

# Osceola to Ocala Wildlife Corridor Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

North Florida Land Trust

## Project Overview

The O2O is a fundamental portion of the Florida Wildlife Corridor, which is Florida’s “blueprint” for landscape conservation, to protect habitat for native wildlife and natural resources in the face of significant development and growth statewide. North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) has worked in the O2O for years. We have observed



compelling needs for a regional program and increased capacity to direct conservation programs. North Florida continues to experience declines in rural lands, particularly productive timber lands that support the forest products industry. Water resources are also affected. The O2O Wildlife Corridor includes large natural areas already in conservation (Ocala and Osceola National Forests, Camp Blanding, etc.) and the initiative seeks to link conservation and protect working timberlands, high quality river and streams, and promote a style of forestry that is not only better for wildlife but increases regional water supplies.

## Goal

The Ocala-to-Osceola (O2O) Wildlife Corridor has been long recognized as an important landscape of natural and rural lands that connects two large National Forests. The 1.6-million-acre region is heavily forested and provides critical wildlife habitat and resiliency to weather related volatility. The O2O is a rural region with local economy dependent on forest products and natural resources.

Project goals are as follows:

- Permanent land protection: 8,500 acres over five years, including NRCS and Partner program acquisitions.
- Restoration of terrestrial habitat for imperiled species: conservation land management of about 6,000 acres
- Connection of existing conservation lands to improve the landscape resiliency of the O2O

- Forest protection and practices for carbon sequestration and watershed health
- Protect military training and readiness on Army National Guard and Navy bombing installations
- Promote sustainable forestry on privately owned working forests

## Primary Resource Concerns

Primary resource concerns include degraded plant condition, fire management, long term protection of land, source water depletion, terrestrial habitat, and weather resilience.

## Objectives

Working with Florida NRCS, RCPP partners will bring a combination of land protection and land management programs to O2O landowners. The RCPP investment of about \$9.5 million will leverage partner support of nearly \$11.5 million.

## Partners

- Camp Blanding Army National Guard
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Putnam Land Conservancy
- FDACS, Florida Forest Service
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection

## Conservation Practices

Priority conservation practices are as follows:

- 112 Prescribed Burn Planning
- 314 Brush Management
- 327 Conservation Cover
- 338 Prescribed Burning
- 394 Firebreak
- 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment
- 666 Forest Stand Improvement

*Other practices may be added at the discretion of NRCS and the lead partner based on targeted resource concerns and land uses.*

## How to Apply for RCPP

NRCS and associated conservation partners will deliver this program collaboratively.

North Florida Land Trust may also be contacted for information related to the project at 904-479-1967 or [www.nflt.org](http://www.nflt.org)

☐ **In Florida:** Contact your local [NRCS service center](#)

