



ALLAPATTAH RANCH ECOLOGICAL PLANNING / MANAGEMENT

Ecological Services



Client:

South Florida Water Management District
CERP Project Management Division

Location:

South Florida

Approximately 2000 acres, the Steele tract (Steele) is part of the Allapattah Ranch, a Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project owned and managed by South Florida Water Management District (District). Glatting Jackson assisted the District in developing and implementing ecological goals and objectives for Steele. Because of long-term fire suppression, most of Steele's forested uplands - pine flatwoods dominated by south Florida slash pine (*Pinus elliottii* var. *densa*) - was comprised of dense, overgrown saw palmetto and young pines. In many places, the saw palmetto exceeded six feet in height. Glatting Jackson coordinated large-scale fuel reduction throughout Steele to diversify vegetative structure, reduce fuel height, break up fuel continuity, reduce woody species encroachment, and ultimately increase herbaceous groundcover and wildlife diversity. With implementation of growing season fires, wildlife habitat and forage will likely improve, particularly for the site's gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) population.

Glatting Jackson also coordinated fireline development, installed photo-monitoring points, collected wildlife data, documented exotic species occurrence, and produced a summary report with management recommendations. Primary recommendations included implementing regular growing season fires, feral hog (*Sus scrofa*) control, exotic plant control, and maintaining cattle grazing as a management tool.

