

Southwest Florida

Water Management District

Four rivers radiate outward from the Green Swamp in West Central Florida. Although the Green Swamp is wholly within the Southwest Florida Water Management District, one of the four, the Oklawaha River, is a major tributary to the St. Johns River.

In addition to being the headwaters of four of Florida's major rivers — the Oklawaha, the Withlacoochee, the Hillsborough, and the Peace — the Green Swamp is Central Florida's major groundwater recharge area. The swamp and the river system it gives birth to are essential to the preservation of the potable groundwater supplies of West Central Florida.

Geographically it is between Tampa Bay and Orlando (home of Disney World), two of the fastest-growing areas of the state. The building of Disney World set off a land boom in Central Florida that threatened to spill over into the Green Swamp. As a result, it was made an "Area of Critical State Concern" under the state's Environmental Land and Water



Save Our Rivers Purchases

Acres Purchased: 12,442

Cost: \$15,784,871

Selected Parcels

Hidden Lake: 589 acres

Sawgrass Lake: 51 acres

Cypress Creek: 427 acres

Anclote Water Storage Lands (Anclote River):

2,528 acres

Green Swamp River Systems (Withlacoochee River):

8,845 acres

Management Act to protect its valuable recharge functions.

Land acquisition programs of the Southwest Florida Water Management District are aimed largely at protecting the drinking water supplies for a fast-growing area of the state. The Cypress Creek, the Anclote water storage lands, and the Green Swamp land acquisitions *all* include protection of water supplies. Of course these acquisitions and others also save important environmental habitats — pine flatlands and wetlands of various types including cypress domes and the hardwood floodplains of the river headwaters — in an area in which natural lands are rapidly disappearing.

The *Save Our Rivers* acquisitions along the Withlacoochee River join 50,000 acres already purchased under other District programs. The goal is to eventually have a large part of the river's five-year floodplain under public ownership and protection.