



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT
POST OFFICE BOX 4970
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32232-0019

October 21, 2020

Regulatory Division
North Permits Branch
Mitigation Bank Team

PUBLIC NOTICE

Application Number: SAJ-2019-02872-SJC

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has received a complete prospectus proposing the establishment of a mitigation bank pursuant to the 2008 *Compensatory Mitigation for Losses of Aquatic Resources* regulations (33 CFR Part 332) as described below:

APPLICANT: Rock Bend Ranch LLC
10150 Highland Manor Drive, Suite 200
Tampa, Florida 33610

LOCATION: The proposed project, identified as the 646.7-acre Rock Bend Mitigation Bank (RBMB), is located north of NE Brownville Street, east of NW County Road 661A, west of the Peace River, and south of the Hardee-DeSoto County line within Sections 29 thru 32, of Township 36 south, and Range 25 east, DeSoto County, Florida.

APPROXIMATE CENTRAL COORDINATES: Latitude: 27.314219° N
Longitude: 81.844431° W

PROSPECTUS SUMMARY: Pursuant to 33 CFR 332.8(d)(4), the Corps has posted a full copy of the RBMB prospectus online so that it is available for review by the public. The prospectus may be downloaded from the Regulatory In-Lieu Fee and Bank Information Tracking System (RIBITS) at web address:
<https://ribits.ops.usace.army.mil/ords/f?p=107:2>.

Once on the RIBITS homepage, select "Jacksonville" from the "ALL DISTRICTS" drop down menu located in the lower left corner of the screen. Once the district filter has been selected, click on the "Banks & ILF Sites" link located in the Navigation box (upper left corner). This will generate a list of projects, scroll down the list and click on the "Rock Bend MB" link. On this page, click on the "Cyber Repository" link located on the menu bar above the General Information box, then click on the Prospectus Documents folder to access the prospectus associated with the RBMB project.

If you are unable to access the web address, a copy of the prospectus is available upon request to the project manager listed at the end of this public notice.

PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The applicant seeks authorization to enhance and/or establish, preserve and protect wetlands and uplands on the 646.7-acre property. The primary ecological goal of the RBMB is to preserve, enhance, and/or establish approximately 386.2 acres of wetland and 260.5 acres of upland communities to improve fish and wildlife habitat use and connectivity; increase wetland, floodplain, and riverine function and quality; and improve the overall integrity of the communities within the Peace River Watershed. Specific restoration objectives include:

- Enhancement of 374.2 acres of Stream and Lake Swamp to provide floodplain protection, flood attenuation, nutrient cycling, water quality treatment, aquifer recharge, and wildlife habitat within the watershed.
- Enhancement of 0.2 acres of Bay Swamp to provide flood attenuation, water quality treatment, nutrient cycling, aquifer recharge, and wildlife habitat within the Peace River Watershed.
- Enhancement of 0.1 acres of Cattle Pond to provide flood attenuation, water quality treatment, nutrient cycling, aquifer recharge, and wildlife habitat within the watershed.
- Establishment of 10.3 acres of Freshwater Marshes to provide flood attenuation, water quality treatment, nutrient cycling, aquifer recharge, and wildlife habitat within the watershed.
- Enhancement of 61.6 acres of Improved Pasture to Shrub and Brushland to create a more native condition, provide wetland buffers and increase wildlife habitat and connectivity
- Enhancement of 160.7 acres of Xeric Oak uplands to create a more natural condition, provide wetland buffers and increase wildlife habitat and connectivity.
- Enhancement of 32.9 acres of upland Hardwood-Conifer Mixed forests to create a more natural condition, provide wetland buffers and increase wildlife habitat and connectivity.
- Preservation of the above activities (386.2 acres of jurisdictional wetland habitat and 260.5 acres of upland buffer habitat) for a total of 646.7 acres to protect and manage the natural resources in perpetuity.

ECOLOGICAL SUITABILITY OF THE SITE: A review of available information indicates that the property historically consisted of forested wetlands, pasture, and xeric uplands that is currently used for agriculture including cattle production.

ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF THE BANK: The proposed RBMB would be established and operated by Rock Bend Ranch, LLC as the Sponsor with the assistance of Flatwood Consulting Group. The property that comprises the RBMB is owned by Rock Bend Ranch, LLC. The RBMB is proposed to be established as a single and complete project. Following RBMB successful implementation and attainment of final success criteria, long-term management activities will be implemented in order to ensure the sustainability of RBMB. In addition, the Sponsor will provide sufficient financial assurances to ensure construction and long-term management of the proposed RBMB.

PROPOSED SERVICE AREA: The project is located within the McBride Branch Subwatershed, identified as Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 031001010905 and Peace River Branch Subwatershed, identified as Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 031001010904 which is part of the larger Peace River Subbasin (HUC 03100101). The Applicant proposes a Mitigation Service Area (MSA) that is coincident with the Peace River Subbasin. The RBMB MSA is anticipated to include wetland habitat communities that could reasonably be expected to occur on the RBMB.

CULTURAL RESOURCES: The proposed mitigation bank is not expected to have any direct or indirect impact to cultural resources. Project review will, however, include review of the proposal for any potential impact to cultural resources.

ENDANGERED SPECIES: The proposed mitigation bank site will be reviewed for potential critical habitat and presence of endangered species. The findings will be coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

ESSENTIAL FISH HABITAT (EFH): This notice initiates consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on EFH as required by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act 1996. Our initial determination is that the proposed action would not have a substantial adverse impact on EFH or Federally managed fisheries. Our final determination relative to project impacts and the need for mitigation measures is subject to review by and coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

NOTE: This public notice is being issued based on information furnished by the applicant. This information has not been verified or evaluated to ensure compliance with laws and regulation governing the regulatory program.

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC HEARING: Any person may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer within the designated comment period of the notice and must state the specific reasons for requesting the public hearing.

COMMENTS: Comments regarding the proposed mitigation bank should be submitted in writing to the District Engineer at the address below within 30 days from the date of this notice.

The initial evaluation pertaining to whether or not this mitigation bank proposal has the potential for providing compensatory mitigation for activities authorized by issued Department of the Army permits will be based on the information contained in the prospectus, received from this public notice and obtained during an inspection of the project site.

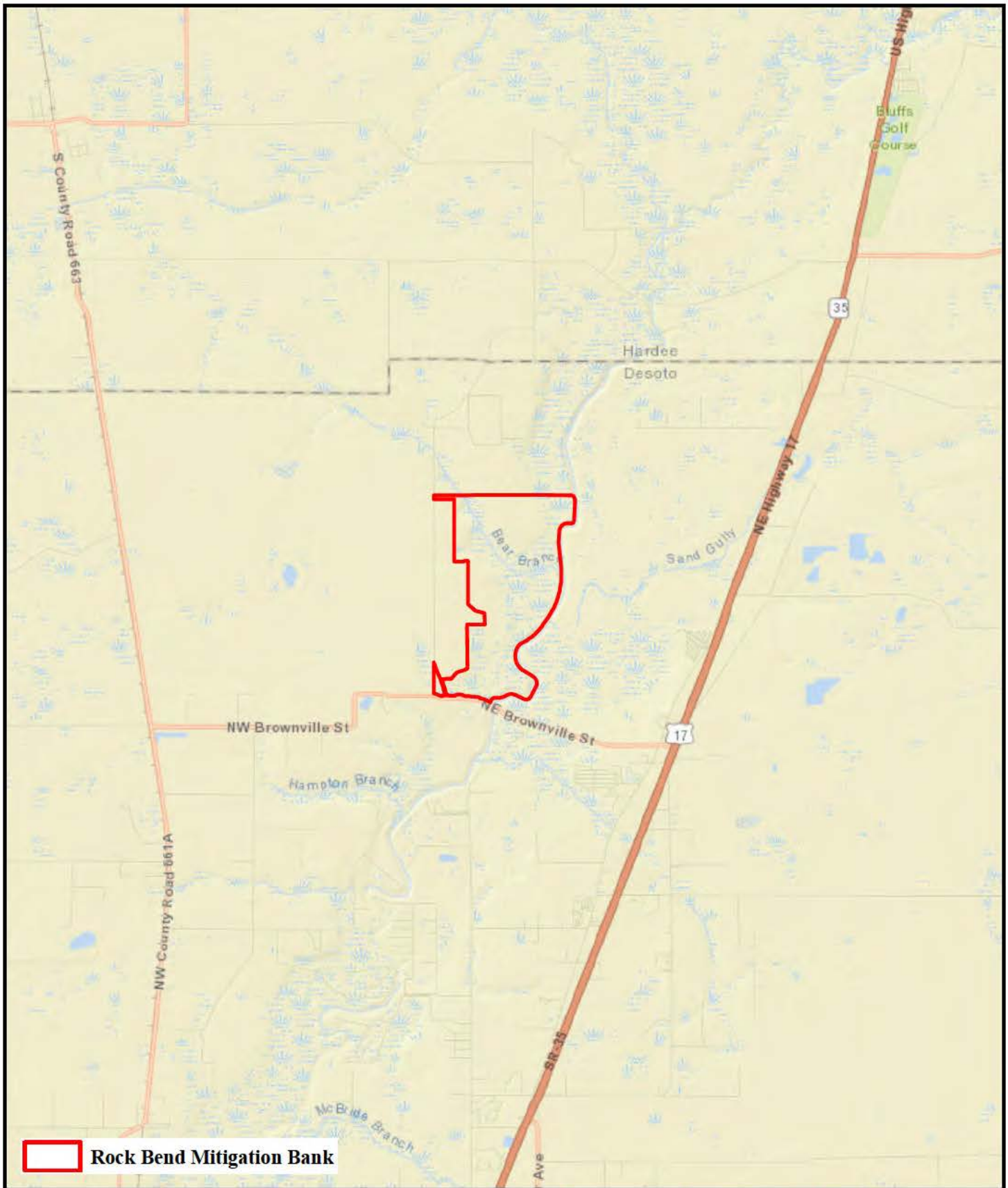
If you have any questions concerning this proposed project, you may contact Mr. Steven Currie by electronic mail at steven.j.currie@usace.army.mil, by fax at 904-232-1904, or by telephone at 904-232-3701 or at the following address:

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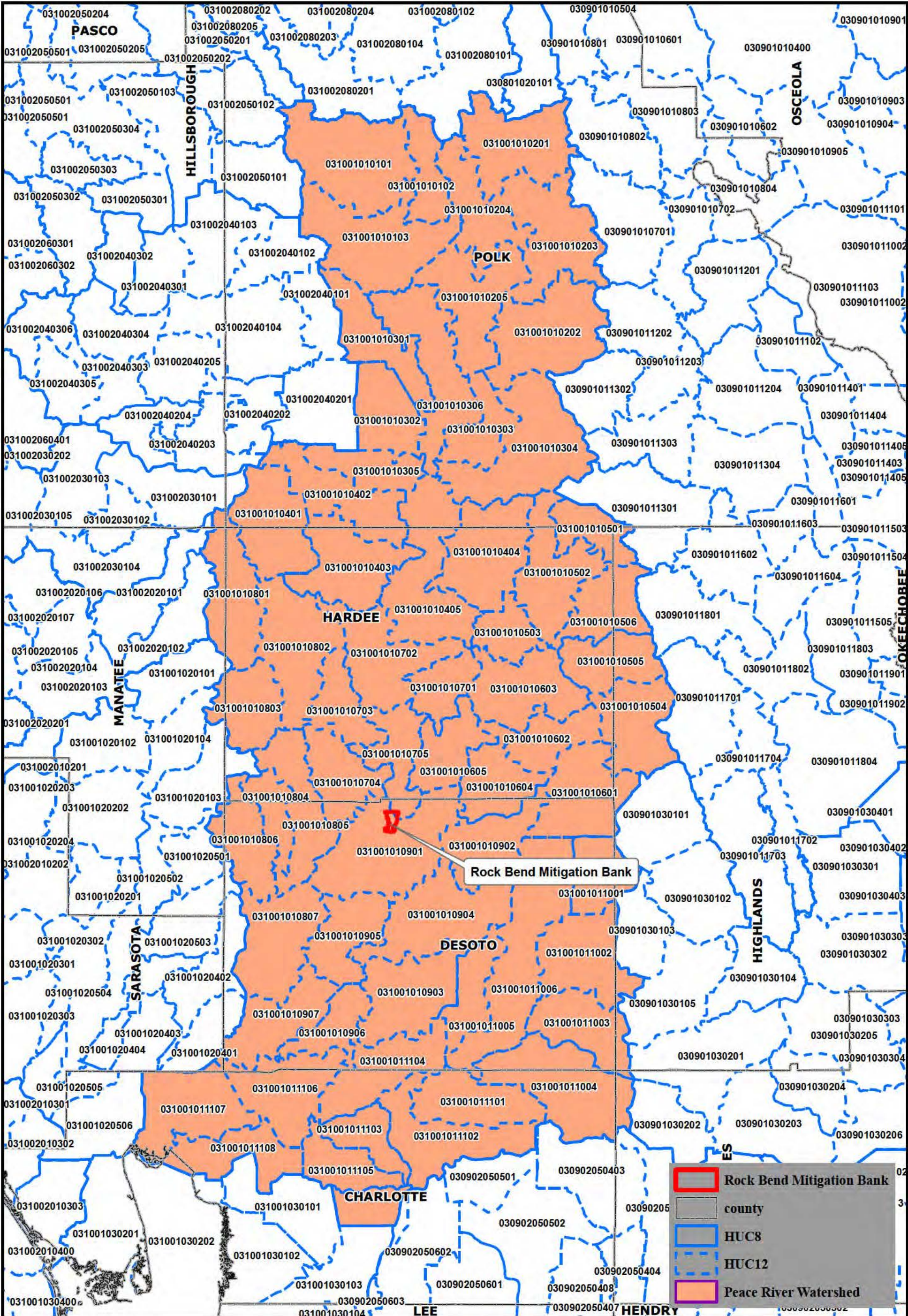
IMPACT ON NATURAL RESOURCES: Preliminary review of this application indicates that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required. Coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Marine Fisheries Services, and other Federal, State, and local agencies, environmental groups, and concerned citizens generally yields pertinent environmental information that is instrumental in determining the impact the proposed action will have on the natural resources of the area. By means of this notice, we are soliciting comments on the potential effects of the project on threatened or endangered species or their habitat

EVALUATION: After the end of the comment period, the district engineer will review all comments received and make an initial determination as to the potential of the proposed project to provide compensatory mitigation for activities authorized by Department of the Army permits. That determination will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. Factors relevant to the proposal will be considered including conservation, economics, esthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historical properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food, and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, and in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, State, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other Interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the proposed activity. All comments received will be considered by the Corps during the formulation of the initial determination of potential for the proposed activity.



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	<p>DESOTO COUNTY, FL</p>	<p>Sarasota</p> <p>Port Charlotte</p>	<p>LOCATION MAP</p>



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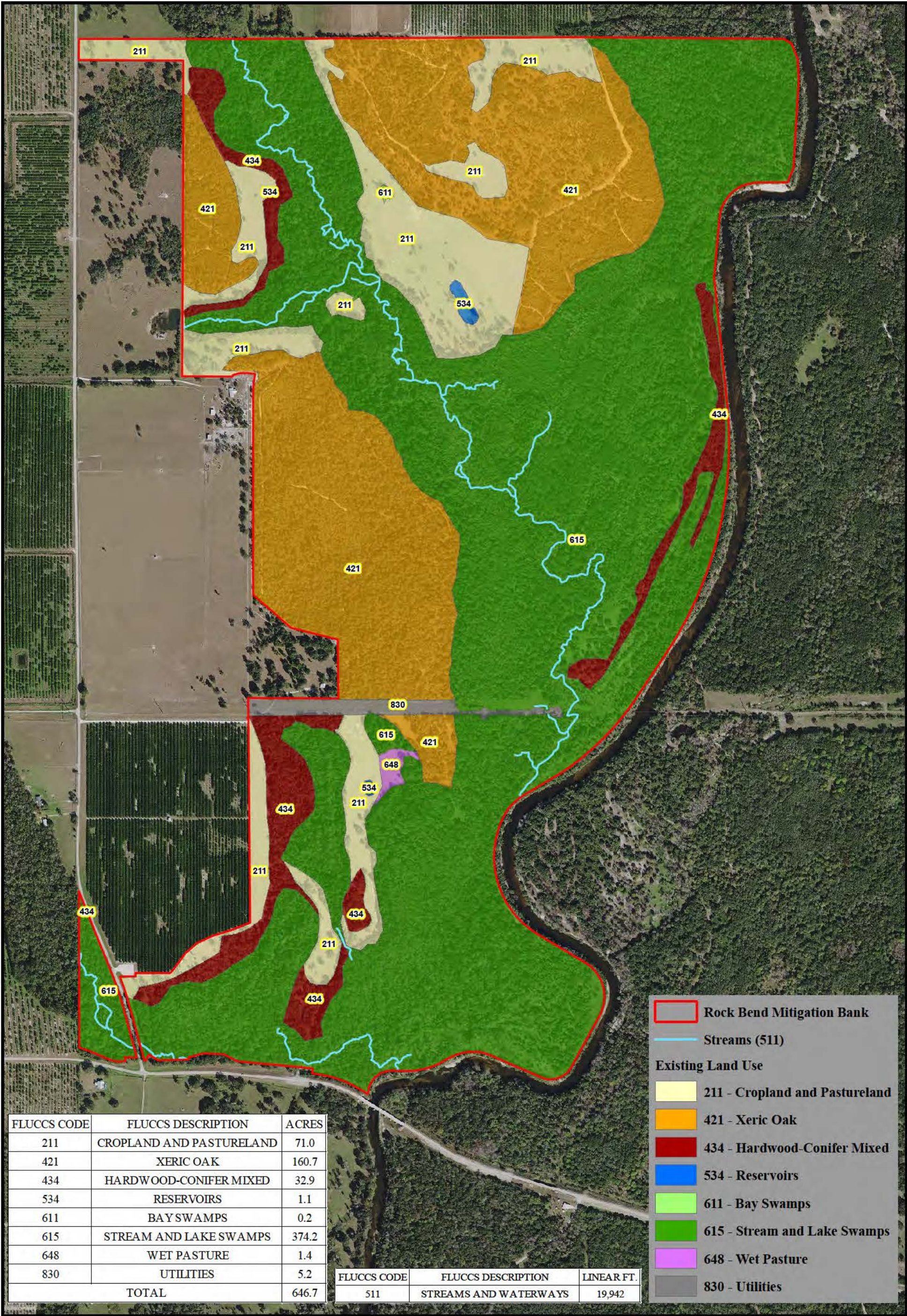
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ROCK BEND MITIGATION BANK
ROCK BEND RANCH, LLC

DESOTO COUNTY, FL

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**HUC
MAP**



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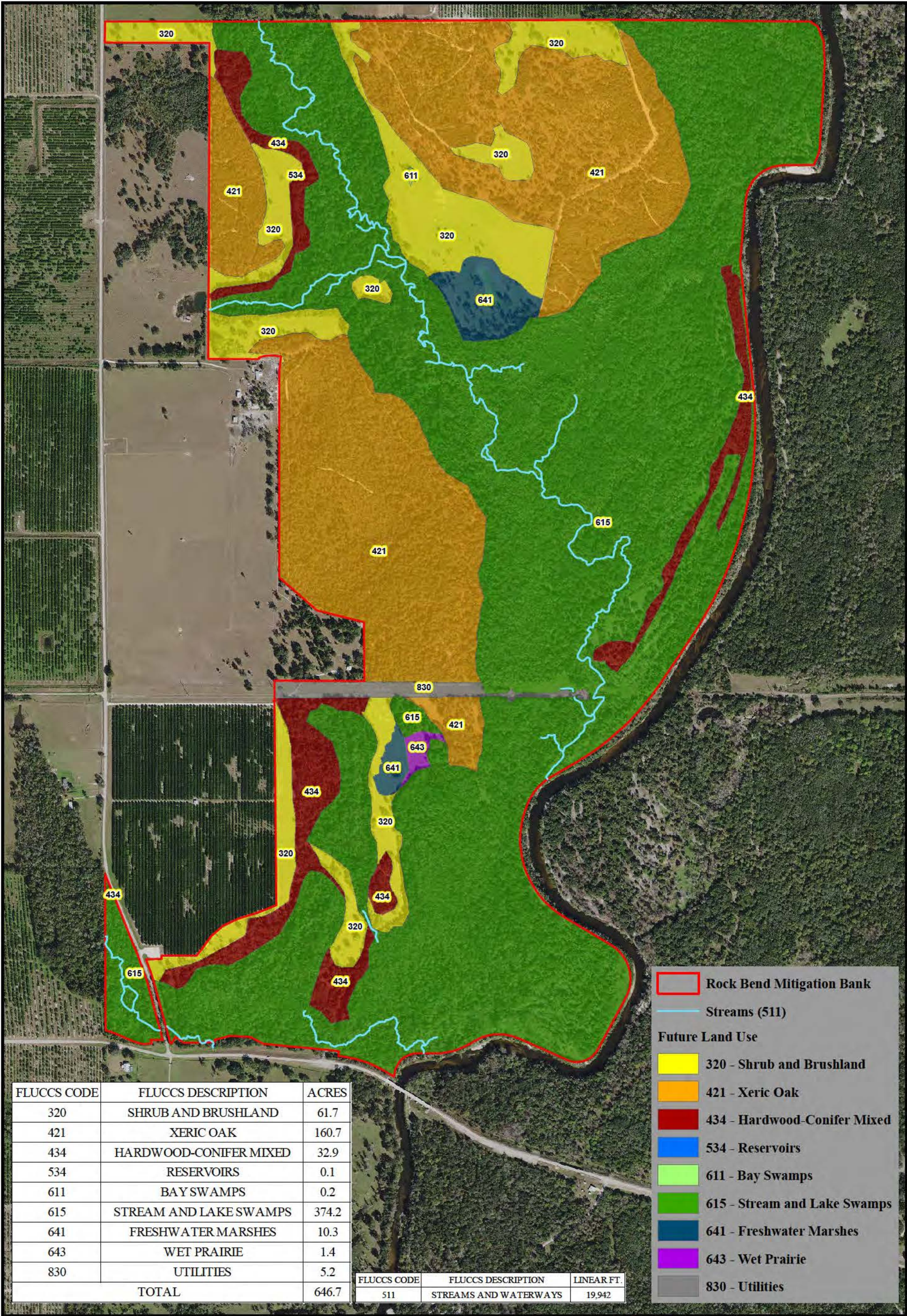
ROCK BEND MITIGATION BANK
ROCK BEND RANCH, LLC

DESOTO COUNTY, FL



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EXISTING
LAND USE
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FLATWOODS
Consulting Group

ROCK BEND MITIGATION BANK
ROCK BEND RANCH, LLC

DESOTO COUNTY, FL

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**FUTURE
LAND USE
MAP**