



Environmentally Sensitive Lands

- County identified “lands with high ecological value”
- County “to develop a strategy to protect these lands” – 15,000 acres to date
- Earmarked 42,660 acres encompassing over 24 properties designated
- As of June 2004, \$60 million spent (\$12,434,000 recovered from grants or costsharing)

Possible Uses of Acquired Lands

- Recreation
- Reservoir for biodiversity, water or others
- Ecotourism
- Education
- Scientific research
- Conservation management
- Managed harvest (Timber? Fish? Boar?)

Economic Role of Conservation Field Station

- Public-private partnership
- Ecotourism options
- Summer science camp (Boys & Girls Club? Girls Inc? School Board?)
- Small Conference Center
- International draw for scientists
- Visitor center for educational exhibits

Criteria for Field Station

- Access to diversity of local ecosystems
- Ease of travel to/from site
- Past history of research and data
- Conservation priorities at national level
- Stewardship by academic institution



Sound Science measured in Peer-reviewed publications

- Highlands County (Archbold) 1150
- LTER Everglades 800+
- Pinellas County (Brooker) 300+
- Leon County (Tall Timbers) 700 +
- Harvard Forest MA 1500+
- Highlands NC 6000+
- Sarasota County 49 +

Timetable and Plan of Action

- Fall 2004 – Examine potential sites
- Spring 2005 – Apply for federal planning grant – NSF and identify local partners
- Summer 2005 – Task force underway
- Fall 2005 – Create master plan
- 2006 – Apply for NSF Field Station funding
- 2007 – More Fund-raising
- 2008 – Construction