



Overgrown Scrub Habitat



Restored Scrub Habitat

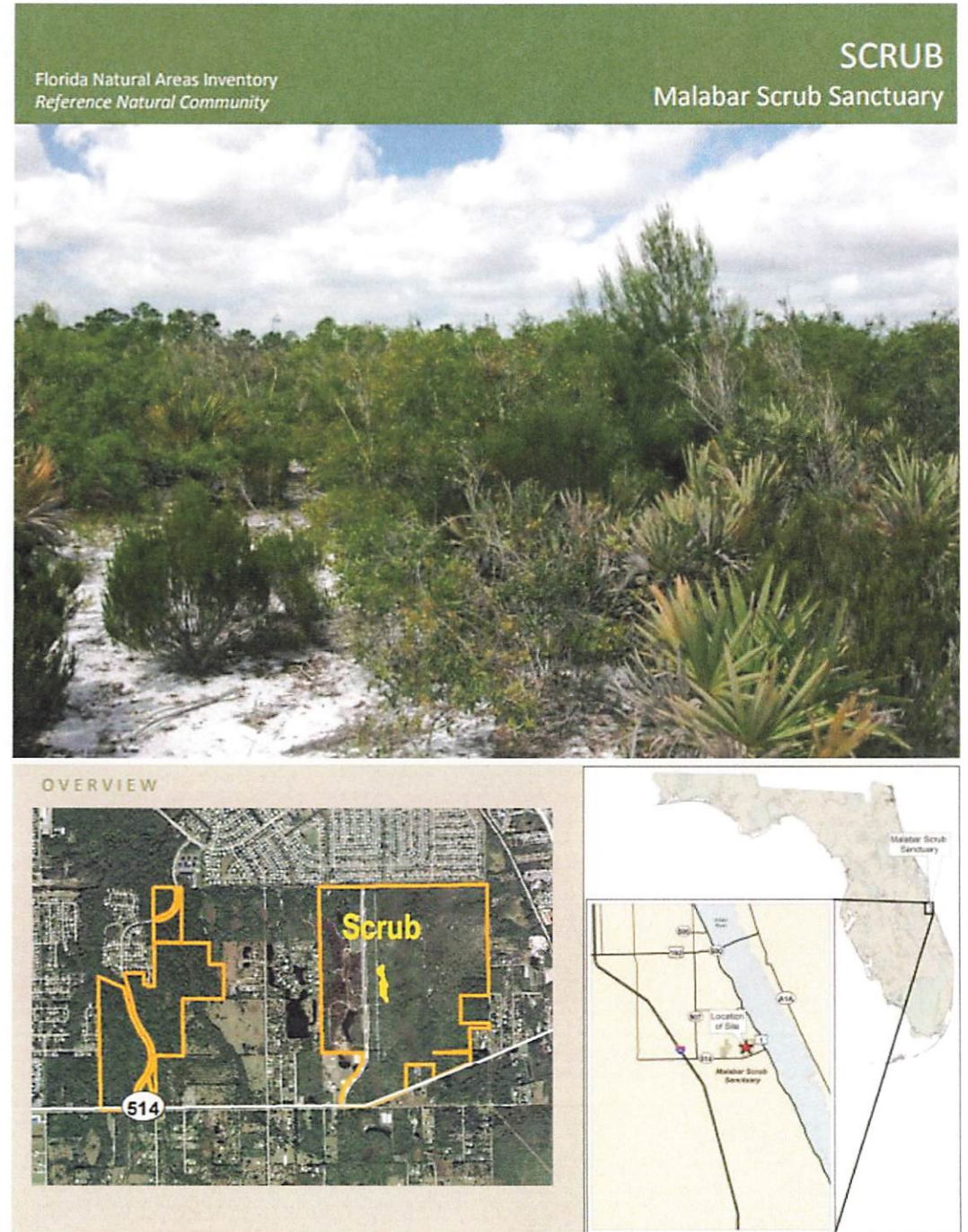
Malabar Scrub Restoration

- Purchased under the EEL referendum for the specific purpose of protecting the Florida Scrub-Jay and other scrub species.
- EEL Policy Manual was approved by BOCC in July 1990 (prior to vote).
 - *“The primary objective of the land acquisition plan is the acquisition of environmentally endangered lands for preservation / conservation. A secondary objective of the plan is to allow some environmentally endangered lands to be used for non-consumptive resource based outdoor enjoyment.”*



What is Optimal Scrub Habitat

- Conditions that promote more jays reaching adulthood than dying.
- Mostly treeless expanses of low shrubs with bare sand openings.
 - 4 - 5.5 feet tall
 - 1000 foot forest edge buffer from scrub jay territories.

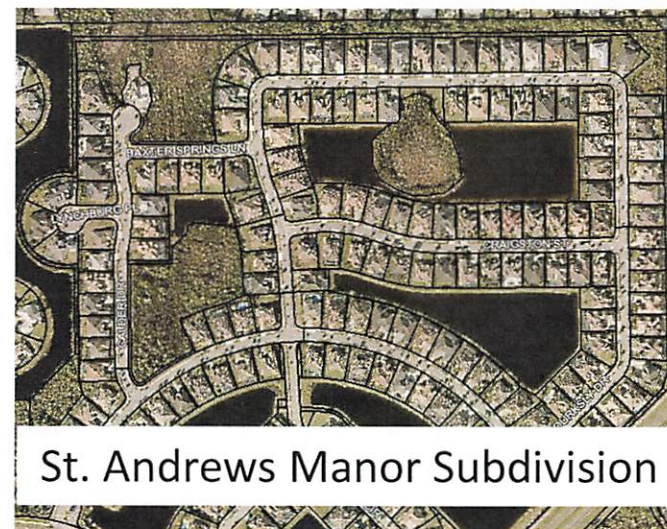


- 30-years of fire exclusion at the time of acquisition.
- Trees become too large to be managed with fire alone.
- EEL restoration efforts have included:
 - Prescribed Fire
 - Roller chopping
 - Private development mitigation

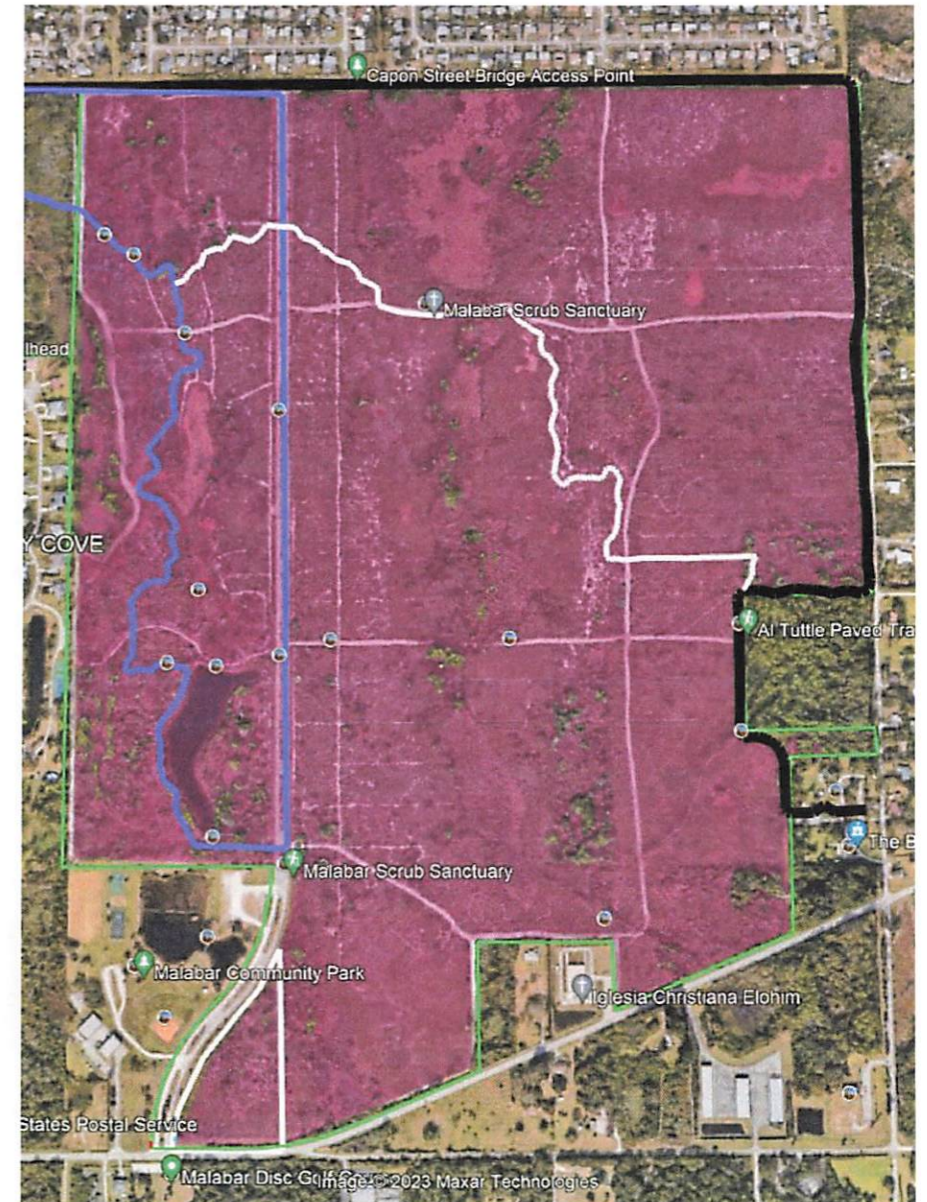
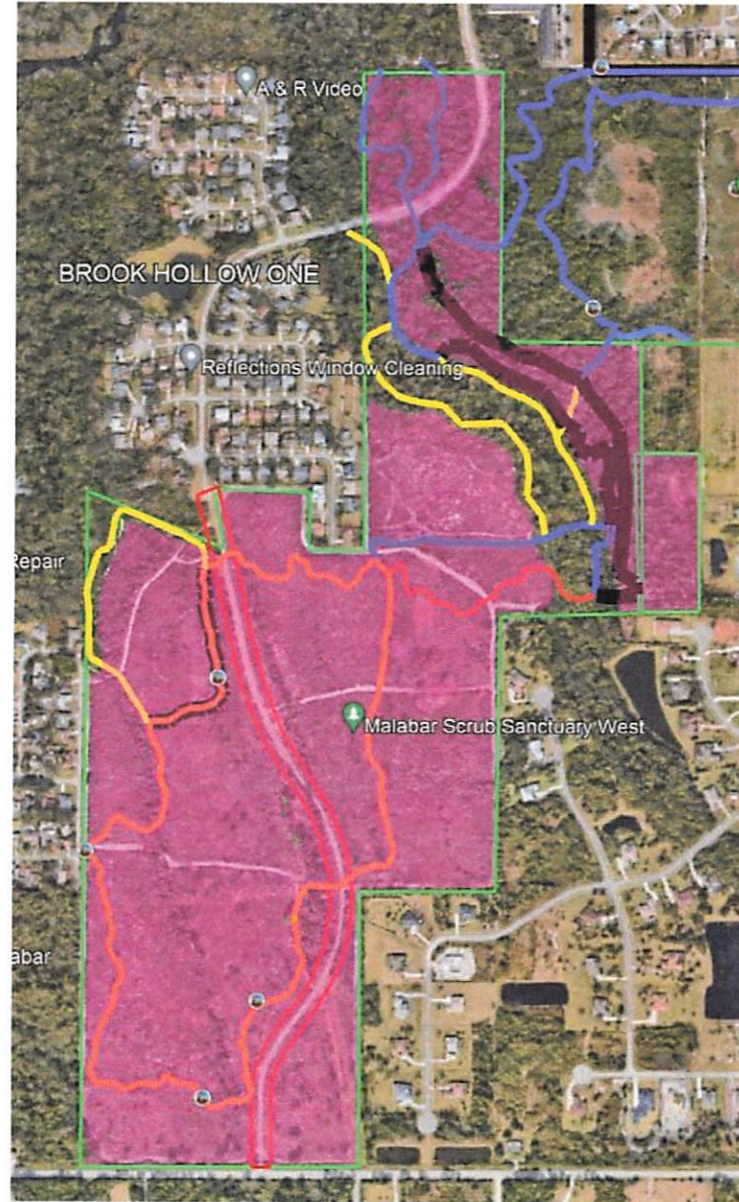


Private Mitigation (Blue)

- Projects are limited in acres due to development permits.
- Permit required removal of all tree curtains. Staff left additional oaks along trails for later removal IF the jay population resumed use of the area (this was clearly stated to users at the time).



- Overall restoration plan will include area north of the creek bottom.
- Creek bottom and NW corner of west tract remain excluded.
- Level of tree thinning will vary depending on location.
- All work will be consistent with FNAI habitat descriptions.



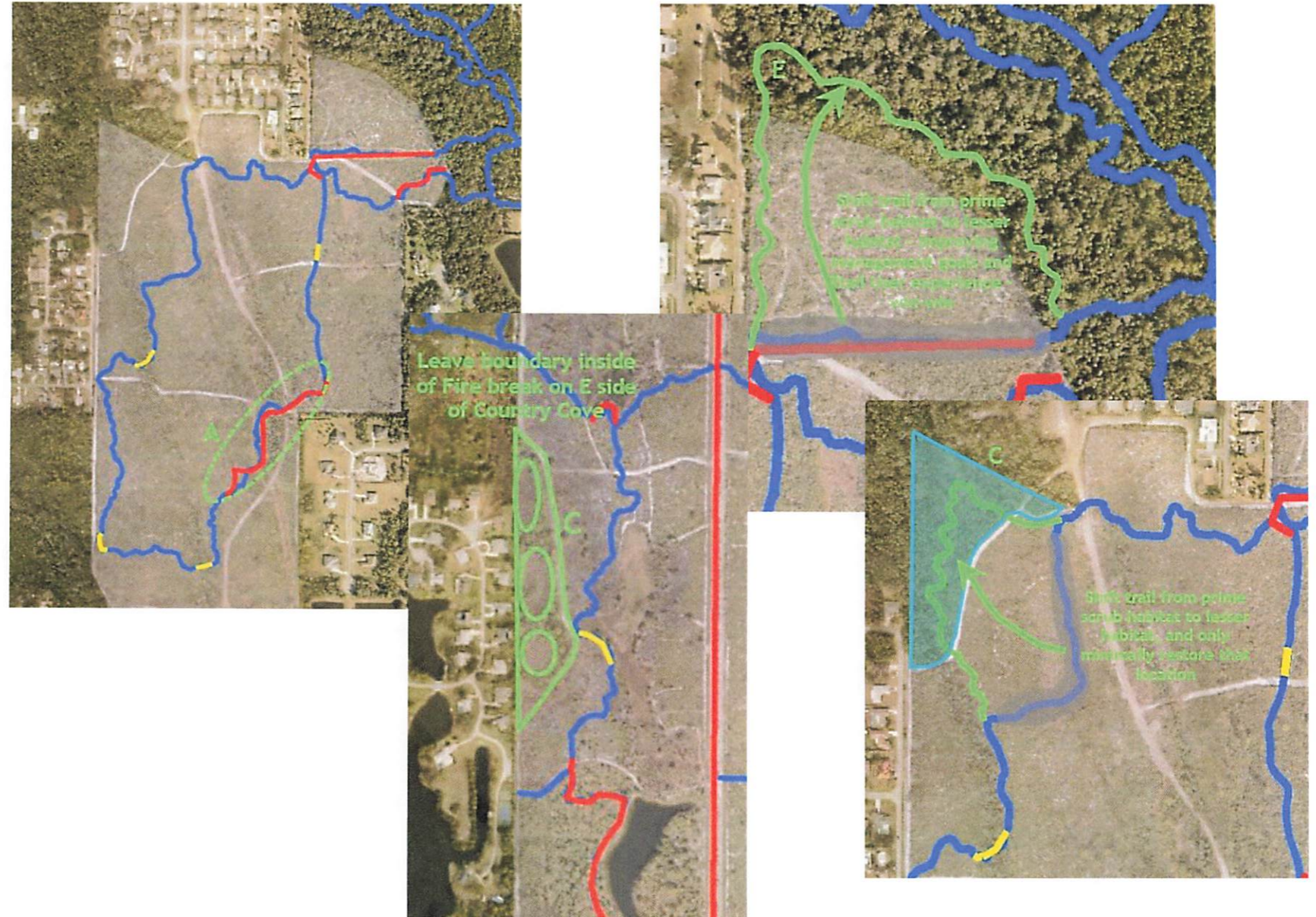
Why Now?

- The Scrub-Jay population is responding to the mitigation work areas.
- Recent research data indicates timeline for species stabilization is shorter than previously expected and that Malabar Scrub plays a key role in contributing to the stabilization of the Scrub-Jay population in southern Brevard County.
- A recent jay relocation to Grant / Valkaria has contributed to some birds already relocating to recently restored habitat at Jordan Scrub.

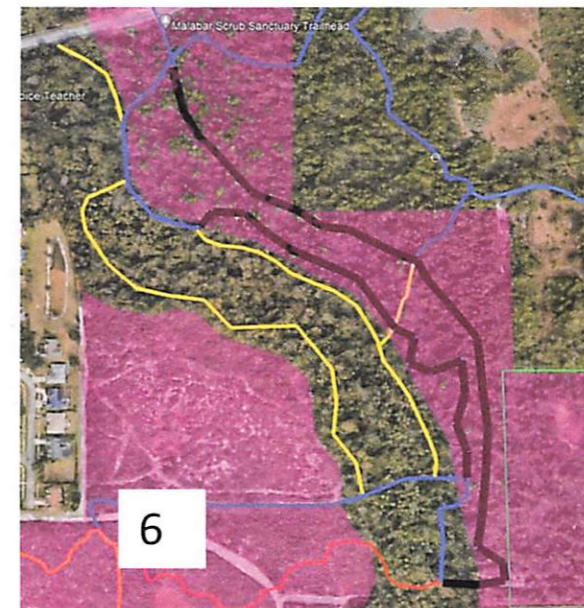
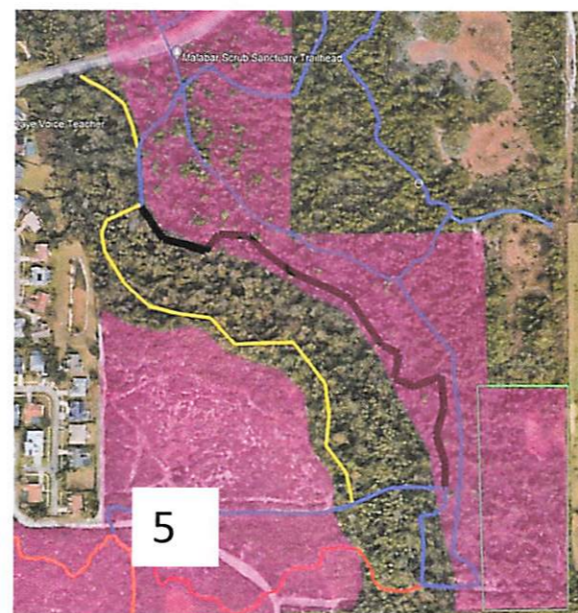
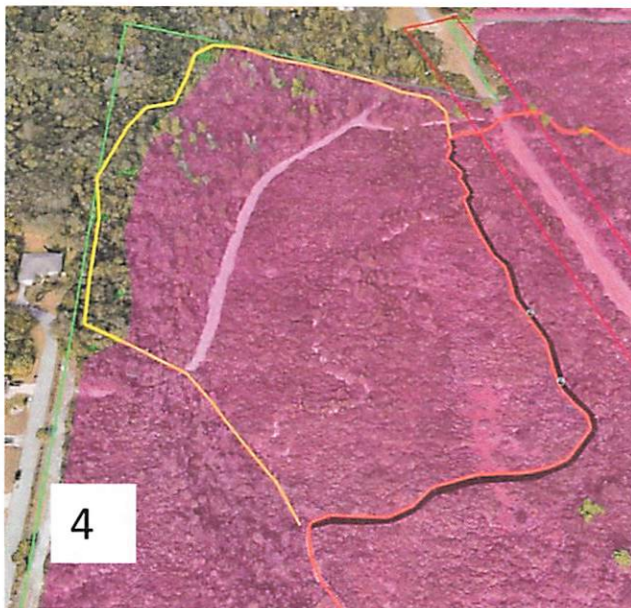


Malabar Trails & Greenway Committee Recommendation

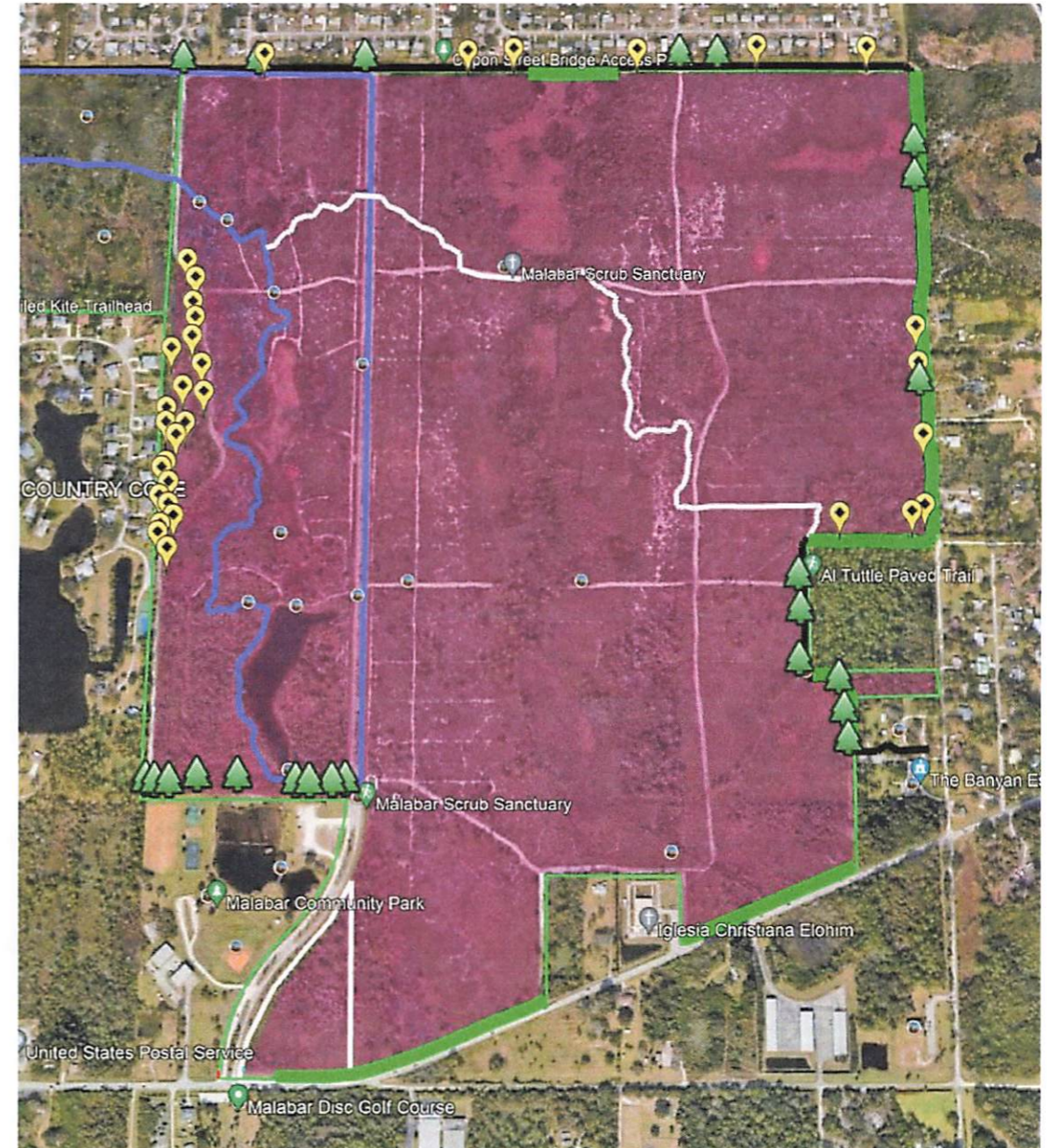
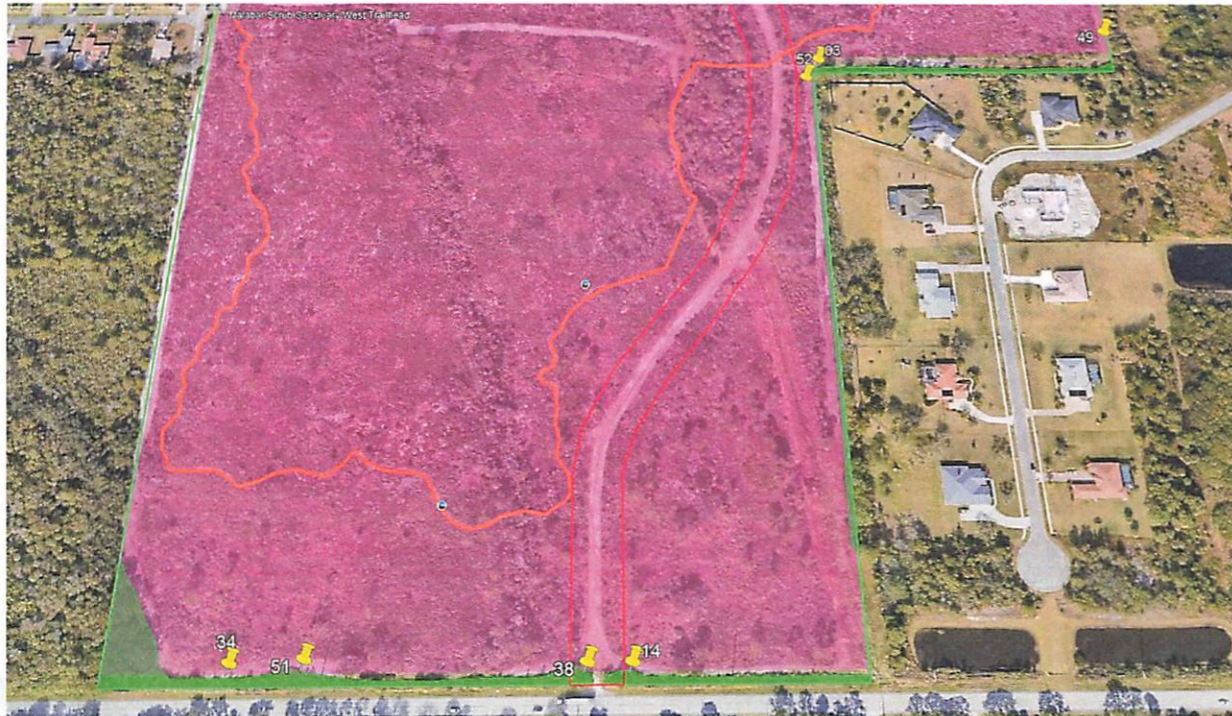
- Malabar Trails and Greenway Committee recommended no removal of overgrown oaks and minimal pine and palm overstory removal along trails, no tree removal by Country Cove, and relocation of two trails into shaded areas.



- **The County (EEL) has offered six compromise options that do not conflict with maximizing optimal scrub habitat:**



- Trees and vegetation between the perimeter fire control line and the boundary fence are not planned for removal.
- Trees interior of and adjacent to the perimeter fire control line have been identified.



Perimeter buffer examples



Current Status

- Malabar Trails and Greenway Committee was not supportive of trail modification / compromise plan provided by EEL.
- Malabar Trails and Greenway Committee has requested a 25' wide preserved tree buffer around entire perimeter of property and the lake along with continued recommendation to not remove oak curtains along the trails. Also advocating for 300' forest edge buffer.

EEL cannot support these requests because it is inconsistent with the requirements we are mandated to follow to maximize optimal scrub habitat conditions.

FWCC Scrub Management Guidelines

Habitat variable	Optimal habitat for scrub-jays (i.e., recruitment exceeds mortality)	Suitable scrub-jay habitat (i.e., scrub-jays can persist, at least for the short-term)
Vegetation height	<p>Sufficient amount of medium-height (4 - 5.5 ft tall) shrubs are present to provide cover and produce acorns for scrub-jays. Optimal arrangement of shrub heights within each potential territory includes conditions where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least 10% of the territory is medium height • most of the vegetation is medium height or shorter • no more than 1 acre of vegetation taller than 5.5 ft per 25 acres is present 	Shrub height averages greater than 3.5 ft but less than 8 ft tall
Open ground	10 - 50% bare sand or sparse herbaceous vegetation.	<p>Minimum: At least some bare sand or sparse herbaceous vegetation. Maximum: No more than 75% bare ground. At least 25% of the territory contains shrubs that provide escape cover, nest sites, and acorns.</p>
Overstory (>15 ft tall) density	0 - 1 tree per acre.	0 - 2 trees per acre (D. R. Breininger, InoMedic Health Applications, pers. comm.).
Distance to forest edge	1,000 ft non-forested buffer (0 - 2 trees/acre) between a scrub-jay territory and forest.	At least a 300-ft non-forested buffer (0 - 4 trees/acre) between a scrub-jay territory and forest.