

Seminole Forever

Board of County Commissioners
Work Session



March 14, 2023

Work Session Outline*

1. Brief Review of Past Acquisition Efforts
2. Current Status, Needs and Opportunities
3. Draft Seminole Forever Proposed Ordinance

DISCLAIMER:

* Will Not Be Discussing Individual, Specific Privately-Owned Parcels at this Session

1990 Natural Lands Bond Referendum

SHOULD SEMINOLE COUNTY ACQUIRE AND PRESERVE NATURAL LANDS?

SEMINOLE COUNTY WILL HOLD A NATURAL LANDS REFERENDUM ON NOVEMBER 6, 1990. THIS REFERENDUM WILL DETERMINE IF COUNTY RESIDENTS SUPPORT THE USE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO PURCHASE AND PRESERVE IMPORTANT NATURAL LANDS.

WHY ACQUIRE LAND?

SEMINOLE COUNTY IS BLESSED WITH MANY NATURAL RESOURCES. THE ACQUISITION AND PRESERVATION OF THESE NATURAL/ENVIRONMENTAL LANDS WILL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS TO ENJOY OUR NATURAL FORESTS AND UNDISTURBED LANDS FOR PASSIVE RECREATION AND EDUCATIONAL USES.

WHAT LANDS WOULD BE ACQUIRED ?

EXAMPLES OF LAND WHICH MAY BE ACQUIRED INCLUDE LAND ALONG THE COUNTY'S RIVERS AND STREAMS SUCH AS THE WEKIVA RIVER, ECONLOCKHATCHEE RIVER, SAINT JOHNS RIVER, LAKE JESUP, SPRING HAMMOCK AND THE CENTRAL FLORIDA ZOO AREA.

HOW WILL LANDS BE SELECTED FOR ACQUISITION?

A NATURAL LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF COUNTY RESIDENTS WILL BE FORMED TO RECOMMEND PROPERTIES FOR ACQUISITION. ACQUISITION WOULD BE THROUGH VOLUNTARY SALE BY PROPERTY OWNERS.

HOW MUCH WILL THE PROGRAM COST?

THE REFERENDUM , IF APPROVED, WOULD ALLOW FOR UP TO 1/4 MIL AD VALORUM ASSESSMENT OVER A TWENTY YEAR PERIOD. THIS ASSESSMENT COULD PROVIDE \$20.28 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE PURCHASE OF NATURAL LANDS. THE COST TO THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER (WITH A \$75,000 HOME AND \$25,000 HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION) IS APPROXIMATELY \$12.00 PER YEAR.

PLEASE VOTE NOVEMBER 6

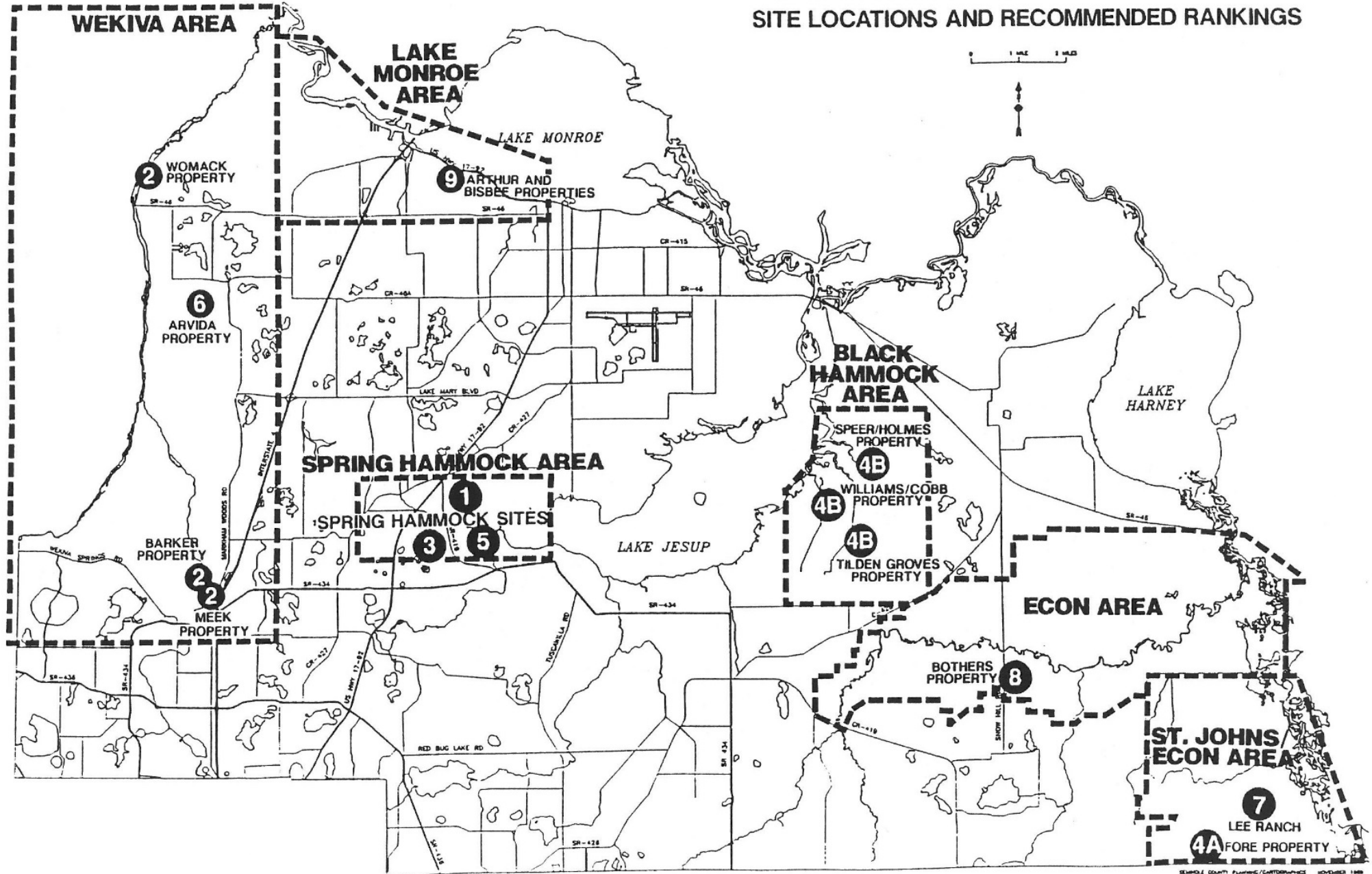
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT THE SEMINOLE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT, 321-1130, EXTENSION 7367.

Original Bond Referendum Process & Timeline

- ▶ **Nov 6, 1990:** 20 Year (.25 Mill) - Passed
- ▶ **Nov 1990:** BCC Establishes Advisory Committee
- ▶ **June 1991:** Committee sets goals, objectives and evaluation standards
- ▶ **July 1991:** BCC approves site evaluation criteria and ranking procedures
- ▶ **Feb 1992:** Site evals and rankings completed for applications received
- ▶ **Mar 1992:** BCC approves initial recommendations to initiate acquisition

NATURAL LANDS PROGRAM

SITE LOCATIONS AND RECOMMENDED RANKINGS





Natural Lands Program Mission Statement

The preservation and management of natural areas within Seminole County to enhance or promote biodiversity, corridors, water resources, environmental education and passive resource-based recreation for existing and future generations.

Natural Lands Acquisition Program History

Acquisition Criteria Development

Utilized State Conservation and Recreational Lands Program (CARL) standards; SJRWMD Save Our Rivers Program; to enhance partnership opportunities

Natural Lands Acquisition Program History

Site Ranking Process

1. Site's **vulnerability** to development and the willingness of a seller (if known);
2. Diversity of species, and the **completeness** and condition of the habitat;
3. The **rarity** or abundance of a given habitat or identification of significant animal or plant species;
4. The long-range **manageability** of a site (can the habitat be managed or restored to its natural state);
5. The degree to which a site is **connected** to existing natural systems and may provide a habitat corridor;
6. The **use potential** for passive recreation or education
7. Other **special considerations** such as high public interest or available matching funds

Natural Lands Acquisition Program History

Acquisition Considerations

1. Acquisition dollars should be **distributed** throughout the County
2. **Joint acquisition** should be pursued in areas with State or regional significance or other areas where available;
3. Partial **donation/bargain** sales if offered should be brought by the County for evaluation by the Committee;
4. Ranked properties which face the **imminent threat** of development should be brought by the County for re-evaluation by the Committee;
5. Unique or **special circumstances** such as a significant public interest project should be brought to the Committee for evaluation.

Natural Lands Acquisition Program History

Bond Referenda Summary

- ▶ **November 1990 - 20 Year (.25 Mill)**
\$20M Natural Lands **Passed – 60.1% Yes**
- ▶ **November 2000 (.25 Mill)**
\$5M Natural Lands
\$20M Trails Bond **Passed – 57.4% Yes**
- ▶ **November 2006 – 10 Year (.2 Mill)**
50% for Natural Lands Acquisition
50% for Trails & Bridges **Failed – 51.2% No**

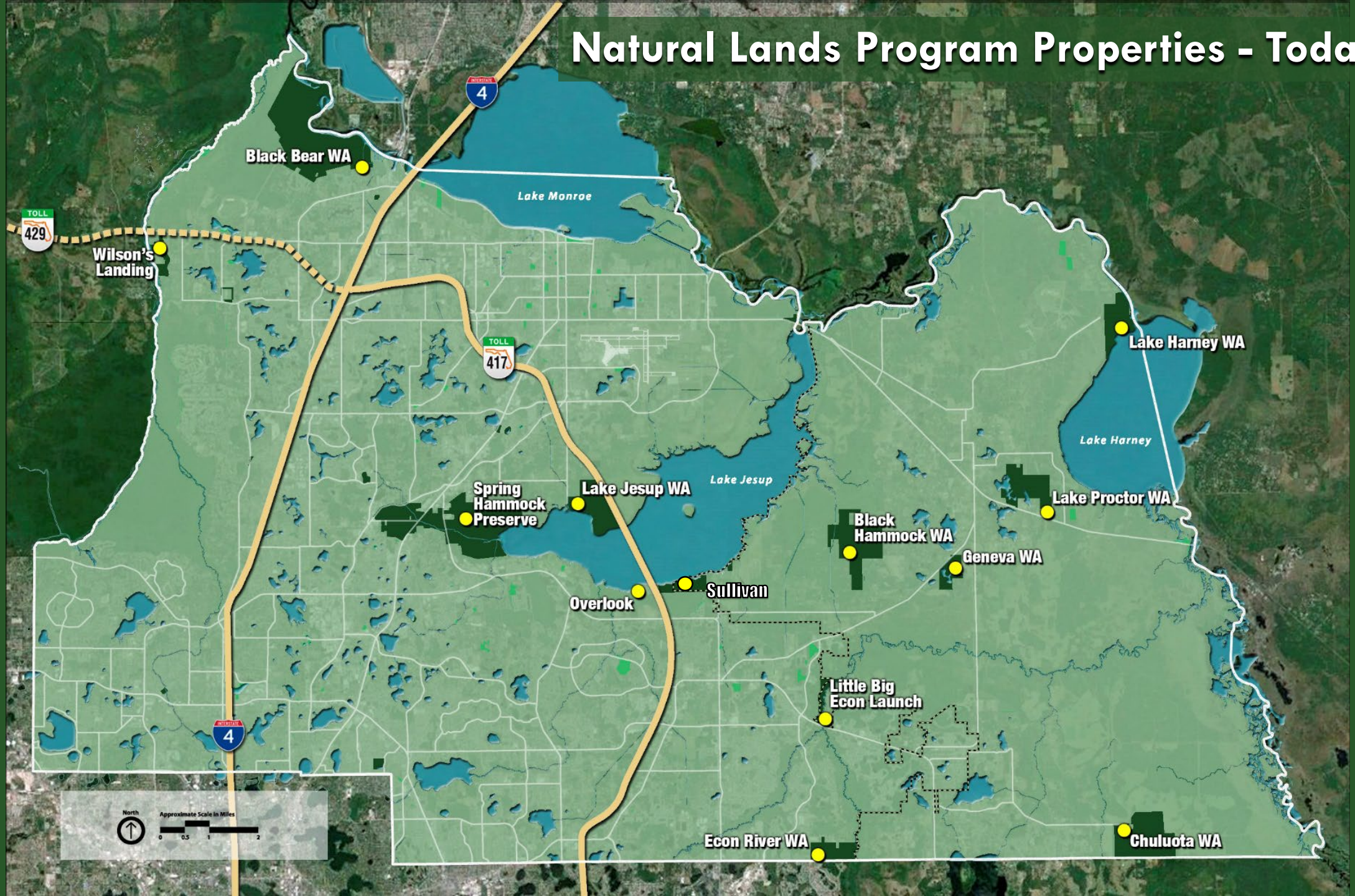
Summary of Past Natural Lands Acquisition & Protection Efforts

- ▶ **1992:** Developed an **ordinance** to regulate the use of the Natural Lands Program properties (passive recreation);
- ▶ **2008:** Updated the County's Future Land Use (FLU) map to reflect Preserved Managed Lands, created with the intent to preserve open space, water resources and significant natural areas;
- ▶ **2021:** Changed the zoning to Public Lands and Institutions (PLI) which limits the allowed uses to public parks, parkways, and preserves;
- ▶ **2021:** Protection Ordinance passed to require a supermajority vote by the Board to dispose of Natural Lands/Preserve lands. A supermajority vote by the Board is also required to amend or invalidate such an ordinance.

2. Current Status



Natural Lands Program Properties - Today



Natural Lands Program Summary

Black Bear Wilderness Area (Open)	1645 acres
Black Hammock Wilderness Area (Open)	711 acres
Chuluota Wilderness Area (Open)	620 acres
Econ River Wilderness Area (Open)	240 acres
Geneva Wilderness Area (Open)	183 acres
Lake Harney Wilderness Area (Open)	363 acres
Lake Jesup Wilderness Area (Open)	481 acres
Lake Proctor Wilderness Area (Open)	477 acres
Lee Tract (Open for canoe/kayak launching)	118 acres
Spring Hammock Preserve (Open)	1495 acres
Sullivan Tract (No access, preservation only)	186.7 acres
Wilson's Landing (Open)	110 acres
Total Acreage	6629.7 acres

6,629.7 Acres Protected

- 12 sites open for public access
- Containing critical habitat and wildlife
- Hiking, equestrian, canoeing, mountain biking, camping, etc.

Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

SC Nat Lands (Ac.)

6,630



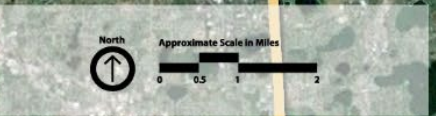
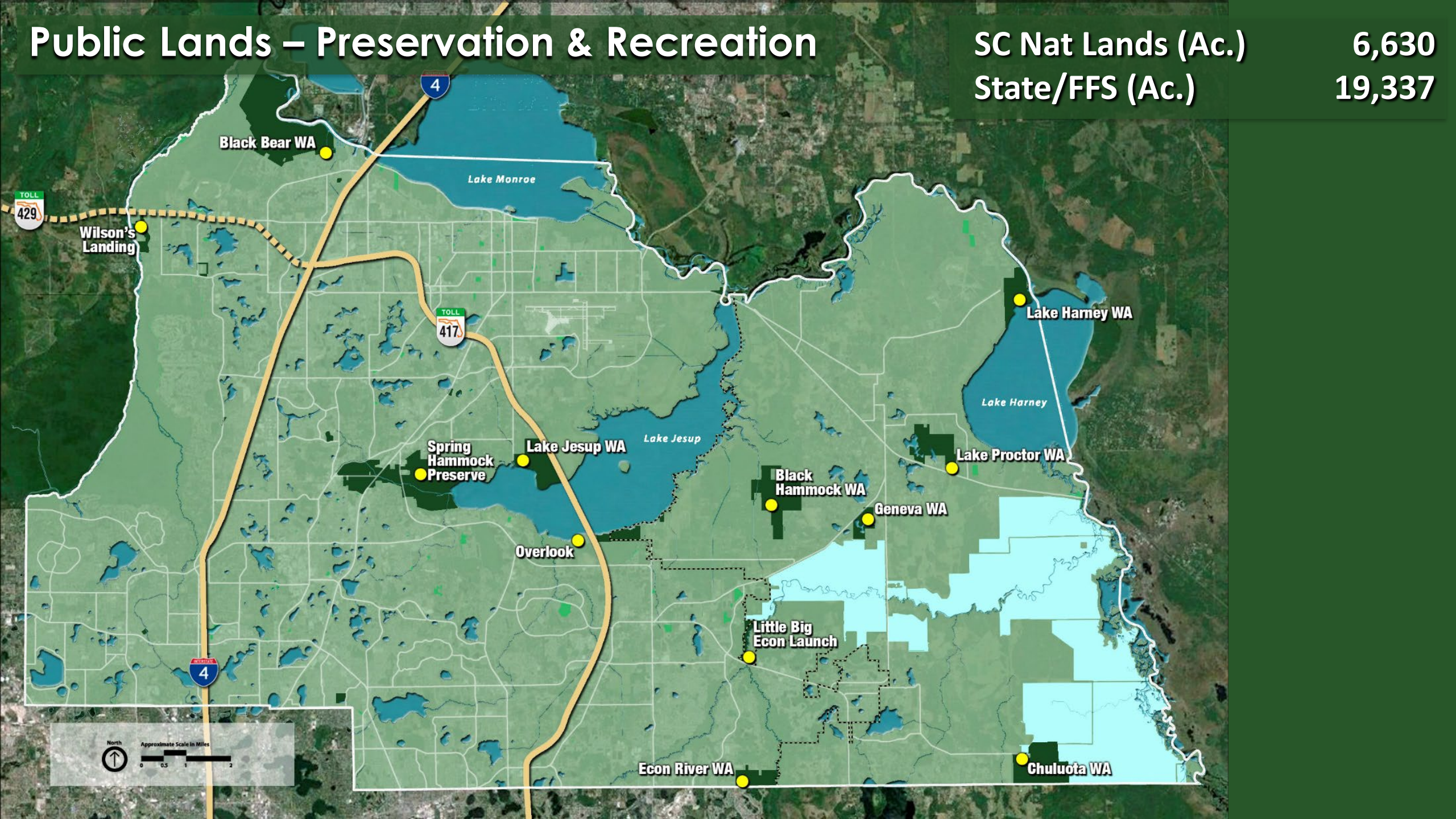
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

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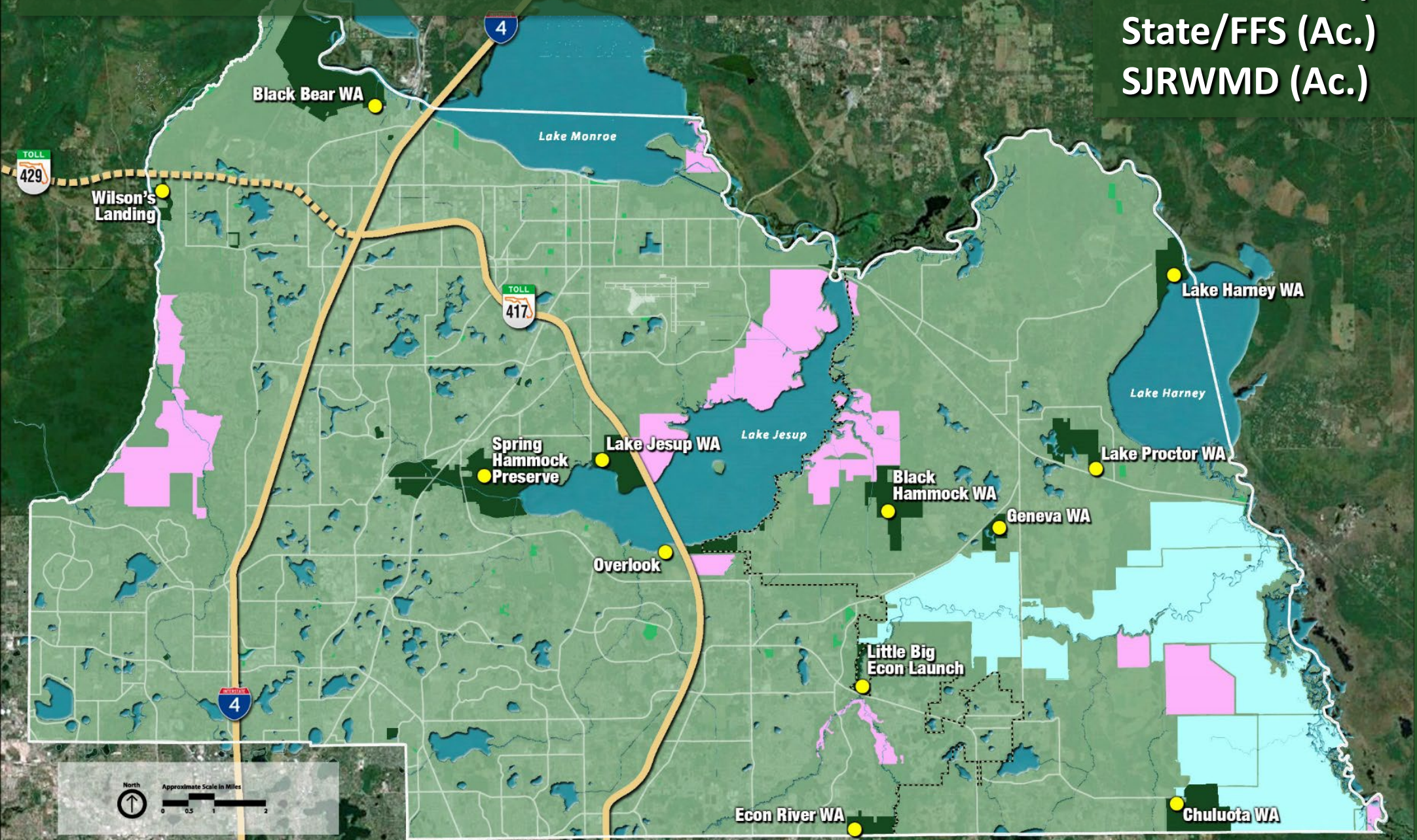
State/FFS (Ac.)

19,337



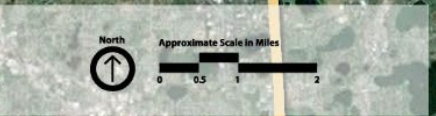
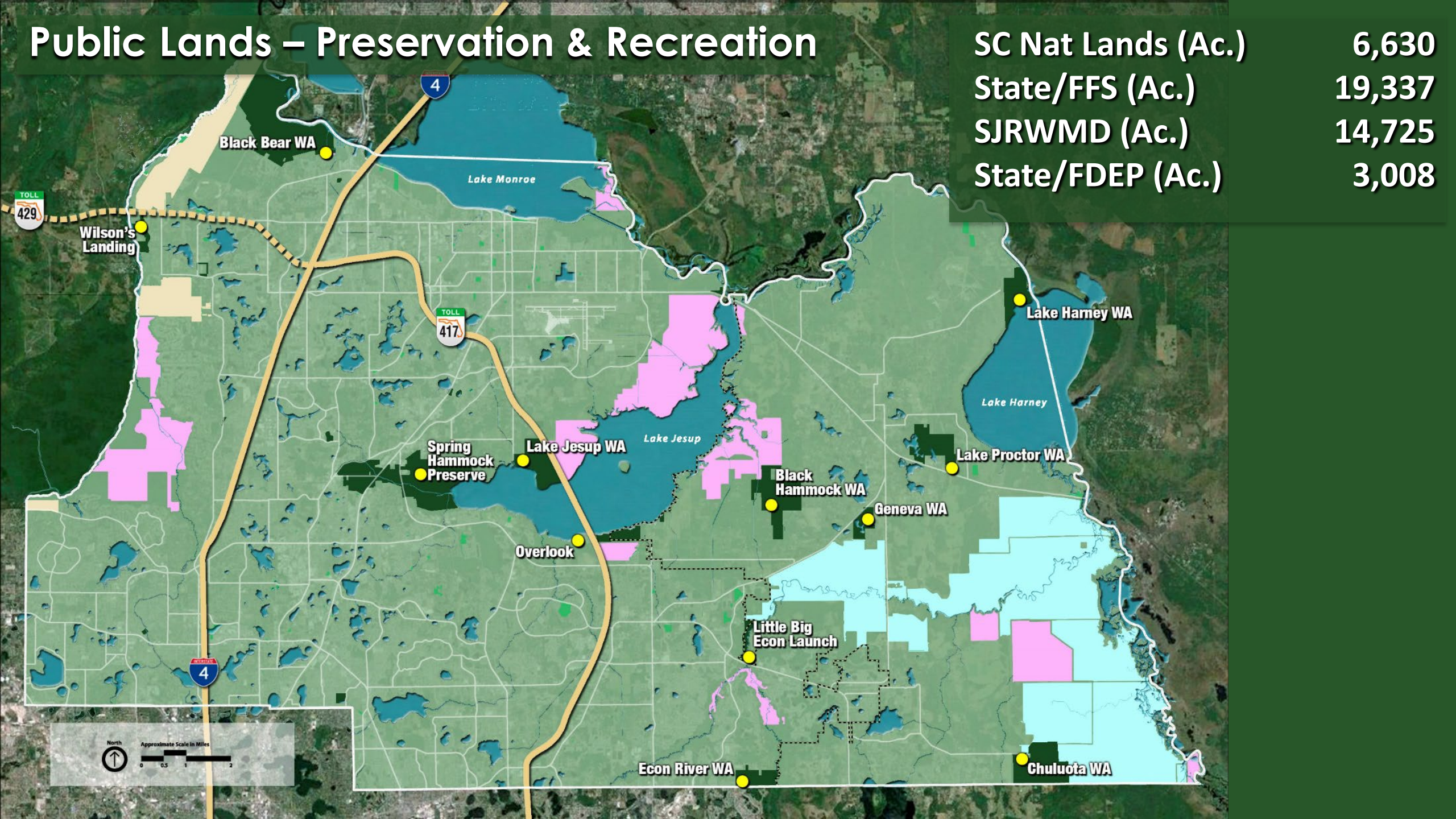
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

SC Nat Lands (Ac.)	6,630
State/FFS (Ac.)	19,337
SJRWMD (Ac.)	14,725



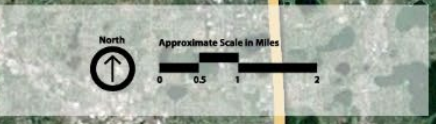
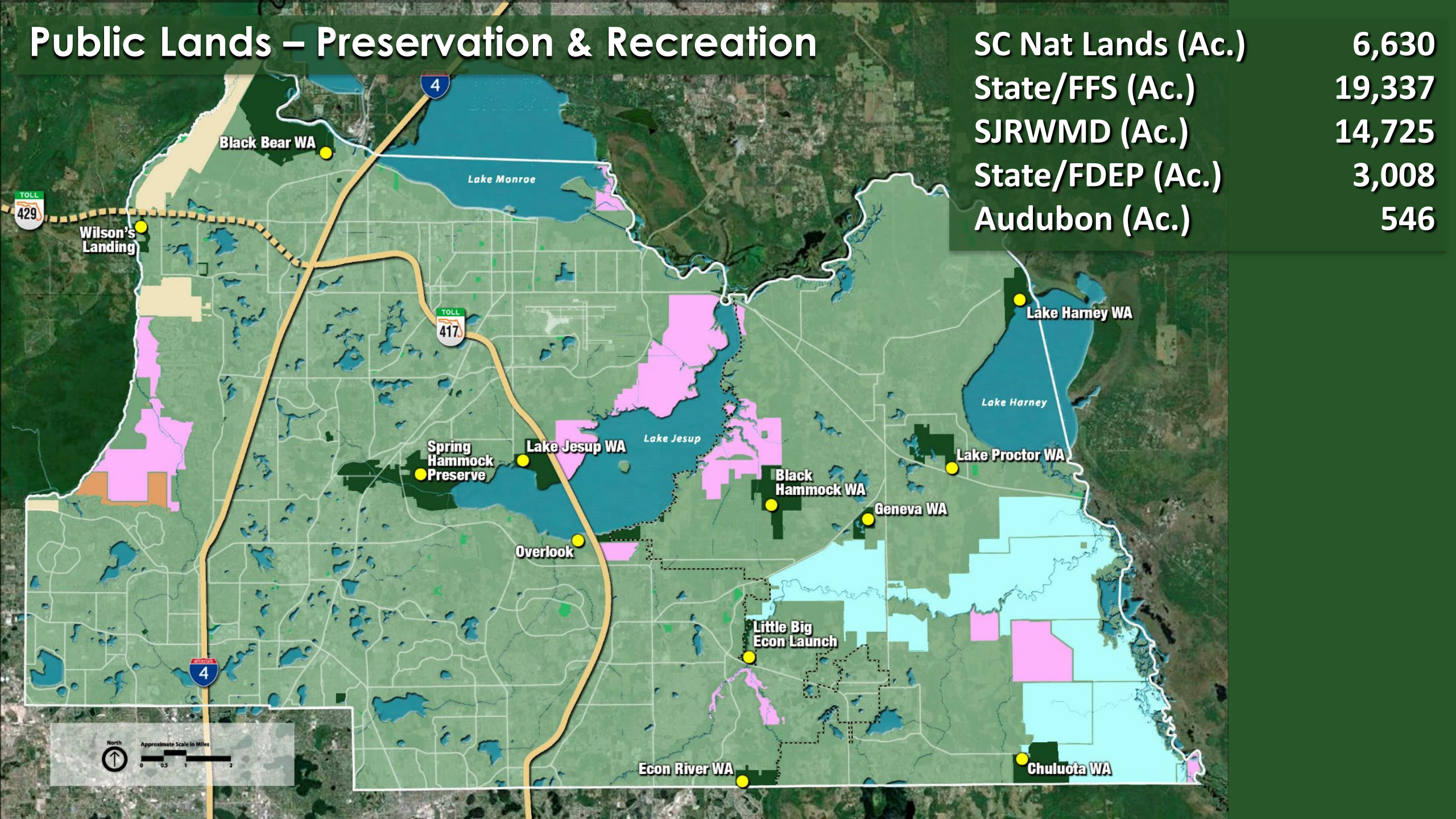
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

SC Nat Lands (Ac.)	6,630
State/FFS (Ac.)	19,337
SJRWMD (Ac.)	14,725
State/FDEP (Ac.)	3,008



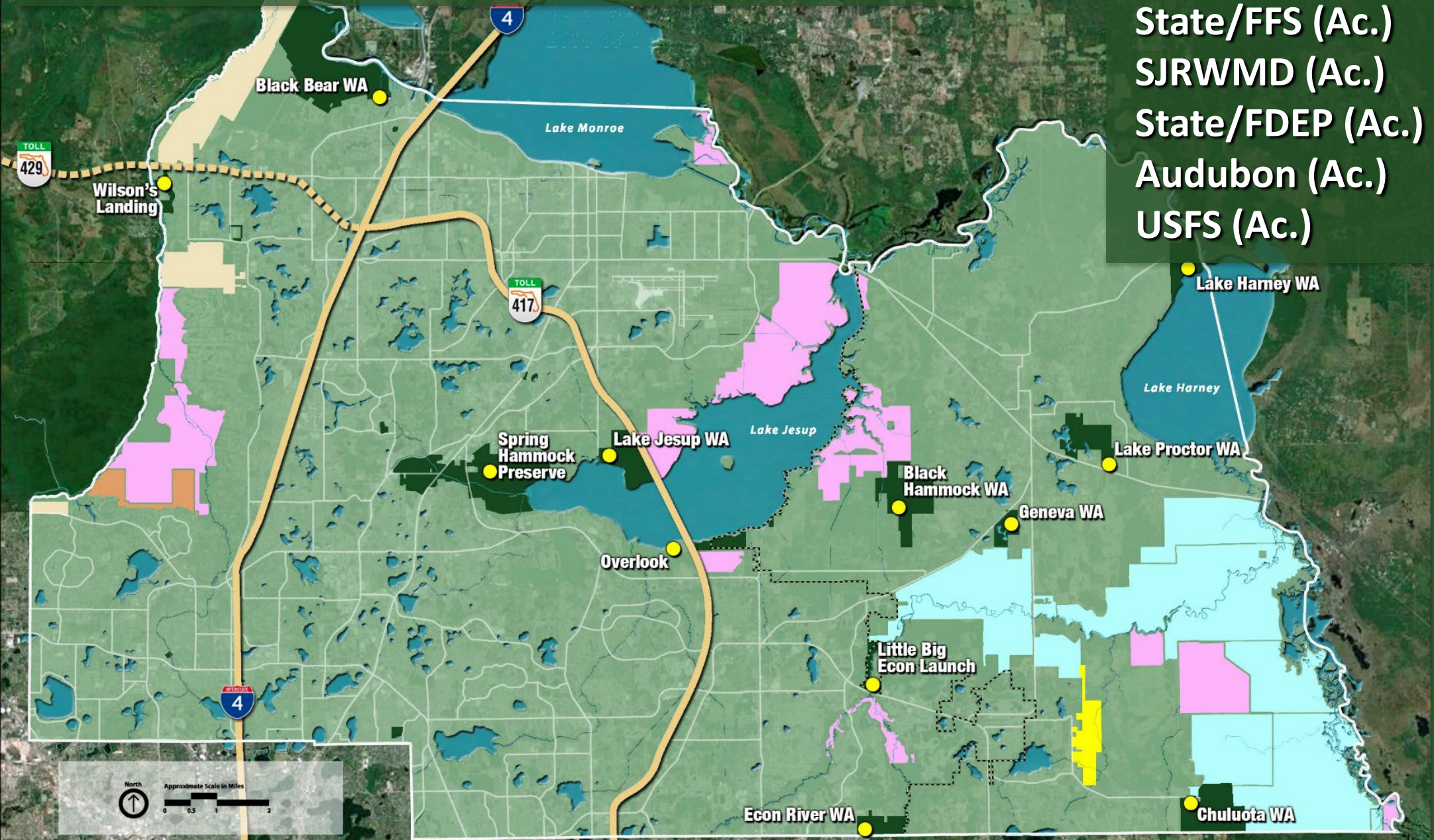
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

SC Nat Lands (Ac.)	6,630
State/FFS (Ac.)	19,337
SJRWMD (Ac.)	14,725
State/FDEP (Ac.)	3,008
Audubon (Ac.)	546

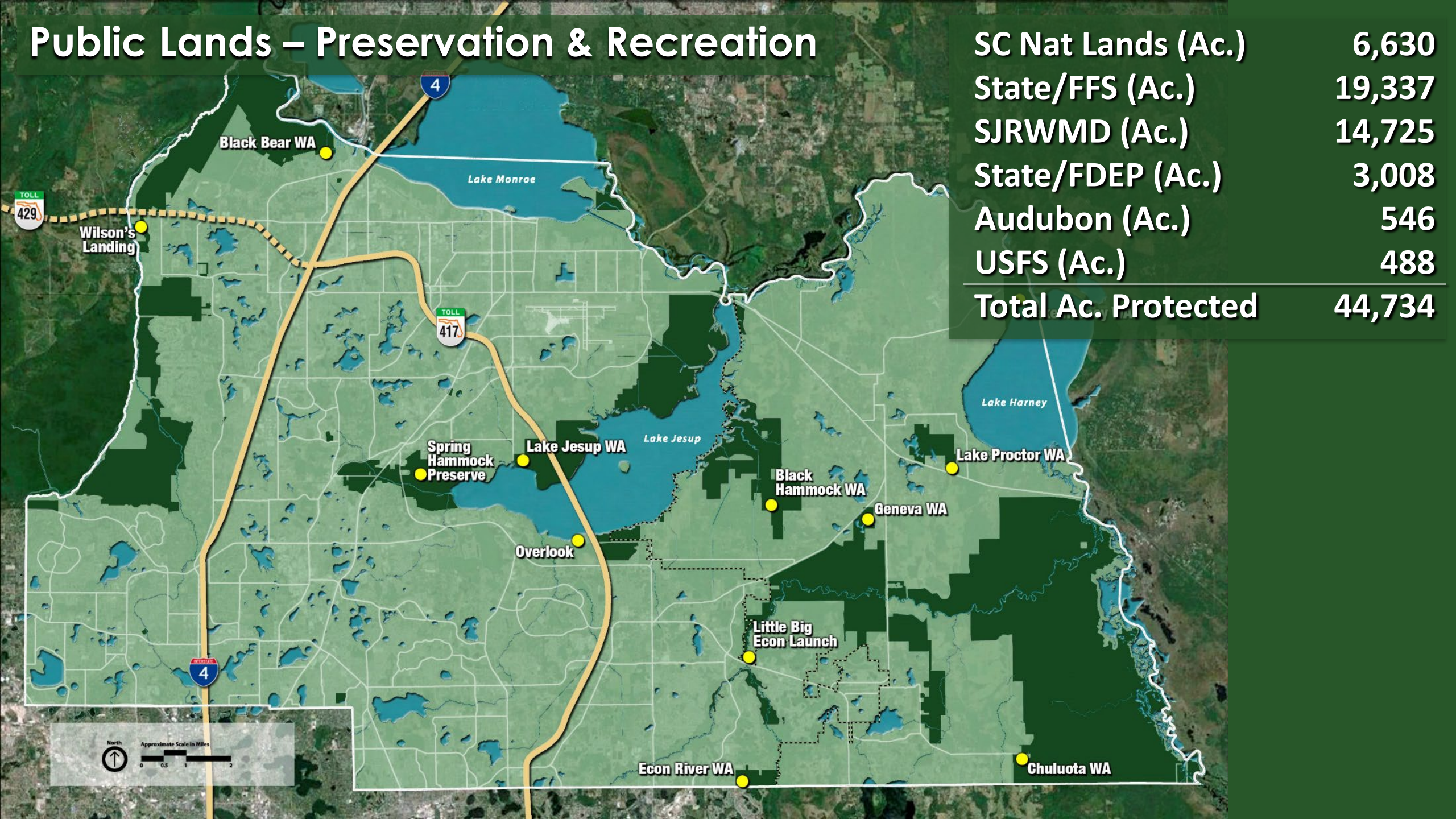


Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

SC Nat Lands (Ac.)	6,630
State/FFS (Ac.)	19,337
SJRWMD (Ac.)	14,725
State/FDEP (Ac.)	3,008
Audubon (Ac.)	546
USFS (Ac.)	488



Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation



SC Nat Lands (Ac.)	6,630
State/FFS (Ac.)	19,337
SJRWMD (Ac.)	14,725
State/FDEP (Ac.)	3,008
Audubon (Ac.)	546
USFS (Ac.)	488
Total Ac. Protected	44,734

Black Bear WA

Wilson's Landing

Spring Hammock Preserve

Lake Jesup WA

Black Hammock WA

Lake Proctor WA

Geneva WA

Overlook

Little Big Econ Launch

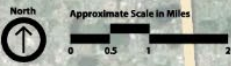
Econ River WA

Chuluota WA

Lake Monroe

Lake Jesup

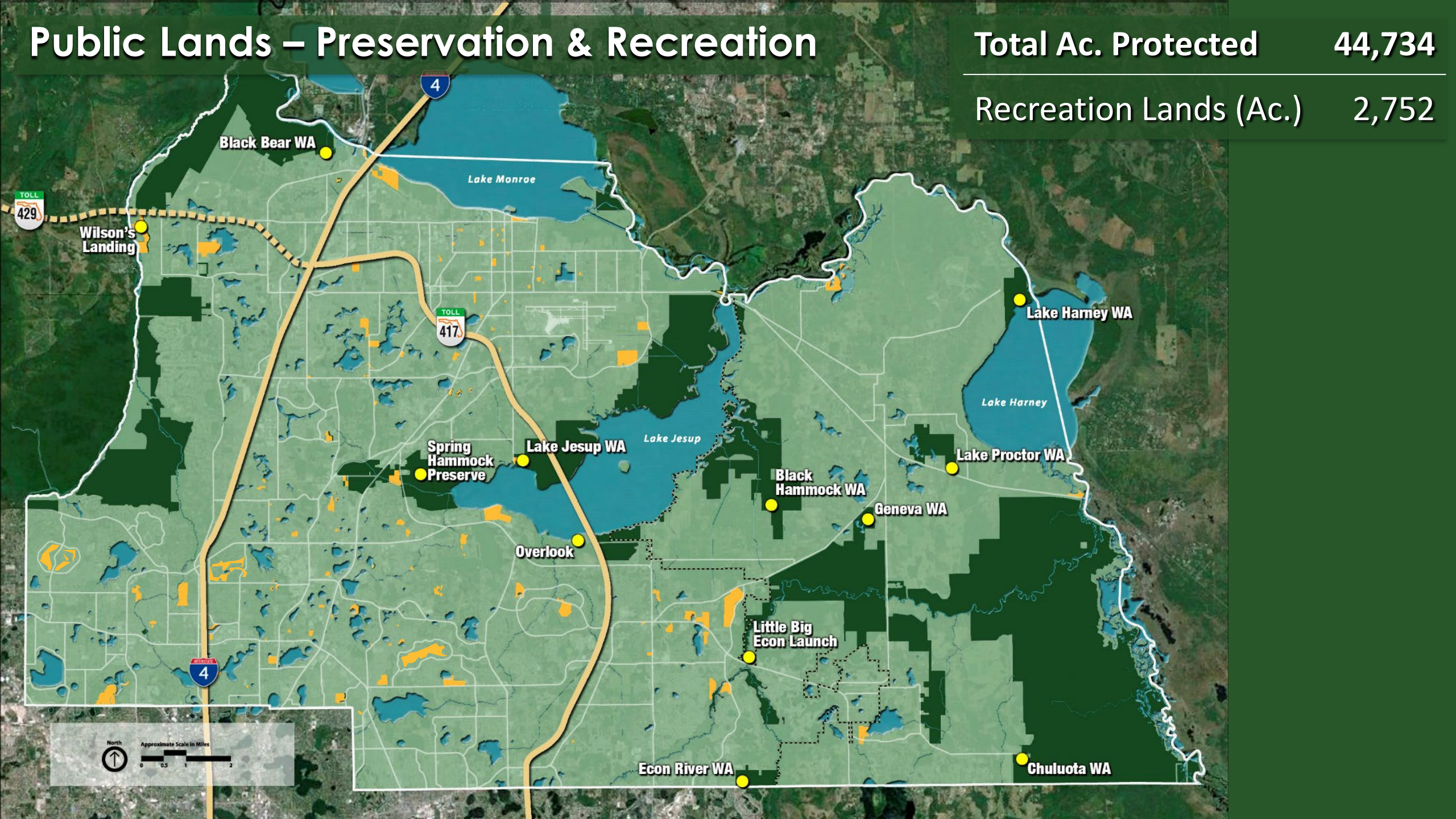
Lake Harney



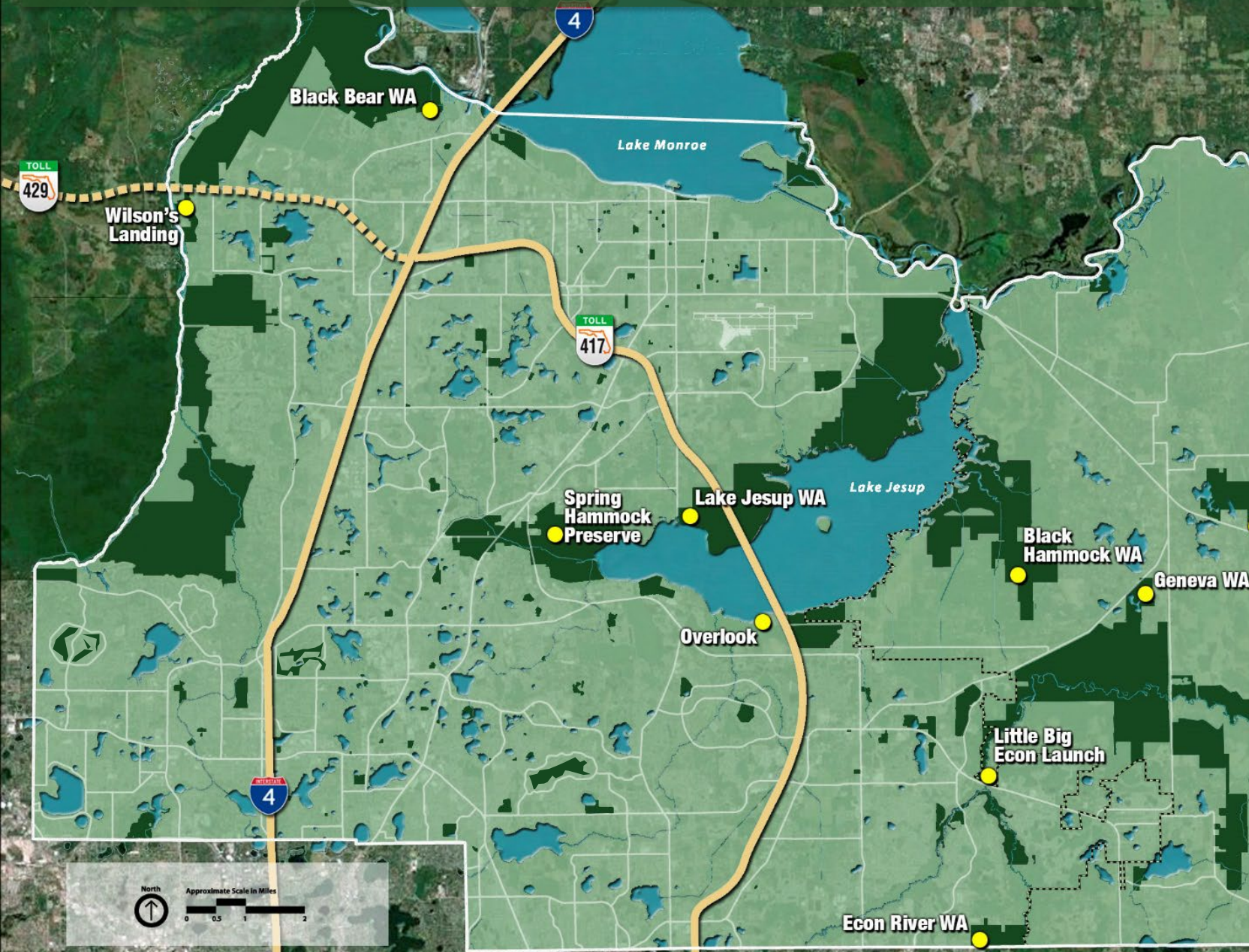
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation

Total Ac. Protected 44,734

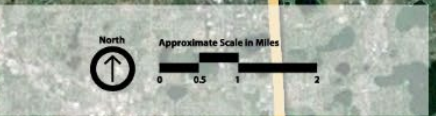
Recreation Lands (Ac.) 2,752



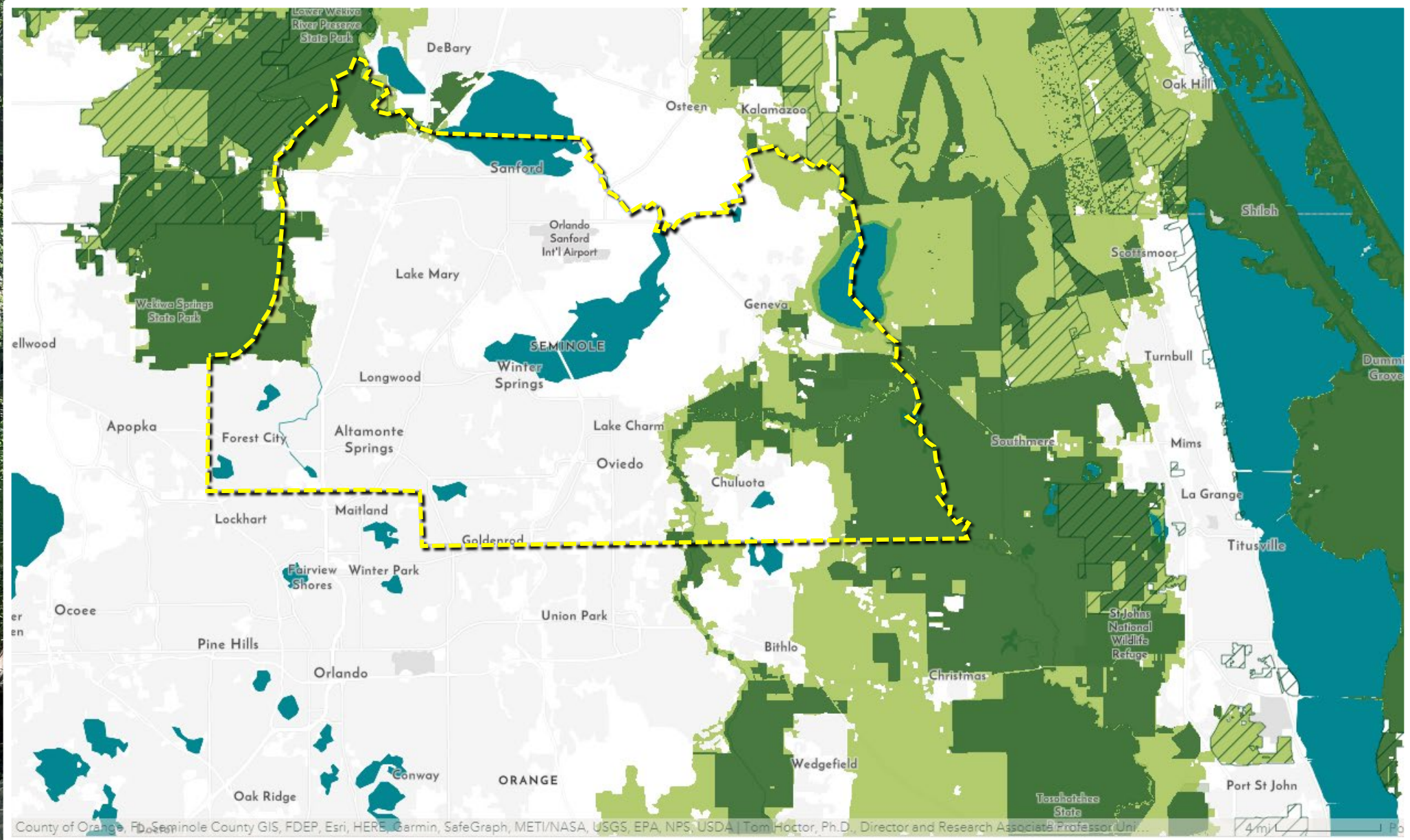
Public Lands – Preservation & Recreation



Total Ac. Protected	44,734
Recreation Lands (Ac.)	2,752
Total Acres	47,486
Recreation/Protected (State, County, Municipal)	
County Total Acres	220,160
Total % Recreation/Preservation	21.6%
Water Bodies (Ac.) (Not included in total – all not accessible to public)	29,485



Critical Wildlife and Ecological Corridors Maps



2023 Parks System Master Plan



Current Status, Needs & Opportunities Summary

- ▶ **1. No additional funding available in Natural Lands Bond Program for new natural lands acquisition;**
- ▶ **2. Need for additional parks and/or open space in the urbanized areas as the County's population continues to grow;**
 - a) Envision 2045 process;
 - b) Leisure Services Telephone Surveys 2014, 2019
 - c) Trails Master Plan 2021
- ▶ **3. Need for potential acquisitions within the rural boundary area;**
 - a) Envision 2045 process;
 - b) Anecdotal discussions/public comment during BCC meetings;
- ▶ **4. 2023 Parks and Natural Lands System Master Plan;**
 - a) Will identify need areas based on desired levels of service within urbanized and rural areas;
 - b) Public engagement meetings to be scheduled;
 - c) New statistically significant telephone survey to be completed;
 - d) Identify opportunities for possible future expansion of existing facilities (parks, natural lands, etc.) to meet current and future needs;
 - e) Prioritization of projects and future investment into the current and future system;
 - f) Identification of funding alternatives and opportunities.

3. Seminole Forever Proposal



Seminole Forever – Chapter 190 Parks & Recreation

- 190.201 Legislative Intent/Use of Acquired Lands by the Public
- 190.202 Definitions
- 190.203 The Use of an Advisory Board and its Purpose
- 190.204 Partnerships: Nonprofits and Local Community Involvement
- 190.205 The Leisure Services Department Acts as Liaison
- 190.206 Duties of ARC and Leisure Services
- 190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever
- 190.208 Property Eligible for Acquisition and Management
- 190.209 Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition
- 190.210 Increased Priority Criteria for Acquisition
- 190.211 Five-year Acquisition Plan
- 190.212 Land Selection Process
- 190.213 Post-Acquisition Management and Property Improvements
- 190.214 Alternatives to Fee Simple Acquisition
- 190.215 Supermajority Required to Change Any Part of Ordinance

190.201 Legislative Intent/Use of Acquired Lands by the Public

The **purpose** is to establish regulations relating to the acquisition of properties, acquired through Seminole Forever:

- ▶ The County commits to the acquisition and management of public lands provided for ecological protection, preservation, and recreation for the enjoyment of present and future citizens.
- ▶ As part of the efforts to maintain and uphold the County's natural character, the County commits to fund its own acquisition program, Seminole Forever.
- ▶ Seminole Forever aims to identify and acquire lands to protect its water resources, natural communities, wildlife and to provide additional greenspace and recreational opportunities.

190.202 Definitions

- ARC
- Board
- Buffer Land
- Environmentally Sensitive Lands
- Leisure Services
- Natural Lands
- Passive Recreation
- Preservation Only Lands
- Program
- Recreation Lands
- Super Majority Vote

190.203 Use of an Advisory Board and its Purpose

(a) CREATION:

- Create the Acquisition and Recovery Committee (ARC)

(b) PURPOSE:

- Provide input and suggestions to the BCC through Leisure Services;
- Create the criteria for selecting properties for acquisition

(c) APPOINTMENT, QUALIFICATION, AND COMPENSATION:

- ARC will consist of five (5) voting members selected from PPAC by the BCC, one by each Commissioner;
- ARC may also consist of nonvoting ex-officio members from agencies (ex: FDEP, SJRWMD, FWC, etc.) local citizen advisory organizations, nonprofits, and statewide land preservation and conservation groups;
- Each member serves a two-year term to run concurrently with the calendar year;
- ARC members will receive no compensation for their services.

190.203 Partnerships: Nonprofits and Local Community Involvement

- ▶ Continue to seek partnerships with nonprofit groups and join in cooperative efforts
- ▶ ARC and Leisure Services shall continue to seek volunteers from the community

190.203 The Leisure Services Department Acts as Liaison

Leisure Services Department will act as a liaison between ARC and the County, providing ARC's input and suggestions to the BCC

190.204 Duties of ARC and Leisure Services

ARC and **Leisure Services** shall make recommendations of properties suitable for purchase and that advance the goals of Seminole Forever. Leisure Services, shall assist ARC with the following:

- (a) Call for land nominations;
- (b) Review completed applications and visit eligible sites;
- (c) Create property evaluation reports;
- (d) Determine whether properties qualify for acquisition according to specified criteria;
- (e) Initiate appraisals and title reports and confirm prices and funding;
- (f) Present selected properties and contracts to the Board for approval;
- (g) Pursue grants that can be used to acquire and restore natural lands

190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever

- a) **Annual funding appropriation:** Funding shall be segregated by Resource Management as a separate fund, maintained in trust by the Board, solely for the purposes to advance the goals of Seminole Forever, and shall not be commingled with any other County funds.
- b) **Allocate six percent of the General Fund:** From non-ad valorem revenues but excluding grants, charges for services, and transfers. May also use Tourism Development funds to the extent the law allows. Any use of the TDT shall require approval of the Tourism Development Council and review by the County Attorney's Office.
- c) **Funding will be reevaluated every year:** If expenditures are estimated to be greater than revenues for a given year, the Board shall not contribute County funds for that year. Does not preclude the County from continuing the program using funds from grants, matching funds, and donations, nor will it preclude the County from continuing to manage already acquired properties.

190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever (continued)

- d) **Revenues are based on actual revenues collected in the last completed, audited fiscal year.** The Resource Management Department, under the County Manager's discretion, must perform the calculation.
- e) **BCC may issue bonds for special purposes related to conservation.** Includes bonds to acquire lands that would otherwise be unattainable.
- f) **CIP Funding:** Dedicated funding will be allocated towards capital improvement projects of newly acquired lands. Any additional funding may be used towards the management of currently held natural lands

190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever (continued)

General Fund Non-Ad Valorem Revenues

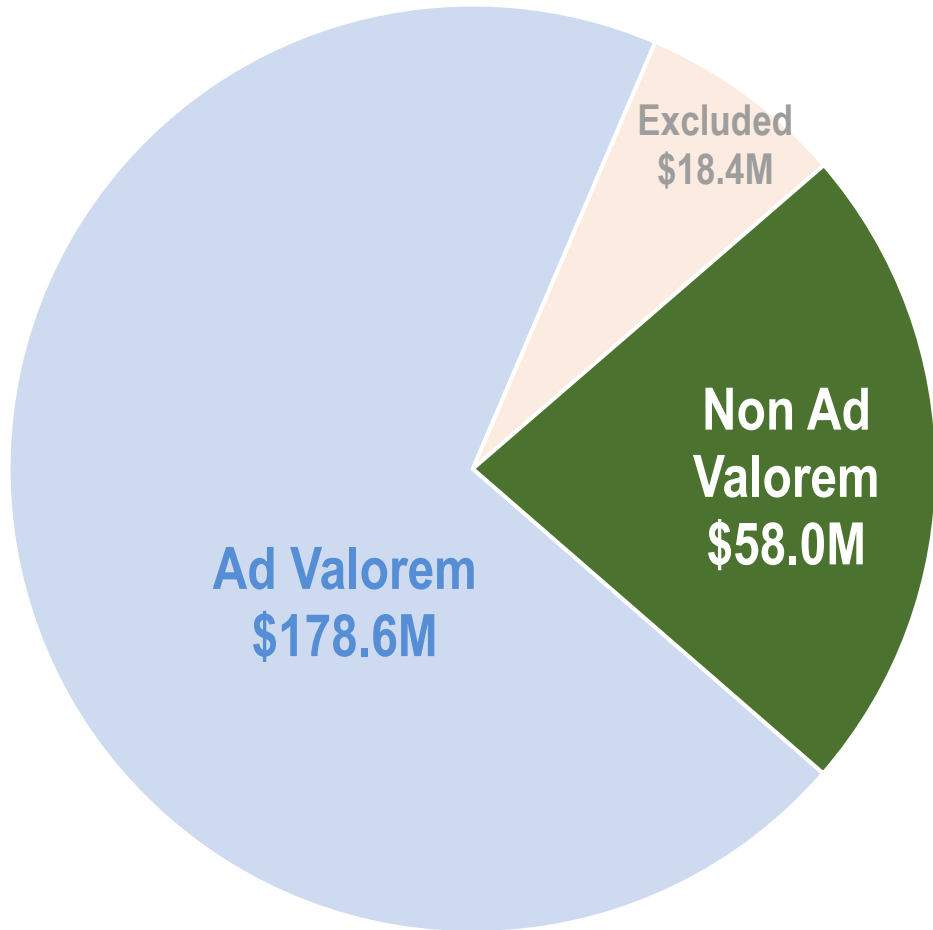
- General Fund Sales Taxes
- Utility Taxes
- Communication Service Tax
- Excludes Ad Valorem, Service Charges, Grants, & Transfers
- Calculated Based on Last full Fiscal Year Collections

Other Funding Sources

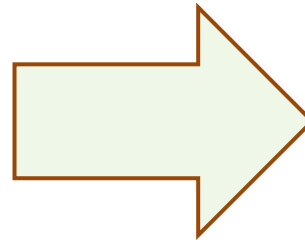
- Dedicated Millage
- Local Infrastructure Sales Tax
- Impact Fee

190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever (continued)

General Fund Non-Ad Valorem Revenues



Total FY21 Revenues \$255.0M



% Non Ad Valorem	Amount Generated	% Total Revenue
1%	\$ 0.6M	0.2%
2%	\$ 1.2M	0.5%
3%	\$ 1.7M	0.7%
4%	\$ 2.3M	0.9%
5%	\$ 2.9M	1.1%
6%	\$ 3.5M	1.4%
7%	\$ 4.1M	1.6%

190.207 Dedicated Funding of Seminole Forever (continued)

Other Funding Sources

Dedicated Millage

- \$43M value of one mill FY23

Millage	Amount Generated
0.03	\$ 1.3M
0.05	\$ 2.2M
0.08	\$ 3.5M
0.10	\$ 4.3M
0.12	\$ 5.2M
1.00	\$ 43.2M

Local Infrastructure Sales Tax

- \$90M Countywide Collection

Agency	3 rd Gen %	Amount
County	55.6%	\$ 50.0M
Cities	19.4%	\$ 17.4M
School Board	25.0%	\$ 22.5M
TOTAL	100.0%	\$ 89.9M

Impact Fees

190.208 Property Eligible for Acquisition and Management

- Natural lands
- Preservation only lands
- Environmentally sensitive lands
- Recreation lands
- Buffer lands
- Less-than-fee simple conservation easements
- Properties available under a joint acquisition process

190.209 Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition

- Funding must be spent only on acquisitions that qualify;
- ARC and Leisure Services shall collaborate to create criteria for acquisition;
- Meeting the preset criteria does not automatically qualify a parcel for the program;
- ARC and Leisure Services must exercise discretion in parcel qualification but also whether the parcel will go before the BCC for recommendation.

190.210 Increased Priority for Acquisition

- a) Provide long-term protection for threatened or endangered species;
- b) Provide public land in an underserved community;
- c) Matching funds from other sources that will help acquire the property;
- d) A sale price below appraised value.

190.211 Five-Year Acquisition Plan

- Leisure Services, with input from ARC, shall create a five-year acquisition plan;
- Update the list annually providing an annual update to the BCC;
- Evaluate if a particular property has increased in priority by meeting other criteria;
- County can purchase any property that has increased in priority sooner than originally anticipated.

190.212 Land Selection Process

(a) **Nomination Process** – lands can be proposed by:

- Any government entity;
- Conservation organization;
- Corporation;
- Individuals, including County staff;
- Reviewed on a first-come, first-serve basis;
- Establish deadlines for consideration;
- Shall periodically inform the public of the open process for accepting nominations.

b) **Acceptance of Nomination** - Each application must include the following:

- (1) Property location and ownership (Street address, parcel identification # or identifying information);
- (2) Permission to conduct a site visit;
- (3) A signed willing-seller statement;
- (4) Approximate property size and existing designation on applicable future land use and zoning maps;
- (5) Generalized description of the property and the reason the County should buy it.

190.212 Land Selection Process (continued)

- c) **Initial Review of Proposals:** Leisure Service's staff shall review the application;
- d) **Evaluating Site by Criteria:** Must meet preset criteria County staff shall create evaluation reports showing whether the property conforms to Seminole Forever's goals. Priority will be given to acquisitions that achieve a combination of conservation goals, including improving water resource and natural groundwater recharge and providing recreation opportunities;
- e) **From County Staff to ARC:** County staff must provide an eligibility-evaluation report on nominated properties at any open, public meeting of ARC. County staff shall provide property owners notice for hearings to provide owners another opportunity to provide the County and ARC with additional information. At this meeting, Leisure Services and ARC shall select eligible properties for acquisitions;
- f) **From ARC to the BCC:** Leisure Services shall convey ARC's recommendations and suggestions to the BCC. If the Board approves the selections, Leisure Services shall move to acquire the properties;
- g) **From Selection to Acquisition:** After BCC approval, the CAO shall draft a contract for acquisition and proceed using the dedicated funds to this program

190.213 Post-Acquisition Management and Property Improvements

A Management / Concept Plan must be completed post-acquisition and include the following:

- (1) Detailed management goals;
- (2) Implementation timetable for various management stages;
- (3) If applicable, provisions for protecting existing infrastructure;
- (4) Associated management costs, including impacts to staffing;
- (5) Capital costs of improvements;
- (6) Projected sources of revenue.

190.214 Alternatives to Fee Simple Acquisition

(a) Option to acquire properties that are less than fee-simple:

- Allow more lands to be protected for preservation and conservation;
- Reduces long-term management costs by allowing private property owners to continue acting as stewards of the land.

b) Acceptance of Donated Parcels:

- Parcels that promote the goals of Seminole Forever;
- Includes lands solely for preservation;
- Donations require BCC approval.

190.215 Supermajority Required to Change any part of Ordinance

If the County desires to change any part of this ordinance, a supermajority vote by the Board of County Commissioners is needed.

Next Steps

▶ BCC Guidance

