

Photo courtesy – Charles Hanlon, SFWMD

Prescribed Fire and Herbicides How and When Each Are Used

Alyssa Jordan

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Herbicide

Benefits:

- Reduce monocultures, allowing a variety of native species to germinate and spread
- Prevents invasive species from taking over and pushing out natives
- Can treat plants selectively

When to Use:

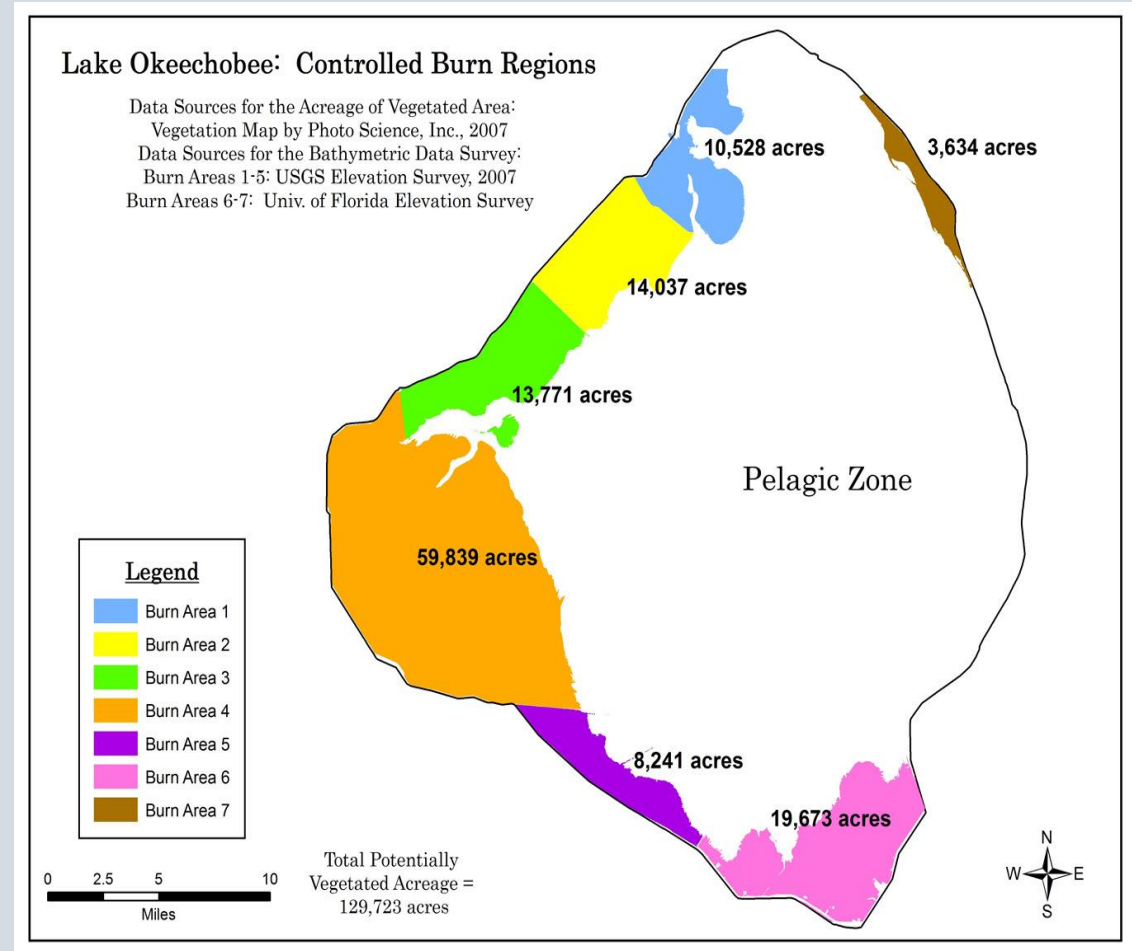
Where prescribed fire or mechanical removal cannot be used

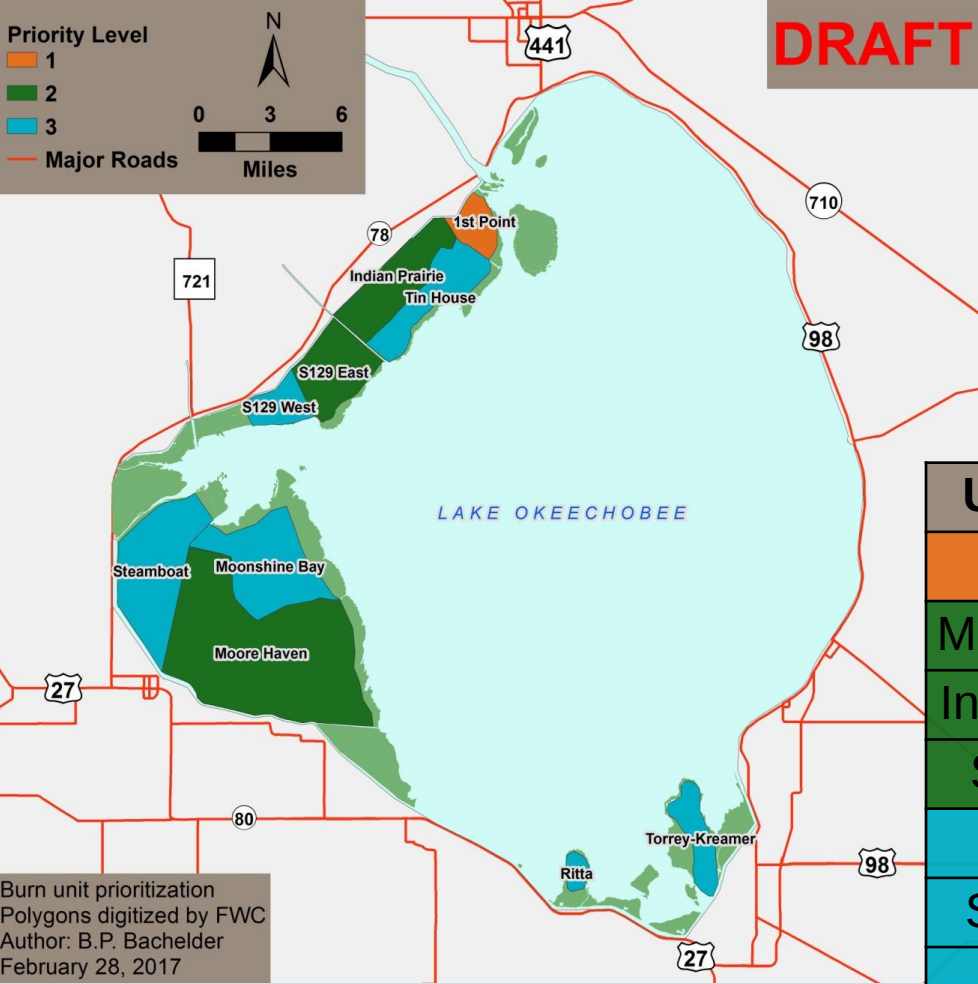
1. Safety (roads, houses, weather)
2. Feasibility (water depth, disposal)
3. Resistance to fire



Prescribed Fire

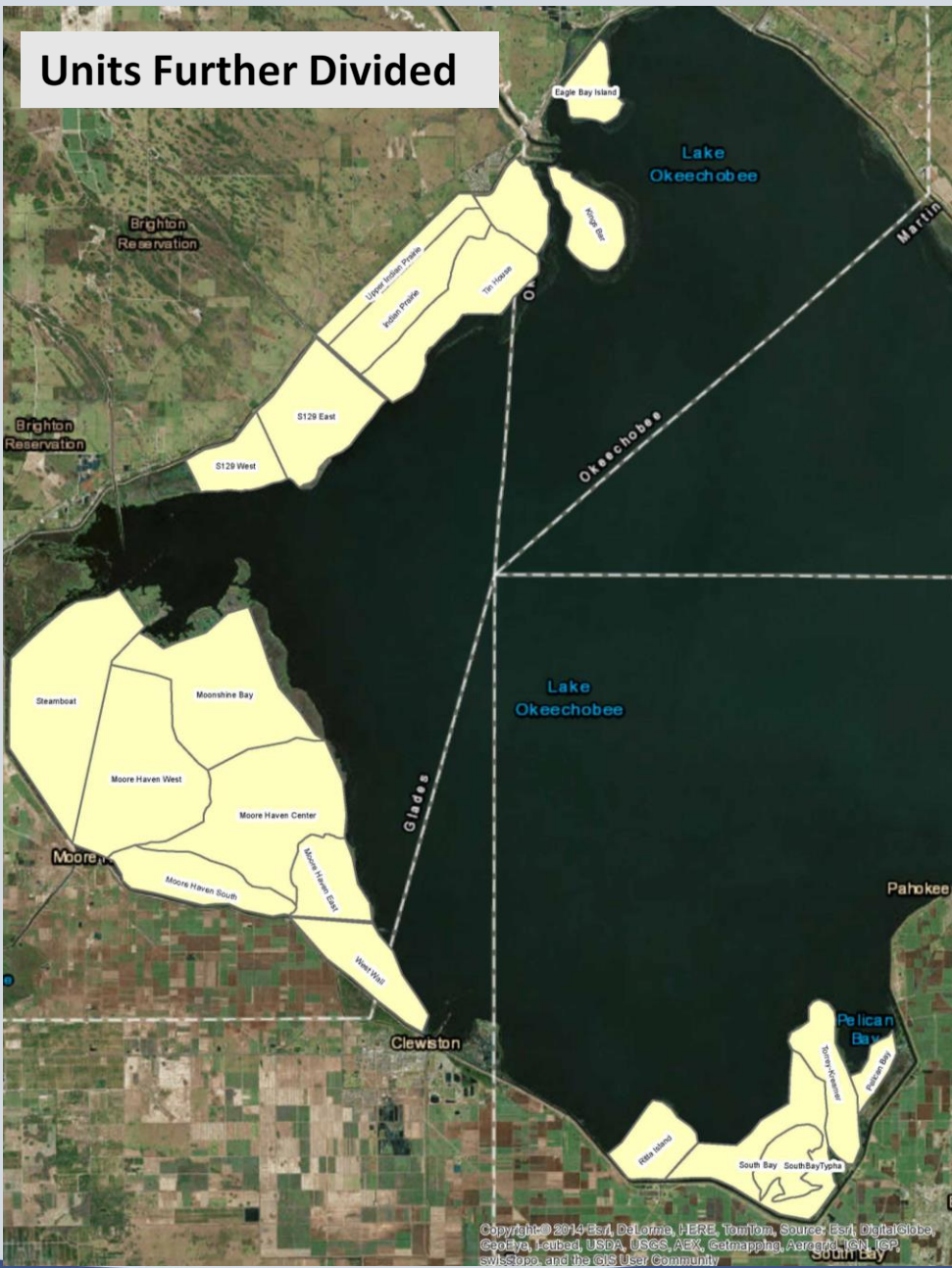
- Approximately 25% of the lake's surface area is dominated by vegetated freshwater marsh.
- Highly diverse, composed of many different vegetation communities (Marsh= 100,000 to 120,000 + acres).
- Adapted to frequent fire; these habitats are fire dependent. The continued presence of quality habitat is predicated on the ability of the marsh to experience regular burns (1-5 year intervals).





Burn Units

Unit Name	Acres
1st Point	2,250
Moore Haven	25,500
Indian Prairie	6,225
S129 East	5,600
Ritta	800
Steamboat	9,950
Torrey - Kreamer	3,000
Tin House	5,400
Moonshine Bay	8,825
S129 West	2,500



Prescribed Fire

Benefits:

- Ecological (increase plant diversity, create open areas, reduce biomass)
- Wildlife utilization, including Endangered Species (Snail Kites)
- Invasive plant species control
- Reduce wildfire risk (safety)

When to Use Alone:

- Lots of dead thatch
- Not enough plant diversity
- To reduce organic/detrital accumulation on bottom
- To maintain scrape projects
- To maintain herbicide projects



Example – March 2020



Lake Okeechobee Prescribed Burns

In an effort to manage vegetation within the seasonally dry portions of Lake Okeechobee, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), in cooperation with the FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Forest Service, and the Army Corps of Engineers, has been preparing to conduct multiple prescribed burns in this area. On March 4-5, SFWMD plans to conduct aerial ignition burns from Clewiston to Cochran's Pass and to the Moore Haven Canal. One should expect smoke impact from Fisheating bay down to Clewiston. Contact SFWMD at 561-686-8800



Prescribed Fire and Herbicide

Benefit:

- Reduces organic material that could fall to lake bottom
- Better, longer term control
- Natives quickly fill in

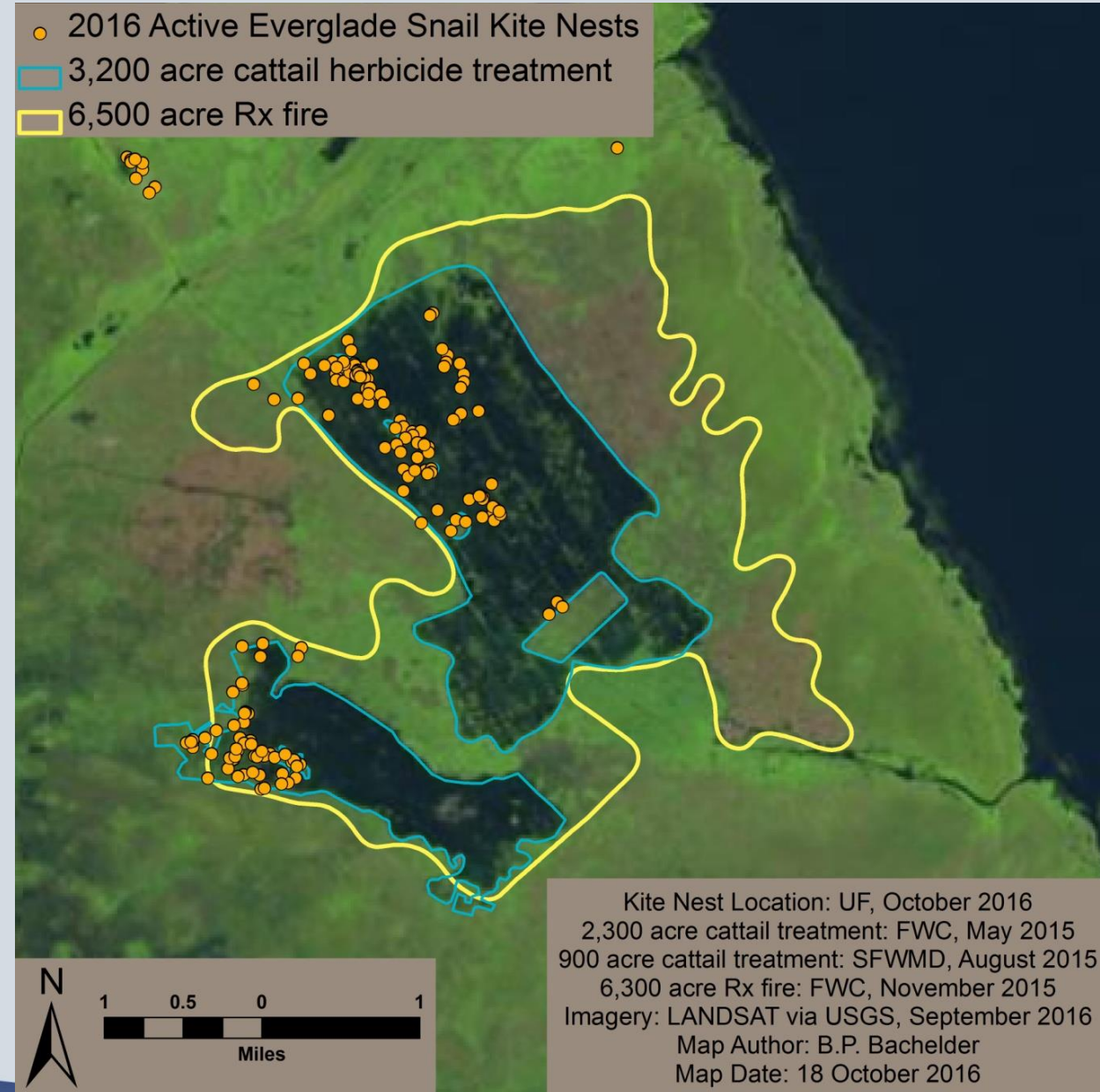
When to Use Together:

- Works particularly well with torpedograss and cattail
- Large acreages ideal
- To burn adjacent green areas that otherwise wouldn't burn



Example: Moonshine 2015

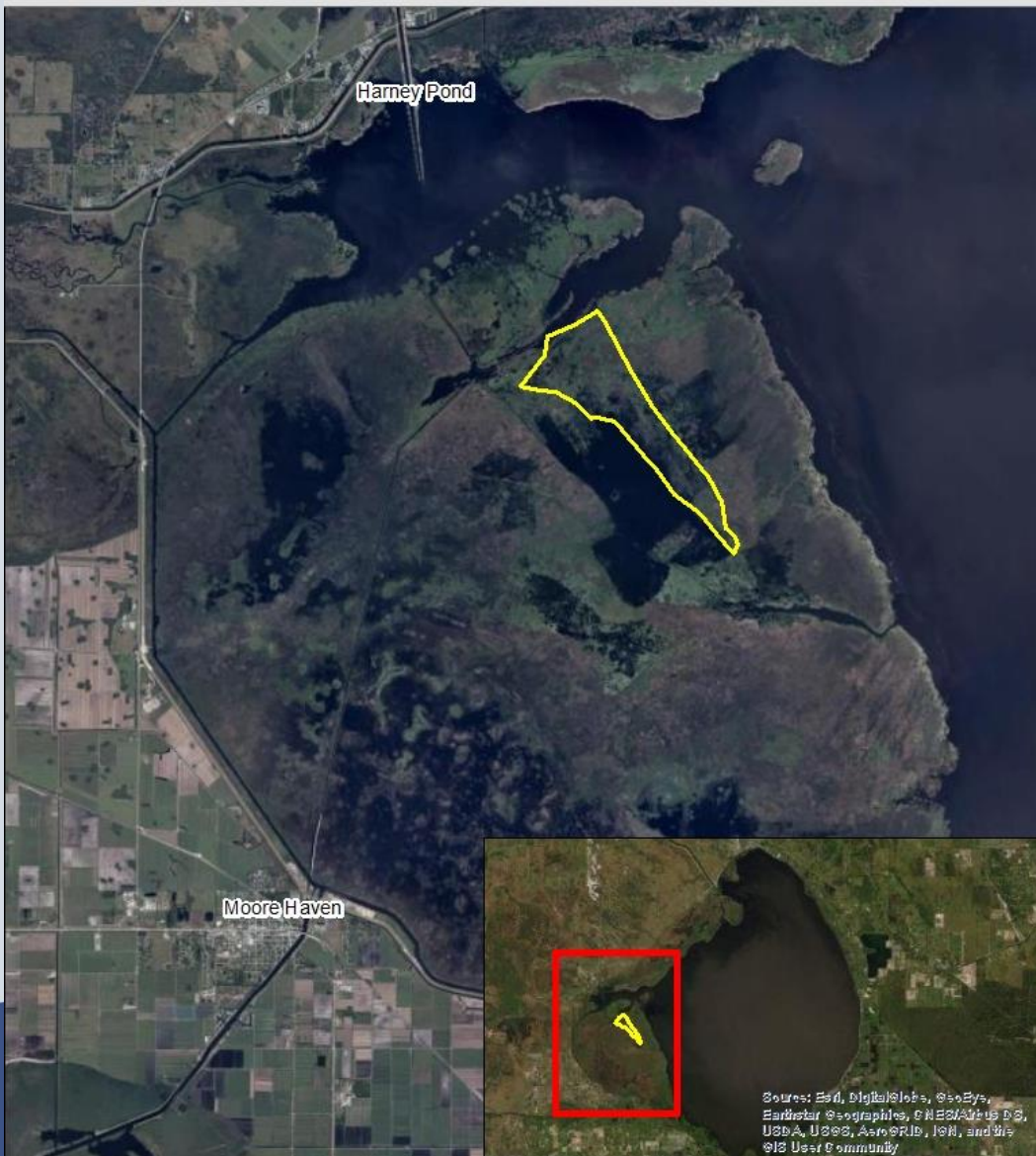
- Record breaking Everglade snail kite nesting event for Lake Okeechobee
- 2005-2014, less than 10 kite nests were documented in Moonshine Bay
- Following habitat management (2,300 acre spray & 6,300 acre burn) – 161 kite nests were documented in Moonshine Bay
- Approximately 70% of nesting on Lake O during 2016
- 82% of the successful nests on Lake Okeechobee came from Moonshine Bay





October 2020

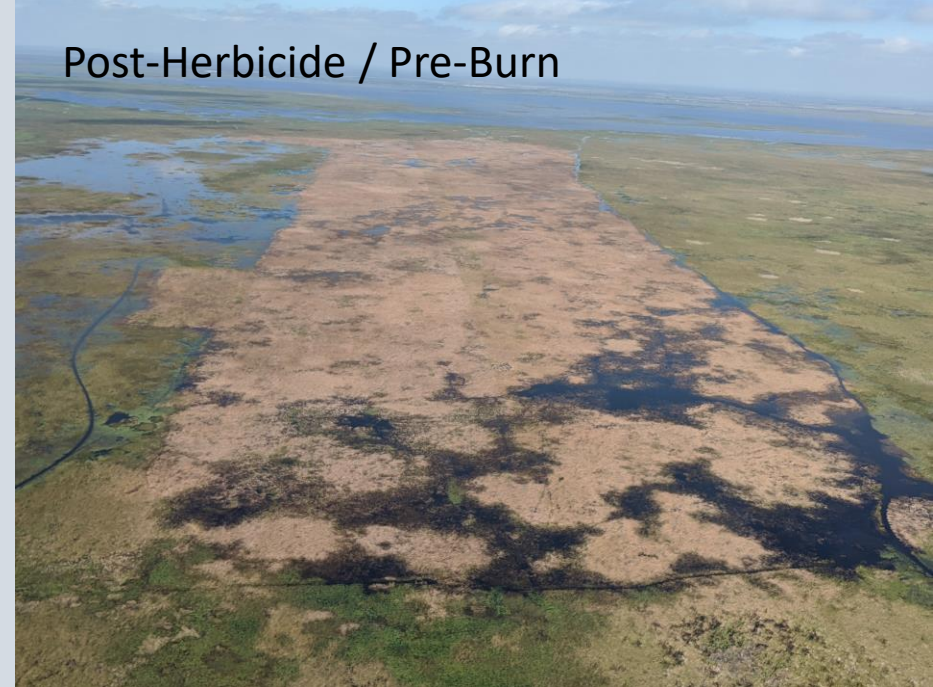
Lake Okeechobee Moonshine Prescribed Fire



Moonshine Fire
March 16, 2021

Approximately
700 acres burned

Post-Herbicide / Pre-Burn



Post-Burn





Upcoming Burn – April 2021

