

OKALOACOOCHEE SLOUGH STATE FOREST (Collier/Hendry Counties)

Initial State Acquisition: *February, 1999*

Area: *32,039 Acres*

Primary Watershed(s): *Caloosahatchee River*

Current Number of DEP *FERI* Database Listings: *1 Project*

Previous Restoration Activities -

The forested wetlands on the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest (OSSF) are vital components of the chain of wetlands that feed the Fakahatchee Strand, which contributes to the health and vitality of the Everglades National Park. Sixty percent of the state forest is made up of wetland communities, primarily swale plant communities.

The **Mustang Grade** and **Patterson-Wild Cow Crossway** road improvement projects completed in 2002 and 2006, respectively, enhanced natural drainage between 2 cypress ponds and within strand wetlands. The work involved lowering a 0.7-mile section of road grade by approximately 2 feet, removing ineffective culverts, re-armoring road surfaces, and installing low-water hard surface crossings. The work was done by the DOF Road Crew based out of Welaka. Hydrological enhancement has occurred on approximately 600 acres of OSSF as a result of past road improvement projects such as these.

Current/Planned/Proposed Restoration Activities –

DEP's *FERI* web site currently shows one restoration opportunity on OSSF, involving exotic plant species control/management. At the present time there is no active or planned wetland restoration projects established for OSSF.

Wetland Restoration Needs Assessment –

No restoration needs assessment work has been conducted on Okaloacoochee Slough Creek State Forest as of this writing.