

SECTION 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Mission Statements

Department of Environmental Management: Leadership dedicated to a sustainable natural and urban environment in Pinellas County for present and future generations.

Environmental Lands Division: To provide sound stewardship to the County's wild lands and opportunities for the appreciation of their intrinsic value.

ELD Ecological Services: To manage and protect the biodiversity and integrity of the County's environmental lands.

History

General

Acquisition of lands that are currently part of Brooker Creek Preserve began in the 1980's. During this decade Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) (then known as the Water Department) purchased 3,623 acres for wellfield production and protection. Several other tracts were also purchased during this time for wildlife and natural plant community protection.

In the early 1990's the County established Brooker Creek Preserve. Tax funds from several voter-approved environmental lands acquisition referendums were used to purchase much of the land. In 1993 the Board of County Commissioners adopted the first management plan. The plan showed the Preserve as approximately 7,100 acres. This included the 3,623 acres purchased by PCU. Also included in the total acreage were privately-owned areas of the Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield (Figure 4). At that time, the only authority the County had over this privately owned land was the lease rights to the water, thus 904 acres were never officially designated as part of the Preserve. Therefore, in 1993, the Preserve area was actually closer to 6,200 acres. Preserve land acquisition continued. Properties were obtained through the Penny for Pinellas Endangered Lands Fund, donations, and grants from the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) P2000/Florida Forever program. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) also purchased 1,621 acres, located mainly in the southern portion of the Preserve. These lands were leased to Pinellas County in 1995 to manage as part of the Preserve.

In 1992, the first manager of Brooker Creek Preserve was hired by the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management (DEM). In October 1998, the Environmental Lands Division (ELD) was created to manage over 15,000 acres of environmental lands including Brooker Creek Preserve. Today Brooker Creek Preserve consists of 7,960 acres of land that stretches from the Anclote River to Pasco County, east to Hillsborough County, and south into Oldsmar.

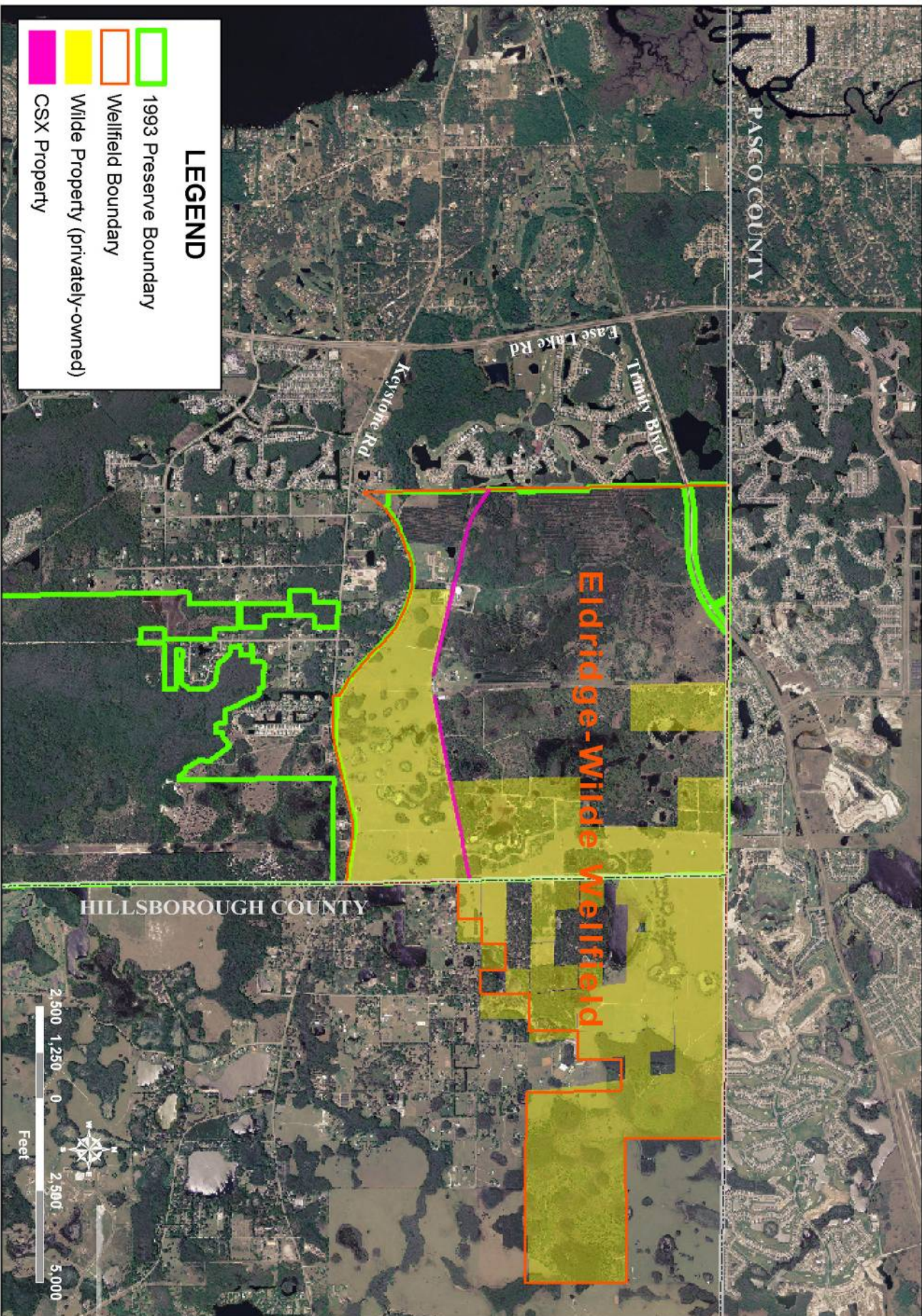


Figure 4. 1993 Brooker Creek Preserve with Privately-Owned Wilde Property

Lands North of Keystone

In the 1980's, Pinellas County Utilities (PCU) purchased 1,413 acres north of Keystone Road. Today these lands remain part of the 3,544-acre Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield (Figure 5). The remaining 2,131 acres of the wellfield is under private ownership and extends into Hillsborough County. PCU controlled the pumping of this wellfield until 1998. At that time Tampa Bay Water (TBW) became the sole provider of potable water to Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties, and the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, and New Port Richey. The Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield originally had an average production limit of 39 million gallons per day. Today it is down to 10 -12 million gallons per day.

Of the 1,413 acres, 968 were part of Sall's Dairy (Figure 6) prior to being purchased in 1983 by Pinellas County. Between 1987 and 1989, DEM planted 488 acres of upland pastureland with slash pine for timber production. Shortly afterward two wildfires destroyed large areas of these planted pines. Today approximately 260 acres of timber remains in this area. The remaining 445 acres, east of the Sall's Dairy tract, were purchased by PCU in a mostly natural state and remains as such today.

Several existing facilities (Figure 7) and wellfield infrastructure are located in the north section of the Preserve. The wellfield production wells with associated piping, monitoring wells and paved access roads have been in existence since the wellfield was put into service in the 1950's. In 1988-1989 the Alcohol Community Treatment Services (ACTS) center was built on 12 acres that were later included within the boundary of the Preserve when it was established. In 1998-1999, PCU built a hydrogen sulfide removal facility on approximately 8 acres. Then in 1999-2000 a new 60-inch drinking water supply line was installed parallel to the old smaller leaking pipe. In 2000, a water treatment chemical storage facility was constructed on approximately 2 acres. In 2003, planning for a water blending facility on 46 acres began. When completed, this facility will blend ground, surface, and desalinated water to provide a safe and uniform water supply to the citizens of Pinellas County. This facility will eventually replace the Keller Water Plant. Construction is currently underway and expected to be completed in November 2009.

Other lands have been acquired north of Keystone Road for conservation through the Penny for Pinellas, FCT, and donations. From the late 1990's through 2003, over 563 acres of lands were added to the Preserve north of Trinity Boulevard and westward to the Anclote River as a wildlife and hiking trail corridor.

Lands South of Keystone

In the 1980's, PCU purchased 2,210 acres south of Keystone Road for protection and development of the East Lake Road Wellfield. The wellfield was used to supplement potable water during the drier times of the year when there was a high water demand for irrigation to offset peak demands on the Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield. During production some of the wells experienced an increase in chlorides. These levels receded during non-pumping times but rose again when pumping resumed. This wellfield was

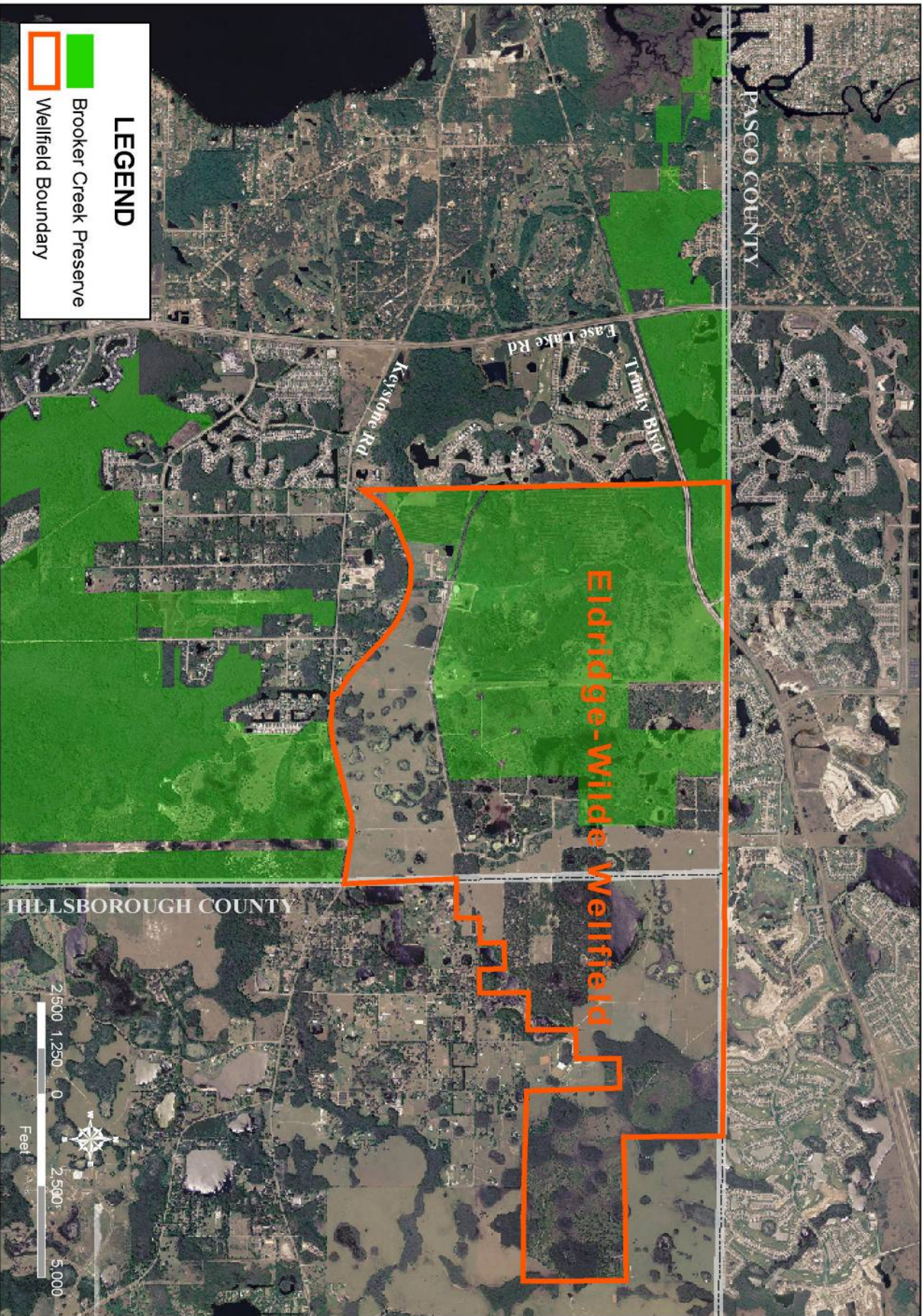


Figure 5. Brooker Creek Preserve and the Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield

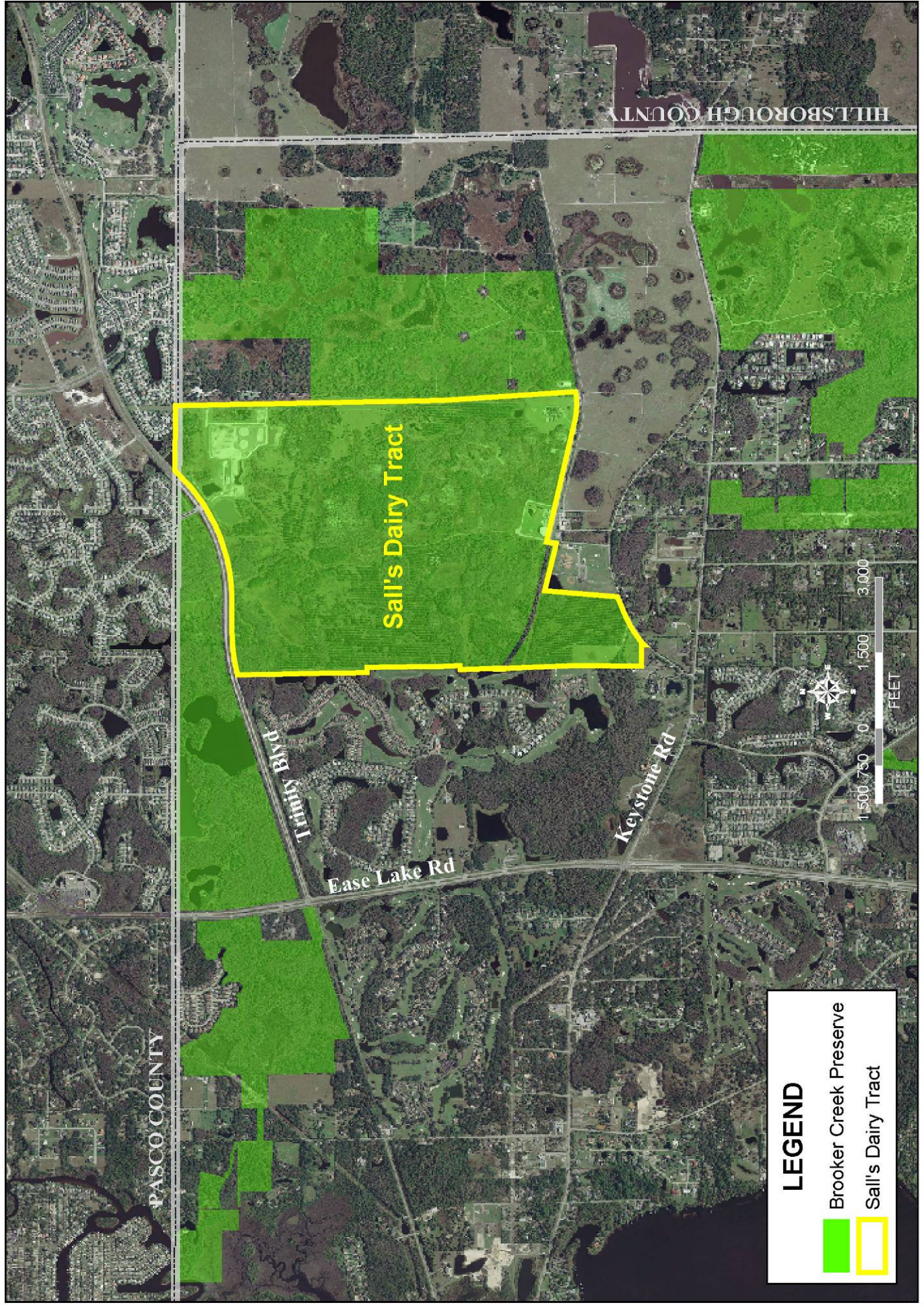


Figure 6. Sall's Dairy Tract

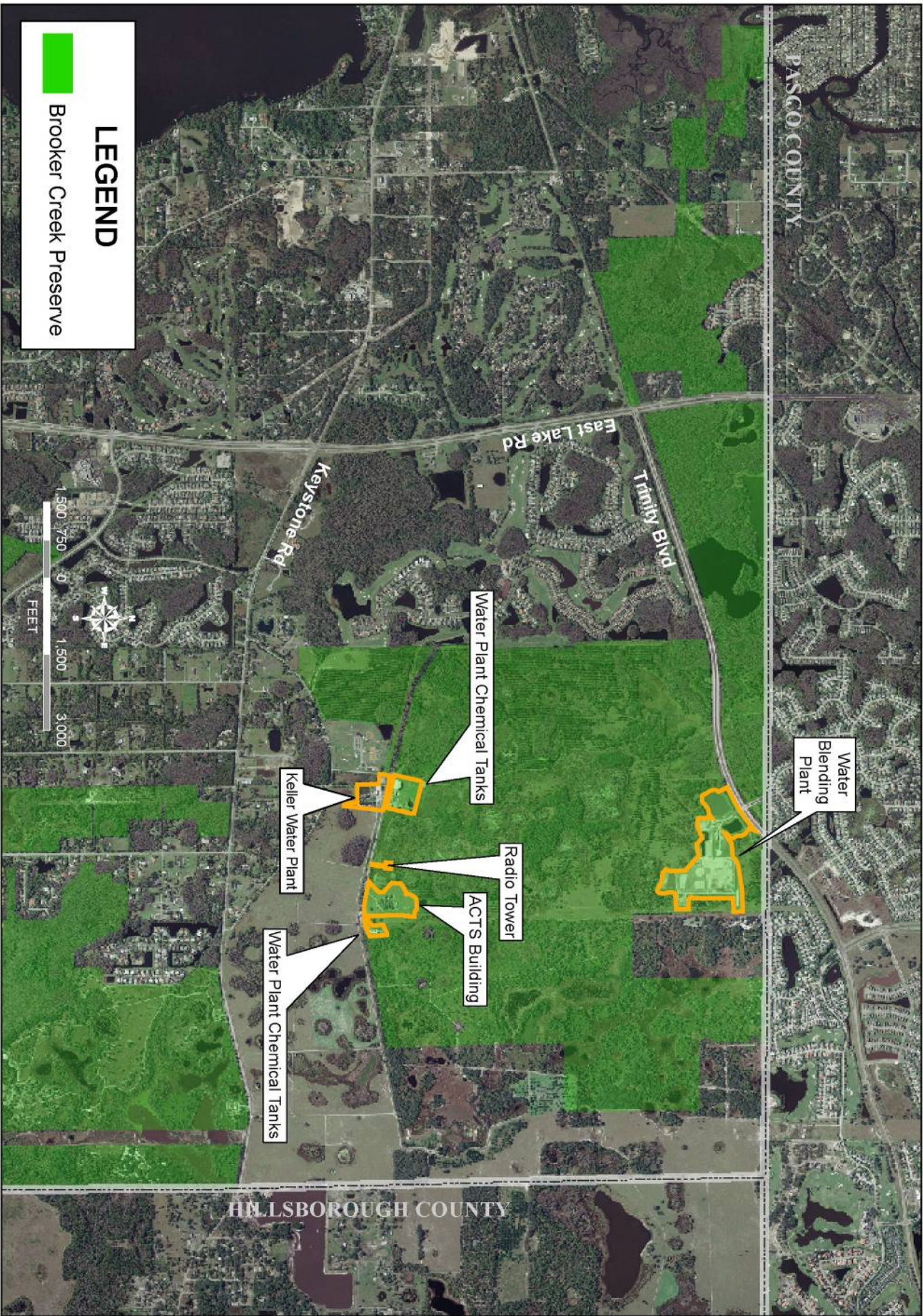


Figure 7. North Brooker Creek Preserve Infrastructure

closed to production later in the 1980's, but the monitoring wells in this area are checked and maintained to the present day.

The additional 4,097 acres south of Keystone Road were obtained for conservation through Penny for Pinellas Endangered Lands Fund, donations, Florida Communities Trust Fund's P2000/Florida Forever funds, and purchases by SWFWMD. Prior to becoming part of the Preserve, the land was used extensively for cattle grazing, unrestricted horseback riding, four-wheeling, mud bogging, camping, hunting, target practice, clay disposal, clear-cut timber harvesting, trash dumping, and some illegal activities. Based on historical aerials the power transmission lines were installed some time between 1951 and 1967.

Ownership

Brooker Creek Preserve is owned by Pinellas County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) (Table 1 and Figure 8). Responsibility of management falls under the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Lands Division.

Table 1. Brooker Creek Preserve Ownership					
OWNERSHIP	ACRES	%	FUNDING	ACRES	%
Pinellas County	6,339	79.6%	Pinellas County Utilities	3,623	45.5%
			Endangered Lands Funds, FCT's P2000/FL Forever Fund, donations	2,716	34.1%
Southwest Florida Water Management District	1,621	20.4%	Southwest Florida Water Management District	1,621	20.4%
TOTAL:	7,960	100%	TOTAL:	7,960	100%

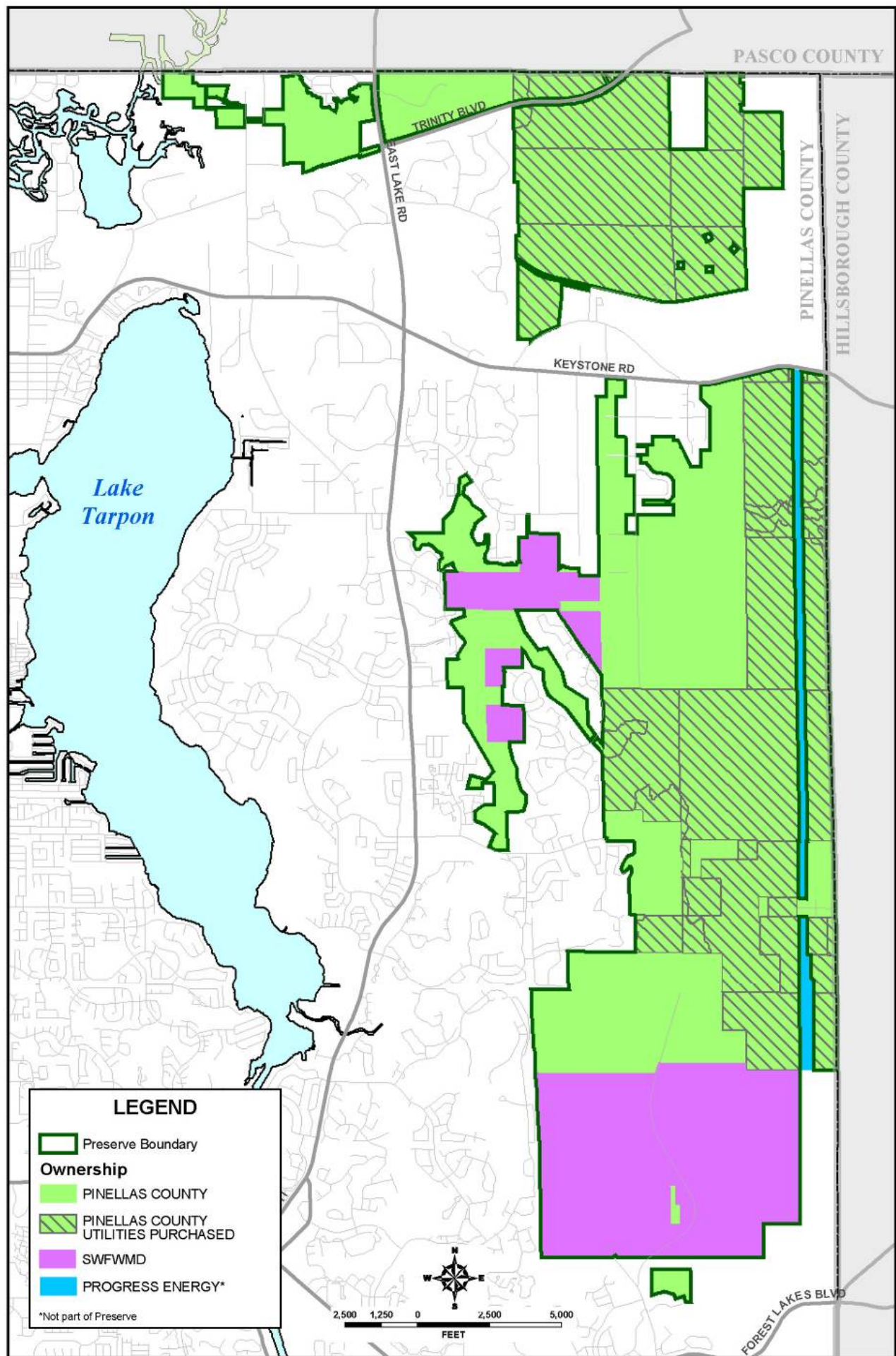


Figure 8. Brooker Creek Preserve Ownership

General Long-Range Target Conditions

Brooker Creek Preserve has been altered by many human impacts. Ditching, plow lines, roads and surrounding development have impacted the hydrology of the Preserve. The biodiversity in many areas of the Preserve was reduced due to the absence of active land management and the suppression of wildfires before the 1990's. Before the land was purchased by Pinellas County, it was in private ownership. The property was used extensively for activities including cattle grazing, unrestricted horseback riding, four-wheeling, mud bogging, camping, hunting, target practice, clay disposal, clear-cut timber harvesting and trash dumping. All of these uses had an impact on the current state of the Preserve. Given the present ecological state of the Preserve, ELD staff have determined the following long-range target conditions.

- One of the most important targets is to have an understanding of the entire watershed. This will allow restoration of the hydrology of Brooker Creek within the Preserve in as natural a condition as feasible so that the wetlands maintain their character and function in the best possible condition without causing hydrologic impacts, such as flooding or dehydration of wetlands upstream or downstream of the Preserve.
- The wetlands will collectively remain a high-quality resource with various hydroperiods that fluctuate seasonally.
- The sandhills will be restored and maintained to support the diverse plant life and locally indigenous species such as gopher tortoise, short-tailed snake, and Florida mice.
- The pine flatwoods will support flora and fauna typical of those found in this region. Higher and drier flatwoods will have scattered mature longleaf pines and a diversity of typical understory and groundcover species found in these natural communities.
- Areas altered from their natural vegetative communities will be restored where practical.
- Vegetative structure across the Preserve will be diverse due to variations in natural processes and active management.
- Firebreaks will be established and maintained to allow necessary access to restore natural burn regimes and provide for wildfire protection.
- The County will continue expansion of the boundaries of the Preserve through land acquisition as opportunities become available. ELD will work with Hillsborough and Pasco counties to encourage land acquisitions that expand wildlife corridors beyond Pinellas County's borders.

Several long-range infrastructure targets have also been established or proposed that are in conjunction with natural ecosystem target conditions.

- The Preserve will have an established hiking and horseback riding trail network that serves the needs of the public while maintaining the long-term sustainability of its natural resources. This includes maintaining the Wildlands Hiking Trails, The Friends Trails, the Exercise Horse Trail and the Scenic Horse Trail. There also will be a hiking trail network with boardwalks that reaches from the Four Lakes Hammock area to the Anclote River leading to a backwater canoe/kayak blueway along the river.
- The Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center will provide a place for various programs, presentations, and events for the public to learn about natural Florida.
- The property boundaries will be secured with appropriate fencing and signage to protect the resources and reduce encroachment and trespassing.

Objectives

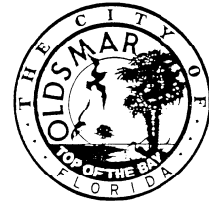
To achieve the long-range target conditions, ELD staff have determined a number of management objectives for Brooker Creek Preserve:

1. Protect, restore and conserve all lands and waterways within the Preserve.
2. Restore the hydrology of the wetlands where ecologically and economically feasible.
3. Continue the re-establishment of natural burn regimes to fire-dependent communities.
4. Repair damage from past land uses where ecologically and economically feasible.
5. Continue the control of invasive exotic flora and fauna.
6. Restore natural plant communities that have been altered due to human disturbance or long-term fire suppression.
7. Continue the collection of long-term ecological data to assess attainment of management goals.
8. Continue the maintenance of existing resource-based recreation facilities.
9. Expand the hiking trail system and provide associated infrastructure for resource-based recreation as required by the Florida Communities Trust Fund's P2000/Florida Forever grants.
10. Continue to provide environmental programs for the public at the BCPEEC.
11. Maintain the integrity of the boundary fencing and signage.
12. Continue to utilize volunteers where feasible.
13. Continue to enforce the County Ordinance 08-29 that was established to regulate public use of ELD properties.
14. Acquire adjacent lands to protect open space as funding becomes available, particularly targeting the adjacent privately-owned Wilde and CSX properties.
15. Investigate the feasibility of wildlife underpasses when road expansions occur in areas where roads divide preserve parcels, particularly Keystone Road near the Hillsborough County line.

Easements

Several easements are located within the Preserve boundaries. Some of these are for powerlines, recreational use and access roads. ELD staff are currently working with the Public Works Survey and Mapping Division to compile this information. This is a very time-consuming process that could not be done in time for this management plan update, but will be included in the next update.

On October 20, 2006 Pinellas County entered into a recreation easement agreement with the City of Oldsmar (Appendix 1). This 932.22-foot by 30-foot wide easement runs over an existing Florida Gas Transmission Company's underground natural gas line. This corridor consists of a raised and mowed grass berm. The City will construct a 10-foot wide asphalt recreation trail along this easement that will connect a citywide trail system. This easement is located at the southern extent of Brooker Creek Preserve in a small outparcel south of the Progress Energy east-west transmission corridor (Figure 9).



Adjacent Land Use

The majority of the Preserve is adjacent to single-family suburban residential homes. Most homes sit on less than 0.25-acre lots that are intertwined within preservation wetlands (Figure 10). There are also six golf courses associated with some of the surrounding subdivisions. Four are within Pinellas County and the other two in Hillsborough County. Rural residential areas near Keystone Road and the Anclote River, where lots range from 2-20 acres, border small portions of the Preserve. There is also a small area of agricultural rural land where the Preserve borders Hillsborough County south of Keystone Road. Hillsborough County's 423-acre Brooker Creek Buffer Preserve is also located in this area. The northeastern corner of the Preserve borders an area of privately-owned land zoned as Agricultural Estate but is currently undeveloped and is leased for cattle, hunting, and wellfield production (see **SECTION 3, Land Acquisition**, page 3-23 for further information on this 900-acre site). A Progress Energy main transmission line borders the southern boundary with additional subdivisions on the other side of the power corridor.

Florida Communities Trust

From 1992-2003, Pinellas County received partial reimbursements for the purchase costs of 569 acres (Figure 11) through the State of Florida Communities Trust's (FCT) P2000/Florida Forever grant program. Grant contracts between FCT and Pinellas County state several natural resource management and resource-based recreational requirements on these funded tracts (Appendix 2). A FCT management plan specific to these parcels outlines these requirements. It was completed June 2004 and is updated through the required annual stewardship reports. The specific



requirements of the grant will be discussed later in the pertinent sections of this Preserve plan. Any proposed modification of the management plan and/or undertaking any site alterations or physical improvements that are not addressed in the management plan requires prior FCT review and approval.

Pinellas County must provide FCT 60 day prior written notice and information regarding any lease of any interest, the operation of any concession, any sale or option, the granting of any management contracts, and any use by any person other than in such person's capacity as a member of the general public and no document will be executed without the prior written approval of FCT.

Although no fees are collected on the FCT-funded portions of Brooker Creek Preserve at the time of this management plan, should any be collected in the future they are to be placed in a segregated account solely for the upkeep and maintenance of the FCT-funded parcels.

Southwest Florida Water Management District

On February 28, 1995, Pinellas County entered into a lease agreement with Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) for the management of SWFWMD-owned areas of



Brooker Creek Preserve (Appendix 3). On May 14, 1996 the lease was amended to include additional properties purchased by SWFWMD. "The County's use of the property" is "for the purposes and associated responsibilities of essential site management, habitat enhancement, and resource-based recreational activities." Today, Pinellas County manages approximately 1,621 acres of SWFWMD-purchased lands (Figure 12) as part of Brooker Creek Preserve. Plans for any recreation or restoration on these lands are submitted to SWFWMD for approval. As part of the lease agreement any updated management plans will require approval by SWFWMD.

A Five-Year Strategic Plan for Pinellas County Government - Department of Environmental Management - Environmental Lands Division

Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management's Environmental Lands Division is currently drafting a five-year strategic plan. Various strategies to enhance ecological and land management practices, promote environmental education and volunteerism, and provide optimal leadership in the field of natural resource management are part of the foundation of this plan. Completion of the five-year strategic plan is expected by Fall 2008.

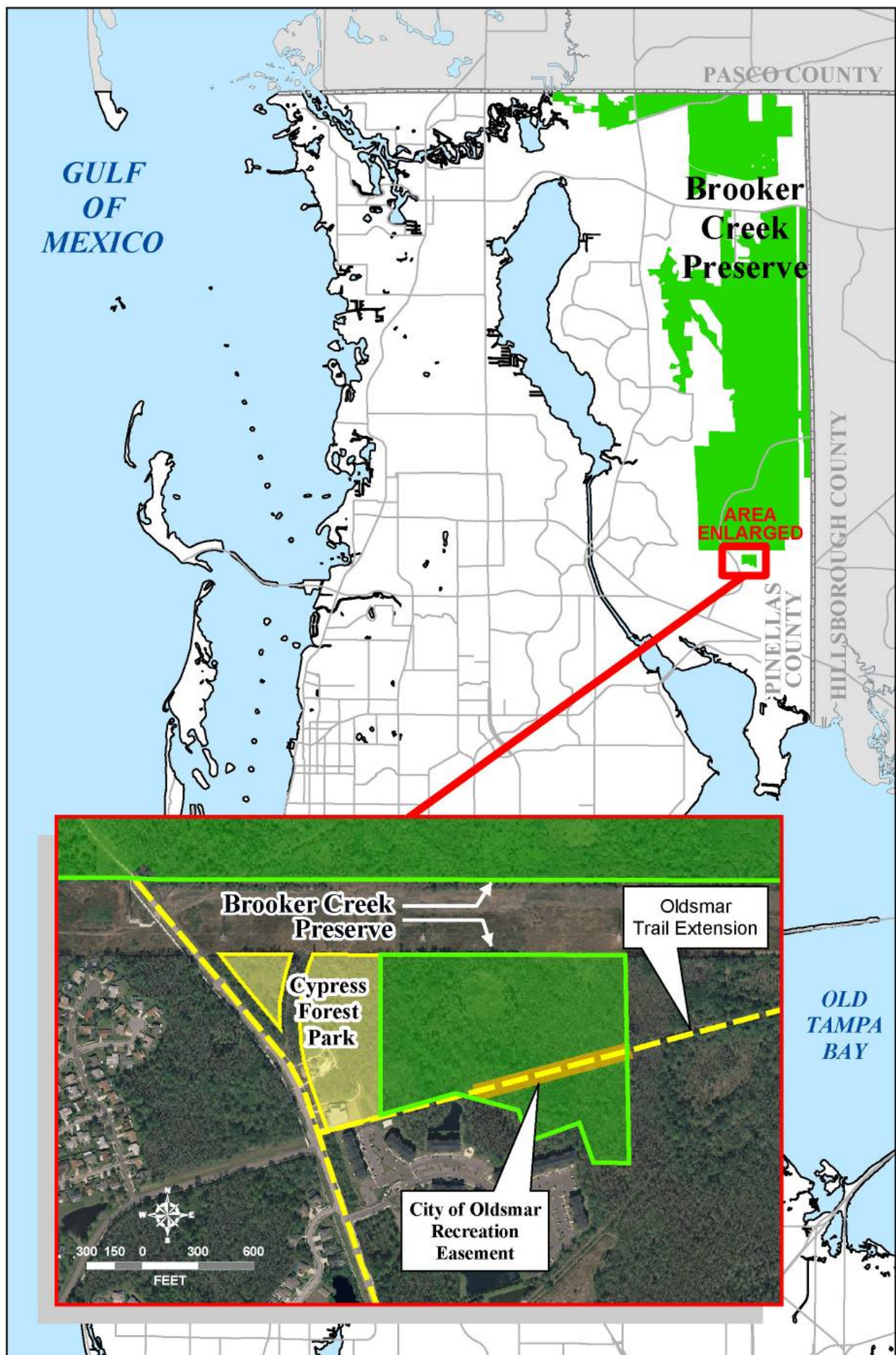


Figure 9. City of Oldsmar Recreation Easement

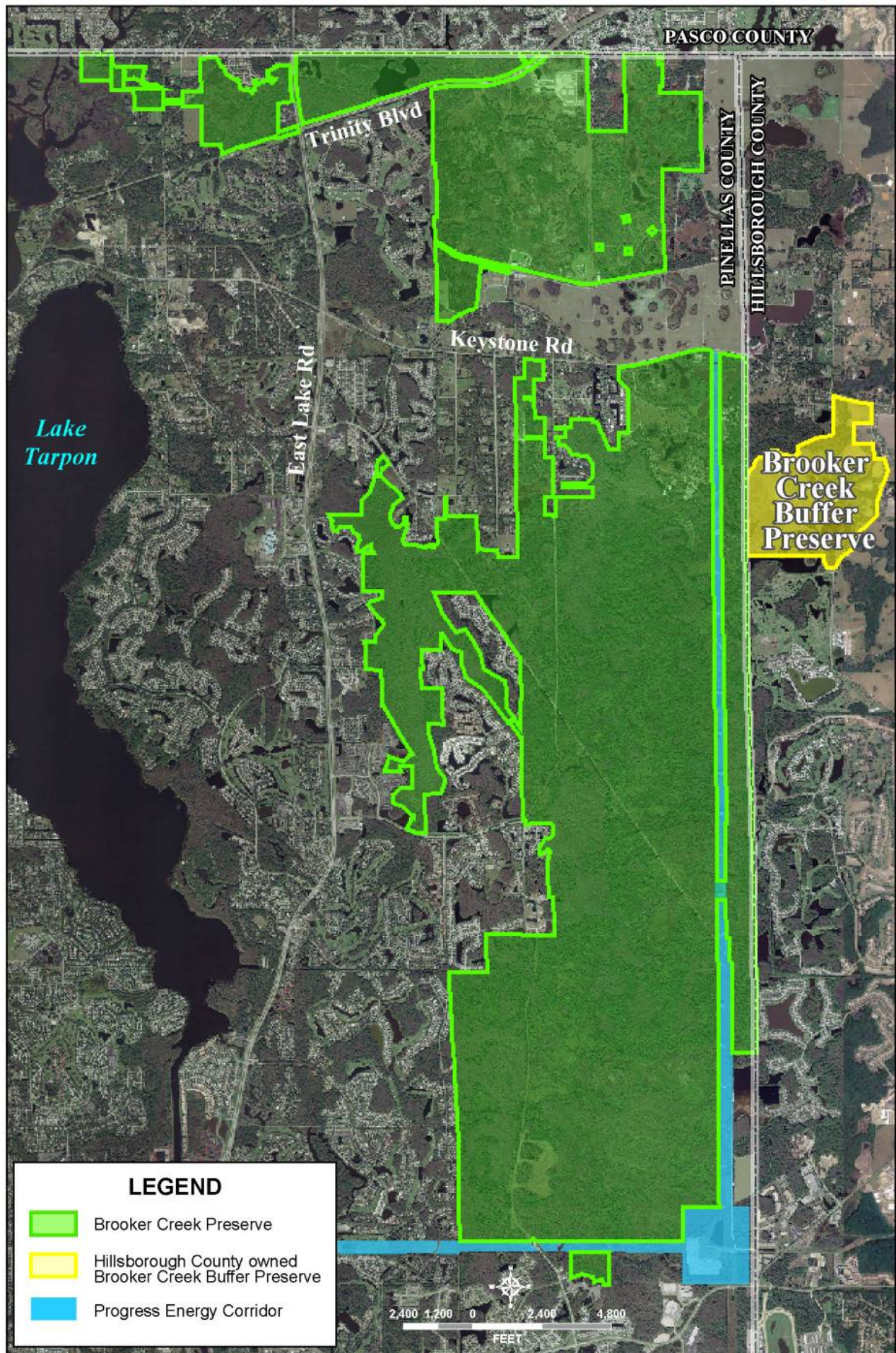


Figure 10. Brooker Creek Preserve Adjacent Land Use

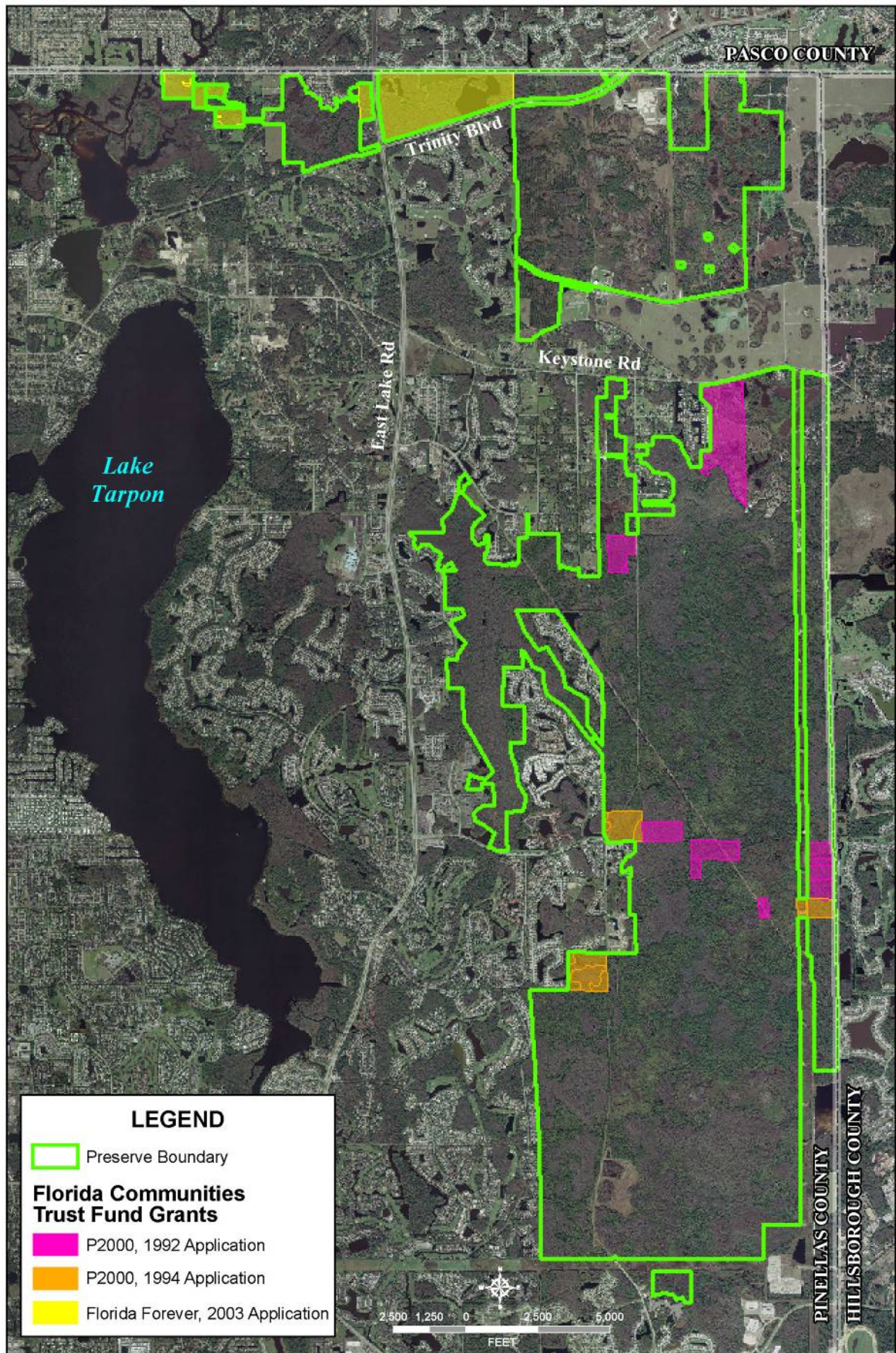


Figure 11. Brooker Creek Preserve Florida Communities Trust Fund Grant Lands

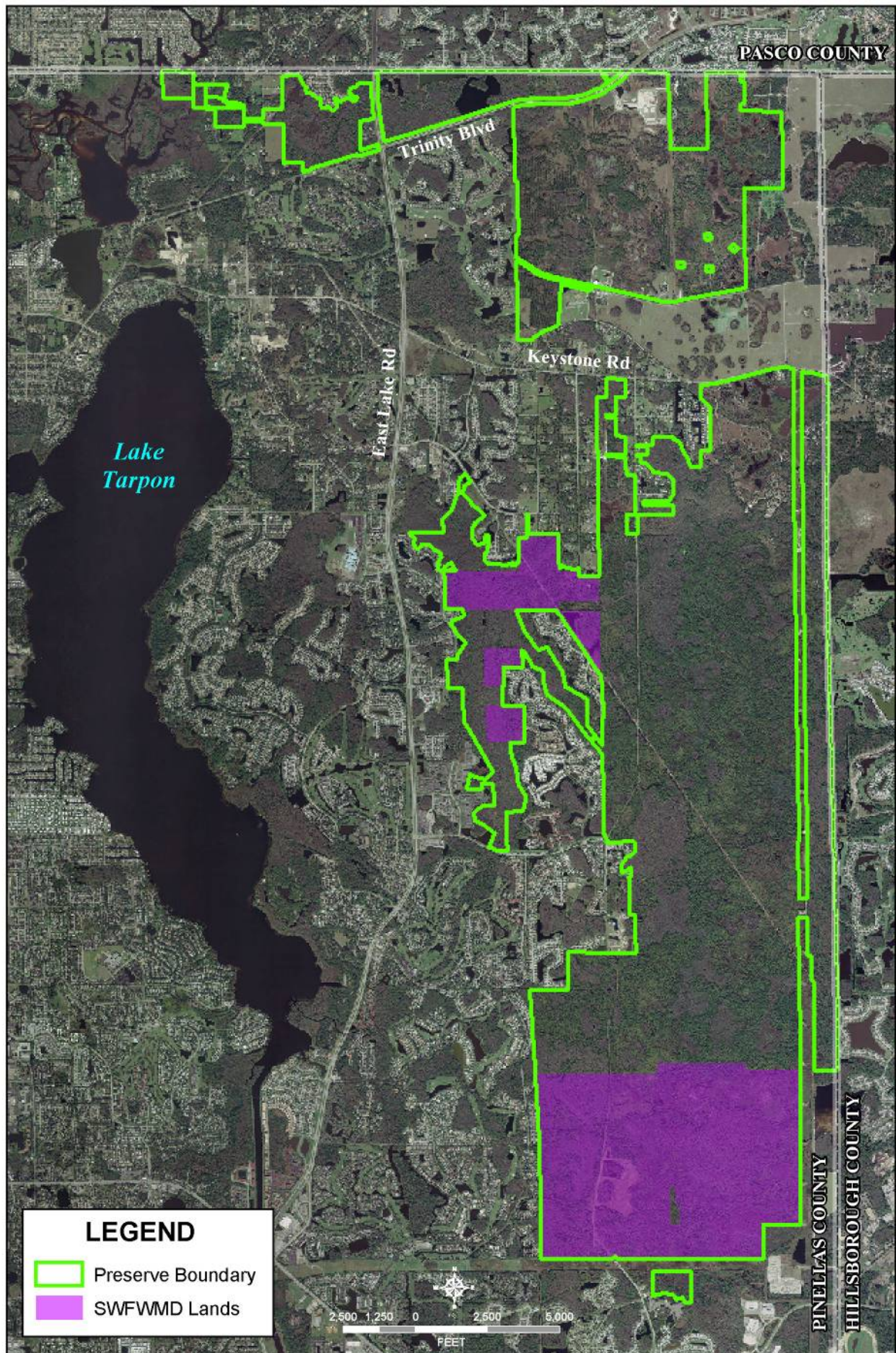


Figure 12. Southwest Florida Water Management District Lands

Board of County Commissioners Strategic Plan and Strategic Business Plan 2007-2012

The Strategic Plan was adopted by the County Commission on February 14, 2006 and “provides overall Board direction on a number of priority issues” organized into six Strategic Focus Areas (SFA). The SFA that pertains to the Preserve is titled Environment, Open Spaces, Recreation, and Culture (Appendix 4). This document covers “What the Community desires in environment, open space, recreation and culture system policy and programs.” One of the “priorities cited by community residents include: Protection of natural resources and preserves.” “The citizens at large appear to agree that County government should avoid inappropriate encroachments into these areas.” As a result of the community expectations, Pinellas County will provide “Protection of remaining environmentally significant resources.” Further defined as, “Substantially all remaining natural areas of environmental significance should be preserved and protected. This result includes those lands already owned by public entities such as the County, as well as the acquisition of remaining pockets of properties that possess environmental values.” Broadly stated in this document is the direction to “Promote a sustainability ethic in Pinellas County. The foundation of this goal is to ensure that ecological limits and environmental impacts are considered during all aspects of community design, from energy efficiency in buildings to transportation system solutions. Sustainability principles, practices and indicators will be brought into policy debate and decision-making on a broad basis.”

Ordinance 08-29

Pinellas County established Ordinance 2-6 to provide rules and regulations controlling the public’s use of Pinellas County Preserves and Management Areas (Appendix 5). Ordinance 08-29 is the 2008 BCC approved updated version. This document provides information on definitions, activities allowed and prohibited within the properties, plant and wildlife protection, enforcement, and special permit requirements. It is a tool to assist in implementing the management plans for all environmental lands.

Pinellas County Recreation, Open Space and Culture System Master Plan (September 2005)

The firm of Glatting-Jackson, under contract with Pinellas County, conducted public surveys and worked closely with County staff to develop this master plan (Appendix 6). One of the major initiatives of this plan is to increase protection for regional parks and preserves. It further states that the County needs to protect these “priceless resources for future generations.” Management plans for each site are needed to guide their development and management. Pinellas County has “steadfastly protected these sites from over use and over-development, and they represent an asset that residents will cherish for generations to come.”

Resolutions

Resolutions No. 96-63-B, 97-99, 99-203, and 99-250 (Appendix 7) were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners to amend the boundaries of Brooker Creek Preserve as new parcels were acquired.

Resolution No. 99-196 (Appendix 7) was adopted to reestablish the commitment of the Board of County Commissioners to the protection and management of Brooker Creek Preserve and wellfield areas within the boundaries. It also recognized Preserve boundaries, the management plan, and the Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc. It was resolved that “all activities, needs and construction projects affecting Brooker Creek Preserve that might impact either the ability to provide a dependable potable water supply or the preservation and management of the Preserve’s unique natural resources, be planned with open communication and cooperation in order that potential issues impacting the goals and management of Brooker Creek Preserve or the wellfield may be satisfactorily resolved.”

Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan

The Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan sets the policy direction for the management of all ELD properties. Brooker Creek Preserve Management Plan implements the goals, objectives, and policies of many elements of the County’s Comprehensive Plan, specifically the Natural Resource Conservation and Management Element; the Recreation, Open Space and Culture Element; and the Future Land Use and Quality Communities Element (Appendix 8).

Within the Natural Resources Conservation and Management Element, Goal 1 discusses the need to protect “natural groundwater aquifer recharge areas and wellfields, in a manner that preserves and enhances natural functions, and protects groundwater quality.” The Preserve and its management plan meet this goal, as they are consistent with the requirements of the wellhead protection zone. The Preserve management plan is also supported by Goal 2 which states “Pinellas County will conserve, protect, restore and appropriately manage its natural systems and living resources to ensure the highest environmental quality possible.”

Other supporting goals include Goal 3 which states “Pinellas County’s environmental lands and resources-based parks are the hallmark of this County’s environmental commitment, and these lands are to be protected and managed in perpetuity for their contribution to the biodiversity and biological sustainability of the region, as a means of providing respite from urban life and because they instill future generations with a sense of appreciation for Florida’s natural heritage.” It is further defined in Objective 3.2 that governing land management plans will be developed for all Pinellas environmental lands by 2015. Finally, Goal 5 states “Pinellas County will be a recognized leader in environmental education and local environmental stewardship” and is supported through

programs provided at the state-of-the-art Brooker Creek Preserve Environmental Education Center.

The Recreation, Open Space and Culture Element states “Pinellas County’s land acquisition and management program will focus on making parks and environmental lands available to all County residents, consistent with adopted park and environmental land management plans.” It further states that “Pinellas County will protect its environmental lands and resource-based regional parks from the impact of incompatible uses as identified in approved management plans, and from conversion to other purposes and uses that are inconsistent with approved management plans.” Additionally Goal 2 of this element states “to protect, in perpetuity, the open space value and countywide public purpose of the County’s regional parks, environmental lands and open spaces, and to develop, implement and adhere to the individual management plans and strategies for these irreplaceable public assets.” The updated Brooker Creek Preserve Management Plan will be that governing document for the Preserve.

In the Future Land Use and Quality Communities Element, Goal 1 states “The pattern of land use in Pinellas County shall provide a variety of urban environments to meet the needs of a diverse population and the local economy, conserve and limit demands on natural and economic resources to ensure sustainable built and natural environments, be in the overall public interest, and effectively serve the community and environmental needs of the population.” This is further defined in Objective 1.8 which states “Pinellas County shall continue to implement future land use policies that restrict the proliferation of urban sprawl at a density which is not compatible with support facilities.” Specifically mentioned in the policies under this objective is the protection in the northern portion of Planning Sector 2, which is the location of Brooker Creek Preserve and the Eldrige-Wilde Wellfield. The policies further state, “The Board shall continue to pursue acquisition of open space and environmentally sensitive areas.” Goal 3 of this Element states “Pinellas County’s Plan shall promote a balanced relationship between the natural environment and development.” In relation to the Preserve, Policy 3.1.2 states “Designated preservation areas shall be retained as undeveloped land suitable for passive recreation, conservation, or aesthetic uses to provide opportunities to appreciate the natural environment.”

The Future Land Use Map and Zoning

Current

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) category (Figure 13) designates Brooker Creek Preserve, in general, as Preservation (P) or Preservation – Resource Management (P-RM) (Appendix 9). The purpose of the Preservation category is “to depict those areas of the County that are now characterized, or appropriate to be characterized, as a natural resource feature worthy of preservation; and to recognize the significance of preserving such major environmental features and their ecological functions.” The P-RM category “depicts those areas of the County where passive recreation uses are compatible with the conservation and management of important natural resources, and to recognize functional open space areas essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the County’s residents.”

Currently, many zoning districts within the Preserve are incompatible with the FLUM categories P and P-RM along with a few small properties along the border with incorrect FLUM designations (Figure 13). These will be changed to the compatible districts such as Preservation/Conservation (PC) and Preservation-Resource Management (P-RM).

Proposed

Modifications to the P-RM FLUM and zoning definitions are proposed (Appendix 9). The purpose of this category will be “to depict those areas of the County where the conservation and management of important natural and potable water resources is a priority, and to recognize those functional open space areas that are essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the County’s residents. In addition, this category is compatible with the provision of resource-based recreation.”

Two Potable Water Resource (PWR) Overlays to the Preservation-Resource Management category will exist. The new PWR Overlays cover 2,616 acres of the original 3,623 acres purchased by Pinellas County Utilities (Figure 14 and Table 2). “The PWR-1 Overlay allows for wellfields and non-vertical water supply infrastructures/structures on those lands that are assets of Pinellas County Utilities or Tampa Bay Water (including necessary supporting minor appurtenances and structures) that facilitate provision of high quality potable water and/or reduce potable water demand.” This overlay will be assigned to 1,224 acres south of Keystone Road and 500 acres north of Keystone Road. “The PWR-2 Overlay allows for PWR-1 uses as well as vertical water supply infrastructure/structures as may be required to support the provision of high quality potable water or to reduce potable water demand. Vertical water supply projects within PWR-2 Overlay, including site plan related alterations (e.g., impervious surfaces such as parking, paved roads, retention ponds,) when combined cannot exceed 260 cumulative acres.” This overlay will be assigned to 892 acres north of Keystone Road. Changes to the FLUM and zoning descriptions are not expected to be finalized and adopted by the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners until 2009.

Wellhead Protection Ordinance

The majority of the Preserve also falls within the wellhead protection zone (Figure 15). The purpose of the Wellhead Protection Ordinance (Appendix 10) is to protect existing and future water supply sources properly within the zone of protection. This document provides information on the prohibition or restriction of all non-residential activities that use, handle, produce, dispose, and/or store regulated substances.

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BROOKER CREEK PRESERVE PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

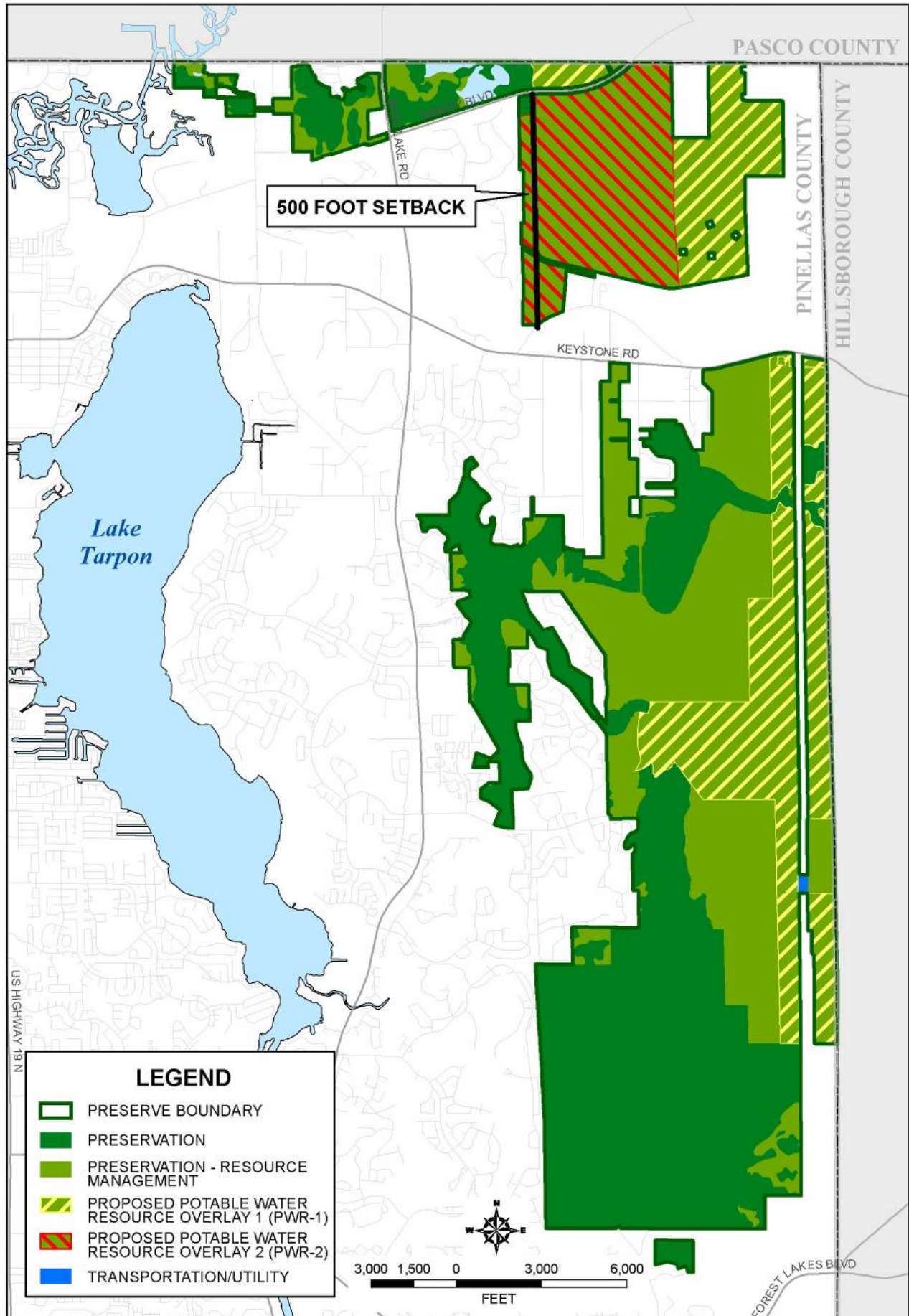


Figure 14. Brooker Creek Preserve Proposed Future Land Use Map

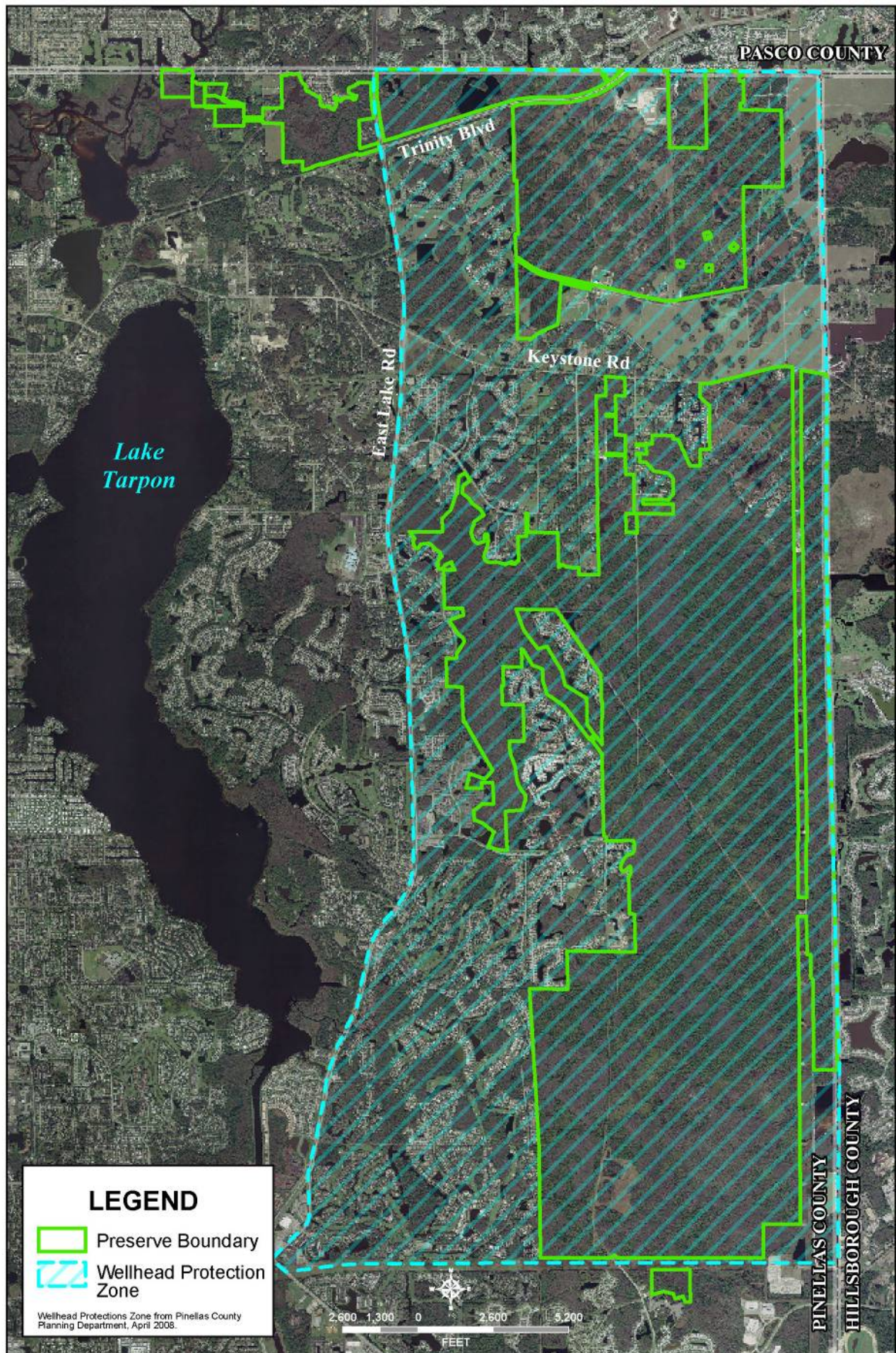


Figure 15. Wellhead Protection Zone

Pinellas County Utilities

In the 1980's, PCU (then called the Water Department) purchased 3,623 acres in northeast Pinellas for wellfield production and protection. When Brooker Creek Preserve was established in the early 1990's, this acreage was included within its boundaries (Figure 8). No formal written agreement was developed, but there was an understanding that these 3,623 acres could still be used for potable water supply related purposes as needed.

Modifications to the Future Land Use Map and Zoning descriptions define where and what PCU uses will be allowed within Brooker Creek Preserve. (Figure 14 and Table 2). The current proposed changes are discussed in Future Land Use Map and Zoning on page 1-21.

There are currently several water distribution pipes, production wells, monitoring wells and various other infrastructure related to water supply within the Preserve (see **Non-Recreational Infrastructure - Wellfield and Water Supply Related**, page 1-29 for a complete list). Access is provided along existing trails and firebreaks to PCU and Tampa Bay Water for replacement, repair and monitoring of these facilities. The vegetation growing over the active water supply lines requires occasional maintenance. ELD staff will remove trees that naturally recruit in these areas to prevent damage from occurring to water supply lines and to allow access for maintenance, monitoring, and repairs.

Table 2. Pinellas County Utilities Present and Potential Uses Within Brooker Creek Preserve

	ACRES	% of BCP	FLUM: P-RM Overlays	ACRES	% of BCP
Pinellas County Utilities	2,616	32.9%	PWR-1 (South of Keystone Road) *	1,224	15.4%
			PWR-1 (North of Keystone Road) *	500	6.3%
			PWR-2 (North of Keystone Road) * **	892	11.2%

* See Appendix 9 for definitions of PWR-1 and PWR-2.

** Vertical water supply projects with site plan alterations, when combined, cannot exceed 260 cumulative acres.

City of Oldsmar

A portion of Brooker Creek Preserve (1,723 acres) lies within the City of Oldsmar. SWFWMD owns 1,146 of these acres. The remaining 577 acres fall under Pinellas County ownership (Figure 16). This land accounts for the largest parcel of the City's Preservation category on the Future Land Use Map that limits any development to passive activities such as nature trails and boardwalks. Under the Recreation and Open Space Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Brooker Creek Preserve is listed as one of the areas of conservation open space that is of the utmost importance to protect.



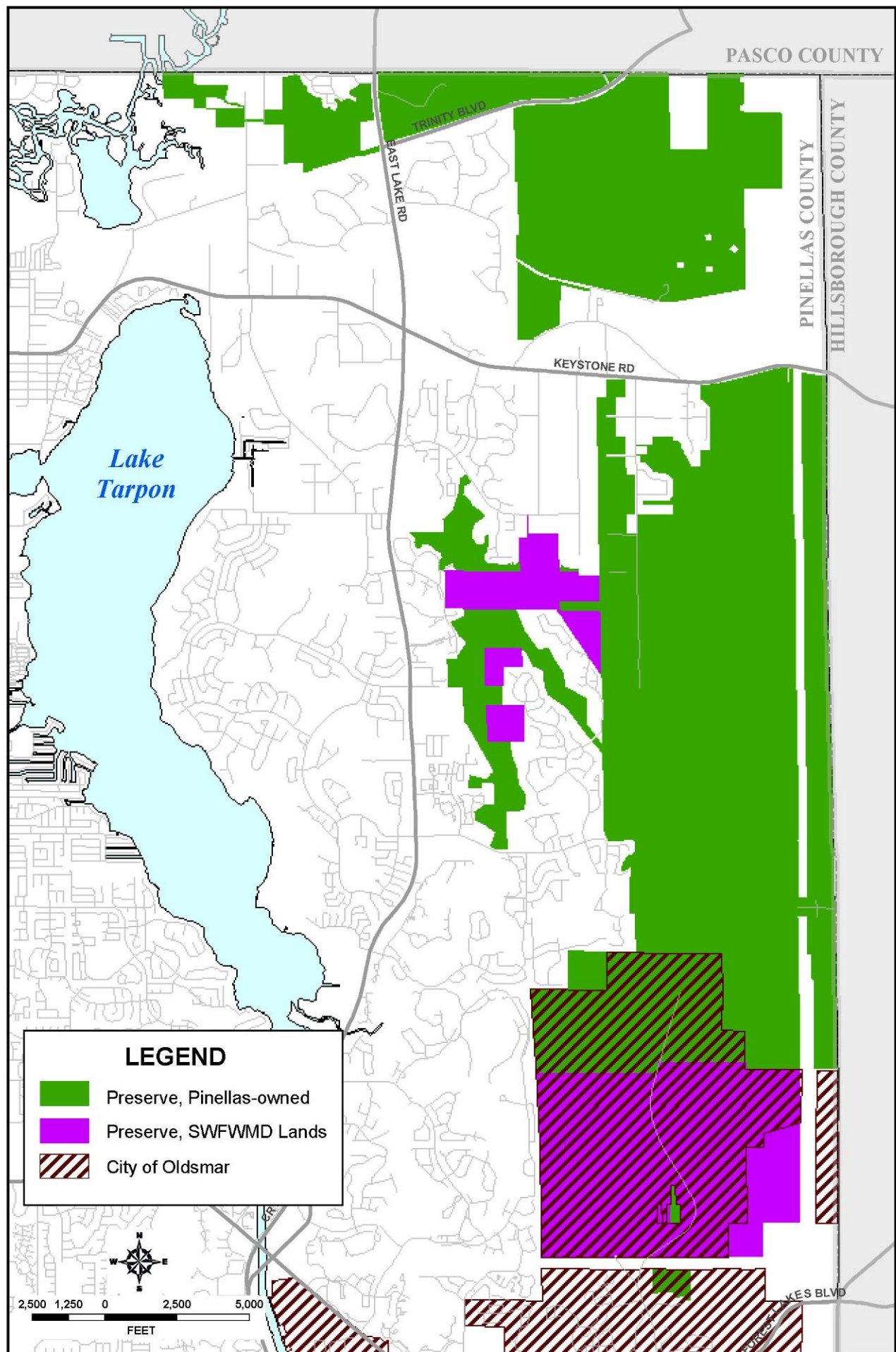
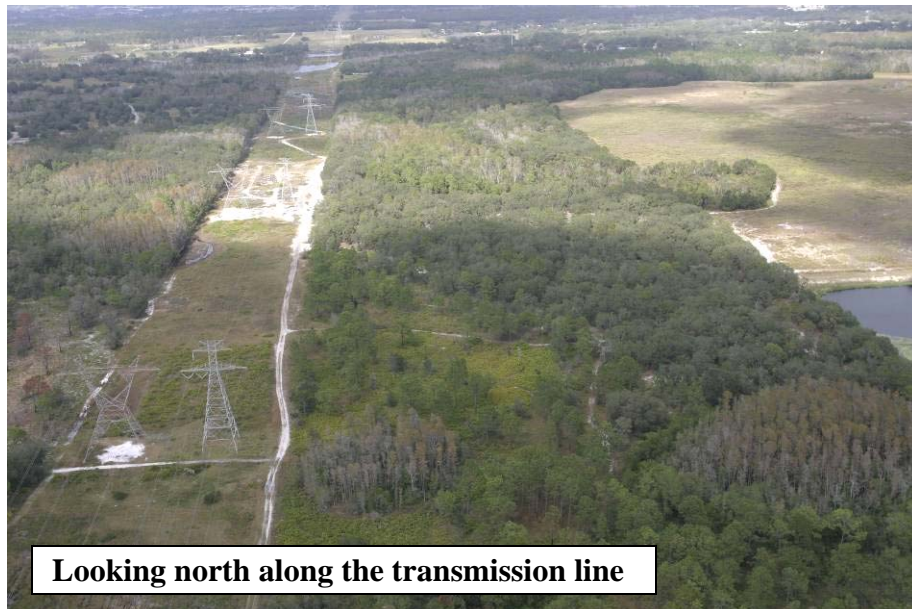


Figure 16. Brooker Creek Preserve within the City of Oldsmar

Progress Energy

Progress Energy has several transmission line easements in various locations within the Preserve. The power company also owns almost 177 acres of one of the transmission corridors that bisects part of the Preserve (Figure 17). This 300- to 500-foot-wide corridor runs north to south and is approximately 850 feet west of the eastern boundary of the Preserve. This corridor is not officially part of the Preserve, although the land itself provides valuable wildlife habitat. Progress Energy and ELD have a cooperative working relationship. When work is needed within any of these transmission corridors the other party is notified to ensure no problems will be caused for either organization. The transmission lines require regular maintenance to keep them free of trees. Outside contractors are normally hired by Progress Energy to perform this maintenance that can include mowing, tree topping and/or limited herbicide application.



Looking north along the transmission line



Deer crossing the transmission line

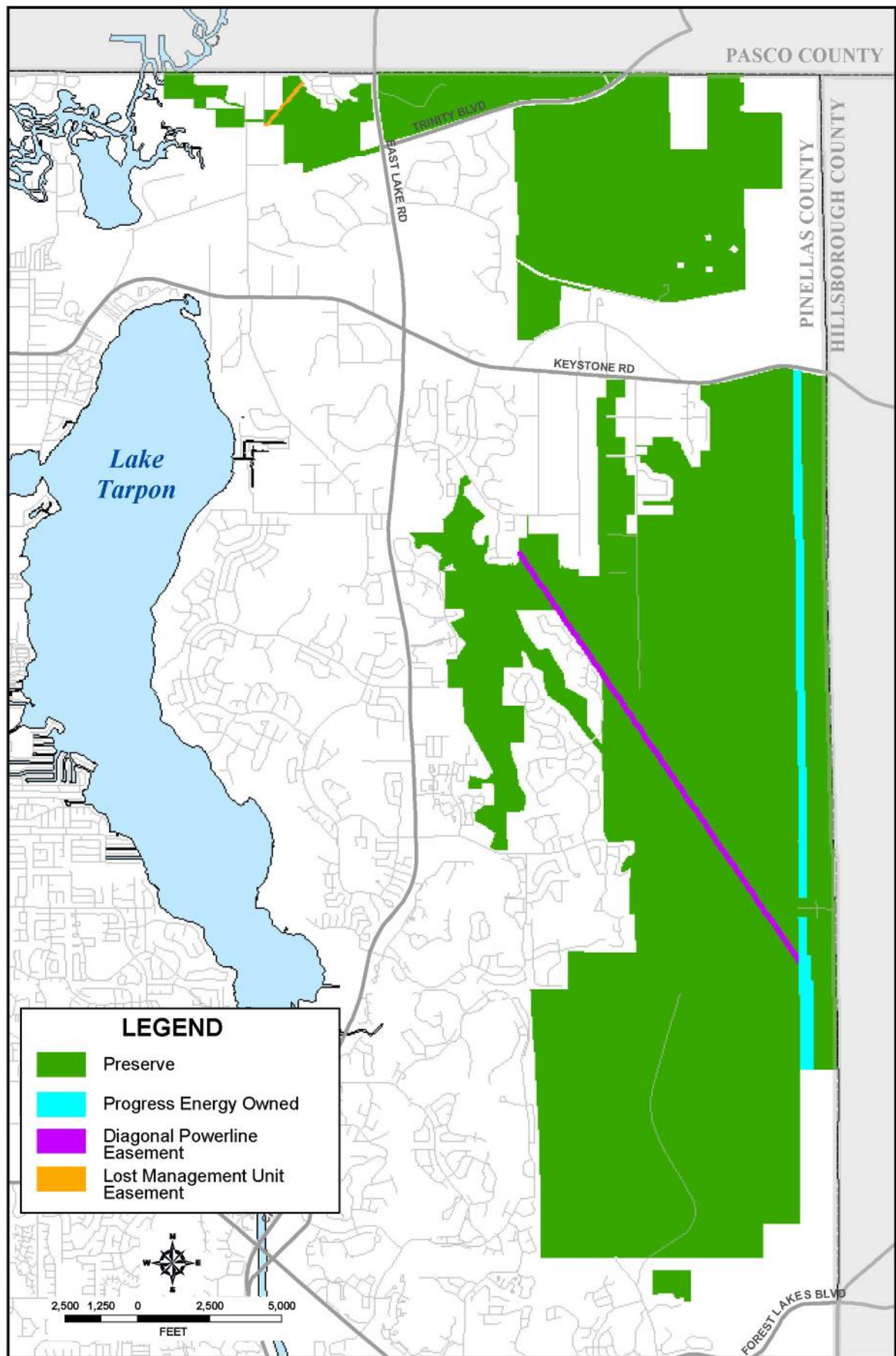


Figure 17. Progress Energy Owned Corridor and Easements within Brooker Creek Preserve

Non-Recreational Infrastructure

(Figure 18)

Preserve Operational Related

- Sheriff officer's residence
- "Tall Pines" equipment and supplies storage area (old horse barns)
- Environmental Lands Complex
 - Administration building (trailer)
 - Research station
 - Pole barn
 - Future maintenance/equipment shop

Wellfield and Water Supply Related

(Some items are left off Figure 18 due to Homeland Security)

- Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield wells, associated piping and paved roads
- 60-inch and 66-inch Pinellas County Utilities potable water supply lines
- Abandoned Pinellas County Utilities potable water supply line
- 48-inch City of St Petersburg potable water supply line
- Pinellas County Utilities potable water blending facility (under construction)
- Pinellas County Utilities hydrogen sulfide removal plant
- Pinellas County Utilities chloramine storage area
- Pinellas County Utilities capped and abandoned production wells, monitoring wells, and associated piping south of Keystone Road

Miscellaneous

- 3 wetland rehydration wells with associated pumps and solar panel
- Florida Division of Forestry work center
- Florida Gas Transmission Company underground natural gas transmission line
- Progress Energy transmission lines
- Radio tower
- Abandoned railroad grade
- Brooker-Anclote Corridor paved easement roadways
- Alcohol Community Treatment Services center

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Archaeological and Cultural Resources

A cultural resource assessment survey was conducted in 2001 prior to construction of the BCPEEC. The results from three of the sample sites were a prehistoric culture with low-density artifact scatter and single artifact or isolated find. The other site identified remnants of the Safety Harbor 1000-1500 CE culture with low-density artifact scatter.

Another site was surveyed as part of a road construction project near the Pinellas/Pasco County line. This survey indicated a prehistoric culture with low-density scatter lacking pottery.

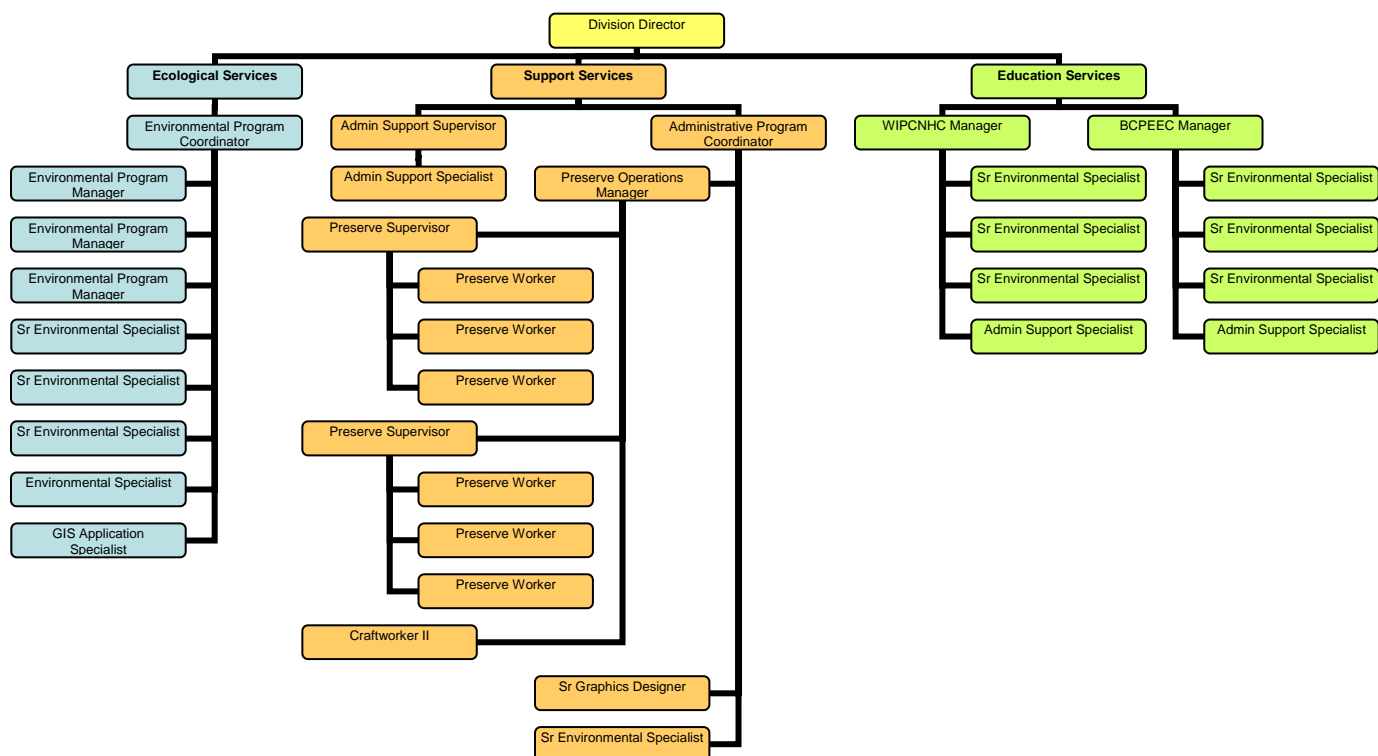
Cultural resource surveys are conducted on high probability areas prior to any proposed ground disturbance. Any resulting survey reports are forwarded to the Florida Division of Historical Resources for review and comment. If any archaeological or historical sites are discovered, the County will comply with Chapter 267, Florida Statutes, specifically Sections 267.061 (2) (a) and (b). The County will notify the Division of Historical Resources immediately if evidence is found to suggest an archaeological or historical resource on any of the project sites and will take appropriate measures to protect these resources.

The collection of artifacts or disturbance of any archaeological or historical site on Brooker Creek Preserve is prohibited unless authorization has been obtained from the Florida Department of State's Division of Historical Resources and the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management.

Staffing

The Environmental Lands Division (ELD) is one of several Divisions within the Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management. The organizational structure beginning in FY08 is depicted on Chart 1. Land management for the preserves and management areas falls under the Ecological Services Section, which also provides ecological monitoring, species inventories, GIS support, and coordination with outside researchers. The Support Services Section provides assistance for the completion of numerous land management tasks.

Chart 1. ELD Organizational Structure –Beginning FY08



Volunteer Program

The Environmental Lands Division has a large team of more than 400 active volunteers. Brooker Creek Preserve receives assistance from 217 of these volunteers, consisting of 57 long-term adults, 31 youth, and 129 short-term volunteers.

Table 3. Volunteer Hours Worked at Brooker Creek Preserve, October 2005 - September 2006			
Administrative/ Office Work	Education Center	Land Management/ General Preserve Work	Research/Monitoring
402 (4.8%)	5933 (71.5%)	1159 (14.0%)	804 (9.7%)
Total: 8298 hours = over 4 full-time workers			



Volunteers help with a wide variety of tasks (Table 3). At the BCPEEC volunteers operate the visitor desk and resource center, help with landscaping, general office work, guided hikes, interpretation, outreach, special events, and provide general support. Research and monitoring projects supported by volunteers include butterfly and bird counts, coyote genetics, Catesby's lily demography, and flatwoods management studies. Land management and other general preserve assistance includes trail and firebreak trimming, trash removal, fence monitoring and clearing, plantings and watering. It is expected that volunteers will continue to play an important role for ELD in the future.

Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc.

The Friends of Brooker Creek Preserve, Inc. (Appendix 11) was organized in 1994 to provide public support for the



protection, funding, and expansion of the Preserve. The Friends is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation made up of volunteers who provide ongoing support for the implementation of the missions and visions of the Preserve and the BCPEEC. The group also provides fundraising efforts, participates in volunteerism, and provides publicity to help support work and programs within the Preserve and at the BCPEEC. More information can be obtained at: <http://www.friendsofbrookercreekpreserve.org/>.

Concessions, Leases, Licenses, Rentals, and Permits

- On July 18, 1995, the Board of County Commissioners executed a 30-year license agreement with the Trinity Oaks Property Owner's Association, Inc. to clear vegetation and install landscaping on either side of Trinity Oaks Boulevard. (Appendix 12)
- In 1995, Pinellas County entered into a lease agreement with the Florida Division of Forestry (FDOF) for the use of 10 acres on the south side of Keystone Road for a Forestry Service Work Center. (Appendix 13) The actual fenced area consists of approximately 2 acres. In lieu of rent FDOF provides in-kind services for ELD such as firebreak installation and maintenance, wildfire mitigation, and prescribed burn assistance on all Preserves and Management Areas.
- On February 10, 2003, the Board of County Commissioners executed a 30- year license agreement with East Lake Youth Sports Association, Inc. to grant permission for use of 38.47 acres north of Keystone Road to build baseball fields, soccer fields and parking. Land use and zoning changes were required prior to construction. In the summer of 2007, due to public concern over this recreational use within the Preserve, the ballfield expansion was proposed to be moved to the Pinellas County School Board property located on the southeast corner of the Keystone Road/East Lake Road intersection. The County is working on an agreement with the School Board which would allow this expansion on a portion of the property. The original license on the 38 acres of Preserve land will be terminated.
- A nature-based gift center at the BCPEEC is currently leased to Discovering Nature Store. The store carries a variety of merchandise for nature lovers including books, optics, bird feeders and houses, toys, and much more. The rental fee is based on a percentage of total sales.



- The auditorium, classroom, conference room, and gazebo at the Brooker Creek Environmental Education Center can be rented through a short-term facility license agreement. These facilities can be rented for such uses as meetings, training classes, workshops, corporate retreats, weddings, conferences, socials and various ceremonies.



- Site use permits are required for scientific research (biological surveys, species collection or trapping, use of non-public trails for observations, and ecological, hydrological, anthropological, geological, or chemical studies), access to non-public trails and off-trail areas, commercial photography, television broadcasting, geocaching, group activities involving 50 or more persons, displays, signs, and/or distribution of printed materials.
- The Pinellas County Biological Field Station (PCBFS) is located at Brooker Creek Preserve. This facility can be rented through a short-term facility license agreement. The PCBFS provides overnight accommodations, small-group conference facilities, and standard equipment for use by visiting scientists to facilitate their authorized research at properties managed by ELD and by visiting presenters at the BCPEEC and Weedon Island Preserve Cultural and Natural History Center (WIPCNHC).

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