

DEP's Division of State Lands provides oversight for more than 11 million acres of state lands, including lakes, rivers and islands. Of these, 3.5 million acres are conservation lands that are protected for citizens, visitors and future generations. These lands cleanse and restore the waters we drink and the air we breathe, and provide a home to tens of thousands of rare and endangered animals.





People think of Florida as flat, but several *Florida Forever* projects include whitewater rapids: the Chipola, Aucilla and Suwannee rivers have rapids.





The world's only bald cypress-royal palm forest is found within the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park in Naples - referred to as "the Amazon of North America."





To assist surveyors and land planners, DEP's Division of State Lands provides a user-friendly online service called the Land Boundary Information System (LABINS). Anyone can research land record information. LABINS receives about 480,000 website visits each year and provides aerial photography of the state, survey plats, historic documents and more.





In April 2008, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission approved a final bald eagle management plan and removed the bald eagle from the imperiled species list. In 1973, surveys found only 88 active nests in Florida when monitoring began. In 2007, more than 1,100 active nests were counted.

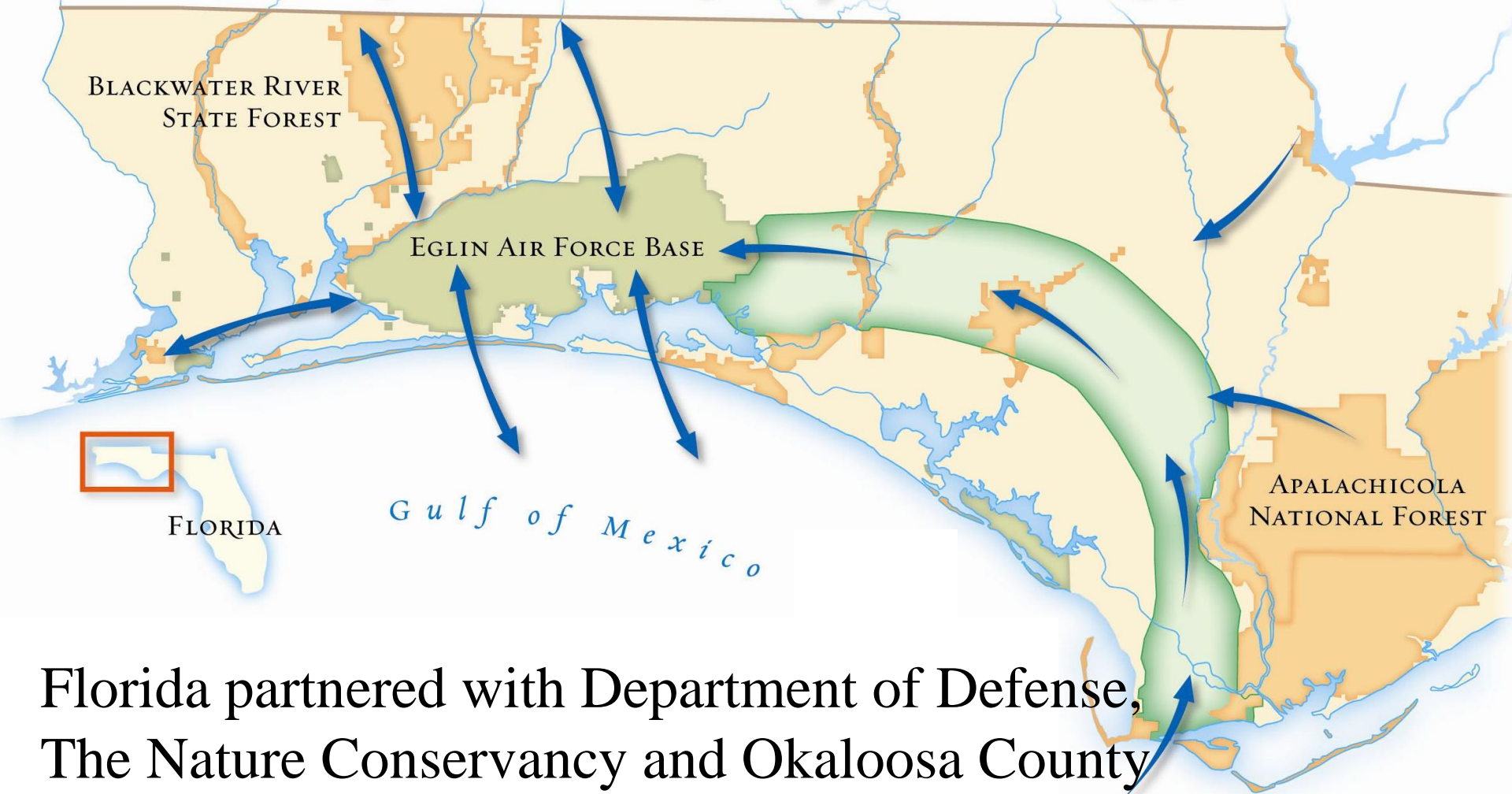




In the last seven years, Florida has acquired more than one million acres of environmentally-sensitive land to protect water quality in rivers, lakes, estuaries and streams through *Florida Forever* and its predecessor, *Preservation 2000*. The acreage includes nearly 130,000 acres of natural floodplains and more than 500,000 acres of functional wetlands.







Florida partnered with Department of Defense, The Nature Conservancy and Okaloosa County to create the Northwest Florida Greenway -- a 100-mile stretch of land in the Florida Panhandle. This biological hot spot provides the public with recreational opportunities and protects air space from the Gulf to Eglin Air Force Base.

Through *Florida Forever*, the state's premier land acquisition program, \$4.5 million is allocated annually to purchase and preserve land specifically for Florida's greenways and trails.

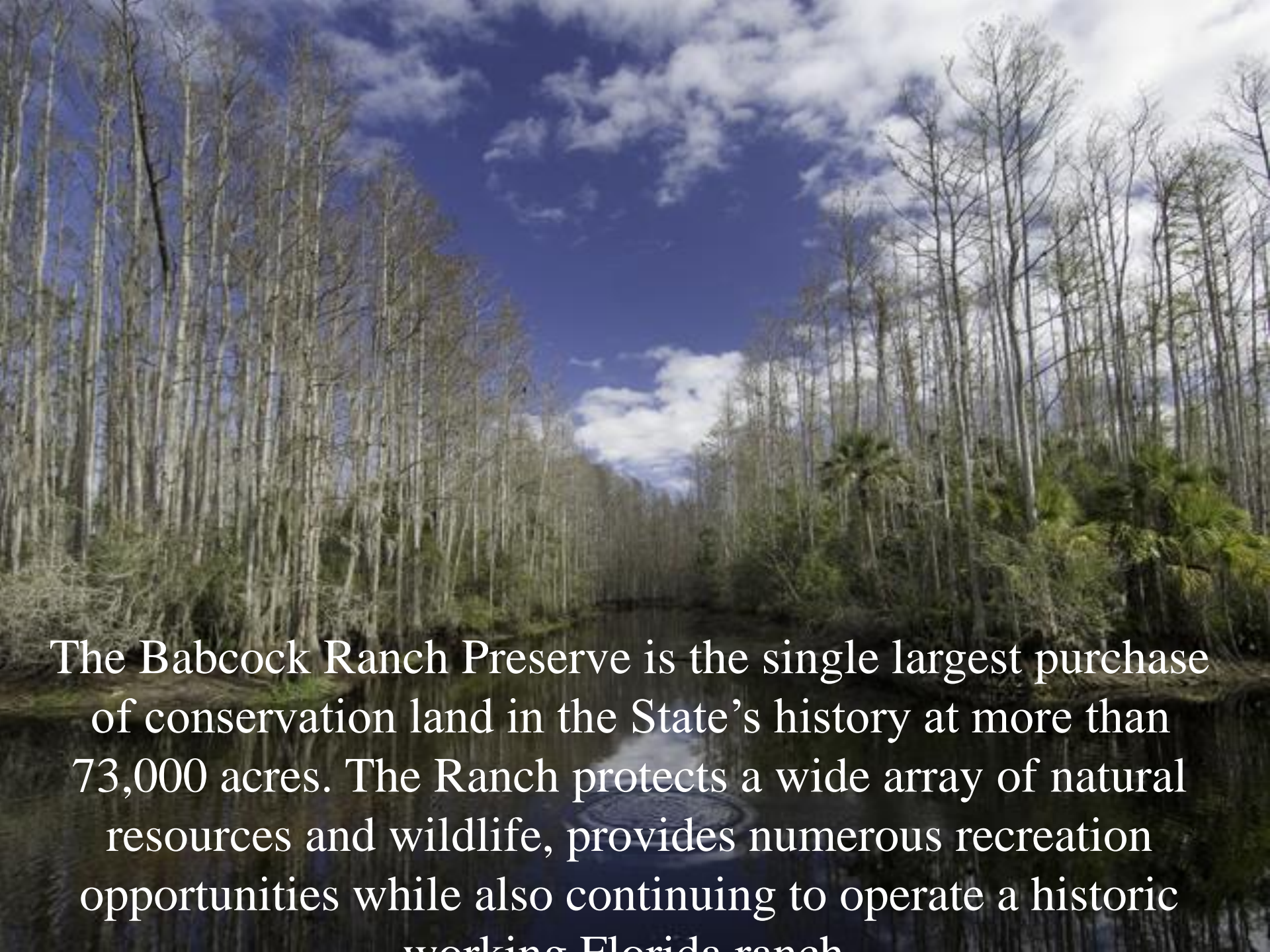




Florida was the first state in the nation to partner with the Department of Defense for the dual purpose of environmental protection and national defense. The State has invested more than \$920 million to acquire more than half a million acres around military bases.



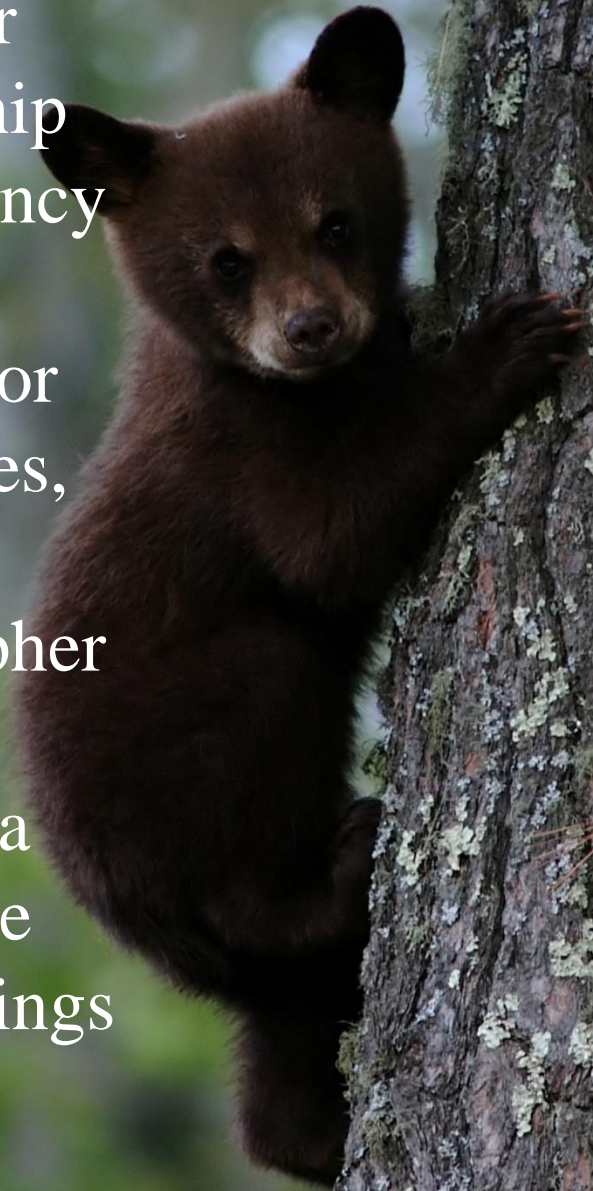




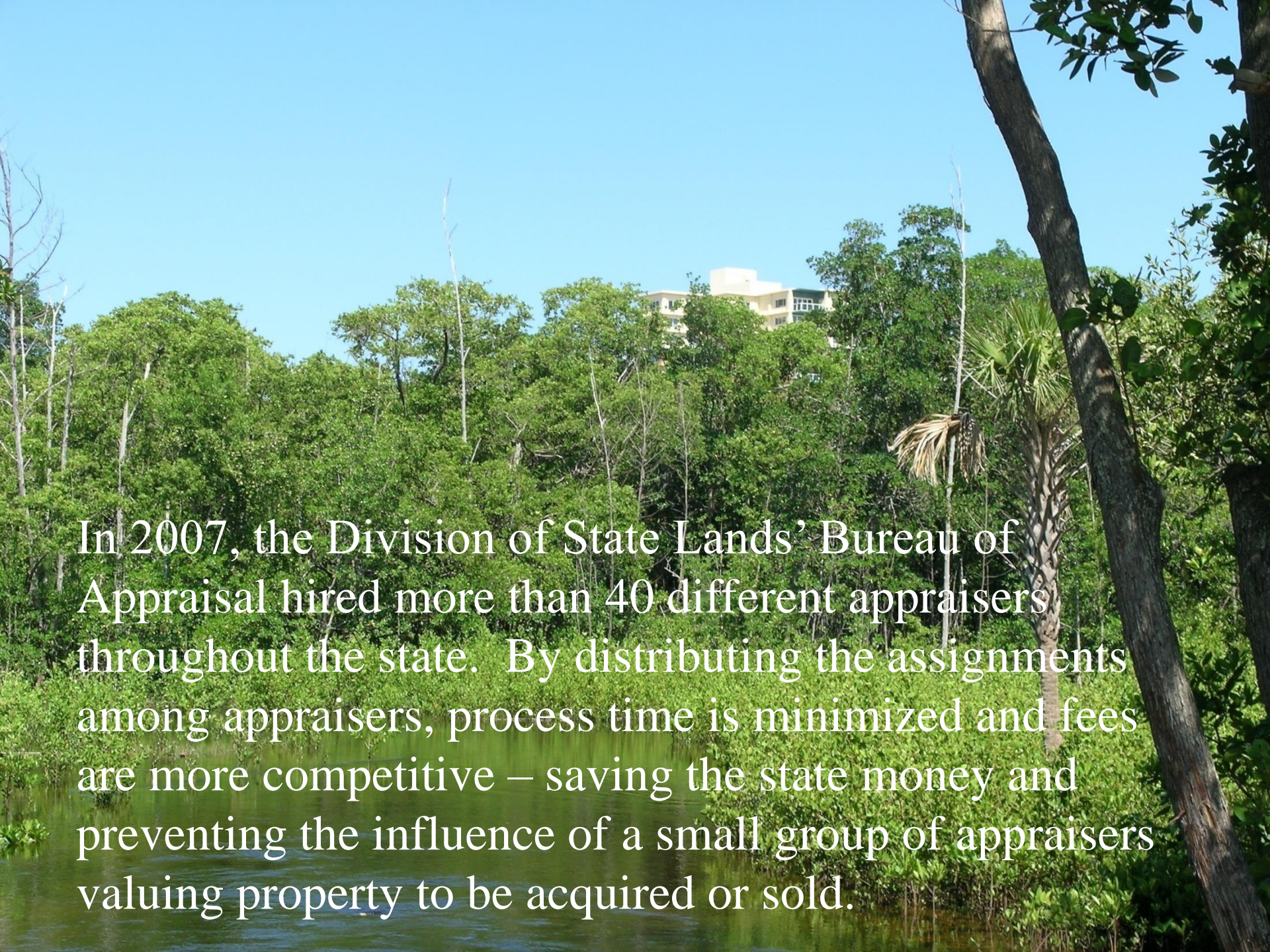
The Babcock Ranch Preserve is the single largest purchase of conservation land in the State's history at more than 73,000 acres. The Ranch protects a wide array of natural resources and wildlife, provides numerous recreation opportunities while also continuing to operate a historic working Florida ranch.



In 2006, Florida purchased more than 4,000 acres near Silver Springs in partnership with The Nature Conservancy and Marion County. The purchase protects habitat for rare and endangered species, including the bald eagle, Florida black bear and gopher tortoise. With 13 known sinkholes, the area acts as a recharge area for one of the largest first magnitude springs in the nation.

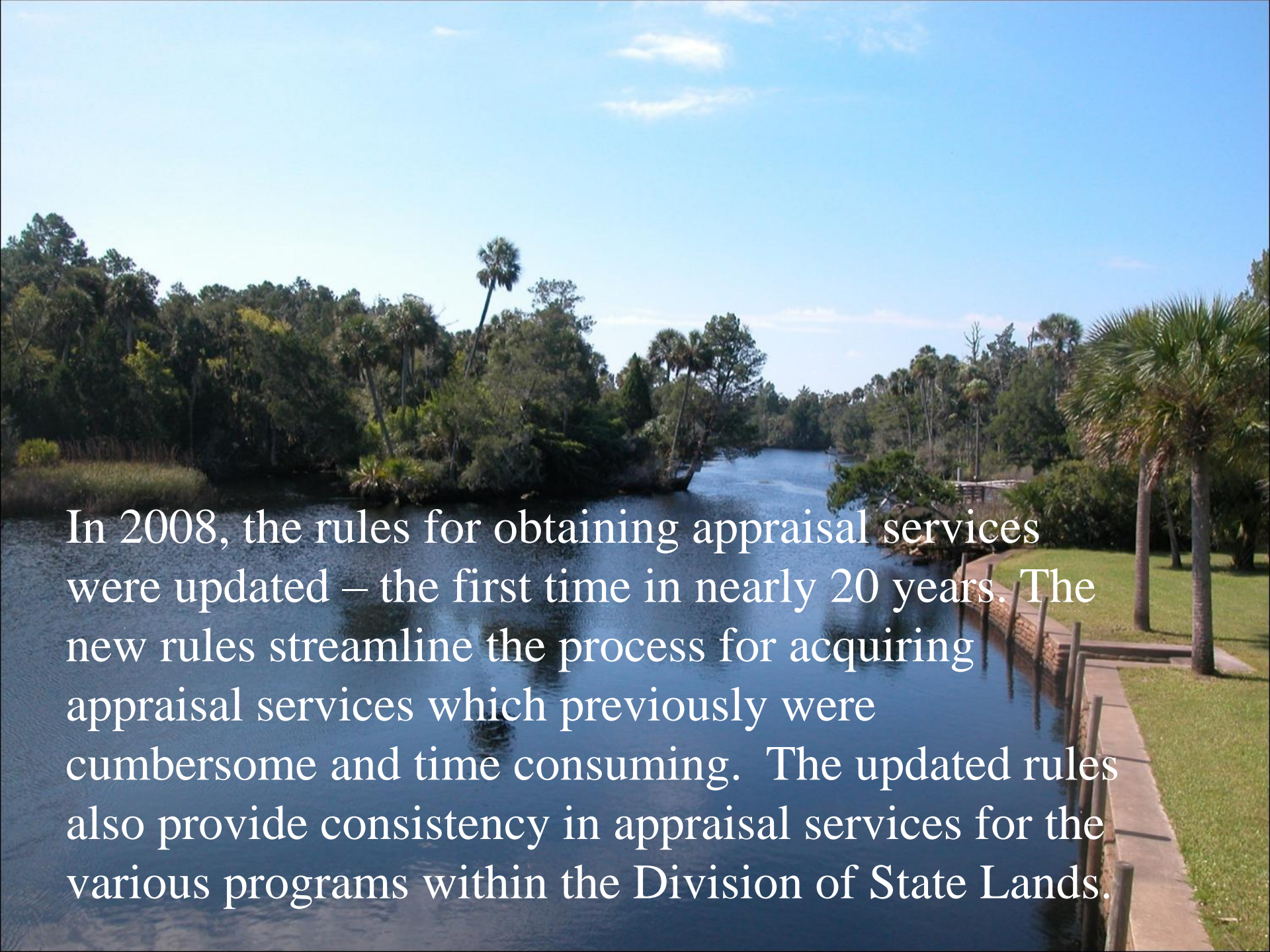






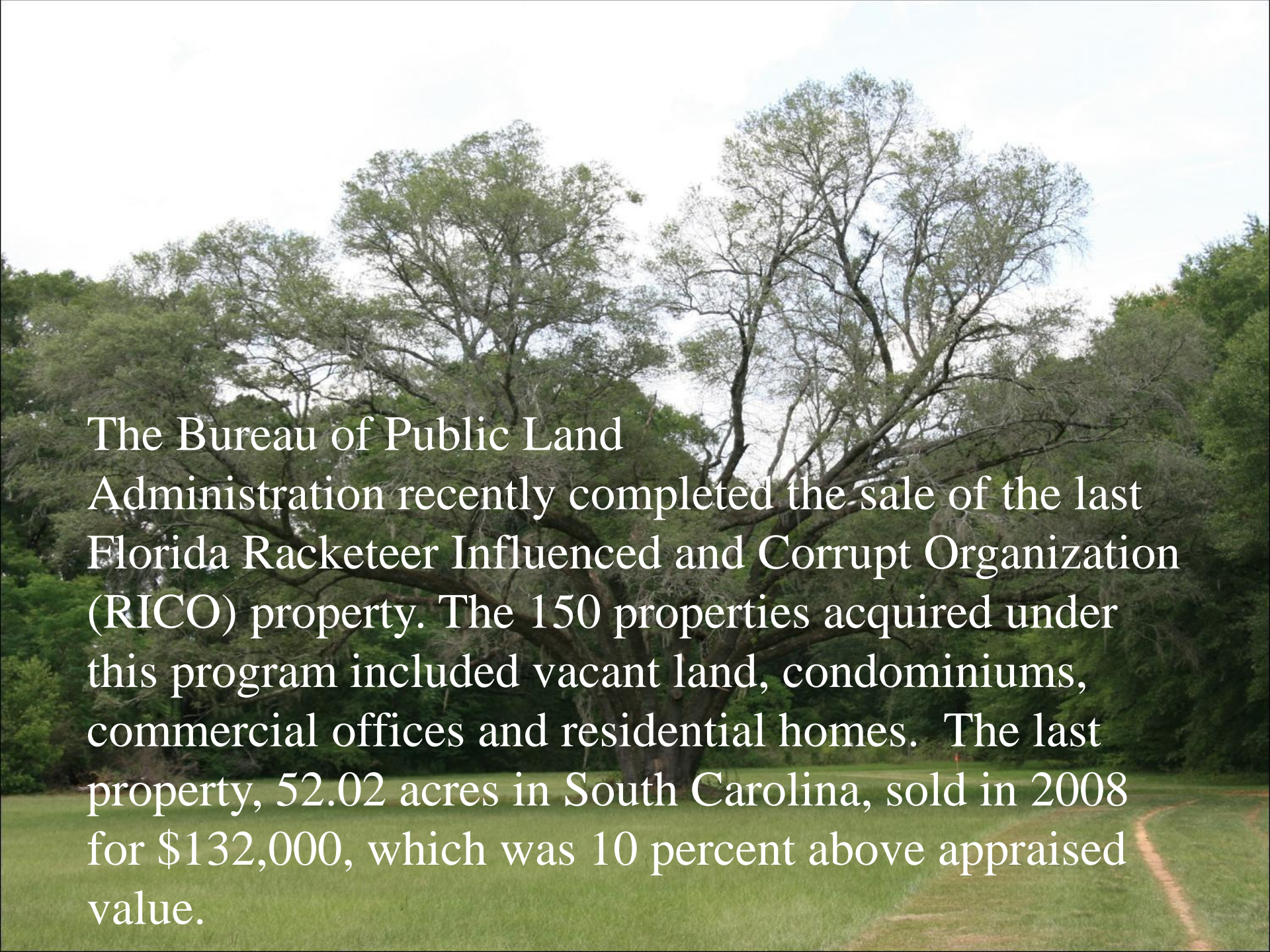
In 2007, the Division of State Lands' Bureau of Appraisal hired more than 40 different appraisers throughout the state. By distributing the assignments among appraisers, process time is minimized and fees are more competitive – saving the state money and preventing the influence of a small group of appraisers valuing property to be acquired or sold.





In 2008, the rules for obtaining appraisal services were updated – the first time in nearly 20 years. The new rules streamline the process for acquiring appraisal services which previously were cumbersome and time consuming. The updated rules also provide consistency in appraisal services for the various programs within the Division of State Lands.



A large, leafy tree stands in the center of a grassy field. A dirt path curves through the grass in the lower right corner. The background is filled with more trees under a bright sky.

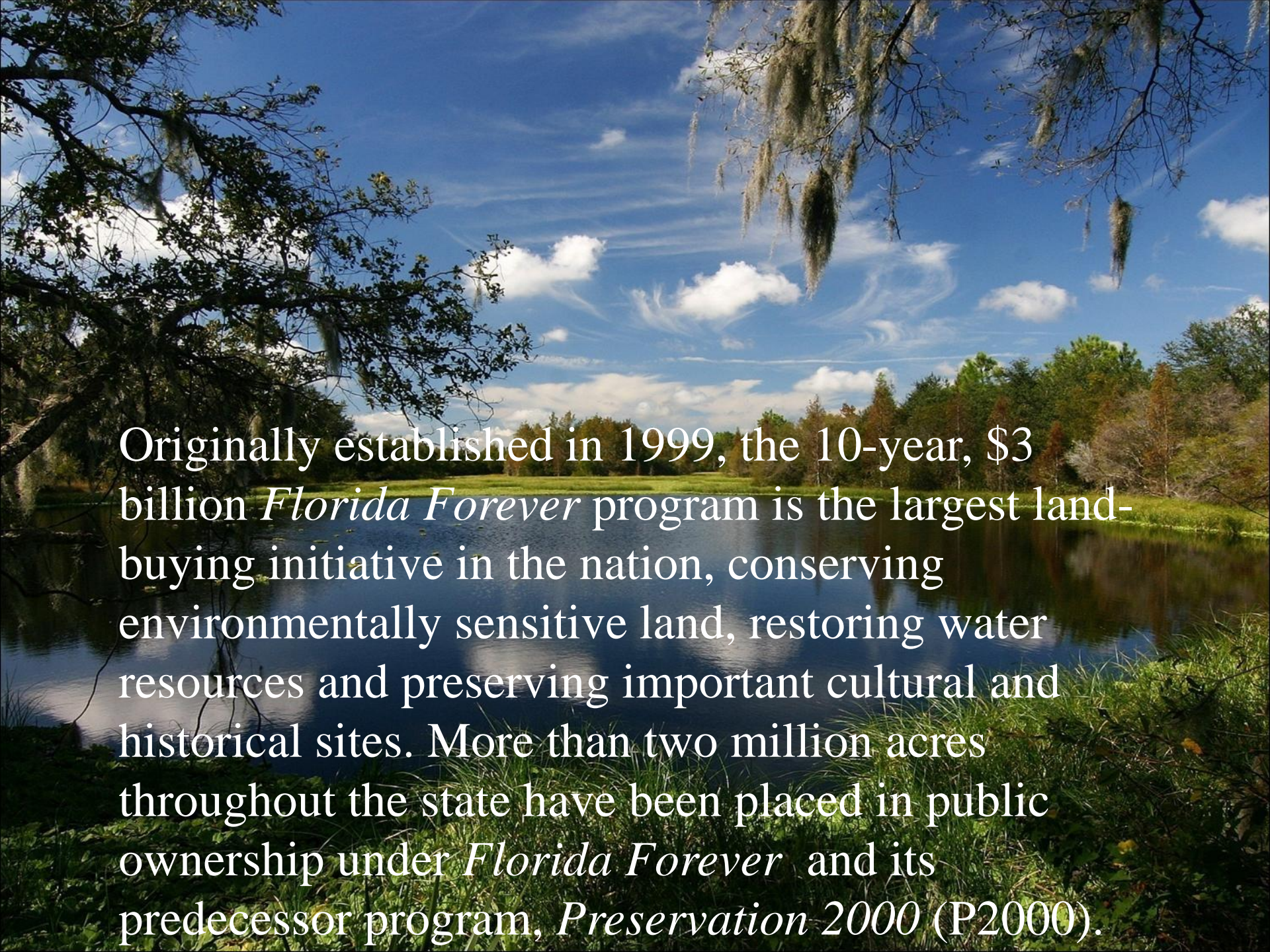
The Bureau of Public Land Administration recently completed the sale of the last Florida Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organization (RICO) property. The 150 properties acquired under this program included vacant land, condominiums, commercial offices and residential homes. The last property, 52.02 acres in South Carolina, sold in 2008 for \$132,000, which was 10 percent above appraised value.



To improve protection of Florida's natural resources, DEP's Division of State Lands partners with the St. Johns and South Florida Water Management Districts to install and maintain meteorological/tide stations at three different locations across the state to monitor the surface water quality.







Originally established in 1999, the 10-year, \$3 billion *Florida Forever* program is the largest land-buying initiative in the nation, conserving environmentally sensitive land, restoring water resources and preserving important cultural and historical sites. More than two million acres throughout the state have been placed in public ownership under *Florida Forever* and its predecessor program, *Preservation 2000* (P2000).



WATER ST.  
SECOND ST.

The North Key Largo  
Hammocks *Florida Forever*  
project is home to the largest  
West Indian tropical forest stand  
in the United States.





# Green Swamp / *Florida Forever* project

- Located in Lake and Polk Counties
- Critical to the recharge of the Floridan aquifer
- 70,000 of 233,000 acres have been acquired
- Lake Louisa State Park offers miles of public access for recreation







## Fisheating Creek Ecosystem / *Florida Forever* project

- Nearly 60,000 acres of the 176,000 have been acquired in Glades and Highland Counties
- One of the largest cattle/agricultural operations
- Only undammed tributary to Lake Okeechobee
- Critical panther habitat
- Includes some of the rarest communities in the state like seepage slopes and prairie hammocks





## Fakahatchee Strand / *Florida Forever* project

- Located in Collier County
- Largest and best example of a strand swamp in Florida
- More varieties of orchids, such as the ghost orchid, than any publicly-owned property in America
- Provides water quality protection to the Ten Thousand Islands of southwest Florida





# Wekiva-Ocala Greenway / *Florida Forever* project

- Located in Lake, Orange, Seminole and Volusia Counties encompassing nearly 77,000 acres
- When complete, the greenway will connect Wekiwa Springs and the Ocala National Forest
- Home to the scrub jay, sandhill crane and gopher tortoises
- 50 to 75 springs estimated within the greenway







## Tates Hell / *Florida Forever* project

- Located in Franklin and Liberty Counties encompassing nearly 200,000 acres
- Drains into the Apalachicola River
- Connects the Apalachicola Forest and the Apalachicola NERR
- Home to Florida black bear and red-cockaded woodpecker