

## **SOUTHPORT RANCH MITIGATION BANK**

### **PROJECT FEATURES**

Southport Ranch Mitigation Bank is located in the south-central portion of Osceola County, Florida. The 3,316 acre bank has a service area that encompasses portions of Orange, Osceola, and Polk Counties. The project site includes an extensive variety of habitat communities that are of regional significance, with its location adjacent to South Florida Water Management District lands, Disney Wilderness Preserve, Reedy Creek Swamp, and the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. In addition, the majority of the site provides vital hydrologic recharge functions for the Florida Aquifer, Reedy Creek Swamp, and Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. Significant habitat within the project site is suitable for: the Florida black bear, crested caracara, bald eagle, red-cockaded woodpecker, Florida sandhill crane, and wood stork, as well as an extensive wading bird population, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and other various mammals and reptiles. In addition, enhancement of the upland areas will provide habitat suitable for the gopher tortoise.

### **SPRMB RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN**

A detailed construction, phasing, implementation, and monitoring plan has been developed to establish baseline conditions as well as record and report monitoring conditions that would establish project success for an array of habitat communities occurring within the site. The primary components for implementation of the SPRMB site will include four (4) major activities: 1) conservation easement recordation for each phase; 2) hydrologic enhancement through ditch-blocks and constructing low water crossings, thereby re-establishing direct hydrologic connection within wetland systems both on-site and off-site; 3) enhancement of vegetation within areas utilized for pastureland activities and sod farming; and, 4) implementation of a native/historic prescribed fire program. These activities are proposed to occur within two (2) distinct phases of implementation. As a result of implementation, the subject area, as well as the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, Reedy Creek Swamp system, and the Florida Aquifer, would receive hydrologic and vegetative enhancement. Additionally, vegetation community structure would be further enhanced and preserved through the implementation of a routine invasive exotic/nuisance vegetation control program.