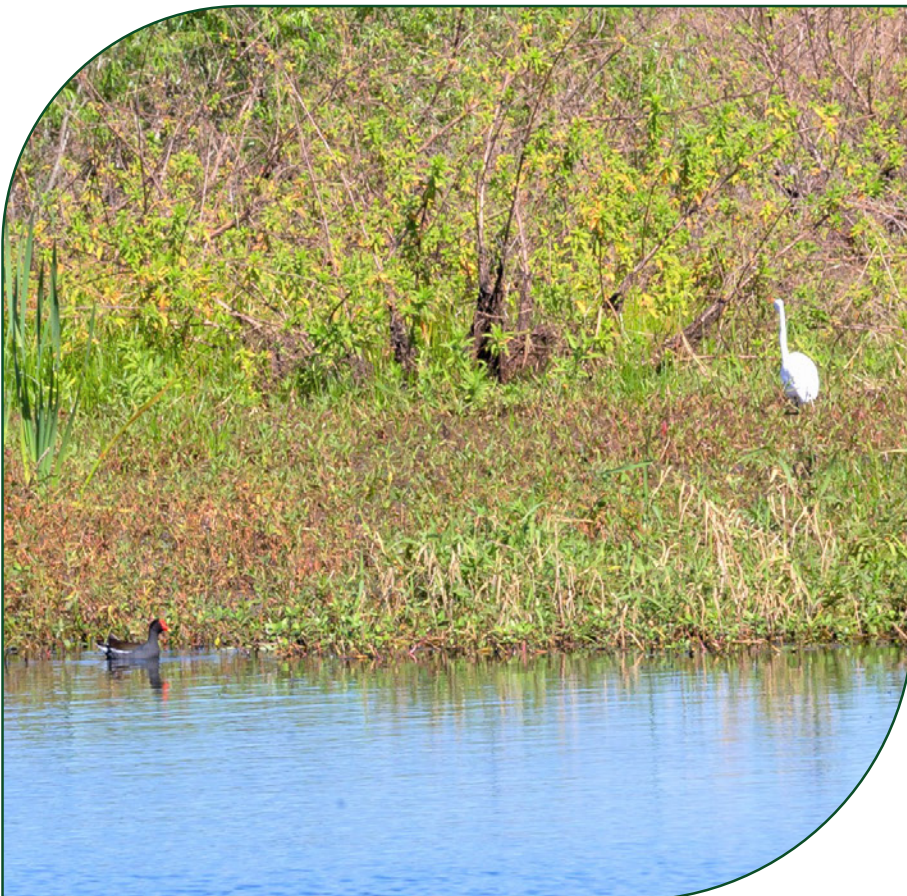




# Orange County Green PLACE Program



# 2023 Annual Report

# MESSAGE FROM THE Mayor



Greetings!

Welcome to the 2023 Orange County Green PLACE Annual Report.

I am delighted to share the progress of the Green PLACE Program, one of the County's most impactful conservation initiatives. In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) committed to increasing the acres of environmentally sensitive lands under protection in Orange County from 23,000 to 46,000 by 2030. In addition, the Board approved an impressive 100 million dollars to be set aside for preserving our natural resources and protecting the diverse flora and fauna that thrive in Orange County.

This type of conservation is essential to protect our natural resources and provide our rapidly growing population with nature-based opportunities for outdoor recreation. Since 2021, County staff have worked diligently to identify, evaluate, negotiate, and preserve new parcels of environmentally sensitive land.

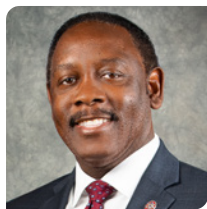
The continued accomplishments of the Green PLACE Program are primarily due to the support of partner organizations and the dedicated staff at the Orange County Environmental Protection Division. Their hard work helps ensure a better future for everyone.

I am pleased to inform you of this progress and invite you to learn more about our Green PLACE properties by visiting <https://orangecountyfl.net/Environment/Naturallands.aspx>. I am confident the best is yet to come, and the measures we are implementing now will have a long-lasting impact on Orange County.

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Demings  
Orange County Mayor

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



**Jerry L. Demings**  
Orange County Mayor



**Nicole Wilson**  
Commissioner  
District 1



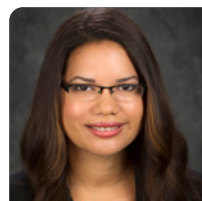
**Christine Moore**  
Commissioner  
District 2



**Mayra Uribe**  
Commissioner  
District 3



**Maribel Gomez Cordero**  
Commissioner  
District 4



**Emily Bonilla**  
Commissioner  
District 5



**Mike Scott**  
Commissioner  
District 6

# OVERVIEW OF THE GREENPLACE PROGRAM

Green PLACE (Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection) is an initiative to preserve, enhance, and restore environmentally sensitive lands. This program encourages the establishment of regional corridors, greenways, and blueways. Preservation of environmentally sensitive lands is an important tool used by federal, state, local, and private organizations to preserve natural resources, to protect imperiled wildlife and plant species, provide nature-based recreational opportunities, and to provide wildlife corridors for species that require a large geographic distribution such as the Florida Black Bear and the Florida Panther.

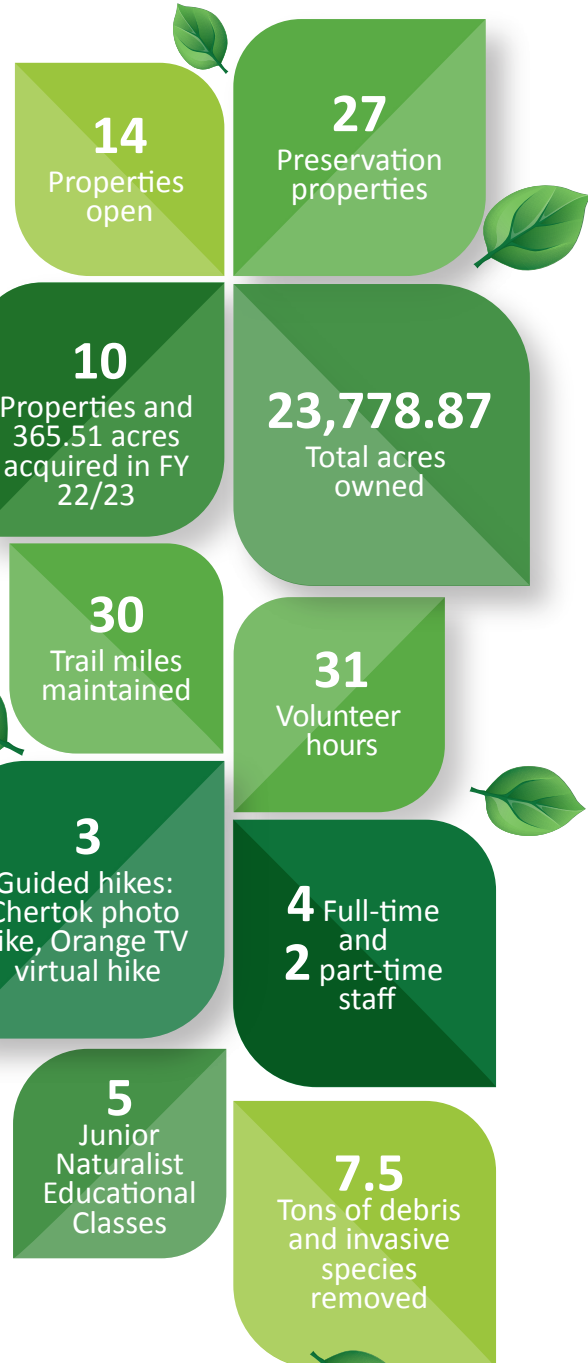


## 2023 SNAPSHOT

Orange County has preserved 23,778 acres of natural lands in partnership with other agencies or on its own. The Environmental Protection Division's Green PLACE Program manages 5,413 acres, with the remaining acreage managed by our partners. Fourteen Green PLACE properties are open for nature-based recreation.

The County, along with our partners, offer a variety of nature-based recreation related amenities for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors. The amenities provided for public enjoyment include benches, picnic areas, pergolas, wildlife observation decks, hiking and equestrian trails, trailhead support facilities, kayak/canoe launching facilities and fishing piers.

# ANNUAL REPORT BY THE NUMBERS



# Green PLACE

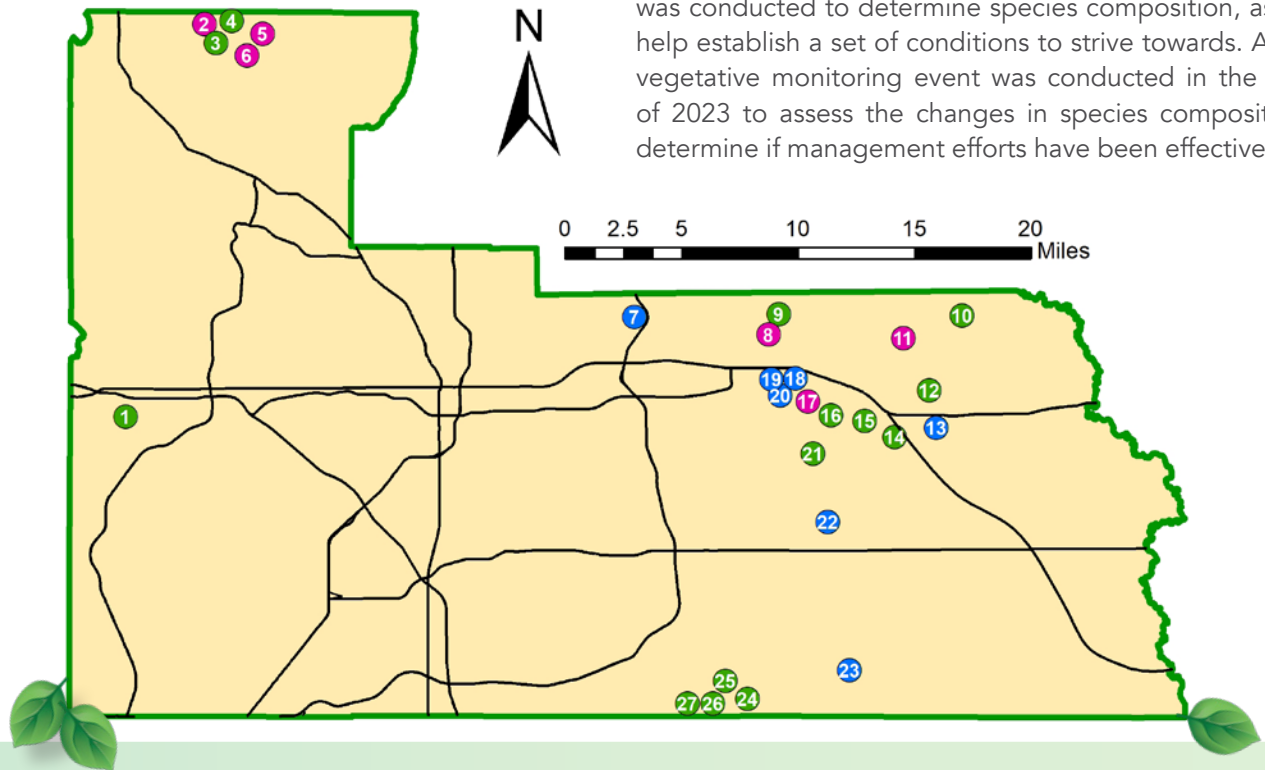
## Property Locations 2023



## LAND MANAGEMENT, VOLUNTEERISM, OUTREACH, FUNDING ASSISTANCE

### Land Management

In addition to acquiring new lands, the Green PLACE Program performs restoration and enhancements on habitats that have been previously impacted by past land uses. Johns Lake Conservation Area (JLCA) is a highly recreated property in west Orange County that has been affected by past uses of the property. In particular, the marshes along the water's edge were converted to pasture and have become overgrown with invasive plants. A restoration project was started in 2022 with the goal of increasing more desirable native species while decreasing invasive species. A baseline monitoring event was conducted to determine species composition, as well as help establish a set of conditions to strive towards. A second vegetative monitoring event was conducted in the summer of 2023 to assess the changes in species composition and determine if management efforts have been effective. Results



### LEGEND



**OPEN PROPERTY**

**PRESERVATION-ONLY SITES**

**PRESERVATION SITES TO BE OPEN IN THE FUTURE**

- |  |                                    |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Johns Lake Conservation Area                 | 10 Charles H Bronson State Forest  | 19 Nunnally/Evans                  |
| 2 Lewis Gress Property                         | 11 Narut Property                  | 20 Vienna Drive                    |
| 3 Sandhill Preserve                            | 12 Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve | 21 Hal Scott Preserve and Park     |
| 4 Lake Lucie Conservation Area                 | 13 RM Property                     | 22 Ranger Property                 |
| 5 Neighborhood Lakes                           | 14 Hidden Pond Preserve            | 23 TM Econ Mitigation Bank Phase 4 |
| 6 Greeneyes Wildlife Preserve                  | 15 Pine Lily Preserve              | 24 Isle of Pine Preserve           |
| 7 University Parcel                            | 16 Long Branch                     | 25 Crosby Island Marsh Preserve    |
| 8 Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve | 17 JEL Property                    | 26 Split Oak Forest                |
| 9 Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area  | 18 Sunflower Property              | 27 Eagles Roost                    |



indicate the need for additional invasive species treatments and possible introduction of native herbaceous groundcover. Future monitoring events will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the management efforts and to determine further restoration activities.

The Green PLACE Program utilizes a diverse range of land-management techniques on 5,413.50 acres of actively managed Green PLACE properties. Techniques used include controlled burning, invasive species management, restoration and mechanical treatment techniques. This year the program used controlled burning and invasive species management techniques with great success. Invasive species are surveyed and treated on 16 different properties throughout the year.

Another practice that is incredibly successful in creating diverse and rich ecosystems that is cost effective for management is the use of the safe application of controlled burning fire techniques. The Program has successfully burned approximately 65 acres spanning two properties, Pine Lily Preserve and the County's TM Econ Mitigation Bank. This practice creates a diverse and rich ecosystem and decreases wildfire activity on the properties.

### Volunteerism and Outreach

The Green PLACE Program introduces the public to our properties by hosting various outreach and

volunteer-driven events designed to educate the community and enhance the public knowledge of Orange County's natural resources. These events increase public awareness regarding the importance of the preservation and management of our natural resources, while exposing them to a variety of nature-based recreational opportunities these properties offer. The types of events held include guided hikes, native vegetation plantings, and invasive species removal. On April 21, 2023, Green PLACE hosted an Earth Day event to commemorate the preservation of the Dell property. At the event, volunteers participated in a variety of land management activities and removed many items from the now preserved land including several large household items, 635 feet of fencing, 10 bags of trash and 10 bags of invasive plants. Work continued on the Dell property at the National Public Lands Day Event on September 23, 2023. Further fence and invasive plant removal was completed and a new trail was laid out that will eventually connect the property to the established Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve trail system. With the efforts of volunteers from various events, Orange County can ensure a quality user experience for our visitors. Volunteers and participants of these events become ambassadors for the Green PLACE Program as they share their experience with their family, friends and colleagues.



## Green PLACE Property Uses Information

Property Name	Acreage	Trailhead	Hiking	Bench	Picnic Area	Observation Platform	Kayak/ Canoe/ Boat Launch	Fishing	Bicycling	Equestrian	Florida National Scenic Trail	Primitive Camping
Charles H Bronson State Forest	4,547.64	X	X		X					X	X	X
Crosby Island Marsh Preserve	272.22	X	X	X	X						X	
Eagles Roost	231.31	X	X	X	X	X						
Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area	706.81	X	X					X	X	X		
Hal Scott Preserve and Park	8,427.00	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Hidden Pond Preserve	111.54	X	X	X	X	X						
Isle of Pine Preserve	534.49	X	X	X	X					X		
Johns Lake Conservation Area	138.62	X	X	X	X		X	X				
Lake Lucie Conservation Area	163.38	X	X	X	X					X		
Long Branch	163.53	X	X	X	X					X		
Pine Lily Preserve	402.98	X	X	X	X					X	X	
Sandhill Preserve	83.03	X	X	X	X							
Savage/Christmas Creek Preserve	906.08	X	X	X	X					X	X	
Split Oak Forest	2,461.89	X	X			X				X	X	



# Organization Chart

In FY 2022-2023, the Green PLACE Program had four (4) full-time staff members, one (1) senior on-call technician and one (1) on-call professional.



## Achievements

In the past year, Green PLACE evaluated 858 parcels utilizing criteria outlined in Administrative Regulation 11.07.01 (Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisitions) and the County was able to acquire 365.51 acres. The BCC approved formally naming an existing Green PLACE property to “Greeneyes Wildlife Preserve” in preparation for opening for nature-based recreational use.

The Green PLACE Program continued to successfully manage the Green PLACE properties and maintained over 52 miles of fire lines and more than 30 miles of trails. The program also managed the invasive species on its properties and continues to collaborate with Capital Projects on the assessment, design and construction of amenities that will enhance the visitor experience on Green PLACE properties.

Capital Projects aids in the development of amenities that improve Green PLACE properties for the public’s recreational use. Capital projects include construction of observation piers, trailheads, trail shelters and trail access improvements, habitat restoration and much more. Through project assessments, design, and construction phases, twelve (12) capital projects are currently active, and one (1) project was completed within the past fiscal 2022-2023 year.

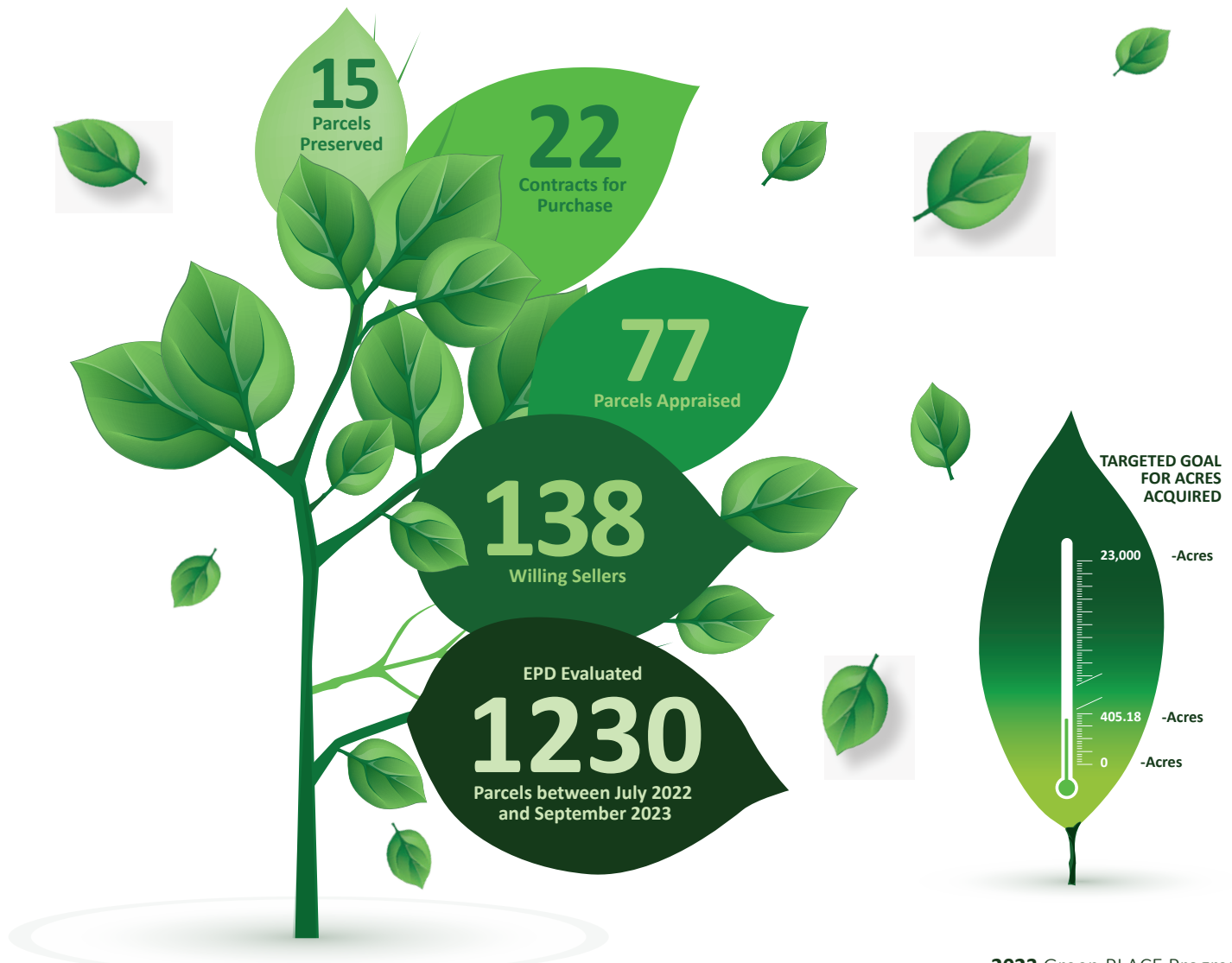


The following Capital Improvement Projects have been completed or are currently in the construction phase on Green PLACE properties:

- A 110-foot-long observation pier was constructed at Hidden Pond Preserve showcasing a pond in the southeast portion of the property.
- At the Greeneyes Wildlife Preserve, a five-parking space trailhead area is under construction in anticipation of opening for public recreation.
- Lake Lucie Conservation Area began constructing and improving an equestrian trail shelter.
- Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge and Education Center, adjacent to Eagles Roost, began constructing five new buildings to support Back to Nature's rehabilitation of injured and orphaned wildlife, as well as education and recreational opportunities for visitors.



# Annual Acquisition FIGURES



# EVALUATION CRITERIA SUMMARY

## Administrative Regulation 11.07.01 Evaluation Criteria Summary

	PID #	Acres	Ecosystem Diversity	Rare Habitat	Current Regulations /Threat of Degrading Events	Presence /likelihood of Non-Imperiled and Imperiled Species	Manageability	Water Resource Protection	Contiguity to other Conservation Lands	Enhances Wildlife Corridor	Nature-Based Recreation	Ecotourism Opportunities
<b>Narut Land Company</b>	12-22-32-0000-00-006	215.85	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Lewis</b>	01-20-27-0000-00-001	10.1		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Lewis</b>	01-20-27-0000-00-050	4.77		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Lewis</b>	01-20-27-0000-00-055	10.03		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Lewis-Gress</b>	01-20-27-0000-00-054	17.65		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
<b>Reynolds Jack Thomas Norris Trust</b>	26-22-32-1312-05-010	47.61	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
<b>RM Properties</b>	31-22-33-1332-02-100	2.26			X	X		X	X	X	X	
<b>Terry and Pam Sible and Michael and Theresa Tardugno</b>	26-22-32-1312-04-040	7.84			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	





## 2022/2023 Acquisitions:

# Narut Land Company



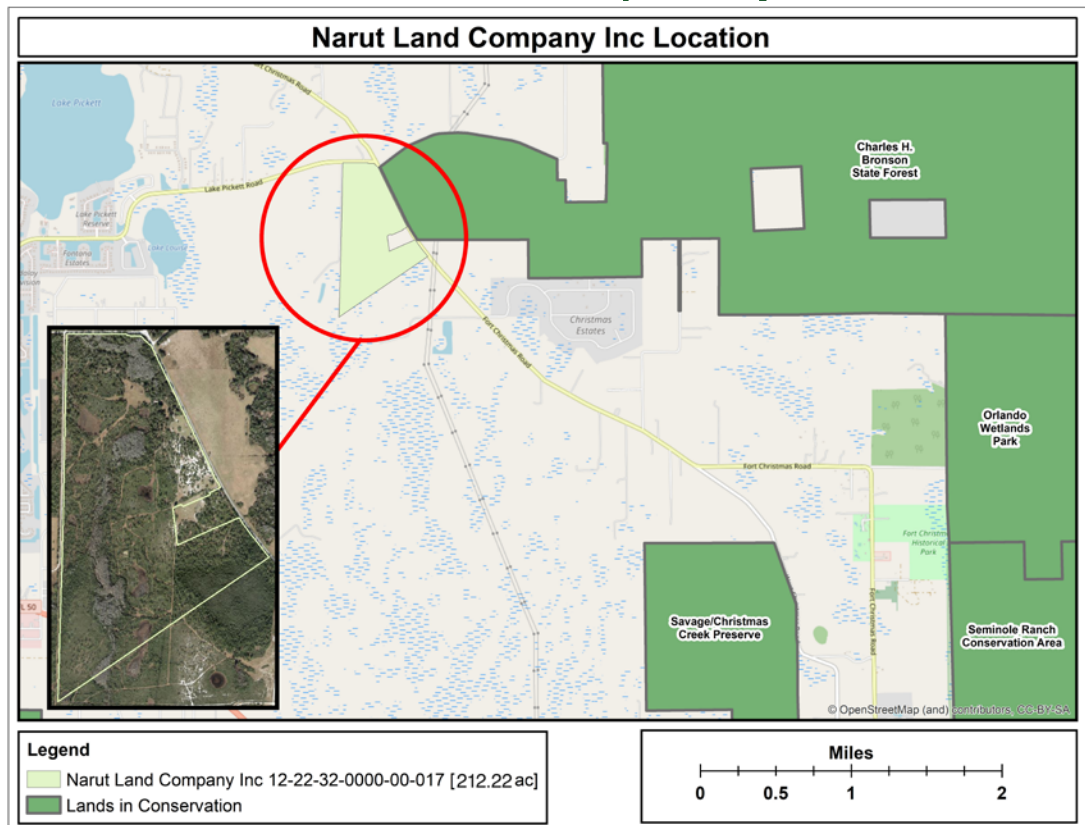
**Acreage: 212.22**

**Key Features:**

This parcel assists in the preservation of a portion of the Florida Wildlife corridor. It is adjacent to other publicly owned natural areas that preserve a 300,000-plus-acre ecological corridor that spans Brevard, Osceola, Orange, Seminole and Volusia counties. This parcel protects eight natural communities, including Wet Prairie, Basin Marsh, Basin Swamp Scrub and Scrubby flatwoods.

**District: 5**

**Purchase price: \$3,370,603**





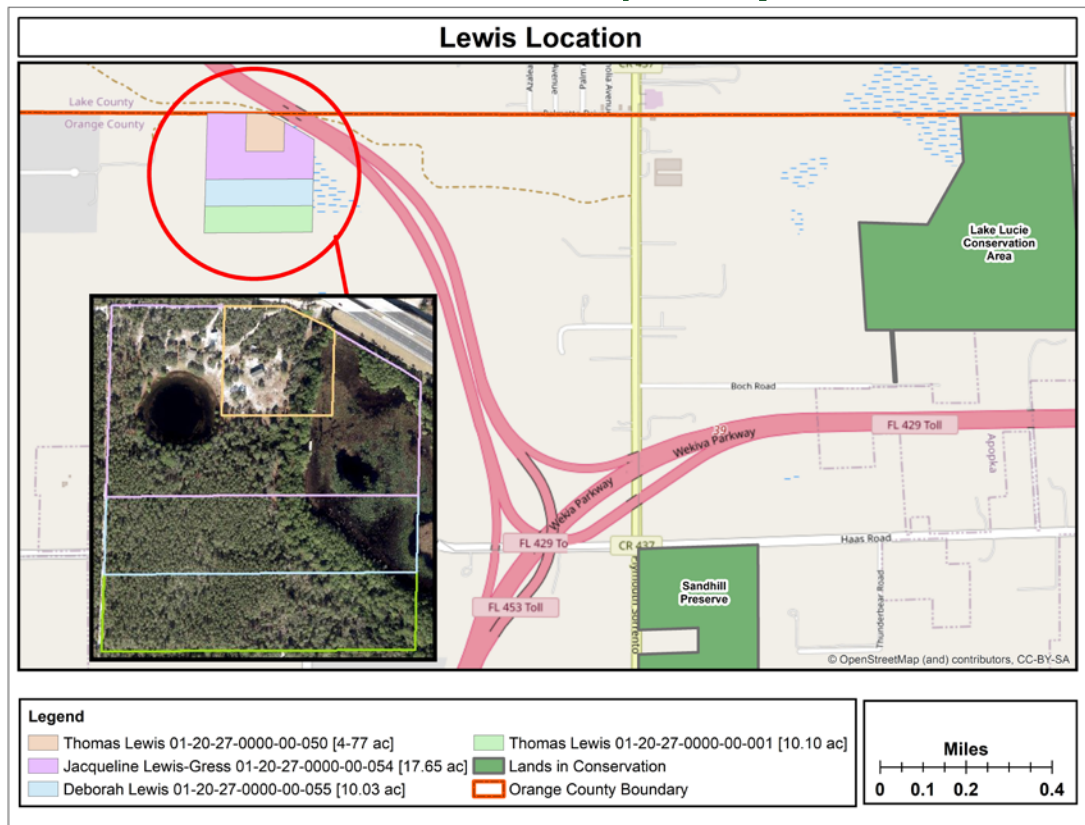
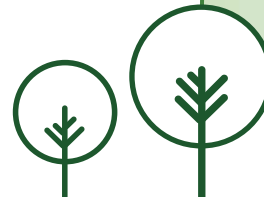
## 2022/2023 Acquisitions: Lewis Properties



**Acreage: 42.71**  
**Key Features:**

This acquisition is comprised of four parcels located in the northwest portion of Orange County and protects the unique and rapidly disappearing habitats of Scrub and Sandhill Lake. These parcels preserve the largest amount of Scrub habitat to date acquired through the Green PLACE Program. These parcels protect the habitats of Scrub, Sandhill Lake and Basin Marsh.

**District: 2**  
**Purchase price: \$1,485,000**





## 2022/2023 Acquisitions: Sible & Tardugno and Jack Reynolds



**Acreage: 55.47**

**Key Features:**

The preservation of these two parcels assists in the protection of wetlands that form the Long Branch tributary that eventually flows into the Econlockhatchee River, an Outstanding Florida Waterway. These parcels are directly adjacent to the County's Pine Lily Preserve and add to an existing ecological corridor of 9,000-plus-acre ecological corridor. This acquisition will allow for the expansion of the trail system on Pine Lily Preserve. These parcels protect the habitats of Mesic Flatwoods, Marshes and Mixed Hardwood Coniferous Swamps.

**District: 5**

**Purchase price: \$1,728,000**

