

GEMINI SPRINGS ADDITION Land Management Plan

Middle St. Johns River Basin
Volusia County

Prepared by
St. Johns River Water Management District

**GOVERNING BOARD APPROVED
MARCH 2006**

**GEMINI SPRINGS ADDITION
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY

Gemini Springs Addition

Acres: approximately 948 acres

Location: City of DeBary, in Volusia County, on the west shore of Lake Monroe, north of the St. Johns River; west of Interstate 4.

Dates of Acquisition: Two acquisitions to date: Hugh West (Empire Cattle Company) and Woodruff Tracts both in 1999.

Funding Sources: Florida Department of Transportation Mitigation (FDOT) for projects on Interstate 4 (I-4) and State Road 417 (SR 417).

Key Resource Issues: The property was acquired as two separate parcels, both of which were purchased with Florida Department of Transportation mitigation funds for the widening of I-4 and the completion of SR 417. The proximity to two major highways makes prescribed burning difficult. Other management techniques that have been used to reduce fuel loads include mowing and chopping. Additionally, District staff has planted 75 acres in pine trees. There is an out parcel owned by FDOT that was used for borrow material. FDOT created a retention pond to contain stormwater runoff from the newly constructed bridgework over the St. Johns River and associated shoreline of Lake Monroe. Volusia County plans to develop a paved trail through the property that connects Gemini Springs Park to Lake Monroe Park (both County owned parks).

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

- **Water Resources** – Water resources within the Gemini Springs Addition project area consist of Mullett Lake, Gemini Springs, Padgett Creek (a.k.a., DeBary Creek), Lake Monroe, and the St. Johns River. These water bodies are classified as Class III waters according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, providing for recreation and the propagation and maintenance of a healthy, well-balanced population of fish and wildlife. The District is cooperating with Volusia County to locate Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) sites within the County. The program is funded with Florida Forever funds to provide local Utility companies with an alternative source of water. One of the test sites is Gemini Springs Addition. A test well will be installed and depending on the results, four permanent wells and a small pump station may be added. The test well (and any subsequent wells) will be in the planted pine area. All associated piping will be underground.
- **Security** – The District security contractor, Volusia County Sheriff's office and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are contacted when necessary to patrol the area.
- **Restoration** – Slash pines (*Pinus elliottii*) have been planted in the improved pasture areas.
- **Fire** – The close proximity to two major highways creates a smoke management concern. District staff have been using mechanical means to reduce fuel loads on the property.
- **Invasive and Exotic Species** – The primary targeted exotic species found on the property are tropical soda apple, or TSA (*Solanum viarum*), cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Chinese tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*), hairy indigo (*Indogofera hirsuta*), wild balsam apple (*Mordica charantia*) and camphor tree (*Camphora cinnamomum*).

- **Wildlife and Plants** – Wildlife found on the property includes many species of birds including a great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*) rookery. Florida Department of Transportation consultants have conducted a plant survey prior to impacts from the I-4 widening project and an aerial survey looking at avian species was conducted in 2000.
- **Cultural Resources** – There are two prehistoric scatter sites and one historic shipwreck site located on the property according to the Master Site File stored with the Florida Division of Historical Resources. Appropriate protection of identified or suspected sites will be implemented.

Key Land Use/Recreation Issues:

This conservation area provides opportunities for a variety of recreational uses including fishing, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, canoeing, boating and wildlife viewing. Some of these activities are seasonal.

General Description:

- **Access** – Access to the property will be from Gemini Springs Park.
- **Public recreation** - The property will be open to the public for nature study, hiking, fishing horseback riding, and bicycling.
- **Coordination of Agreements** – There is an intergovernmental management agreement with Volusia County delegating recreation management to the County and resource management to the District.
- **Leases, Easements and Concessions** – There are two Florida Department of Transportation access easements located on the Hugh West (Empire Cattle Company) tract.

**Middle St. Johns River Basin
Gemini Springs Addition
Volusia County, Florida**

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidelines for land management activities to be implemented within the Gemini Springs Addition over the next five years. Management of this property is a cooperative effort between the District and Volusia County, as delineated in a management agreement. This plan updates the management plan approved by the Governing Board in March 2000.

The Gemini Springs Addition is located in the City of DeBary, in Volusia County, west of Lake Monroe and north of the St. Johns River (Figure 1). Two major highways occur on the south and west boundaries. I-4 bisects the property and United States Highway 17 (U.S. 17) occurs along the west boundary. The property served as mitigation to offset wetland impacts for two FDOT projects; the widening of I-4 and the completion of S.R. 417.

CONSERVATION AREA OVERVIEW

Regional Significance

Gemini Springs Addition protects the west shore of Lake Monroe from direct stormwater runoff from adjacent roadways. The addition of the property creates a contiguous corridor between Gemini Springs Park and Lake Monroe Park (two Volusia County owned parks). A trail has been designed to connect all three properties for public recreation.

Acquisition History

The property is comprised of two acquisition parcels (Figure 2).

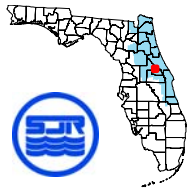
The 815-acre parcel known as Hugh West Tract (Empire Cattle Company, LA 98-71) was acquired on March 24, 1999 for \$4,011,690. It is located west of Interstate 4, north of Old DeLand Road, east of Highway 17-92, and south of Gemini Springs Park and Dirksen Drive. The parcel was acquired with funds from the Florida Department of Transportation as mitigation for the expansion of the Interstate 4 corridor and for the purpose of preserving and enhancing significant portions of wetlands associated with the West Lake Monroe Project Area.

In November 2005, a 29.495-acre portion of this parcel was conveyed to DOT via a Quit Claim Deed. Twenty acres was part of the original purchase and the additional 9.495-acres was purchased in November 2005. This property was used for the construction of a borrow pond for I-4.

The 162-acre Woodruff parcel, (LA 91-54), acquired on May 10, 1999 for \$1,292,000, is located east of Highway 17-92, north of Monroe Park, and south of the Hugh West Tract. The parcel was acquired with funds from the Florida Department of Transportation as mitigation for the remaining segment of SR 417 (Eastern Beltway) and for the purpose of preserving and enhancing wetlands associated with the West Lake Monroe Project Area.



**Gemini Springs Addition
Figure 1: Location Map**



0 0.375 0.75 Miles



1:82979

Legend

- Gemini Springs Addition
- District - full fee
- District - less than fee
- District - joint ownership
- Potential
- 2005 Florida Public Lands: Not Owned by District
- Reservoir
- Marsh, Wetland, Swamp
- City
- Town
- Village
- Census Designated Place

