

NRCS Florida Wetlands Reserve Easement 2017 Ranking Worksheet

Landowner: _____ **NEST ID:** _____
Property: _____ **County:** _____
Date of Site Visit: _____
Easement Option: Permanent or 30-Year
Easement Donation: Yes or No **Easement Donation Acres:** _____
Of the offered area, how many acres are hydric soils? _____
What percent of the offered area are hydric soils? _____
Is there any evidence of agricultural manipulation of hydrology? YES or NO
Easement Offered Acres: _____
Total estimated restoration cost: \$ _____
Restoration cost per acre: \$ _____

Summary of Ranking Scores

Factor	Points
Factor 1: Hydrology (possible 270)	
Factor 2: Habitat (possible 75)	
Factor 3: Location (possible 70)	
Factor 4: Wildlife (possible 75)	
Factor 5: Economic Considerations (possible 50)	
TOTAL (possible 540)	

SIGNATURES _____

Date: _____

NRCS
Biologist/Planner _____

NRCS Engineer _____

FWS Biologist _____

Coordinator _____

Factor 1 – Hydrology (270 Maximum Points)

Factor Score _____

The proposed easement's estimated restorable wetland acres are:

- 200 75-100% of the offered acres.
 - 100 50- 74% of the offered acres.
 - 0 0- 49% of the offered acres.
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Hydrologic Flow:

- 30 The pre-conversion hydrologic flow pattern can be restored to the site (i.e. there are no dikes, canals, ditches or structures adjacent to the site that will affect the surface or subsurface flow onto or off of the site, or other physical or legal restrictions present).
 - 0 The pre-conversion hydrologic flow pattern cannot be restored to the site (i.e. there are dikes, canals, ditches or structures adjacent to the site that will affect the surface or subsurface flow onto or off of the site, or other physical or legal restrictions present).
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Ponding Soil Factors (based on the web soil survey):

- 40 The proposed easement contains 76-100% ponded soils
- 30 The proposed easement contains 51-75% ponded soils
- 20 The proposed easement contains 26-50% ponded soils
- 10 The proposed easement contains 11-25% ponded soils
- 0 The proposed easement contains 0-10% ponded soils

Factor 2: Habitat (75 Maximum Points)

Factor Score _____

The proposed easement would restore and protect the following predominant habitat type (based on soils maps and site evaluation) - Choose one:

- 50 Tidal Wetlands, Freshwater Marsh
- 40 Cypress pond, Gum pond, Lake Fringe Swamps, Cypress Strand, Mixed Hardwood Swamp
- 30 Wet Prairies, River Swamps
- 20 Hydric Hammock, Hydric Flatwoods
- 0 Site is predominantly upland

FLEPPC Category I invasive plant cover observed:

- 25 0-2%
- 0 >2-10%
- 25 > 10%

Definitions:

Tidal wetlands-- coastal wetland communities influenced by tidal fluctuations. This includes mangrove swamps, salt marshes, transition zones, and adjacent freshwater marshes whose water regimes are controlled on a regular basis by the tides. (Ecological Community Equivalent (E.C.E.) ¹= Salt marsh, Mangrove swamp)

Freshwater marsh -- non-tidal wetlands dominated by herbaceous plants rooted in and generally emergent from shallow water that stands at or above the ground surface for much of the year. (E.C.E.= Freshwater marsh, Sawgrass marsh)

Wet Prairies -- a treeless plain with a sparse to dense ground cover of grasses, grass-like, herbaceous plants occurring on low, relatively flat, poorly drained terrain. Woody shrubs and are typically absent unless drainage has been installed and water table flux and surface flows have been altered. Trees and shrubs can also encroach upon these ecological communities when natural fire regimes have altered or removed. (E.C.E = Slough, Cutthroat Sedge, Marl Prairie, Pitcher Plant Bog, Dwarf Cypress Savanna, or Flood Plain Marsh)

River swamps -- forested wetlands along rivers and larger streams. These are seasonally flooded areas with a relatively short hydroperiod and high productivity and diversity. This includes floodplain bottomland hardwoods whose main water source comes from the river, and spring run swamps and hydric hardwood forests whose main water sources are from deep groundwater aquifers. (E.C.E. = Bottomland hardwoods, Wetland hardwood hammocks, and wetter areas of Upland hardwood hammocks)

Lake fringe swamp -- these are forested wetlands at the margins of lakes, characterized by moderately high productivity and diversity. The main water source is lake water and the hydroperiod is moderate. (E.C.E. = Cypress swamps, Swamp hardwoods)

Cypress strand -- these are forested wetlands dominated typically by bald cypress trees, occurring where there is sufficient water and flow to generate a depression channel. This community has moderate hydroperiods, diversity and productivity; however, productivity is generally slightly higher than the non-flowing cypress ponds. (E.C.E. = Cypress swamp)

Mixed hardwood swamps -- these are still-water, forested wetlands dominated by hardwood species such as red maple, swamp blackgum, water ash, and water hickory, although cypress commonly occurs here also. The main water source is shallow groundwater and the hydroperiod is moderate. (E.C.E. = Shrub Bog -- Bay Swamp, Swamp hardwoods)

Hydric hammock -- forested wetlands dominated by hardwoods (live, laurel and water oak), and/or cabbage palms and, sometimes, red cedar. Soils are often saturated, but seldom flooded. This community is often found between the upper zones of river swamps and more mesic sites (e.g., N. FL. Flatwoods, etc.) and can also be found in depressions. (E.C.E. = Wetland hardwood hammock and drier portions of Swamp hardwoods)

Hydric flatwoods -- forested wetlands located in south and central Florida and described as relatively open canopied forests of scattered pines and/or cabbage palms with either an understory of mixed hydrophytic shrubs or, more commonly, a savanna-like mix of grasses, sedges and forbs. Generally thought of as an ecotonal community, hydric flatwoods are often found between wetter (e.g., cypress swamps, wet prairie, etc.) and drier communities (e.g., hydric hammock, mesic flatwoods, etc.). (E.C.E. = South Florida flatwoods and Cabbage palm flatwoods)

Cypress pond -- these forested wetlands are typically dominated by pond cypress and occur where depressions expose the shallow groundwater. These communities have moderate hydroperiods, productivity and diversity. (E.C.E. = Cypress swamp) **Gum pond** -- these forested wetlands occur in depressions, primarily in the Panhandle. This community has long hydroperiods, and moderate productivity and diversity. The dominant tree is swamp black gum, although red maple, water ash, and pond cypress commonly occur. (E.C.E. = Swamp hardwoods)

¹ The Ecological Community Equivalent (E.C.E.) is put in to help correlate these designations normally used by NRCS with the wetland types described in Ecosystems of Florida. The Ecological Community groupings are usually broader than the ones above, so note carefully where these areas occur.

Factor 3: Location (70 Maximum Points)

Factor Score _____

The proposed easement:

Choose one:

- 40 shares a common boundary with an existing WRP easement **and** would allow more complete hydrological restoration of both WRP projects.
 - 30 shares a common boundary with an existing WRP site **and** may enhance habitat restoration of both WRP projects.
 - 20 shares a common boundary with a permanently protected conservation area of any size.
 - 10 is within 1 mile of a permanently protected conservation area \geq 100 acres in size.
 - 5 is within 5 miles of a permanently protected conservation area \geq 1000 acres in size.
 - 0 is not within any of the categories above.
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Choose all that apply:

- 10 is within the Everglades Ecosystem.
- 5 is within the boundary of the Everglades Headwaters NWR Conservation Partnership.
- 5 is contiguous to or within a State-designated Outstanding Florida Water, National Estuarine Area, National Scenic River, or other State or National designated ecological area (if deemed important by the WRE Ranking Team).
- 5 is within a focus area of either the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Waterbird Conservation Plan, or Partners in Flight plan.
- 5 is within 2 miles of coastal waters.

Factor 4 – Wildlife Species (75 Maximum Points)

Factor Score _____

The proposed easement:

Choose one:

- 30 is currently (or is expected to be) occupied by five (5) or more species federally listed as threatened or endangered AND restoration will provide high quality habitat for these species.
 - 25 is currently (or is expected to be) occupied by four (4) species federally listed as threatened or endangered AND restoration will provide high quality habitat for these species.
 - 20 is currently (or is expected to be) occupied by two to three (2-3) species federally listed threatened or endangered AND restoration will provide high quality habitat for these species.
 - 15 is currently (or is expected to be) occupied by one (1) species federally listed as threatened or endangered AND restoration will provide high quality habitat for these species.
 - 5 is currently (or is expected to be) occupied by at least three (3) State Listed wildlife species (waders counted as single species) AND restoration will provide high quality habitat for these species.
 - 0 restoration will provide habitat, but likelihood of human disturbance is so great that significant wildlife usage is unlikely.
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Choose one, if applicable:

- 15 is located within the designated Florida panther primary zone and provides suitable habitat for the Florida panther.
 - 10 is located within the designated Florida panther secondary or dispersal zone and provides suitable habitat for the Florida panther.
 - 5 is located within designated Florida panther Northern Area expansion zone and provides suitable habitat for the Florida panther.
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Choose all that apply:

- 5 is located within 9 miles of a known wood stork rookery and will provide suitable feeding habitat for the wood stork.
- 5 is located within the Core Foraging Area of a known wood stork rookery and will provide suitable feeding habitat for the wood stork.
- 5 is located within USFWS critical habitat designated for Everglade snail kite, Piping plover or Flatwoods salamander and will provide suitable habitat for any of these species.
- 5 restoration will provide water quality benefits in a river drainage basin known to support populations of federally listed fish or mussels.
- 5 is located within 1.5 miles of a known Audubon's crested caracara nest AND will provide suitable foraging habitat for the caracara.
- 5 has known wood stork rookeries or other rookeries, nesting sites and dens for federal T&E species within the proposed easement.

Factor 5 - Economic Considerations (50 Maximum Points)

Factor Score _____

Initial Restoration Cost

- 50 \$0-\$500/acre
- 0 >\$500-\$1000/acre
- 100 >\$1000-\$3000/acre
- 200 >\$3000/acre

Total Estimated Cost from page 8	\$
Offered Acres from page 1	
Total Cost per Acre	\$

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- 50 Proposed easement has an in-holding/outparcel that could potentially have a negative impact on restoration efforts and/or requires maintenance or establishment of access across the easement.

Additional Documentation:

Hydrology-
Habitat-
Location-
Wildlife Species-
Species potentially found on site (based on NRCS County Listed Species List, FNAI Biodiversity Matrix and USFWS data and maps):
Species observed on site:
Species benefited by proposed restoration activities:
Economic Considerations-
FLEPPC Category I Species observed on site:
Potential success limiting factors-

