

## **Big Cypress Mitigation Banking *Hendry County, Florida***

EarthMark Companies is proud to announce the expansion of the Big Cypress Mitigation Bank. Inclusion of Phase VI will add an additional 1,300 acres of Florida Panther Priority 1 habitat to the bank.



On family owned land, the Big Cypress Mitigation Bank (BCMB) will now double in size to almost 2,600 acres. The property is located in Southwest Florida, currently among the fastest growing regions in the country. The Bank will provide freshwater, herbaceous and forested credits for permitted activities in Collier, and portions of Hendry, Lee and Monroe Counties in Florida. The Big Cypress Preserve (U.S. Fish and Wildlife National Wildlife Preserve) runs along the southern boundary of BCMB, which consists of over 720,000 acres of protected natural wetlands.

BCMB has been deemed a “regionally significant” asset by the Southwest Florida Regional Development Council. BCMB is located in an area that is crucial habitat for the endangered Florida Panther and will be part of the joint program restoring the Florida Everglades.

Phase VI restoration work required the destruction of an active Citrus Farming Operation on 2 sections of land! Over 150,000 mature, producing Grapefruit, Orange and Tangerine trees were removed and burned.



Nearly 30 miles of ditches and canals have been filled and compacted. Additionally, approximately 4 miles of earthen dike around two retention ponds are currently being leveled. Thousands of exotic Brazilian Pepper trees have been pulled and burned.

The first phase of our planting process began. Over 30,000 cypress trees have been planted. Thousands of Cypress, Oak, and Cabbage Palms have been preserved through the removal of exotic and nuisance plant species. The property is prime habitat for many species of plants and animals including several threatened and endangered species including the Florida Panther, Florida Black Bear, Alligator, American Eagle, Big Cypress Fox Squirrel, Everglades Snail Kite and the Eastern Indigo Snake.

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