

What Does Wetland Restoration Mean in the Western Everglades from the NRCS Perspective?

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Wetlands Reserve Easement Program

Objectives: to protect, restore, and enhance the functions and values of wetland ecosystems to attain:

- **Habitat for migratory birds, other wetland-dependent wildlife, T&E species and species of concern.**
- **Protection and improvement of water quality.**
- **Attenuation of floodwater.**
- **Recharge of ground water.**
- **Protection and enhancement of open space and aesthetic quality.**
- **Protection of native flora and fauna contributing to the Nation's natural heritage.**
- **Contribution to educational and scientific scholarship.**



Wetlands Reserve Easement Program

Types:

- Permanent easements
- 30 – year easements



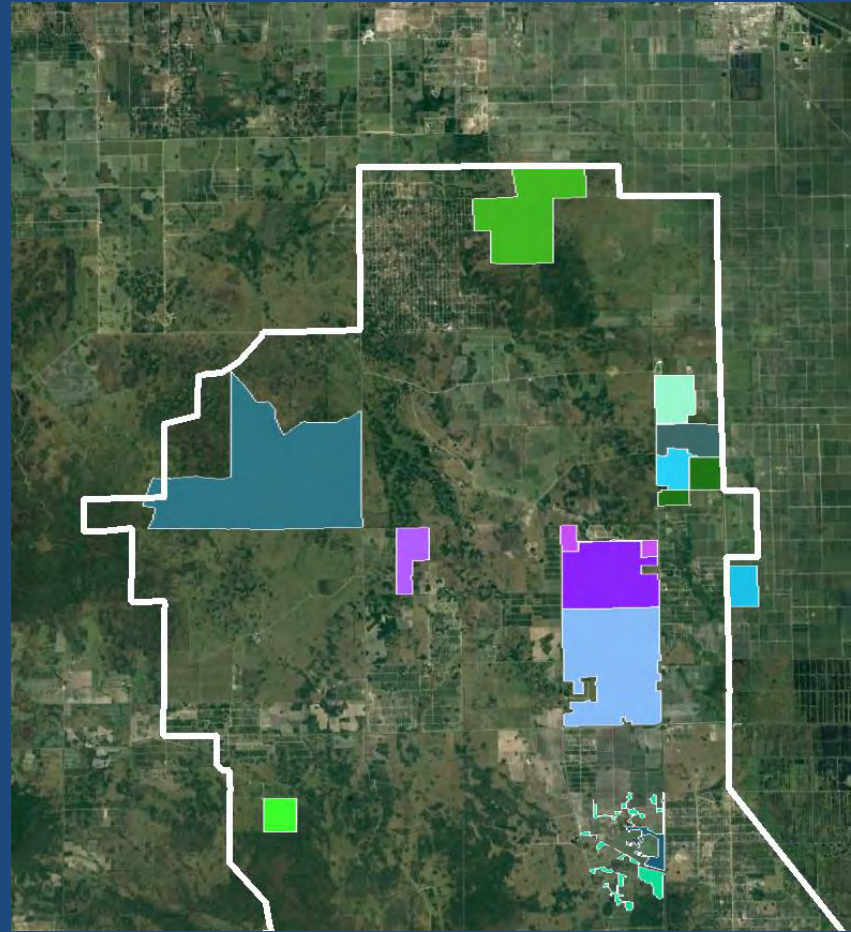
- Participation is voluntary.
- Funding is provided directly to the landowners for an easement.
- The land must have been a farmed or converted wetland prior to manipulation.
- The land must be able to be successfully and cost-effectively restored.
- The land must be under private or tribal ownership.

Wetlands Reserve Easement Program

Florida: 120 easements enrolled on 178,172 acres

WERP Area: 13 easements enrolled on 32,731 acres

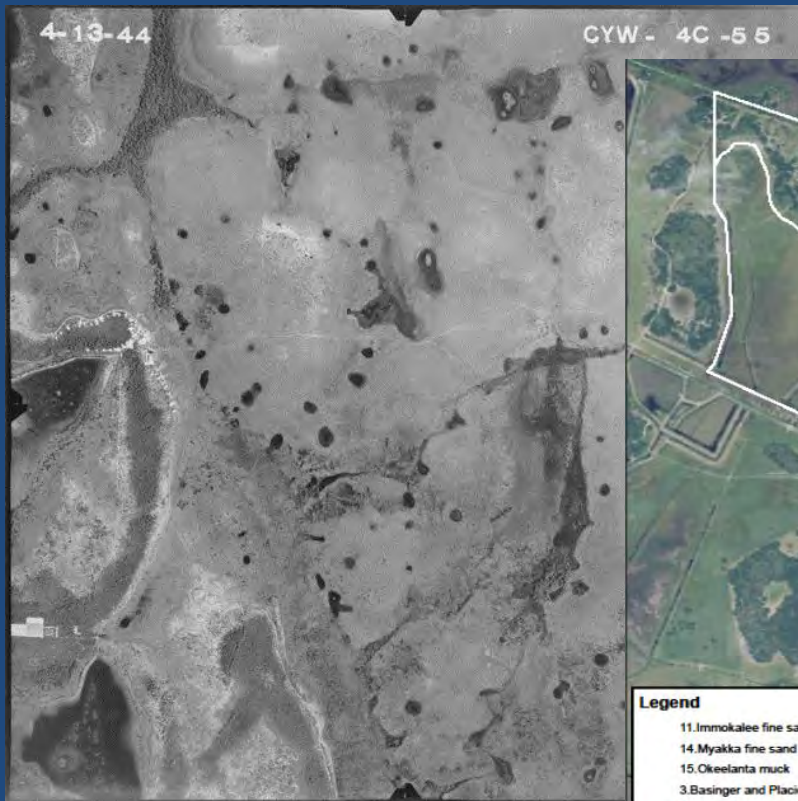
2016-2018 WERP Area Restoration: 30,941 acres



Restoration Objectives

Restore, protect, and enhance to the maximum extent practicable

Historic Aerials



Soils Maps



Historic Maps/Accounts



WRE Restoration

- Habitat components of the WRP area are restored to the historic condition to the extent practicable.
- Alternative habitat types can be restored on up to 30% of the easement area.

Restoration must:

- Reestablish native plant communities.
- Reestablish natural hydrological regimes.
- Maximize habitat for wetland-dependent species.
- Be cost effective.



Problems:

- Determining “historic” conditions and “average” conditions on the site
- Limitations on restoration due to offsite impacts
- Limitations on restoration due to perception of impacts

Opportunities:

- Wetland restoration on private lands
- High quality wetland systems
- Cattle grazing as a management practice
- Outreach

Objectives:

- Restore, protect, and enhance wetland systems to the maximum extent practicable

Questions?

