

Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area

(Charlotte County)

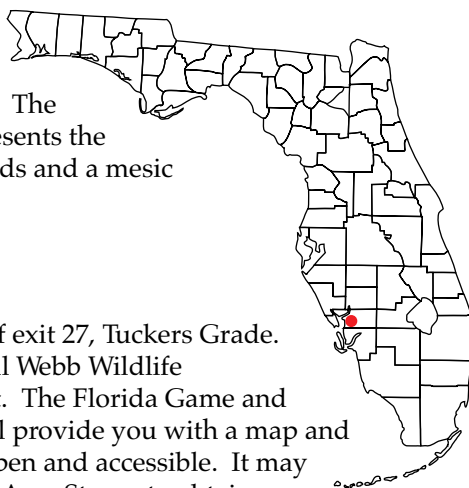
SLOUGH/HYDRIC PINE FLATWOODS



Hydric pine flatwoods

LOCATION

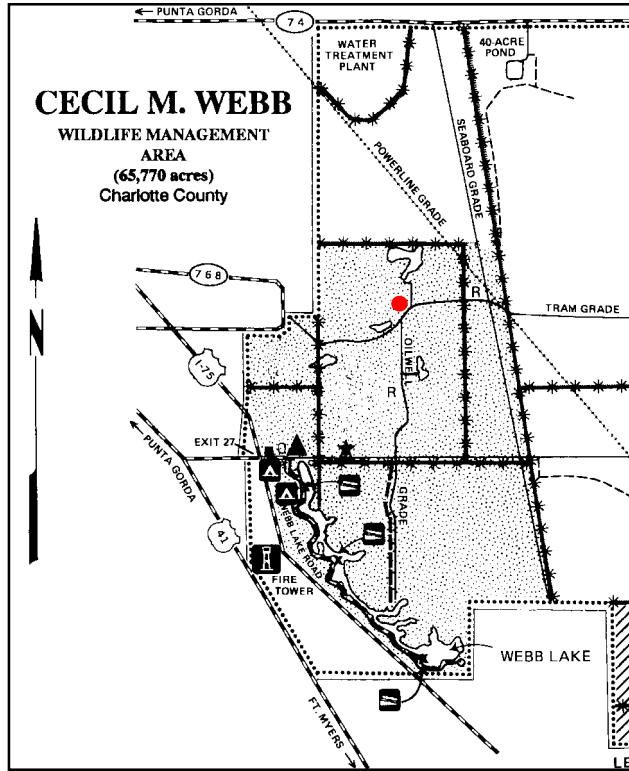
The Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area is located in Charlotte County along the east side of I-75 south of Punta Gorda. The property is an extensive mosaic of mesic and hydric pine flatwoods interspersed with ponds, sloughs, and small areas of hardwood hammock. The reference site is relatively easy to locate and represents the boundary between a slough/hydric pine flatwoods and a mesic pine flatwoods.



ACCESS

The property may be reached from I-75 by way of exit 27, Tuckers Grade. Travel east on Tuckers Grade and stop at the Cecil Webb Wildlife Management Area office which will be on the left. The Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission personnel there will provide you with a map and information on which areas of the property are open and accessible. It may be necessary to purchase a Wildlife Management Area Stamp to obtain access. The cost at the time of this printing is \$26 per year. The stamps can be obtained

wherever a hunting license may be obtained, but are not available at the management area office. If you wish to visit, please contact the management area office at (941) 639-



1531 or Suncom 721-7161, or the Lakeland regional office at (941) 648-3205 or Suncom 595-3205 prior to your trip. The location of the reference site is not far from the main entrance. Specifically, the reference site is located at the intersection of Oilwell Grade and Tram Grade (as indicated by the red dot on the map). There is a section of upland pine flatwoods along the left side of the road just before the intersection. The wetland boundary is located on the inside of that small upland area and is marked by concrete monuments.

COMMUNITY CHARACTERIZATION

The reference site is a hydric pine flatwoods bordering a shallow freshwater slough located along the headwaters of Alligator Creek. In places, the herbaceous components of the ground cover along with the density of saw palmetto present a clear picture of the difference between the mesic and the hydric flatwoods. However, the wetland boundary in an area such as this is often not defined by sharp breaks in soil characteristics, or in vegetative composition. A slight but perceptible slope is present from the wetland through the upland. Hydrologic indicators are helpful but also may be obscured by the

effects of fire and the shallow inundation and saturation within the outer zones of the wetland.

DELINEATION PROCEDURE

The presence of a wetland is established by the use of a depressional soil mapping unit, Felda fine sand, depressional. Pursuant to subsection 62-340.300(2)(c), F.A.C., the hydric nature of soils within the depressional mapping unit are confirmed by the presence of oxidized rhizospheres. Moving landward from the depressional soil mapping unit, hydric soil indicators continue to be present and the herbaceous vegetation is typical of a hydric flatwoods community, with many obligate grasses and sedges and thin stemmed dicots. The wetland boundary is determined using vegetative dominance and the presence of hydric soil indicators (subsections 62-340.300(2)(a) and (b), F.A.C.). A shift in ground cover dominance marked by the abundance of *Serenoa repens* (saw palmetto) or the absence of hydric soil indicators establishes the wetland/upland boundary. In other places along the boundary, it will be necessary to consider a canopy of *Pinus elliottii* (slash pine). Locating the edge in these areas will require consideration of all facts and factors



Active crayfish burrow in hydric pine flatwoods

relating to the hydrologic nature of the site. At this local, an abundance of crayfish borrows, along with a prevalence of obligate plants in the ground cover, provides sufficient data to conclude that the areas are wetlands in keeping with the wetland definition. The appropriate stratum to use in the application of vegetative dominance would be the ground cover not the canopy. Because crayfish borrows extend landward

of the dominance of listed plants, the provisions of subsection 62-340.300(2)(d), F.A.C., are also evaluated. An obvious decrease in the number of active crayfish chimneys is observed as the vegetative boundary is crossed moving landward. The key word here is *active*. Crayfish are ambulatory creatures and will move their burrow location or burrow entrance with changing ground water elevations. It was acknowledged that water levels had been higher in the recent past. It is not uncommon for mesic pine flatwoods in south Florida to have short periods of surface water inundation during the peak of the rainy season. The presence of the crayfish burrows in the upland was not deemed significant enough to compare to the numerous observations of crayfish chimneys observed waterward of the line. In considering all facts and factors pertaining to the intent of the wetland definition, reasonable scientific judgment did not support the use of subsection 62-340.300(2)(d), F.A.C., in this situation. The wetland boundary line is thus set where there is a vegetative change to a dominance of saw palmetto or a lack of hydric soil indicators.

Vegetation Immediately Waterward of the Wetland Boundary

Ground cover

<i>Amphicarpum muhlenbergianum</i>	FACW	blue maidencane
<i>Cirsium horridulum</i>	UPLAND	thistle
<i>Eleocharis</i> sp.	OBL	hairgrass
<i>Eryngium baldwinii</i>	FAC	coyote-thistle
<i>Juncus</i> sp.	OBL	rush
<i>Melochia corchorifolia</i>	FAC	chocolate weed
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	FAC	wax myrtle
<i>Panicum tenerum</i>	OBL	bluejoint panicum
<i>Phyla nodiflora</i>	FAC	frog fruit
<i>Pluchea</i> spp.	FACW	marsh fleabane
<i>Rhynchospora microcarpa</i>	OBL	southern beakrush
<i>Schizachyrium rhizomatum</i>	FAC	little bluestem
<i>Setaria geniculata</i>	FAC	bristle grass
<i>Stillingia aquatica</i>	OBL	corkwood

Note: The species diversity in this wetland community is very high. A list of the species characteristic of the internal slough wetland area was recorded but not presented here. Only those species observed landward of the *Hypericum fasciculatum* zone are included. These lists were recorded following a burn and the vegetative species diversity observed was low.

Vegetation Immediately Landward of the Wetland Boundary

Canopy

Pinus elliottii UPLAND slash pine

Subcanopy

Pinus elliottii UPLAND slash pine

Ground cover

** *Aristida stricta* FAC wiregrass
Erigeron vernus FACW early fleabane
Melochia villosa UPLAND hairy chocolate weed
Myrica cerifera FAC wax myrtle
 ** *Serenoa repens* UPLAND saw palmetto

** Designates species which are overwhelmingly dominant.

SOIL DESCRIPTIONS

USDA-NRCS Soil Survey of Charlotte County - Sheet 35

The wetland soil is mapped as **Felda fine sand, depressional** (mapping unit #49)

49 - Felda fine sand, depressional is composed of:

85% - Felda soil hydric component
 10% - Malabar soil hydric inclusion
 5% - Pompano soil hydric inclusion

The upland soil is mapped as **Heights fine sand** (mapping unit #70)

70 - Heights fine sand is composed of:

70% - Heights soil non-hydric component
 10% - Felda soil hydric inclusion
 20% - Heights soil hydric inclusion

Soil Profile Descriptions

Point 1. Seventy-two feet waterward of the wetland boundary line (water table - 2 inches).

Horizon	Depth (in)	
A1	0-2	very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) fine sand
E or C	2-12+	grayish brown (10YR 5/2), dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2), and

very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) fine sand with yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) and brownish yellow (10YR 6/6) oxidized rhizospheres in the upper three inches of the horizon

Hydric soil: Yes

Hydric soil field indicators: presence of oxidized rhizospheres in the upper part of the E horizon.



Point 2.

Point 2. One feet waterward of the wetland boundary line (water table - 9 inches).

Horizon	Depth (in)	
A1	0-3	very dark gray (10YR 3/1) fine sand, many fine and few medium roots
A2	3-5	dark gray (10YR 4/1) fine sand with dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4) oxidized rhizospheres, common medium roots
E or C	5-12+	grayish brown (10YR 5/2) fine sand with yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) oxidized rhizospheres, few large and medium roots

Hydric soil: Yes

Hydric soil field indicators: presence of oxidized rhizospheres in the A2 and E horizons.



Point 3. in the South Florida flatwoods areas, the upland soils (non-hydric) tend to be darker in color (more organic matter) than the hydric soils.

Point 3. Fifty feet landward of the wetland boundary line (water table - 14 inches).

Horizon	Depth (in)	
A1	0-4	very dark gray (10YR 3/1) fine sand, many fine roots
A2	4-6	dark gray (10YR 4/1) fine sand, common fine and medium roots
B?	6-11	dark grayish brown (10YR 4/2) fine sand with yellowish brown (10YR 5/6) oxidized rhizospheres, common fine and medium roots
Cr	11+	white (10YR 8/1) very crumbly limestone

Hydric soil: No

Hydric soil field indicators: presence of oxidized rhizospheres in the B horizon were below six inches.