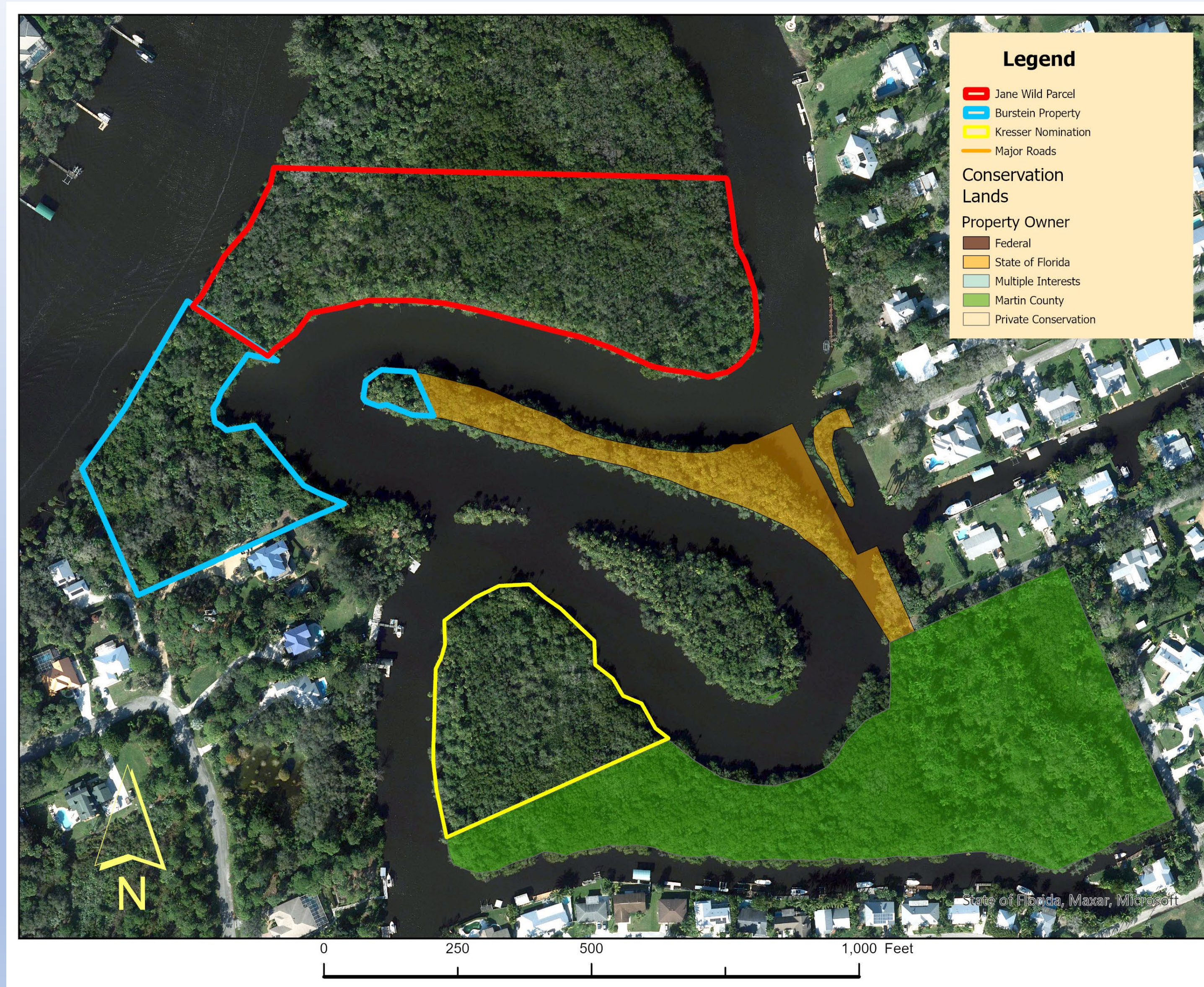


- 20-acre property that is a part of Eastern Flow Way of Kitching Creek
 - Could be used to help restore wetlands in Jonathan Dickinson and support the restoration of the NW Fork of the Loxahatchee River (CERP)

BLUEWAYS ACQUISITION ZONE

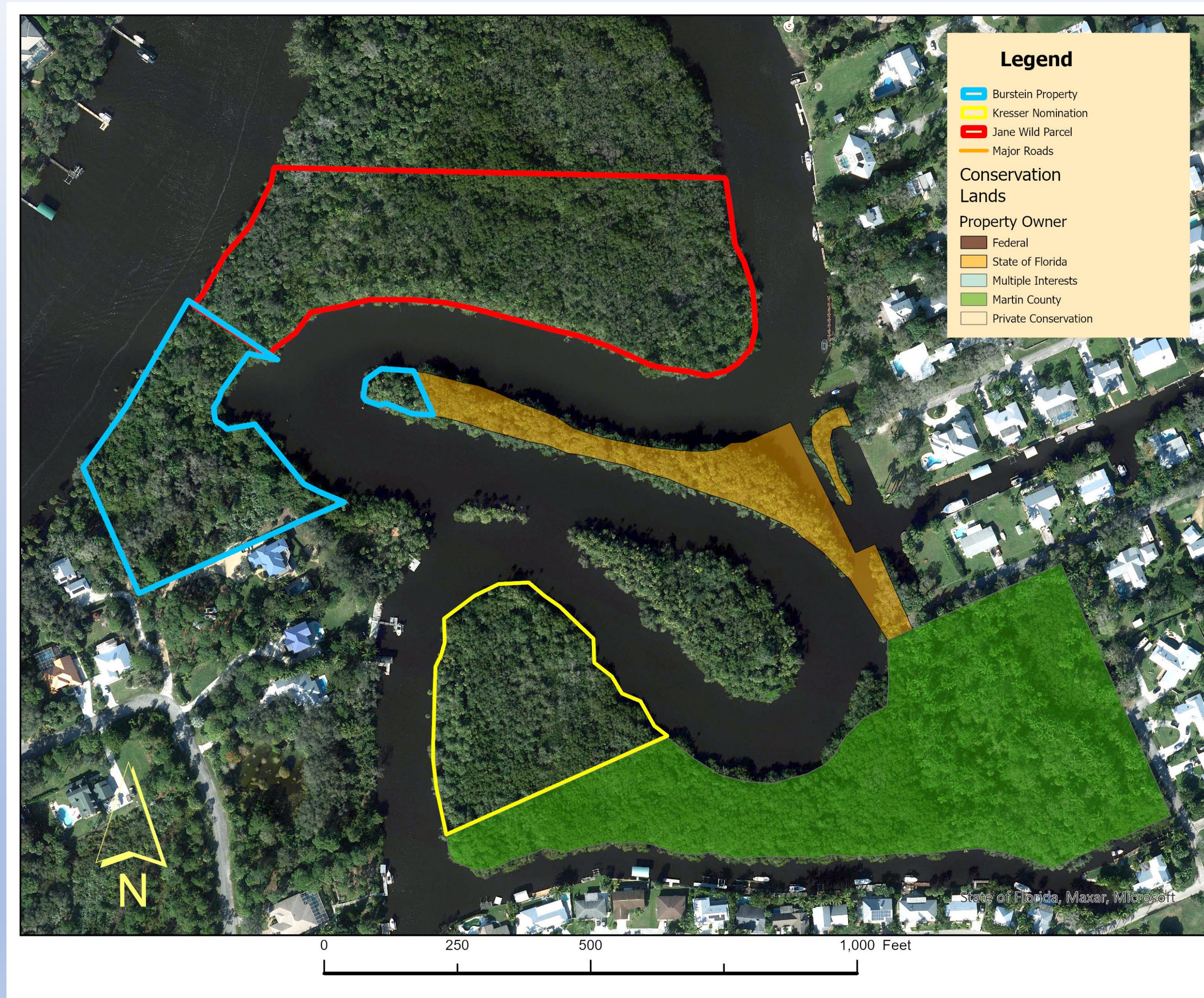


JANE WILD PARCEL



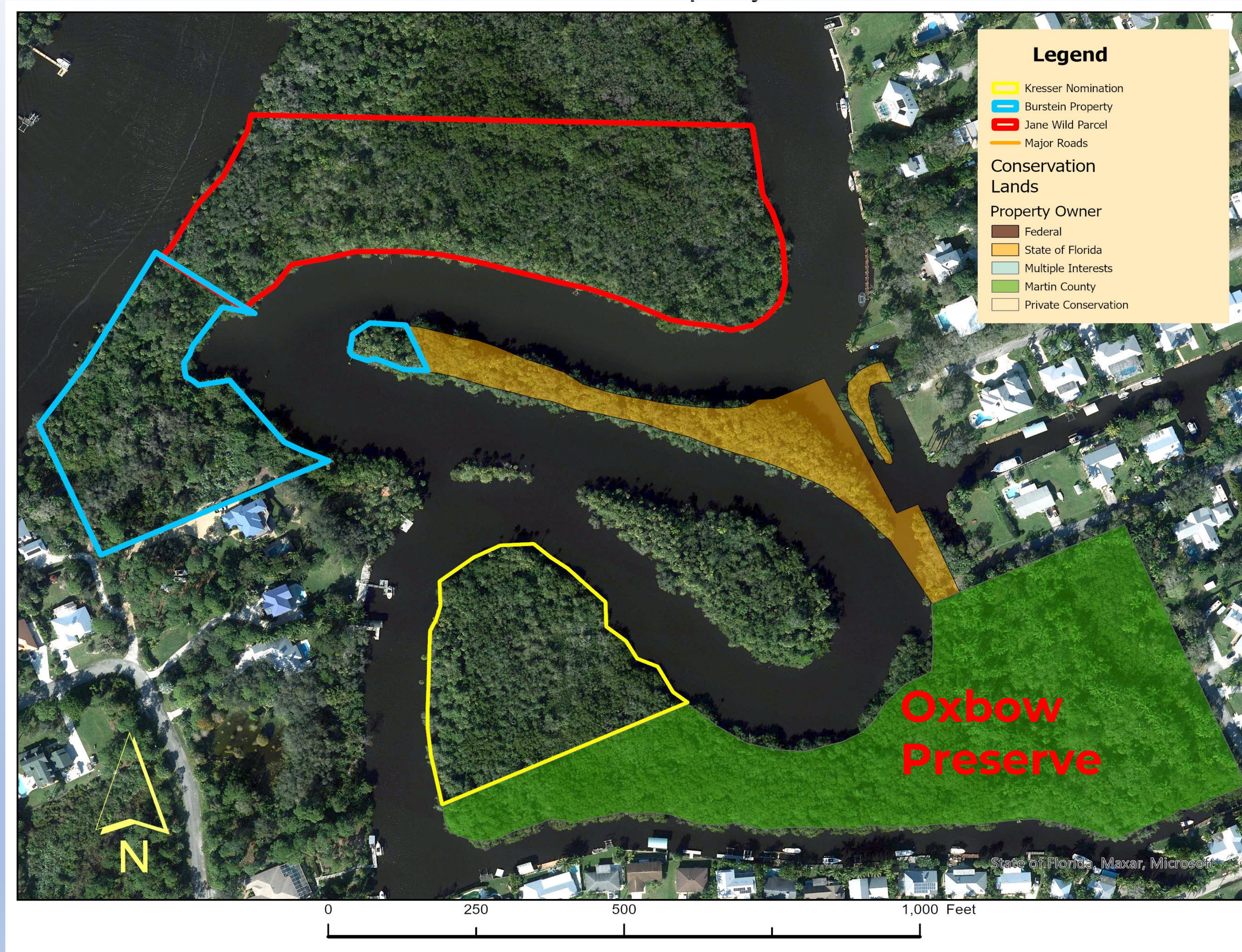
- **6.5-acre wetland dominant property along the South Fork of the St. Lucie River**
 - **Helps protect critically important St. Lucie River shoreline**

BURSTEIN PROPERTY



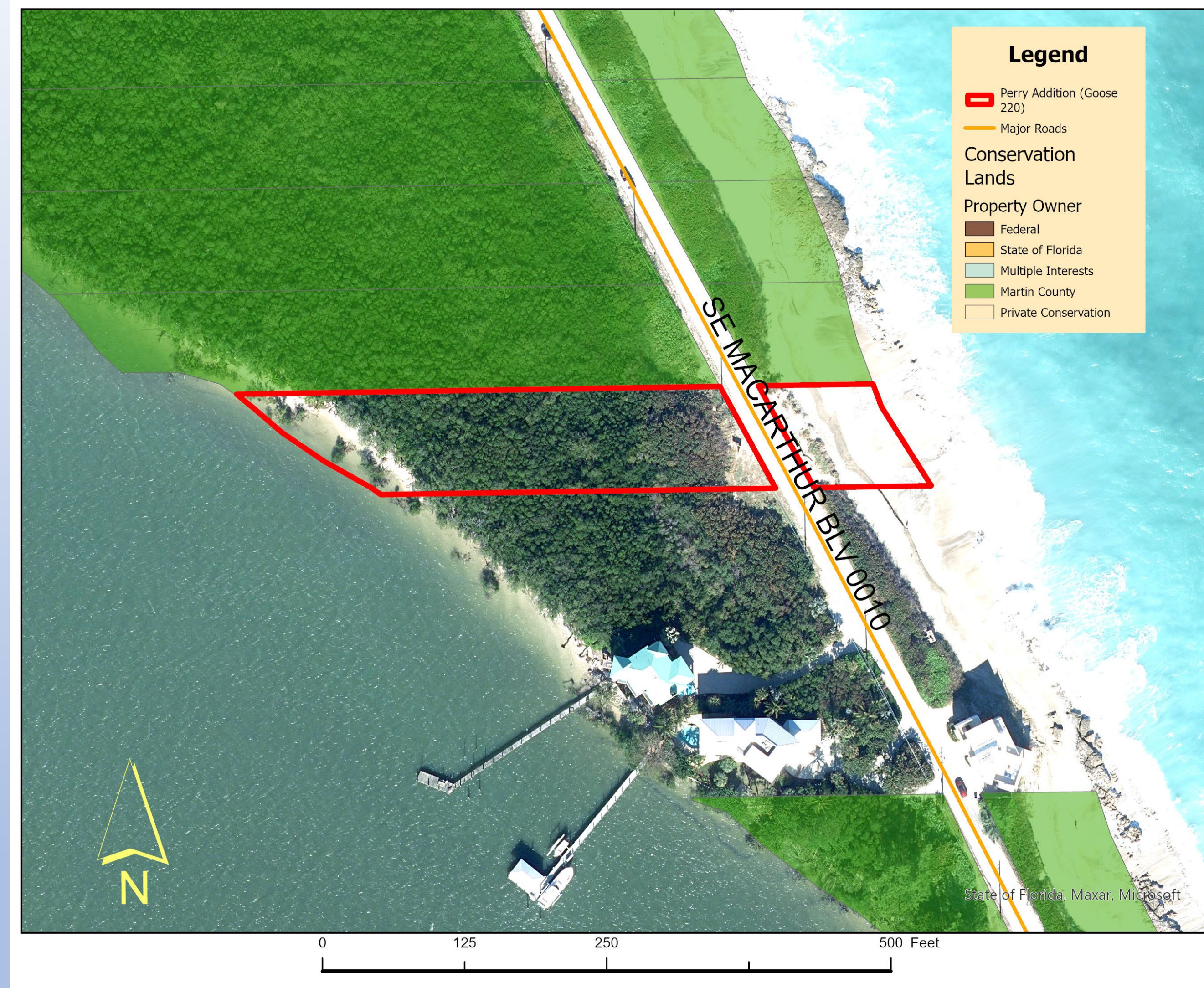
- 3-acre property along the South Fork of the St. Lucie River
- Would be part of a series of County owned conservation lands in the area

KRESSER PROPERTY



- 3-acre property mangrove swamp dominated property
- Owner has easement that could allow access road construction through Oxbow Preserve

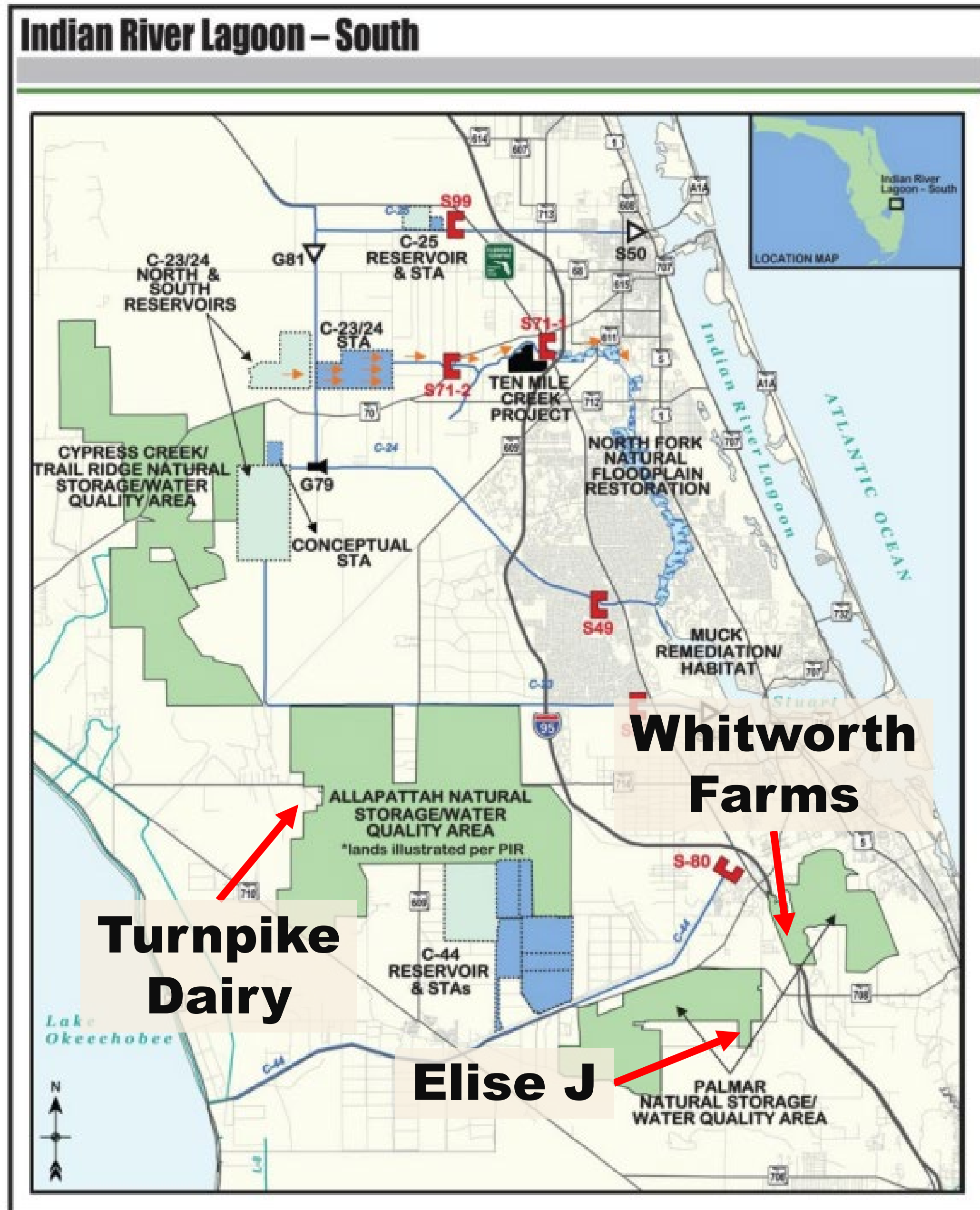
PERRY BEACH ADDITION



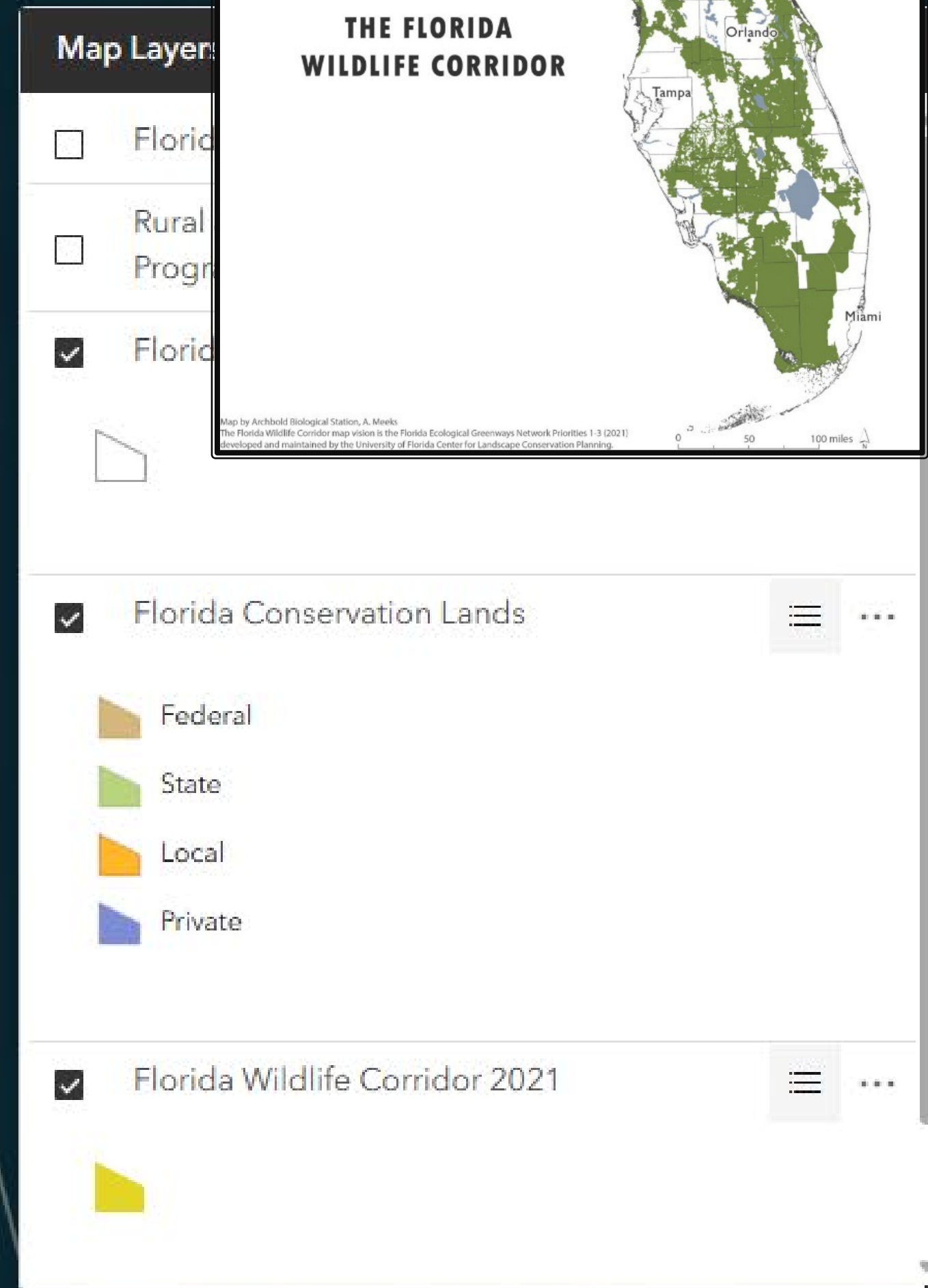
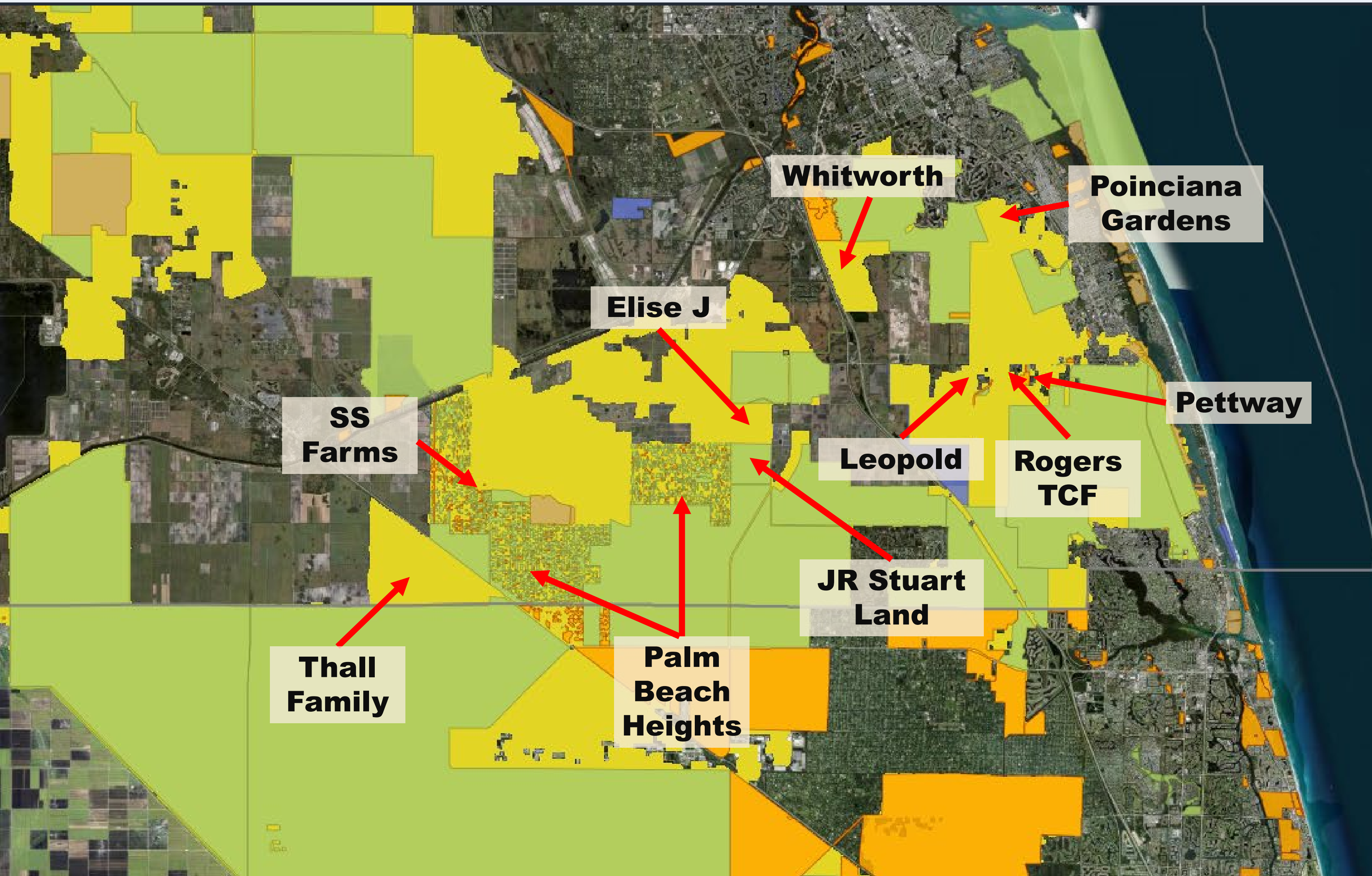
- Small 1-acre property that includes beach habitats and mangrove
 - Property extends all the way across Hutchinson Island
- The property is directly adjacent to the County Clifton S. Perry Beach preserve

Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan

- Capture stormwater runoff that is severely impacting the St. Lucie River Estuary
- Purpose is to also offset lands impacted by CERP by acquiring other lands
- Approved as acquisition priority by Federal Government in 2007 WRDA Bill
- State funds are credited to the state's ledger in the CERP Cost-Share Agreement

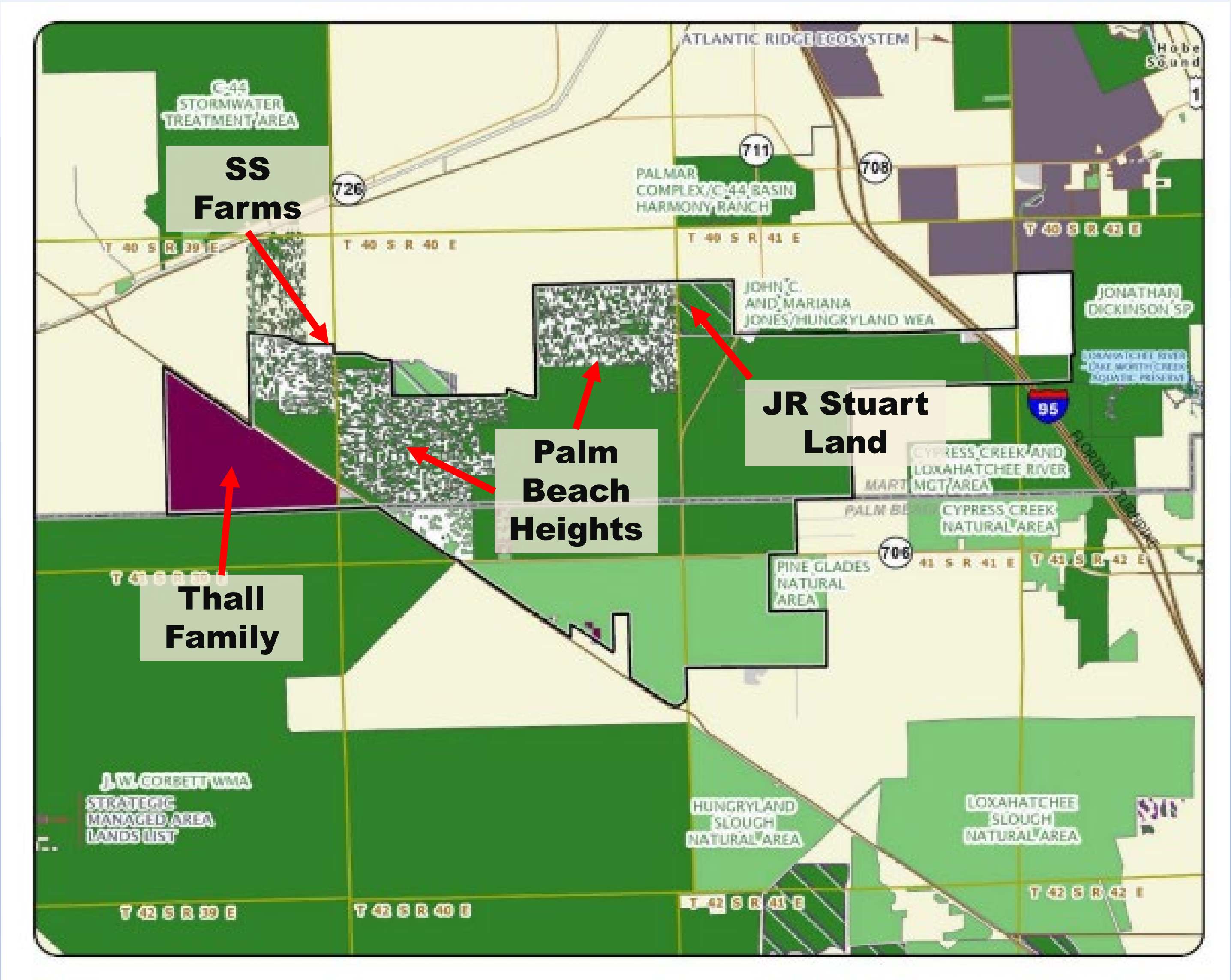


Florida Wildlife Corridor



- Part of Florida Wildlife Corridor segment between WPB to Central Florida
- Florida Ecological Greenway Network (FEGN) lists these properties as a Priority 2

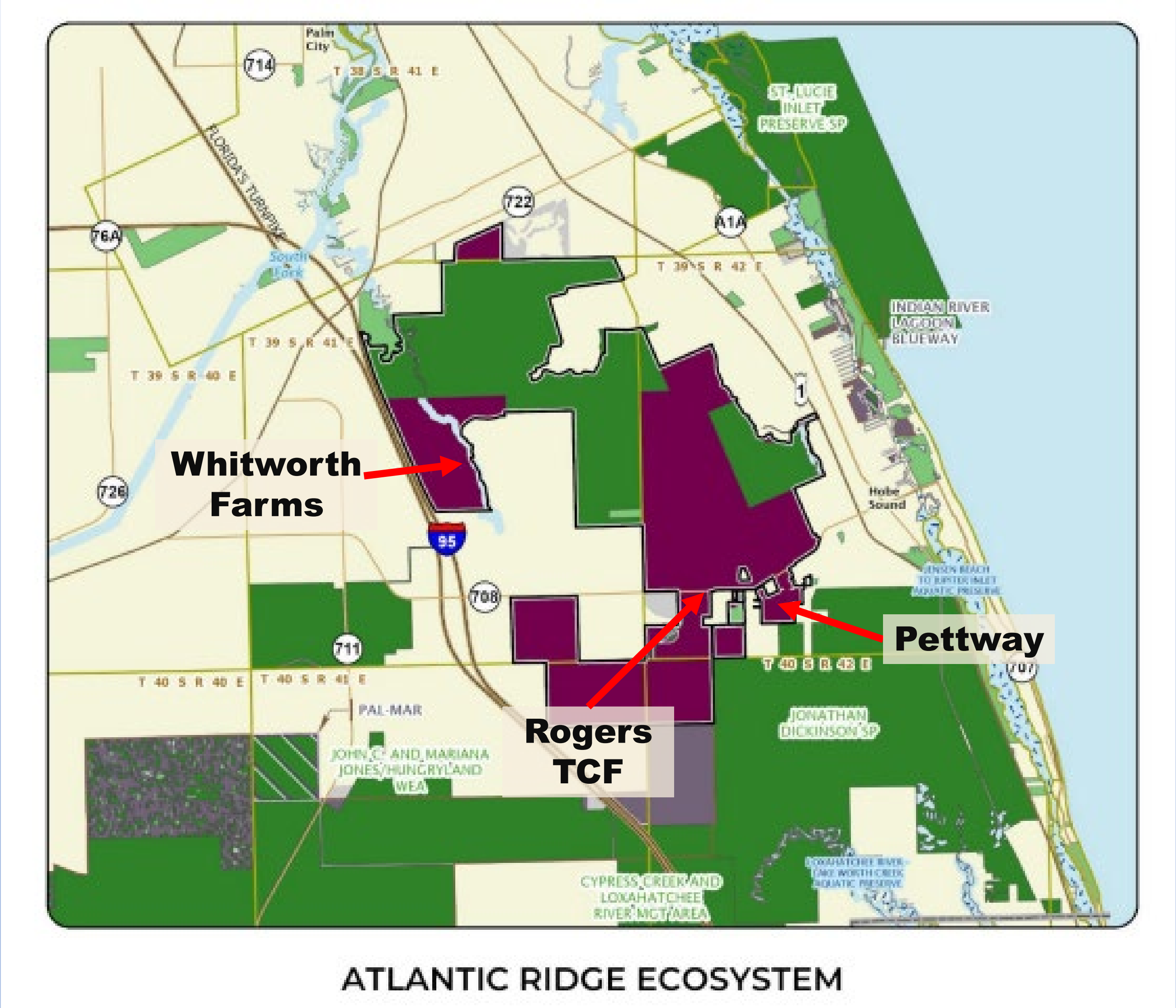
PAL MAR FLORIDA FOREVER PROGRAM



Properties within the Pal Mar Florida Forever project boundary



ATLANTIC RIDGE FLORIDA FOREVER PROGRAM



Properties within the Atlantic Ridge Florida Forever project boundary



PROJECT RANKINGS

Final Rankings for Proposed Acquisitions

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	RELATION TO CERP PROJECT	GREENWAY CORRIDOR	POTENTIAL FUNDING PARTNERS	HABITAT QUALITY	MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS	RARE OR LISTED SPECIES OR HABITATS	ESTIMATED COST PER ACRE	RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	WATERWAYS OR SHORELINES PROTECTION	TOTAL SCORE	Rank #
Whitworth Farms	101.25	69	68	61.5	58	91.5	0	33	71	67	620.25	1
Elise J	111	77	68	71	66.5	104.25	0	30	30	60	617.75	2
Thall Partnership	105.75	75.5	67	71.5	62.5	102.75	0	28.75	35.5	61	610.25	3
Perry Beach Addition	51	66	57	66	70.5	108.75	0	37.5	59	77	592.75	4
Palm Beach Heights	89.25	73	73	63.5	41	93	0	25	25	36	518.75	5
Kresser Parcels	52.5	62.5	53	62	47.5	96.75	0	24	32.5	78	508.75	6
Burstein/Hixon	52.5	59.5	49	62	47.5	96.75	0	22.25	29	78	496.5	7
Jane Wild	52.5	58.5	49	62	47.5	96.75	0	23.5	25.5	70	485.25	8
SS Farms	84.75	63	64.5	45.5	49.5	77.25	0	23	39.5	32.5	479.5	9
Leonard Property	60	59.5	66.5	46	63.5	71.25	0	4	51.5	41.5	463.75	10
JR Stuart Land	69	75	21	65	69	70.5	0	28.75	11.5	39.5	449.25	11
Turnpike Dairy	72.75	61	63	45.5	44	48.75	0	3.25	69	33.5	440.75	12
Rogers Atlantic Ridge	52.5	66.5	34.5	51	54.5	69.75	0	23.25	35	41.5	428.5	13
Poinciana Gardens	82.5	71	14	45.5	29.5	51.75	0	16	70	43.5	423.75	14
Pettway Property	40.5	61	61	40.5	46	52.5	0	21.75	39.5	57	419.75	15
Rogers - TCF	48.75	60.5	41	17.5	56.5	24.75	0	23.75	25	42	339.75	16
Bar B Ranch	100.5	51.5	64	41	43	83.25	0	4.25	50	20.5		588.86
Pal Mar Settlement	78.75	50.5	54	53	34	70.5	0	23	40	29		556.39

*Bar B Ranch and Pal Mar Settlement were scored by only 7 ELOC members so to compare to the other properties the project score was divided by 7 and then multiplied by 9 so the total score for Bar B Ranch = (458/7)x9 and Pal Mar Settlement - (432.75/7)x9

Projects ranked 1-16 but ELOC recommended all proposals for acquisition

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF MOVING FORWARD

- **Threat of development and/or sale to another entity**
- **Status and potential for funding partners (FDACS, Florida Forever, SFWMD, land trusts, NGO's)**
- **Cost to acquire lands outstrip amount of money collected**
- **Small parcels versus large more complex acquisitions**



QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION