



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

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3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jeanette Nuñez
Lt. Governor

Shawn Hamilton
Secretary

November 28, 2023

Mr. Brian Camposano
Florida Forest Service
Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
3125 Conner Boulevard, Room 236
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1650

RE: Holopaw State Forest – Lease No. 3556

Dear Mr. Camposano,

The Division of State Lands, Office of Environmental Services, acting as agent for the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, hereby approves the **Holopaw State Forest** management plan. The next management plan update is due November 28, 2033.

Pursuant to s. 253.034(5)(a), F.S., each management plan is required to “describe both short-term and long-term management goals and include measurable objectives to achieve those goals. Short-term goals shall be achievable within a 2-year planning period, and long-term goals shall be achievable within a 10-year planning period.” Upon completion of short-term goals, please submit a signed letter identifying categories, goals, and results with attached methodology to the Division of State Lands, Office of Environmental Services.

Pursuant to s. 259.032(8)(g), F.S., by July 1 of each year, each governmental agency and each private entity designated to manage lands shall report to the Secretary of Environmental Protection, via the Division of State Lands, on the progress of funding, staffing, and resource management of every project for which the agency or entity is responsible.

Pursuant to s. 259.032, F.S., and Chapter 18-2.021, F.A.C., management plans for areas less than 160 acres may be handled in accordance with the negative response process. This process requires small management plans and management plan amendments be submitted to the Division of State Lands for review, and the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) for public notification. The Division of State Lands will approve these plans or plan amendments submitted for review through delegated authority unless three or more ARC members request the division place the item on a future council meeting agenda for review. To create better efficiency, improve customer service, and assist

Mr. Brian Camposano
Page 2
November 28, 2023

members of the ARC, the Division of State Lands will notice negative response items on Thursdays except for weeks that have State or Federal holidays that fall on Thursday or Friday. The Division of State Lands will contact you on the appropriate Friday to inform you if the item is approved via delegated authority or if it will be placed on a future ARC agenda by request of the ARC members.

Pursuant to s. 259.036(2), F.S., management areas that exceed 1,000 acres in size, shall be scheduled for a land management review at least every 5 years.

Conditional approval of this land management plan does not waive the authority or jurisdiction of any governmental entity that may have an interest in this project. Implementation of any upland activities proposed by this management plan may require a permit or other authorization from federal and state agencies having regulatory jurisdiction over those particular activities. Pursuant to the conditions of your lease, please forward copies of all permits to this office upon issuance.

Sincerely,

Deborah Burr

Digitally signed by
Deborah Burr
Date: 2023.11.28
15:13:14 -05'00'

Deborah Burr
Office of Environmental Services
Division of State Lands

TEN-YEAR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR THE

HOLOPAW STATE FOREST

OSCEOLA COUNTY



PREPARED BY THE

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES

FLORIDA FOREST SERVICE

APPROVED ON

NOVEMBER 28, 2023

TEN-YEAR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR THE
HOLOPAW STATE FOREST



Approved by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Dolan", written over a horizontal line.

Richard Dolan, Director
Florida Forest Service

12/1/2023

Date

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Roberts", written over a horizontal line.

James Roberts, Chief
Forest Management Bureau

11-29-23

Date

**TEN-YEAR LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
HOLOPAW STATE FOREST
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HOLOPAW STATE FOREST
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LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEAD AGENCY: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS),
Florida Forest Service (FFS)
COMMON NAME: Holopaw State Forest (HSF)
LOCATION: Osceola County
ACREAGE TOTAL: 58

<u>Land Cover Classification</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Planted Slash Pine	47
Ruderal (Driveway, buildings)	11
Acreage Total:	58

TIITF LEASE AGREEMENT NUMBER: 3556

USE: Single ____ Multiple X

MANAGEMENT AGENCY

Florida DACS, Florida Forest Service
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

RESPONSIBILITY

General Forest Resource Management
Wildlife Resources and Laws

DESIGNATED LAND USE: Multiple-Use State Forest
SUBLEASES: None
ENCUMBRANCES: None
TYPE OF ACQUISITION: Florida Development Commission
UNIQUE FEATURES: None
ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL: None
MANAGEMENT NEEDS: Prescribed burning and timber harvesting (thinning)
ACQUISITION NEEDS: None
SURPLUS ACREAGE: None
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Osceola County; Forest is less than 160 acres, thus no
Advisory Group is required- -----

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE
(FOR DIVISION OF STATE LANDS USE ONLY)**

ARC Approval Date: _____ TIITF Approval Date: _____

Comments:

I. Introduction

Holopaw State Forest (HSF) is a 58-acre tract located approximately 2.5 miles east of the unincorporated community of Holopaw, on U.S. Highway 192 in Osceola County. It was acquired in 1961 and is designated as a multiple-use management area by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Forest Service (FFS). Improved slash pine and south Florida slash pine were planted on 56 of the 58 acres between 1979 and 1983. The size of the forest was reduced by 9 acres when U.S. 192 was widened in 2005.

A. General Mission and Management Plan Direction

The primary mission of the Florida Forest Service (FFS) is to “protect Florida and its people from the dangers of wildland fire and manage the forest resources through a stewardship ethic to assure they are available for future generations.”

Management strategies for HSF center on the multiple-use concept, as defined in Sections 589.04(3) and 253.034(2)(a) F.S. Implementation of this concept will utilize and conserve state forest resources in a harmonious and coordinated combination that will best serve the people of the state of Florida, and that is consistent with the purpose for which the forest was acquired. Multiple-use management for HSF will be accomplished with the following strategies:

- Practice sustainable forest management for the efficient generation of revenue and in support of state forest management objectives;
- Restore and manage healthy forests and native ecosystems ensuring the long-term viability of populations and species listed as endangered, threatened, or rare, and other components of biological diversity, including game and non-game wildlife, and plants;
- Protect known archaeological, historical, and cultural resources;
- Restore, maintain, and protect hydrological functions, related water resources, and the health of associated wetlands and aquatic communities; and
- Provide research and educational opportunities related to natural resource management.

This management plan is provided according to requirements of Sections 253.034, 259.032, and 373, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and was prepared utilizing guidelines outlined in Section 18-2.021 of the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). It is not an annual work plan or detailed operational plan but provides general guidance for the management of HSF for the next ten-year period and outlines the major concepts that will guide management activities on the forest.

B. Past Accomplishments

Data regarding past management activities on HSF have been compiled monthly and are available from the Forest Manager. Among the most notable are the following:

- A thinning operation was conducted in September/October 2019. All four stands were selectively thinned and a total of 1,042.76 tons of pulpwood were harvested. All four stands in the forest were inventoried in May 2021.
- Prescribed burning occurred on all stands in July 2020 and in January 2021.
- Approximately 130 cumulative acres of timber inventory updated.

C. Goals / Objectives for the Next Ten-Year Period

The following goals and objectives provide direction and focus of management resources for the next ten-year planning period. Funding, agency program priorities, and the potential for wildfire or other natural disasters during the planning period will determine the degree to which these objectives can be met. Management activities on HSF during this management period must serve to conserve, protect, utilize, and enhance the natural resources. Most of the management operations will be conducted by the FFS, although appropriate activities will be contracted to private sector vendors or completed with the cooperation of other agencies. All activities will enhance the property's natural resource value.

The management activities listed below will be addressed within the ten-year management period and are defined as long-term or ongoing goals. Long-term goals are achievable within a ten-year planning period. Objectives are listed in priority order for each goal. Other activities will be completed with minimal overhead expense and existing staff.

➤ **GOAL 1: Sustainable Forest Management**

Objective 1: Continue to update and implement the Five-Year Silviculture Action Plan including reforestation, timber harvesting, prescribed burning, restoration, and timber stand improvement activities and goals. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measures:

- Annual updates of the Five-Year Silviculture Action Plan completed
- Continued implementation of the Five-Year Silviculture Action Plan (acres treated)

Objective 2: Continue to implement the FFS process for developing stand descriptions and conducting forest inventory, including maintaining a GIS database containing forest stands, roads, and other attributes (including, but not limited to: rare, threatened, and endangered species, archaeological and historical resources, and, invasive species locations). (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measures:

- Update GIS database and re-inventory all attributes as required by FFS procedures
- Number of acres inventoried

➤ **GOAL 2: Habitat Restoration, Improvement, and Fire Management**

Objective 1: The HSF currently contains approximately 47 acres of fire-dependent communities. The HSF staff will plan and conduct prescribed burns in a manner that benefits these fire-dependent natural communities within HSF. To achieve an average fire-return interval of two (2) to four (4) years for most fire-dependent communities, FFS will conduct one prescribed burn across all 47 acres during each interval. Currently FFS staff estimates 47 acres at HSF are within the desired fire management interval. (Ongoing Objective)

Performance Measures:

- Annual number of acres burned
- Number of acres burned within target fire-return interval

Objective 2: Continue to annually update and implement the Five-Year Prescribed Burning Management Plan and prescribed burning goals. (Ongoing Objective)

Performance Measures:

- Annual updates of the Five-Year Prescribed Burning Management Plan completed
- Continued Implementation of the Five-Year Prescribed Burning Management Plan (acres treated)

Objective 3: Utilize prescribed fire to enhance restoration of native groundcover. Evaluate areas where native groundcover has been eliminated or heavily impacted from historical land use on a case by case basis for alternative methods to address reestablishment of native groundcover plants. Restore native groundcover from historical land use where practical or heavily impacted. (Long-term objective)

Performance Measure: Number of acres restored

➤ **GOAL 3: Invasive Species Management Control**

Objective 1: Continue to follow and annually update the Five-Year Ecological Plan for HSF, to locate, identify, and control invasive species. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measures:

- Total number of acres identified and successfully treated
- Annual updates of the Five-Year Ecological Plan completed
- Continue to maintain HSF invasive species database information annually

➤ **GOAL 4: Cultural and Historical Resource Management**

Objective 1: Ensure all known cultural and historical sites are recorded in the Department of State, Division of Historical Resources (DHR) Florida Master Site File. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measure: Documentation of recorded sites

Objective 2: Monitor recorded sites and send updates to the DHR Florida Master Site File as needed. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measure: Number of sites monitored. Reports submitted to DHR

Objective 3: Maintain at least one (1) qualified staff member as an Archaeological Resource Management (ARM) Monitor. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measure: Percent compliance with Silviculture BMP

➤ **GOAL 5: Capital Facilities and Infrastructure**

Objective 1: HSF staff, along with help from volunteers and / or user groups, will continue to maintain state forest boundary annually. (Ongoing objective)

Performance Measure:

- Number of miles of forest boundary maintained

II. Administration Section

A. Descriptive Information

1. Common Name of Property

The common name of the property is Holopaw State Forest.

2. Legal Description and Acreage

The 58-acre forest lies in Section 17, Township 27 South, Range 33 East in Osceola County, Florida.

A complete legal description of lands owned by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (TIITF) and the Orlando District Office, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the FFS State Office in Tallahassee.

3. Proximity to Other Public Resources

Lands managed by State, Federal, Local government, or by private entity for conservation of natural or cultural resources that are located within approximately 10 miles of HSF are listed in Table 1 and illustrated in Exhibit D.

Table 1. Nearby Public Conservation Land and Easements

Public Conservation Land	Managing Agency	Distance
Triple N Wildlife Management Area	SJRWMD	Adjacent S
Bull Creek Wildlife Management Area	FWC	2 miles SE
Holopaw Conservation Area	Osceola County	4 miles W
Three Lakes Wildlife Management Area	FWC	8 miles SE
River Lakes Conservation Area	SJRWMD	10 miles NE

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
SJRWMD – St. Johns River Water Management District

4. Property Acquisition and Land Use Considerations

HSF was acquired by the Florida Development Commission in 1961. This tract was purchased by the Florida Development Commission from Consolidated Naval Stores Company. The Commission bought the land for approximately \$300, less the mineral rights which were owned by Sun Oil Company. Terms of the oil, gas and mineral (OGM) lease with Sun Oil Company were for ten years. As such, the lease expired ten years after issuance and no utilization of the minerals occurred.

B. Management Authority, Purpose, and Constraints

1. Purpose for Acquisition / Management Prospectus

The FFS assumed management of the property from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection on August 14, 1979. At the time of acquisition there were no stated acquisition goals and / or objectives.

2. Degree of Title Interest Held by the Board

The TIITF holds fee simple title to the property. No restrictions, leases, reservations, or encumbrances are known to exist for this property. Lease Agreement Number 3556, between the TIITF, Department of Natural Resources Division of Resource Management (now FDEP), and FDACS, provides authority for the FFS to manage HSF.

3. Designated Single or Multiple-Use Management

HSF is managed under a multiple-use concept by the FFS, under the authority of Chapters

253 and 589, F.S. The FFS is the lead managing agency as stated in TIITF Management Lease number 3556.

Multiple-use management is the harmonious and coordinated management of timber, recreation, conservation of fish and wildlife, forage, archaeological and historic sites, habitat and other biological resources, and water resources so they are utilized in the combination that will best serve the people of the state, making the most judicious use of the land for some or all these resources and considering the relative values of the various resources. Local demands, acquisition objectives, and other factors influence the array of uses that are compatible with and allowed on any specific area of the forest. This management approach is believed to provide for the greatest public benefit, by allowing compatible uses while protecting overall forest health, native ecosystems, and the functions and values associated with them.

4. Revenue Producing Activities

Revenue producing activities will be considered when they have been determined to be financially feasible and will not adversely impact management of the forest. Current and potential revenue producing activities for the HSF include, but are not limited to:

- Timber Harvests – Timber harvests on HSF will be conducted to improve forest health, promote wildlife habitat, restore plant communities, and provide additional benefits.
- Apiary Leases – There are currently no apiary leases on HSF. The feasibility of pursuing and establishing apiary leases on HSF in areas where appropriate will be evaluated in accordance with guidelines stated in the State Forest Handbook.
- Miscellaneous Forest Product Sales – Other miscellaneous forest product sales, including but not limited to, palm fronds and berries, pine cones, pine straw and firewood, may be considered.

5. Conformation to State Lands Management Plan

Management of the Forest under the multiple-use concept complies with the State Lands Management Plan and provides optimum balanced public utilization of the property. Specific authority for the FFS's management of public land is derived from Chapters 253, 259, and 589 F.S.

6. Legislative or Executive Constraints

There are no known legislative or executive constraints specifically directed toward HSF.

7. Aquatic Preserve / Area of Critical State Concern

This area is not within an aquatic preserve or an area of critical state concern, nor is it in an area under study for such designation.

C. Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

1. Property Boundaries Establishment and Preservation

HSF boundary, 1.8 miles, is managed by state forest personnel in accordance with the guidelines of the State Forest Handbook. There is one gate on HSF that requires periodic maintenance. State forest boundaries are maintained by periodic clearing, repainting and reposting, and placement of state forest boundary signs by FFS personnel.

2. Improvements

This 58-acre state forest is located approximately 2.5 miles east of Holopaw, on U.S. Highway 192 in Osceola County. See Exhibit B. Structures consist of two abandoned concrete block buildings. Other improvements consist of an asphalt driveway, a paved walkway to an old radar site, and a boundary fence.

3. On-Site Housing

There are no residences located on HSF.

FFS may establish on-site housing (mobile / manufactured home) on HSF if deemed necessary to alleviate security and management issues. The need and feasibility for the state forest will be evaluated and established if considered appropriate by the Center Manager and approved by the FFS Director. Prior to the occurrence of any ground disturbing activity for establishing on-site housing, a notification will be sent to the DHR and Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) for review and recommendations. This type of housing will not exceed three homes per location with the possibility of more than one on-site housing location occurring if considered necessary by the District Manager and approved by the FFS Director.

4. Operations Infrastructure

Personnel dedicated to HSF are assigned from St. Cloud Forestry Station.

The Forester will work to achieve the goals outlined in this management plan. Management and planning activities, such as timber cruising and sale administration, are the responsibility of the Forester under the direction of the Forest Area Supervisor, and District Manager. Forest operations, such as road maintenance and prescribed burning, are the responsibility of the Forest Area Supervisor under the direction of the District Manager.

a. Operations Budget

There is no operations budget for HSF. Personnel, budget, and equipment resources are derived from the expense budget for the Orlando District with support from Forest Management as warranted. Implementation of any of the activities within this management plan is contingent on annual district budget, availability of funding, other resources, and other statewide priorities.

D. Additional Acquisitions and Land Use Considerations

1. Alternate Uses Considered

No alternate uses are being considered at this time. Alternate uses will be considered as requests are made and will be accommodated as appropriate if they are determined to be compatible with existing uses and with the management goals and objectives of HSF. Uses determined as incompatible include, but are not limited to: water resource development projects, water supply projects, storm-water management projects, sewage treatment facilities, linear facilities, off-highway vehicle use, communication towers and antennas, dumping, mining, and oil well stimulation (e.g. hydraulic fracturing / fracking), or as determined by law, regulation or other incompatible uses as described elsewhere in

this management plan. Deadhead logging is not compatible and is not considered an appropriate use within or adjacent to HSF's boundaries. Although no water resource projects are being considered at this time on SJWMD-owned lands within HSF, they should not be precluded.

2. Additional Land Needs

No additional lands adjacent to HSF are deemed desirable for acquisition.

3. Surplus Land Assessment

On conservation lands where FFS is the lead manager, FFS assesses and identifies areas for potential surplus land. This assessment consists of an examination of resource and operational management needs, public access and recreational use, and GIS modeling and analysis.

The evaluation of HSF by FFS has determined that all of the forest is being managed and operated for the original purposes of acquisition, as well as center on the multiple-use concept, as defined in sections 589.04(3) and 253.034(2)(a) F.S. Implementation of this concept will utilize and conserve state forest resources in a harmonious and coordinated combination that will best serve the people of the State of Florida. Therefore, no portion of HSF is recommended for potential surplus.

4. Adjacent Conflicting Uses

During the development of this management plan, FFS staff identified and evaluated adjacent land uses; reviewed current local comprehensive plans and future land use maps in making the determination that there are currently no known conflicting adjacent land uses. Additionally, FFS staff maintains liaison with adjacent landowners to ensure that any conflicting future land uses may be readily identified and addressed.

FFS will cooperate with adjacent property owners, prospective owners, or prospective developers to discuss methods to minimize negative impacts on management, resources, facilities, roads, recreations, etc., and discuss ways to minimize encroachment onto HSF.

5. Compliance with Local Comprehensive Plan

This plan was submitted to the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners for review and compliance with their local comprehensive plans. See Exhibit M.

6. Utility Corridors and Easements

FFS does not favor the fragmentation of natural communities with linear facilities. Consequently, easements for such uses will be discouraged to the greatest extent practical. When such encroachments are unavoidable, previously disturbed sites will be the preferred location. The objectives, when identifying possible locations for new linear facilities, will be to minimize damage to sensitive resources (e.g., listed species and archaeological sites), minimize habitat fragmentation, limit disruption of management activities, including prescribed burns, and limit disruption of resource-based multiple use activities such as recreation.

Collocation of new linear facilities with existing corridors will be considered but will be used only where expansion of existing corridors does not increase the level of habitat fragmentation and disruption of management and multiple-use activities. FFS will further encourage the use of underground cable where scenic considerations are desirable as well as encourage the development and use of wildlife crossings for unavoidable roadway development projects. Easements for such utilities are subject to the review and approval of the TIITF. Requests for linear facility uses will be handled according to the Governor and the Cabinet's linear facilities policy.

E. Agency and Public Involvement

1. Responsibilities of Managing Agencies

FFS is the lead managing agency, responsible for the overall management of HSF as stated in TIITF Management Lease number 3556.

FFS will cooperate with the DHR regarding appropriate management practices on historical or archaeological sites on the property as stated in Section 267.061, F.S. FFS will consult DHR prior to the initiation of ground disturbing activities as required per DHR guidelines.

FWC is responsible for enforcement of wildlife management laws and conducts other wildlife management activities with input from FFS.

2. Law Enforcement

Primary law enforcement responsibilities will be handled by FWC law enforcement officers. Rules governing the use of HSF are stated in Chapter 5I-4 of the F.A.C. FWC will enforce fish and wildlife regulations and aid in enforcing state forest rules. FWC does not currently have an officer dedicated to patrolling and enforcement on HSF. This task is shared among multiple FWC officers who also patrol and enforce laws on properties and waterways outside of HSF. Additional assistance is rendered by the Osceola County Sheriff's Office or FWC as needed.

The FDACS Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement (OALE) will assist with open burning and wildfire investigations as needed. The City of St. Cloud Police Department provides additional assistance as needed.

Special rules under Chapter 5I-4 of the F.A.C. were promulgated for FDACS-FFS to manage the use of state lands and better control traffic, and to oversee camping and other uses on HSF.

3. Wildland Fire

The FFS has the primary responsibility for prevention, detection, and suppression of wildfires wherever they may occur. The FFS shall provide leadership and direction in the evaluation, coordination, allocation of resources, and monitoring of wildfire management and protection (F.S. 590.01). The FFS also has the responsibility of authorizing prescribed burns (F.S. 590.02 [1][i]).

4. Public and Local Government Involvement

This plan has been prepared by FFS and will be carried out primarily by the FFS. FFS responds to public involvement through direct communication with individuals, user groups, and government officials. The forest is less than 160 acres, so no designated advisory group is required.

5. Friends of Florida State Forests

Friends of Florida State Forests, Inc. (FFSF) is a Direct Support Organization (DSO) of the Florida Forest Service. FFSF supports management activities and projects on Florida's state forests. FFSF is established by Florida Statute, supports programs within Florida's state forests, and is governed by a board of directors representing all areas of the state. Through community support, FFSF assists the FFS to expand opportunities for recreation, environmental education, fire prevention, and forest management within Florida's state forests.

The FFSF program is referenced in Chapter 589.012, F.S. For more information visit: www.floridastateforests.org.

III. Archaeological / Cultural Resources and Protection

A. Past Uses

A cleared area on HSF, located between the timber stands and U.S. Highway 192, has been used in the past as a dirt airstrip and is still designated as such on the county map. At one time, some type of radar structure was located on the property according to some local residents. A tracking device may have rotated on the still existing asphalt walkway which is approximately five feet wide and 100 feet in length.

B. Archaeological and Historical Resources

A review of information contained in the Florida Department of State, DHR, Florida Master Site File has determined there are no (0) recorded archaeological or historical sites on HSF.

C. Ground Disturbing Activities

Representatives of DHR and FNAI will be consulted prior to the initiation of proposed ground disturbing activity as required per DHR guidelines. FFS will make every effort to protect known archaeological and historical resources. FFS will follow the "Management Procedures for Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State Owned or Controlled Lands" and will comply with all appropriate provisions of Section 267.061(2)(a,b), F.S. See Exhibit F. Any significant ground disturbing activity proposal will be submitted to DHR's Compliance and Review office for review prior to undertakings and allow the Division a reasonable opportunity to comment. Ground disturbing activities not specifically covered by this plan will be conducted under the parameters of the "Interim Management Guidelines".

IV. Natural Resources and Protection

A. Soils and Geologic Resources

1. Resources

Soil information for HSF was obtained from the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The soils listed by the NRCS include

Smyrna fine sand and Myakka fine sand. Being the predominant soil, Smyrna fine sand is a nearly level, poorly drained soil in broad, flat areas in the flatwoods. The potential for pine production is moderate with slash pine the recommended tree for planting. See Exhibit G.

2. Soil Protection

Management activities will be executed in a manner that minimizes negative impacts to the soil. As problems arise, corrective action will be implemented by FFS staff under the direction of the FFS Forest Hydrology section in conjunction with recommendations as contained in the most current version of the Florida Silviculture BMP Manual.

There are no major or significant soil erosion problems on HSF.

B. Water Resources

There are no water bodies on HSF.

C. Flora and Fauna Resources

1. Rare, Endangered, and Threatened Species

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Biodiversity Matrix Report, no listed species are known to exist on the HSF. However, several listed species have been mapped in the vicinity of the forest including Loammi skipper (*Atrytonopsis loammi*), Eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), wood stork (*Mycteria americana*), and red-cockaded woodpecker (*Dryobates borealis*).

The intent of FFS is to manage HSF in a manner that will minimize the potential for wildlife species to become imperiled. FFS employees continually monitor the forest for threatened or endangered species while conducting management activities. Specialized management techniques may be used, as necessary, to protect or increase protection of rare, threatened, and endangered species, as applicable for both plants and animals.

2. Florida Natural Areas Inventory

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) is the single most comprehensive source of information available on locations of rare species and significant ecological resources throughout Florida. FNAI has reported the following:

a. Element Occurrences

FNAI element occurrences data layer includes occurrences of rare species and natural communities. For animals and plants, element occurrences usually indicate a viable population of the species, although they may also reflect historically documented observations which may no longer be extant. FNAI reports several documented Element Occurrences of rare or endangered species within the vicinity of the property. See Exhibit I.

b. Likely and Potential Habitat for Rare Species

In addition to documented occurrences, other rare or threatened species may occur near HSF. Rare species and communities that have not been documented but that are likely or potentially at the site are listed in Exhibit I.

FNAI recommends that professionals familiar with Florida's flora and fauna conduct a site-specific survey to determine the current presence or absence of rare, threatened, or endangered species before expansions or alterations are made to any facilities.

3. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

The FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute (FWRI) reports numerous records of listed species occurrences or critical habitats within the confines of the property. This includes state and federally listed endangered or threatened species.

Other findings by the FWC include:

- a. No Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCAs) occur within the property boundaries, although the property itself is adjacent to a high priority SHCA.
- b. HSF is located within an area of high Species Richness which indicates the total number of species within potential habitat identified in a specific location.
- c. HSF is adjacent to Priority Wetlands, which are wetlands significant to listed wetland-dependent vertebrates.

These data represent only those occurrences recorded by FWC staff and other affiliated researchers. The database does not necessarily contain records of all listed species that may occur in a given area. Also, data on certain species are not entered into the database on a site-specific basis. Therefore, one should not assume that an absence of occurrences in their database indicates that species of significance do not occur in the area. See Exhibit J.

The FWC recommends the review of management guidelines in the published FWC Gopher Tortoise Species Management Plan to guide management actions for the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) on the area. The FWC Gopher Tortoise Species Management Plan provides beneficial resource guidelines for habitat management and monitoring of the gopher tortoise. For reference, the FWC Gopher Tortoise Species Management Plan can be accessed at MyFWC.com.

The FWC recommends the review of management guidelines in FWC's published Species Action Plans for the management of imperiled, rare, and focal species. The FWC Species Action Plans provide beneficial resource guidelines for habitat management and monitoring of the respective species. For reference, the FWC Species Action Plans can be accessed at MyFWC.com.

4. Game Species and Other Wildlife

Game species such as deer and wild hog have been observed on the site. The site also supports non-game populations (i.e. snakes, birds, turtles, etc.) that would typically be associated with flatwoods sites.

There are no permanent wildlife openings or food plots to be maintained by the FFS and FWC. Should the need arise, wildlife openings and food plots may be established and maintained in accordance with Chapter 5 of the FFS State Forest Handbook.

Non-game species will be managed and protected through the restoration and maintenance of native ecosystems found on the forest. The current State Forest Handbook gives additional details for such things as snag management and retention.

5. Survey and Monitoring

FFS may implement species-specific management plans developed by FWC and other agencies as applicable. FFS will cooperate with FWC and other agencies in the development of new wildlife management plans and monitoring protocols, as necessary. Such plans will be consistent with rule and statute promulgated for the management of such species.

Surveys conducted by university researchers, students, and knowledgeable naturalists on HSF augment information provided by formal surveys conducted by FWC and other cooperating agencies. The FFS will seek assistance from citizen scientists, colleges, universities, and other agencies to gather data on plant and animal species.

6. Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site Feasibility Assessment

The FFS has assessed the feasibility of establishing a gopher tortoise recipient site on HSF. Soil drainage classes present across the forest are all poorly drained (see Exhibit G). Further, the entire 58 acre property is bounded by pasture to the north, east, and west, and is bounded by U.S. Highway 192 to the south. Therefore, the FFS has determined there are no suitable locations for potential gopher tortoise recipient site establishment on HSF.

D. Sustainable Forest Resources

FFS practices sustainable multiple-use forestry to meet the forest resource needs and values of the present without compromising the similar capability of the future. Sustainable forestry involves practicing a land stewardship ethic that integrates the reforestation, managing, growing, nurturing, and harvesting of trees for useful products with the conservation of soil, air and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics. This is accomplished by maintaining and updating accurate estimates of standing timber in order to assure that the timber resources retain their sustainability. Forest inventories will be updated on a continual basis according to guidelines established by the FFS Forest Management Bureau.

E. Beaches and Dune Resources

No beaches or dunes occur on the HSF.

F. Swamps, Marshes, and Other Wetlands

There are no swamps, marshes or other wetlands on HSF.

G. Mineral Resources

No known mineral deposits exist in this forest.

H. Unique Natural Features and Outstanding Native Landscapes

HSF possesses no distinctive features or native landscapes.

I. Research Projects / Specimen Collection

Research projects may be conducted on the forest on a temporary or permanent basis for the purpose of obtaining information that furthers the knowledge of forestry and related fields. FFS cooperates with other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions, whenever feasible, on this type of research. FFS will consider assisting with research projects when funds and manpower are available.

All research to be considered on HSF must be in accordance with the guidelines stated in the State Forest Handbook. Any requests for research should be submitted in writing to the appropriate field staff to be forwarded to the Forest Management Bureau for approval. Requests must include: a letter outlining the purpose, scope, methodology, and location of the proposed research. Requests are subject to review by FFS Foresters, Biologists, the Forest Health Section, and the Forest Hydrology Section, as appropriate. Authorization to conduct research will require that the investigator provide copies of any reports or studies generated from any research to the FFS and the HSF staff. Other special conditions may be applicable, and the authorization may be terminated at any point if the study is not in compliance.

No research projects or specimen collections have been initiated on HSF over the last ten years.

J. Ground Disturbing Activities

Although the FFS's approach to handling ground disturbing activities is identified in other sections of this plan, the FFS's overall approach to this issue is summarized here. FFS recognizes the importance of managing and protecting sensitive resources and will take steps to ensure that such resources are not adversely impacted by ground disturbing activities. Sensitive resources include areas such as known sensitive species locations; archaeological, fossil, and historical sites; ecotones, wetlands, and water resources. The process for evaluating and obtaining approval for ground disturbing activities is outlined in Appendix 2.A.6. of the State Forest Handbook.

When new pre-suppression firelines are necessary, their placement will be reviewed by state forest field staff to avoid sensitive areas. For ground disturbing activities such as construction of buildings, parking lots, and new roads, the FFS will consult with FNAI, DHR, and ARC, as appropriate.

V. Public Access and Recreation

Access to HSF can be made from the southwestern corner of the property, directly adjacent to U.S. Highway 192. Otherwise, there are no formal, developed recreational facilities / opportunities at HSF.

VI. Forest Management Practices

A. Prescribed Fire

Forest management practices on HSF are important in the restoration and maintenance of forest ecosystems and provide a variety of socio-economic benefits to Floridians. Management practices on HSF include prescribed fire, which is an effective tool in controlling the encroachment of shrubs and off-site hardwoods, stimulating the recovery of native

herbaceous groundcover, and promoting the regeneration of native pines.

FFS utilizes a fire management program on state forests that includes wildfire prevention, detection and suppression, and prescribed burning. This program is the responsibility of FFS's Orlando District Office and the St. Cloud Forestry Station, and is detailed in the Five-Year Prescribed Burning Management Plan. Emphasis will be placed on prescribed burning, wildfire prevention, and education to help reduce wildfire occurrence on the forest.

A Fire History chart detailing the recent history of prescribed burns and wildfires at HSF is available in Exhibit K.

The prescribed burning program developed for HSF produces multiple benefits. The objectives of prescribed burning on HSF include facilitating forest management operations, enhancing wildlife and listed species habitat; decreasing fuel loading, enhancing public safety, and restoring, maintaining, and protecting all native ecosystems, ecotones, and their ecological processes. FFS personnel are responsible for planning and implementing the annual prescribed burn program for HSF, which will consist of dormant and growing season burns. An update to the Five-Year Prescribed Burning Management Plan is developed each year by FFS staff. All burns conducted on HSF are executed by Florida Certified Prescribed Burn Managers in accordance with Chapters 590.125, F.S. and 5I-2 F.A.C.

1. Fire Management

The fire management plan serves as a working tool and an informational document for HSF. The plan provides guidelines regarding wildfire suppression and prescribed fire management. It will specify burn units, burn unit prescriptions, appropriate fire return intervals, and fire pre-suppression planning. The plan may be reviewed and amended as necessary.

The use of prescribed fire in the management of timber, wildlife, and ecological resources on HSF is necessary if the FFS is to fulfill the goals and objectives stated in this plan including: enhancing and restoring native plant communities, managing protected species, managing timber, recreation, historical, and other resource values. The fire management plan and its objectives shall reflect and incorporate these multiple-resource objectives.

- a. Prescribed Fire:** Prescribed fire is the most important land management tool, both ecologically and economically, for managing vegetation and natural communities and perpetuating existing wildlife populations in Florida. Forest operation records and staff experience will allow for identification of areas that may require mechanical or chemical treatments in conjunction with prescribed fire to restore a more natural vegetative structure.
- b. Burn Unit Plans:** Each prescribed fire will be conducted in accordance with FFS regulations and state law (Chapter 5I-2 F.A.C., Chapter 590, F.S.) and have a burn unit plan (or prescription). Each prescription will contain, at a minimum, the information, as required by Section 590.125(3), F.S., needed to complete the FFS Prescribed Burn Plan Form FDACS 11461.

Consideration should be given to rotating burn units between dormant and growing season burns over time. Fire return intervals for a burn unit are recommended to fall within the natural, historic range for the dominant natural community or communities within a given burn unit.

Based upon available species survey data, burn units within a prescription that have listed wildlife species shall explicitly state their presence and any restrictions or requirements relative to prescribed burning in proximity to these species or habitats. These may include time of year, pre-burn preparation, fire return intervals, and other burn parameters.

B. Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Strategies

FFS utilizes a comprehensive wildfire management approach on state forests that includes an ongoing program of wildfire prevention, detection and suppression, and prescribed burning. Implementation of this program is the responsibility of FFS's Orlando District Office and the St. Cloud Forestry Station. Emphasis will be placed on consistent accomplishment of prescribed burning goals and community outreach to increase public understanding of wildfire prevention and the benefits of prescribed fire.

FFS has three paramount considerations regarding wildfires and are established in priority order:

- 1) Protection of human lives
- 2) Protection of improvements
- 3) Protection of natural resources

All procedures regarding wildfire will follow the State Forest Handbook and the HSF Fire Management Plan.

1. Suppression Strategies

If a wildfire occurs on HSF there are two (2) alternative suppression strategies as defined below:

- a. Contain and Control** is defined as a suppression strategy where a fire is restricted to a certain area by using existing natural or constructed barriers that stop the fires spread under the prevailing and forecasted weather until it is out. This strategy allows the use of environmentally sensitive tactics based on fuels, fire behavior, and weather conditions that keep a wildfire from burning a large area or for a long duration.
- b. Direct Suppression** is defined as a suppression strategy where aggressive suppression tactics are used to establish firelines around a fire to halt its spread and to extinguish all hotspots. This alternative is used whenever there is a threat to human life, property, private lands, and / or critical natural or cultural resources. This strategy should also be used when the total district fire load dictates that crews not be involved with individual fires for any longer than necessary.

Appropriate suppression action will be that which provides for the most reasonable probability of minimizing fire suppression cost and critical resource damage, consistent with probable fire behavior, total fire load, potential resource and environmental impacts,

safety, and smoke management considerations. The Incident Command System (ICS) will be used for all suppression actions.

2. Smoke Management

Caution will be exercised to prevent a public safety or health hazard from the smoke of any prescribed burn or wildfire. Prescribed burns must pass the smoke screening procedure and be conducted by a certified burner. If smoke threatens to cause a safety hazard, then direct, immediate suppression action will be taken.

3. Fire Breaks and Firelines

A system of permanent fire breaks will be developed and maintained around and within the boundaries of HSF to guard against fires escaping from and entering the forest. Such fire breaks will consist of natural barriers, roads, trails, permanent grass strips and where appropriate, well maintained harrowed lines. All pre-suppression fire breaks will meet the established Silvicultural BMP criteria.

During wildfire suppression, the use of water and foam, permanent fire breaks, natural barriers, and existing roads and trails for firelines can be used when human life, safety, property, and resource considerations allow. Plowed and / or bladed lines will be used for initial installation of firelines in heavy fuels and in cases where it's considered necessary to protect life, property, or resources and / or to minimize threats to firefighters. Plowed and bladed lines will be rehabilitated and brought to BMP compliance as soon as practical after the fire is suppressed.

4. Sensitive Areas

HSF retains on file in the state forest headquarters an Environmentally Sensitive Area Map that identifies protected sites such as critical wetlands and archaeological and historical sites known to occur on the state forest. FFS personnel are aware of these areas in the event of a wildfire. Special precautions will be followed when prescribed burning in sensitive areas on HSF. When possible, FFS personnel will avoid line construction in wetland ecotones throughout the forest.

5. Firewise Communities

FFS has implemented a Firewise community approach for prevention statewide. Specifically, in the area adjacent to or nearby HSF, efforts in this regard will continue to identify communities at risk and to contact their representatives.

6. Adjacent Neighbor Contacts

The staff at HSF maintains a list of neighbors that have requested they be notified in advance of prescribed burns. These families are contacted by telephone or email with potential sites and dates of anticipated prescribed burns.

7. Post-Burn Evaluations

A post-burn evaluation is required for each prescribed burn on the forest to assess impacts on timber and habitat. Based on the evaluations, after prescribed fires in particular, decisions will be made on the effectiveness of the prescribed burn and improvements that

can be made in the future. A historical fire record for all significant fires and prescribed burns will be maintained. This will be accomplished using completed burn plans and the maintenance of GIS data. These records are intended to provide data for future management decisions.

C. Sustainable Forestry and Silviculture

Timber is a valuable economic and ecological resource, and timber harvesting for the purposes of generating revenue, improving stand viability, forest health, wildlife, and ecological restoration and maintenance is critical to the silvicultural objectives on HSF.

1. Strategies

The following silvicultural strategies will apply to silvicultural practices on HSF:

- a. To restore and maintain forest health and vigor through timber harvesting, prescribed burning, and reforestation, both naturally and artificially, with species native to the site.
- b. To create, through natural or artificial regeneration, uneven-aged, and even-aged management, a forest with both young and old growth components that yields sustainable economic, ecological, and social benefits.

2. Silvicultural Operations

All stands are being managed on a 60 to 80-year rotation with final harvest scheduled sometime between 2040 and 2060. It is not anticipated that there will be a need to harvest timber from HSF within this planning period, except as emergency salvage should a hurricane or other disaster occur. All timber sales will follow the guidelines stated in Chapter 6.4 of the most currently approved State Forest Handbook.

Prescribed fire is the most desirable method of vegetation control in fire-dependent ecosystems. However, due to the existence of areas where fuel loads have reached dangerous levels or urban interface dictates prescribed fire is not suitable, mechanical or chemical vegetation control may be used. Mechanical and / or chemical vegetation control will be utilized where appropriate as determined by FFS staff for wildlife enhancement, fuel mitigation, and reforestation.

Maintenance and restoration of timber stands and natural communities through timber harvesting will include thinning for maintenance, regeneration harvests applicable to the species present, and clear-cutting to remove off-site species or to establish younger, faster growing stands of timber at the end of the rotation.

All silvicultural activities, including timber harvesting and reforestation, will meet or exceed the standards in FFS's Silviculture BMPs and the State Forest Handbook, and will follow the Five-Year Silviculture Action Plan.

3. Forest Inventory

HSF contains one stand of South Florida slash pine and three stands of improved slash pine. These stands were established between 1980 and 1983. Stands are being managed on a 60 to 80-year rotation with final harvest scheduled around 2040.

4. **Timber Sales**

Timber sales are generally advertised for competitive bids and sold on a per unit or lump sum basis. All timber sales are conducted according to guidelines specified in the State Forest Handbook.

5. **Ground Cover**

Management activities will be designed and conducted to protect and enhance the condition and integrity of the native groundcover. Management techniques, such as prescribed fire, will be used to restore, recover, and maintain a diversity of native groundcover.

D. **Invasive Species Control**

FFS employees continually monitor the forest for invasive species while conducting management activities. FFS will locate, identify, and apply control measures with the intent to eradicate or control invasive species. Table 2 lists the general treatment strategy, acres impacted, and population stability trend for invasive plant species occurring on HSF.

Ongoing maintenance and monitoring strategies are outlined in the Five-Year Ecological Management Plan which is developed to locate, identify, and control invasive plant species. Occurrences of invasive species are recorded in the HSF GIS database and are monitored and treated annually as funding permits. The GIS database is updated as new infestations are discovered.

Adjacent landowners who are known to have these species on their property will be approached to cooperate on control measures. FFS works to control the spread of invasive species by decontaminating agency equipment and equipment used by private contractors according to the State Forest Handbook.

FFS will enlist support from FWC in efforts to control invasive animals. Feral hogs (*Sus scrofa*) are present on HSF but are not believed to occur in significant numbers at this time. FWC has issued a feral hog control permit to FFS for all state forests and FFS will allow for feral hog removal on HSF through trapping and hunting as necessary.

Training in the identification and control of invasive species will be scheduled for personnel as time and resources permit. Training concerning invasive plants will be coordinated with the Forest Management Bureau's Forest Health Section. Control of invasive species will be target-specific and use a variety of methods including appropriately labeled and efficacious herbicides as needed.

Table 2. Invasive Plant Species Occurring on HSF

Common Name	Scientific Name	Treatment Strategy	Acres Impacted	Status
Caesarweed	<i>Urena lobata</i>	Spot Treatment with herbicide	<1	Stable
Cogongrass	<i>Imperata cylindrica</i>	Spot Treatment with herbicide	<1	Stable
Old World climbing fern	<i>Lygodium microphyllum</i>	Spot Treatment with herbicide	<1	Stable

E. Insects, Disease and Forest Health

Currently, there are no significant insect or disease problems on HSF. In the event of a forest pest outbreak, HSF resource managers will consult with the Forest Management Bureau's Forest Health Section to formulate an appropriate and effective response.

In compliance with Section 388.4111, F.S. and in Section 5E-13.042, F.A.C., all lands have been evaluated and subsequently designated as environmentally sensitive and biologically highly productive. Such designation is appropriate and consistent with the previously documented natural resources and ecosystem values and affords the appropriate protection for these resources from arthropod control practices that would impose a potential hazard to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources existing on this property. The local arthropod control agencies in Osceola County will be notified of the approval of this plan documenting this designation.

As a result, prior to conducting any arthropod control activities on HSF, the local agency must prepare a public lands control plan that addresses all concerns that FFS may have for protecting the natural resources and ecosystem values on the state forest. In this regard, FFS will provide the local agency details on the management objectives for HSF. This public lands control plan must comply with FDACS guidelines and use the appropriate FDACS form. The plan must then be approved and mutually adopted by the county, FFS, and FDACS, prior to initiation of any mosquito control work. Should the local mosquito control district not propose any mosquito control operations on the property, no arthropod control plan is required. See Exhibit N.

F. Use of Private Land Contractors

The forest manager makes ongoing evaluations of the use of private contractors and consultants to facilitate the total resource management activities of this state forest. The opportunities for outsourcing land management work include, or are anticipated to include:

1. Herbicide applications
2. Restoration activities
3. Site preparation activities
4. Reforestation
5. Timber harvesting
6. Biological assessments and mapping
7. Contractors for fixed capital and infrastructure improvements

VII. Proposed Management Activities

A. Existing and Planned Uses

Use of the property consists of managing the property as a forestry demonstration area. This forest is used by the FFS to show local landowners and other interested persons the various types of site preparation, tree spacing, species selection and other forestry practices that can be used to manage a typical Florida flatwoods site for timber production. Any harvesting done will follow Best Management Practices and existing firelines will continue to be maintained.

B. Impact of Planned Uses on Property Resources

The intended use of the property will have minimal impact upon renewable and nonrenewable resources. By implementing a balanced forest management plan for the property, both wildlife and timber resources will be enhanced. The prescribed burning program, as implemented, will enhance the availability of food for wildlife and help provide a diverse habitat for the various species that may use the forest.

C. Description of Natural Communities and Proposed Management Activities

Stand I is 9 acres of South Florida slash pine planted in 1980. This stand was selectively thinned in September and October 2019.

Stand II is 9 acres of improved slash pine planted in 1980. This stand was selectively thinned in September and October 2019.

Stand III is 20 acres of improved slash pine planted in 1981. This stand was selectively thinned in September and October 2019.

Stand IV is 9 acres of improved slash pine planted in 1983. This stand was selectively thinned in September and October 2019.

All stands were re-inventoried in May 2021. Because all stands were thinned in 2019, no thinning or harvesting activity is anticipated for the next ten (10) years. All stands will be burned on a 2 to 4-year prescribed fire return interval.

VIII. References

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Florida Master Site File Cultural Resource Roster. 2021. Tallahassee, Florida.

Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources. Revised 2021. Management Procedures for Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State-Owned or Controlled Lands. Department of the State, Division of Historical Resources. Tallahassee, Florida.

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Florida Natural Areas Inventory. Revised 2017. Guide to the Natural Communities of Florida: 2010 Edition. Florida Natural Areas Inventory. Tallahassee, Florida.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. Web Soil Survey. Soil Survey Area: Osceola County, Florida. Survey Area Data: Version 19, August 27, 2021.

IX. Glossary of Abbreviations

ARC	Acquisition and Restoration Council
BMP	Best Management Practice
DHR	Division of Historical Resources
DSO.....	Direct Support Organization
F.A.C.....	Florida Administrative Code
FDACS.....	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
FDEP.....	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FFS.....	Florida Forest Service
FNAI	Florida Natural Areas Inventory
F.S.	Florida Statutes
FWC.....	Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OALE.....	FDACS Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement
OGM	Oil, gas, and mineral
OPS	Other Personal Services Employment
HSF	Holopaw State Forest
TIITF.....	Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, Board of