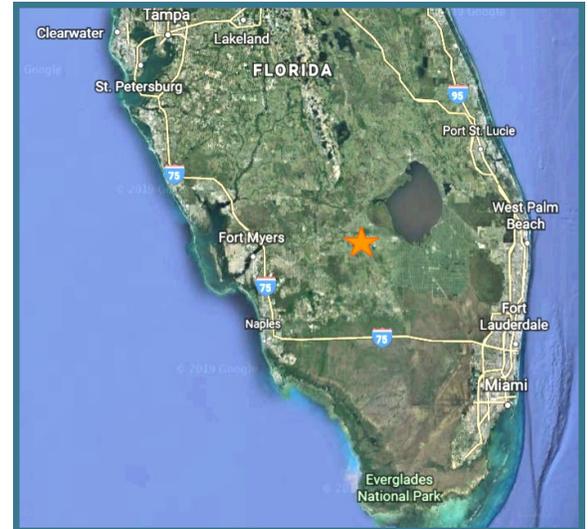


Habitat Restoration Needs Expansion

FISH, WILDLIFE, & HABITAT RESTORATION



Summary

The CHNEP area is known for its spectacular birds, fish, and other wildlife. The rich diversity and abundance of these species requires a diverse environment of interconnected habitats that support natural processes and viable, resilient native plant and animal communities. To fulfill this vision, CHNEP and its partners created the Habitat Restoration Needs (HRN) Plan in May of 2019.

The HRN Plan identifies preservation/conservation and reservation opportunities, as well as management/enhancement and restoration targets. Full implementation of the Plan will have substantial positive impacts on the long-term sustainability of water quantity, water quality, natural systems, and species populations. The overarching goal of the Plan is to increase the acreages of native habitats in the CHNEP area, both strategically and opportunistically.

CHNEP expanded the program area to include the freshwater upstream portions of the Caloosahatchee River basin in the designated counties. Phase II of the HRN Plan included the mapping of preservation/conservation opportunities as well as management/enhancement and restoration targets in the CHNEP expansion area. The updated HRN Plan can be used by partners to identify, prioritize, and implement effective habitat restoration and conservation projects in these counties.

Location: Glades, Hendry, Lee and Charlotte Counties, FL

Partners: CHNEP Management Conference

Implemented: 2019

Status: Completed

Cost: \$78,248

Funding Source: Environmental Protection Agency

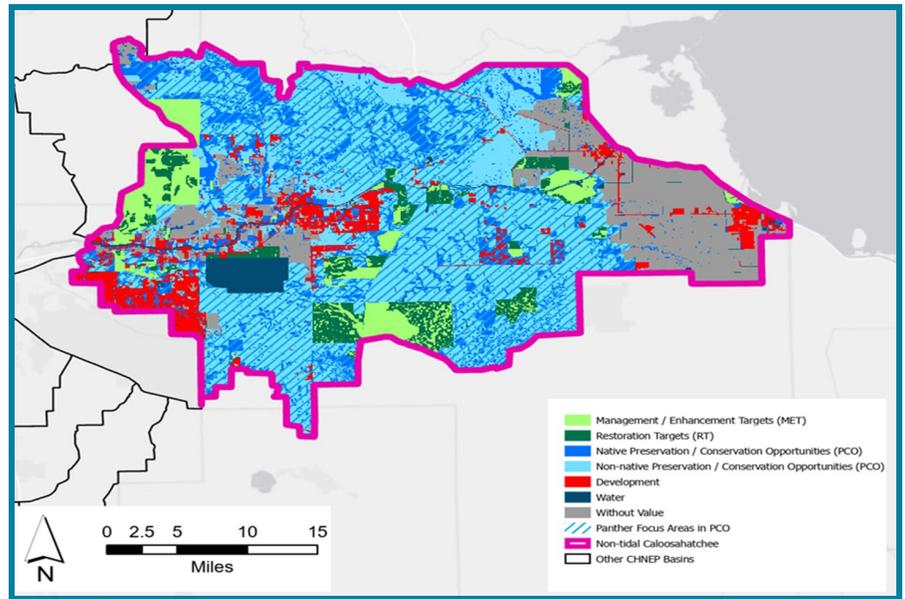
2019 CHNEP Plan Activity: 

Fish, Wildlife, & Habitat Restoration 2.1: Encourage and support the permanent conservation of environmentally sensitive lands and critical habitat areas through land acquisition and conservation easements held in perpetuity.

Results:

Opportunities and Targets:

Opportunities and Targets identified in Phase II of the Habitat Restoration Needs Plan include: Opportunity to increase existing acreage of preservation and conservation areas by 368,762 acres through land acquisition or conservation easements; and Targets for public lands include: increase restored areas by 33,142 acres; and increase managed or enhanced areas to 47,108 acres. Native habitats that are at-risk for transition into another habitat type due to groundwater drying conditions caused by climate change were also identified. Almost 19,000 acres of non-forested wetlands and over 10,000 acres of upland hardwood forests are in high risk of transition.



Economical and Recreational Benefits:

The natural systems within the CHNEP area offer many economical and recreational benefits. The results from this project will be used in coordination with FWC's Critical Habitat Conservation Plan to identify multi-partner opportunities and priorities. The project results can assist local and regional organizations and state and federal agencies in identifying, planning, and implementing habitat restoration and land acquisition projects needed to efficiently achieve habitat restoration goals while balancing additional community needs including economic growth, water supply, water quality treatment, and flood protection.



Improved Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat:

Full implementation of the Plan will have substantial positive impacts on the long-term sustainability of water quantity, water quality, natural systems, and species populations. The Plan articulates CHNEP's habitat restoration vision for the next 50 years of "a diverse environment of interconnected, healthy habitats that support natural processes and viable and resilient native plant and animal communities."

The HRN Report Phase II can be found online at CHNEP.org/publications

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Southwest Florida Water Management District



Uniting Central and Southwest Florida to protect water and wildlife