



## Protecting and Restoring Rural South Florida Watersheds

From Orlando in the north to Florida Bay in the south lies the Greater Everglades Region; this area contains some of the highest biodiversity in the nation – plants and animals that you will find nowhere else. The region supports the Florida panther and many other iconic species that make Florida one of the most vibrant wildlife areas in the country while also playing an essential role in protecting and restoring water resources. The Greater Everglades Region supplies water to millions of coastal residents and is the heart of Florida's ranchlands. It is also a disappearing landscape, as a 1000 people a day pour into our state.



## We Are Unique

The National Wildlife Refuge Association is a unique conservation organization working in rural south Florida and statewide to protect both wildlife and water resources. We are unique due to three attributes that are critical to accomplishing effective land and water conservation.

- 1) Advocating for land protection funding at the federal and state levels**
- 2) Developing conservation science in partnership with the University of Florida Center for Landscape Conservation Planning that is critical to land and water conservation decision-making**
- 3) Implementing land and water conservation projects on the ground**

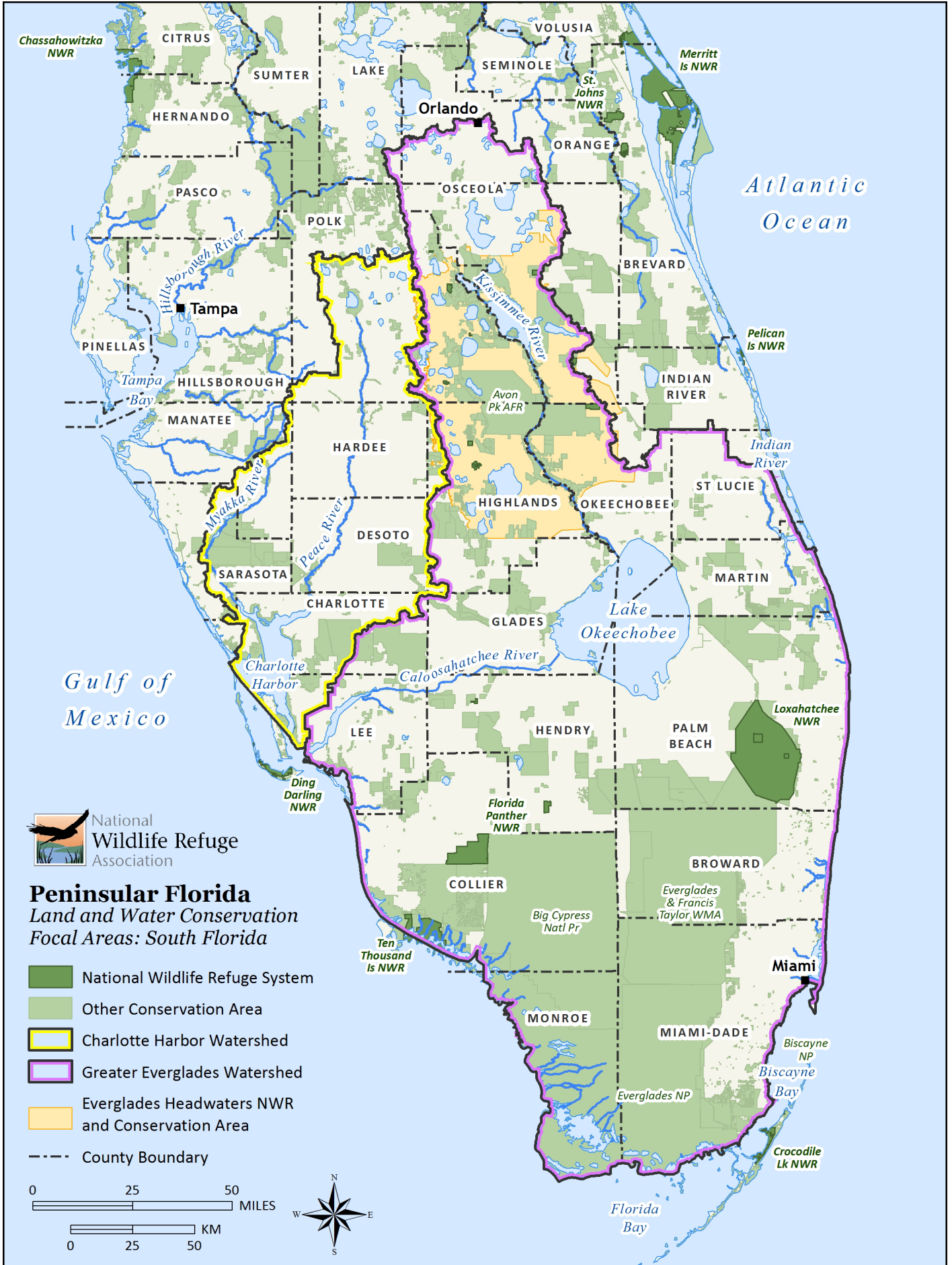
We focus on working in the rural landscapes of the Greater Everglades and Charlotte Harbor Watersheds to protect and restore our wetlands. Cattle ranches are the primary rural land use in these watersheds; they provide essential wildlife habitat AND the best opportunities for wetland restoration and water storage.

Our work to address the algae blooms and red tide in south Florida begins at the source, by protecting and restoring these ranching landscapes to hold and clean water before it flows into the rivers and lakes, which all flow to our coastal estuaries.

We are in a race against time to protect our water and wildlife. Continued support for these efforts will drive land and water conservation forward and help us preserve this disappearing landscape.

## Land Protected

Since the inception of the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge in 2012, we have been instrumental in land protection projects totaling over 20,000 acres and continue to work with USFWS to achieve their goal of protecting 150,000 acres in the northern Everglades watershed. In addition, over the past three years we have helped protect over 10,000 acres of sensitive habitat and wetlands in the Charlotte Harbor Watershed, and we have assisted ranchers to place tens of thousands of acres into Florida's conservation land protection programs.



**Peninsular Florida**  
**Land and Water Conservation**  
**Focal Areas: South Florida**

- National Wildlife Refuge System
- Other Conservation Area
- Charlotte Harbor Watershed
- Greater Everglades Watershed
- Everglades Headwaters NWR and Conservation Area
- County Boundary

