

Florida Lands and Outstanding Waters (FLOW): A Wetland Restoration Program for Private Ranches in the Kissimmee-Okeechobee Basin

FLOW provides economic incentives to ranchers to protect and restore hydrologic function while maintaining some level of agricultural productivity and keeping the land in private ownership. Invasive plant control is an important component of the program, and a key strategy is purchase of conservation and flowage easements over targeted areas. These easements include sections related to management of invasive species that can provide guidance for easements in other conservation areas.

Excerpts from a FLOW conservation easement related to invasive plant control:

Vegetation. There shall be no removal, destruction, cutting, trimming, mowing, or alteration of any vegetation except as follows:

- (i) in accordance with a vegetation management plan approved by the Grantee, and
- (ii) with respect to trees or vegetation that are diseased, rotten, damaged, or fallen, or that are a safety or health hazard, and
- (iii) as is necessary to maintain existing or otherwise authorized footpaths, and
- (iv) to control and/or eradicate the following nuisance exotic or non-native species of plants from the Protected Property: Brazilian Pepper, Melaleuca, torpedo grass, Japanese and Old World Climbing Fern, Skunk Vine, Tropical Soda Apple, Cogon Grass, Australian Pine, Water Hyacinth, Hydrilla, Air Potato, Chinese Tallow, Water Lettuce, Japanese Honeysuckle, Wisteria, Chinese Privet, English Ivy, Kudzu, and any other exotic plant species that Grantors and Grantee may agree in writing to designate in the future as nuisance species subject to eradication (collectively, "Nuisance Exotic Plant Species").

Exotic Plant Species. Grantor will eradicate Nuisance Exotic Plant Species from the Protected Property to the degree (possible/practical). There shall be no planting or introduction on the Protected Property of any Nuisance Exotic Plant Species, or any other non-native species of vegetation, without the express prior written approval of the Grantee, which may be withheld in the Grantee's sole discretion.