

Charlotte County
Annual County-wide Scrub Jay
Habitat Conservation Plan Report

Prepared for:

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

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Overview

The Charlotte County County-wide Florida Scrub-Jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) was approved by the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service through Incidental Take Permit # TE09117B-0 on December 12, 2014 and was subsequently approved by the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) through Ordinance number 2015-003 on February 10, 2015. Since the inception of the HCP Charlotte County has received twenty eight (28) pre-payment applications and one hundred sixty (160) development applications (Appendix 1)*. The following charts detail the number of parcels that have elected to participate in the county-wide HCP by year:

2015	
HCP Development Fees	# of parcels
Tier 1 (0.00 - 0.22 acres)	5
Tier 2 (0.23 - 0.49 acres)	50
Tier 3 (0.50 - 1.00 acres)	2
Tier 4 (1.01 - 3.00 acres)	1
Tier 5 (3.01 - 5.00 acres)	1
Tier 6 (5.01 - 20.00 acres)	0
Tier 7 (20.01 - 99.99 acres)	0

2016	
HCP Development Fees	# of parcels
Tier 1 (0.00 - 0.22 acres)	27
Tier 2 (0.23 - 0.49 acres)	96
Tier 3 (0.50 - 1.00 acres)	3
Tier 4 (1.01 - 3.00 acres)	2
Tier 5 (3.01 - 5.00 acres)	0
Tier 6 (5.01 - 20.00 acres)	0
Tier 7 (20.01 - 99.99 acres)	0

*Also see Appendix 2 for aerial depiction of all parcels that have been released through the county-wide habitat conservation plan (HCP) program since the date of its inception.

Funding

To date a total of \$398,830 has been received through the HCP pre-payment and development applications. At the inception of the HCP an additional \$465,014.32 was deposited via the counties open space habitat reservation fund as defined in Section 3-5-363.

Habitat Monitoring and Management

Charlotte County has managed several properties which are now components of the Scrub jay reserve area design. As a component of environmental land management, staff has monitored and surveyed the habitats within Tippecanoe Environmental Park, Tippecanoe II Mitigation Area, Oyster Creek Regional Park, Cedar Point Environmental Park, Buck Creek Preserve, Amberjack Environmental Park and Charlotte Flatwoods Environmental Park. As of this year four (4) parcels within the reserve design have been acquired through the County-wide HCP program. These newly acquired parcels have not yet been assessed for management but are scheduled to be assessed in 2017.

Since the inception of the HCP Natural Resources staff has implemented management on the following existing county conservation lands:

Prescribed burning:

Prairie Creek Preserve – 400 acres in 2016

Tippecanoe Environmental Park – 50 acres in units 3 & 4 in late 2014

Biscayne Trust Conservation Easement – 72 acres in 2016

Shell Creek Preserve – 55 acres in 2016

74 acres in 2017

Mechanical reduction:

Tippecanoe Environmental Park – 54 acres in units 5, 6 & 8 in 2016

20 acres in units 2 & 3 in 2016

Amberjack Environmental Park - 27 acres in 2017

Please also see the attached annual vegetative surveys that were completed by staff in 2016 (Appendix 3). The vegetative surveys consist of 10 x 10 metered plots representative of each habitat type. The data recorded includes percent canopy cover, canopy height, dominant tree species, oak scrub height and percent open space. This data is used as a guide for each parcels management need in order to meet Scrub-jay requirements within the designated habitat.

Scrub-jay Monitoring

Currently environmental staff has conducted Scrub jay surveys on 6 existing Charlotte County conservation properties (attached). These properties include Tippecanoe Environmental Park, Tippecanoe II Mitigation Area, Amberjack Environmental Park, Biscayne Trust, Prairie Creek Preserve and Shell Creek Preserve. The results of the surveys are as follows:

2016 Survey Results – 2nd season	
Tippecanoe	Jays observed 5 out of 5 survey days
Tippecanoe II	Jays observed 5 out of 5 survey days
Amberjack	No jays observed out of 5 survey days
Biscayne Trust	No jays observed out of 3 survey days
Prairie Creek Preserve	Jays observed 10 out of 10 survey days
Shell Creek Preserve	No jays observed out of 3 survey days
* A total of 216 jays were observed on the above listed properties in 2016.	

2015 Survey Results – BASELINE DATA	
Tippecanoe	Jays observed 4 out of 4 survey days
Tippecanoe II	Jays observed 7 out of 9 survey days
Peace River Preserve	Jays observed 1 out of 3 survey days
Biscayne Trust	No jays observed out of 3 survey days
Prairie Creek Preserve	Jays observed 5 out of 5 survey days
Shell Creek Preserve	No jays observed out of 3 survey days
* A total of 116 jays were observed on the above listed properties in 2015.	

Parcel Acquisition

In 2016 four (4) parcels were acquired through the county-wide habitat conservation plan program for a total of 12.586 acres at a total acquisition cost of \$93,036.94. All four parcels are within the reserve design and are located to the south of Washington Loop Road and to the north of Biscayne Trust. The parcel addresses and acreage are as follows:

Parcel Address	Total Acreage
31861 Creek Trail	5.536
32161 Creek Trail	2.403
2251 Boxwood Road	1.977
31172 Turkey Oak Road	2.67

Please see Appendix 4 for the parcels geographical locations as well as their warranty deeds.

Building Permit Tracking

To ensure that each property is receiving the necessary Scrub jay review the Charlotte County GIS department has created a scrub jay layer within our permitting database which ensures that every permit submitted on a parcel located within the Scrub jay area will be flagged for a separate Scrub jay review. Since the implementation of the HCP county staff has also created a Scrub-jay Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Application (Appendix 5) along with an individual permit type for citizens who opt to pre-pay their Scrub Jay fees. The HCP application not only allows staff to track all permits that receive a Scrub Jay review but it also ensures that the applicant has acknowledged all of the habitat conservation plan conditions including but not limited to granting Charlotte County staff access to the development site for management purposes. In addition to the permit database Natural Resources staff also keeps an internal spreadsheet as a method to track the parcel location, permit number and fees acquired. We have also included the Fish and Wildlife Service Scrub-jay review application on our website for citizens who choose not to utilize Charlotte County's HCP program.



To review the appendices referenced in this report
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