

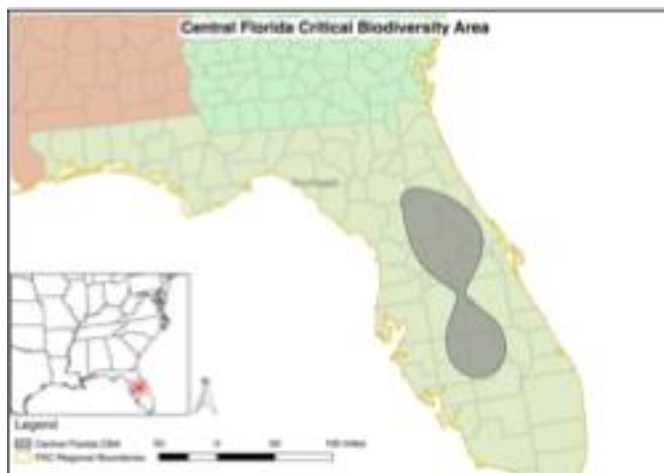
FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS

CENTRAL FLORIDA CBA

FSC REGION Southeast

HCVs IN FSC A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.¹

WHY IS CENTRAL FLORIDA CRITICAL BIODIVERSITY AREA (CBA) CONSIDERED AN HCV? This CBA is considered an HCV because it contains a high overall species richness, diversity, or uniqueness within a defined area compared to other sites within the same biogeographic area. The CBA was identified using a species richness index originally published by NatureServe and The Nature Conservancy that identifies areas with high concentrations of rare species. This index preferences species that have limited ranges by applying additional weighting. The results identify areas with concentrations of high biological diversity and spaces with an increased conservation significance.



SUMMARY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

CBA As in other areas of the southern US, native pine ecosystems are an important driver for biodiversity in this CBA. Pine flatwoods in Central Florida are associated with drier uplands/sandhills that provide a range of biodiversity values. Longleaf pine is the dominant tree species in pine flatwoods, however as with other longleaf pine systems, the native plant diversity is one of the most significant components of the overall biodiversity. Rare wildlife supported by this habitat include Florida black bear (*Ursus*

americanus floridanus), Florida panther (*Felis concolor coryi*), Southeastern kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*), Red- cockaded Woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), Florida sandhill crane (*Grus canadensis pratensis*), Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), eastern indigo snake (*Drymarshon corais couperi*), and Chapman's rododendron (*Rhododendron chapmanii*).

¹ Brown, E., N. Dudley, A. Lindhe, D.R. Muhtaman, C. Stewart, and T. Synnott (eds.). 2013 (October). Common guidance for the identification of High Conservation Values. HCV Resource Network.

This CBA occurs in an area that receives the highest possible scores in an assessment of Florida's biodiversity hotspots. It includes top priority areas from the Florida Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project, and also represents other spatial priorities (e.g., landscape integrity, rare species habitat conservation, strategic habitat conservation areas).

IDENTIFIED THREATS TO THE CENTRAL FLORIDA CBA HABITATS Reported threats to Pine flatwoods include **conversion to agriculture and pine plantations, non-native species (including invasion by melaleuca if logged and over drained), hydrologic alteration, substrate disturbance (Wiregrass may not withstand disturbance associated with planting pine)**, alteration of fire regimes, and recreational damage. Forestry practices were identified as a high source of stress to the natural pineland habitat in the Florida Wildlife Action Plan, in association with the following stresses which all had high ranks for the habitat: Altered fire regime, Altered hydrologic regime, Habitat destruction or conversion, Altered community structure, Altered species composition/dominance, and Fragmentation of habitats, communities, ecosystems.

WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?

Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the Central Florida CBA is one of these places. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places (like this CBA) are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this CBA, any mitigation actions will need to address the threats identified above in **bold**.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting engage.fsc.us.org and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.

INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [University of Florida IFAS Extension](#)
- [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#)
- [Florida Natural Areas Inventory](#)
- [Florida Wildlife Legacy Initiative](#)