

# AVON PARK AIR FORCE RANGE

## SENTINEL LANDSCAPE

FLORIDA | Est. 2016



The Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape is located in south central Florida between Orlando and Lake Okeechobee. The landscape is anchored by the Avon Park Air Force Range (AFR), the U.S. Air Force's largest air-to-ground primary training range east of the Mississippi River. Avon Park AFR is a world-class military training venue with over 106,638-acres of ground range and 12 million acres of airspace.

The sentinel landscape contains a large portion of the Florida Wildlife Corridor and the headwaters of the Everglades, containing some of the oldest natural habitats and most biodiverse lands in Florida. It includes numerous private ranches, the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area, and Lake Wales Ridge—a globally unique ecosystem home to many rare and endangered plant and animal species and an aquifer supplying water to more than 1 million people. The sentinel landscape also supports some of the last remaining grassland and longleaf pine savanna ecosystems in Eastern North America.

Local partners formed the Avon Park Air Force Range Sentinel Landscape in 2016 to strengthen military readiness, protect the region's natural resources, and support agricultural working lands, all while contributing to Florida's economy. These efforts to support land use compatible with military missions allow Avon Park AFR to maintain existing capabilities and keep pace with the increasing requirements of new aircraft. Limiting potential incompatible development also decreases noise complaints as well as light pollution that may impact night training. Overall, such landscape-scale protection in this region of Florida provides opportunities to better align Federal resources and strengthen locally led conservation initiatives.

### Landscape Goals



Safeguard defense operations by protecting restricted airspace and limiting incompatible development surrounding the base.



Combine local and Federal funding to achieve maximum cost-savings benefits while contributing to the local economy.



Achieve agricultural viability and conservation goals through streamlining partner engagement in land protection efforts with willing landowners.



Create natural corridors for imperiled species by connecting priority properties throughout the landscape.



Protect and conserve water resources by buffering rivers, protecting aquifer recharge areas, and improving water quality.



A pararescueman from the 38<sup>th</sup> Rescue Squadron rides a hoist back into a 41<sup>st</sup> RQS HH-60G Pave Hawk during a 'spin-up' exercise at Avon Park Air Force Range, Florida. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ryan Callaghan)

### LANDSCAPE DETAIL

Total Sentinel Landscape Area: **1,687,316** acres

Total Protected  
Acres:

**74,802**

From year established  
through fiscal year 2023

Total Enrolled  
Acres:

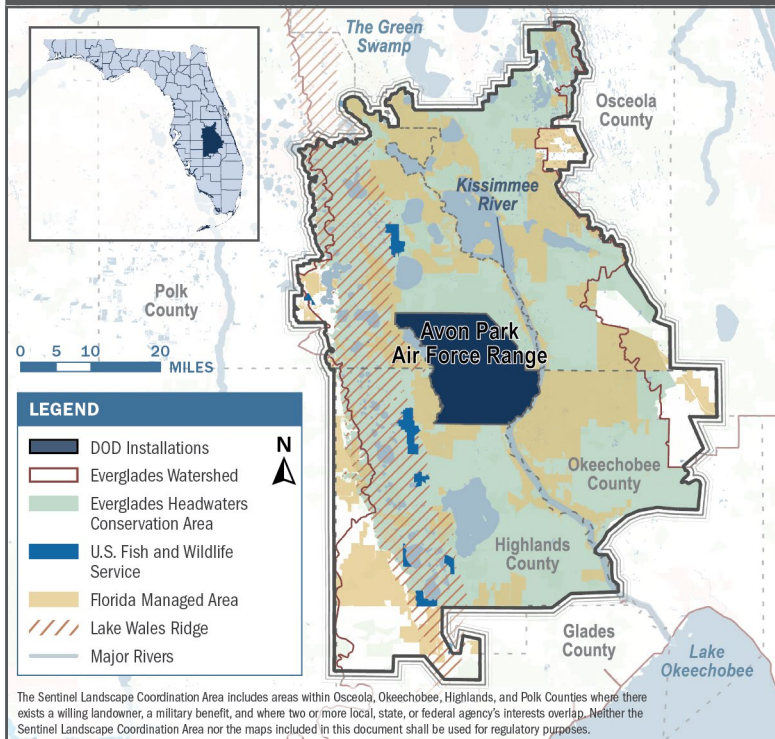
**144,893**

For fiscal year 2023

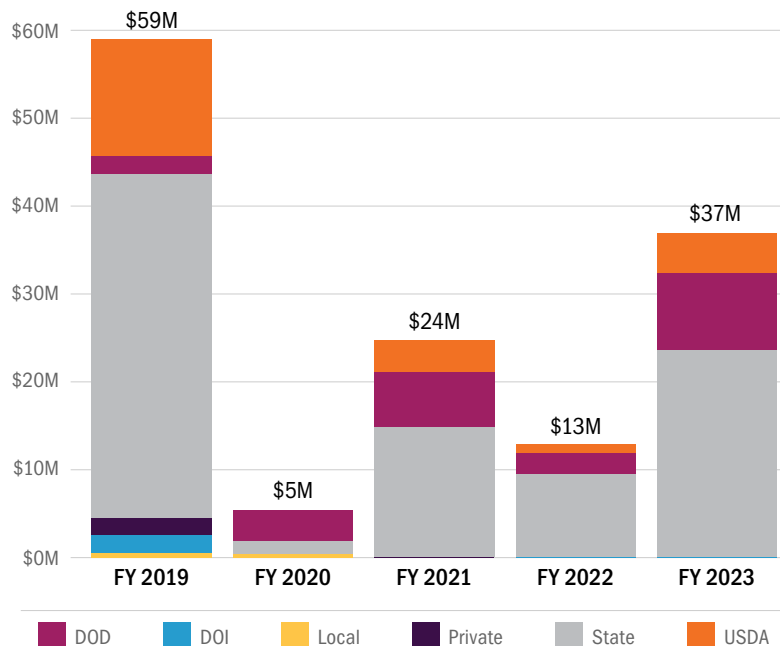
Active Base  
Area Acres:

**106,638**

## Avon Park Sentinel Landscape Map



## Avon Park Sentinel Landscape Total Funding by Partner



## Key Partners

- ▶ Archbold Biological Station
- ▶ Bok Tower Gardens
- ▶ Central Florida Regional Planning Council
- ▶ Cities of Avon Park, Frostproof, and Sebring
- ▶ Conservation Florida
- ▶ Counties of Highlands, Polk, Okeechobee, and Osceola
- ▶ Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area
- ▶ Florida Audubon
- ▶ Florida Cattlemen's Association
- ▶ Florida Commerce
- ▶ Florida Conservation Group
- ▶ Florida Defense Alliance
- ▶ Florida Departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Environmental Protection, and Transportation
- ▶ Florida Ducks Unlimited
- ▶ Florida Farm Bureau Federation
- ▶ Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- ▶ Florida Forest Service
- ▶ Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation
- ▶ Green Horizon Land Trust
- ▶ Highlands Soil & Water Conservation District
- ▶ National Wildlife Refuge Association
- ▶ Okeechobee Soil & Water Conservation District
- ▶ Soldiers2Scientists
- ▶ Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability
- ▶ South Florida Water Management District
- ▶ Southwest Florida Water Management District
- ▶ The Conservation Fund
- ▶ The Florida Defense Support Task Force
- ▶ The Nature Conservancy
- ▶ University of Florida's Center for Landscape Conservation Planning, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), School of Forest, Fisheries, & Geomatic Sciences, and Range Cattle Research and Education Center
- ▶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency
- ▶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service
- ▶ U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation
- ▶ U.S. Department of Defense, Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program
- ▶ U.S. Department of Defense, Avon Park Air Force Range
- ▶ U.S. Department of Defense, Air Force Civil Engineer Center
- ▶ U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
- ▶ Wildlands Conservation



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