USDA icon **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Major Land Resource Area 156B
Southern Florida Lowlands

Accessed: 05/07/2026

Description

This area makes up about 2,264 square miles (5,864 square kilometers) and is entirely in Florida. It is long and narrow (170 miles by 20 miles) and oriented in a northwest-southeast direction along the Atlantic Coast, extending from the shore inland to Lake Okeechobee. The naturally hummocky landscape serves as the headwaters for both the north-flowing St. Johns River and the Everglades (MLRA 156A) to the south. A significant portion of this area is in agriculture due to an expansive water-control system that drains and irrigates. Urban sprawl from major cities on the Atlantic Ridge has encroached on the eastern boundary of this MLRA. However, the area limits urban growth from the east because of a water table that is at or near the surface and its identity as a national treasure. The boundary between MLRAs 156B and 156A is not apparent and is primarily marked by differing soil temperature regimes. MLRA 156B is hyperthermic whereas MLRA 156A is isohyperthermic. The boundary between MLRAs 156B and 155 is distinct. MLRA 155 has a higher, drier landscape that allows for significantly different use and management. Water-control systems have allowed extensive agriculture. Citrus and specialty crops are extensively planted in beds between shallow ditches that are part of the water control system. The major soil resource concerns are wind erosion on exposed soil, maintenance of the content of organic matter and productivity of the soils, and management of soil moisture. Conservation practices on cropland generally include conservation crop rotations, cover crops, nutrient management, pest management, water-control structures, surface drainage systems (field ditches, mains, and laterals), pumping plants, and irrigation water management (including micro, surface, and subsurface irrigation systems). Conservation practices on pasture and rangeland generally include prescribed grazing, brush management, pest management, prescribed burning, and watering facilities.

Ecological site keys

MLRA 156B Southern Florida Lowlands

I. Terrestrial Landscape

A. Very Poorly to Poorly Drained Soils

1 Geomorphic Position: Floodplains, Flood-Plain Step, Stream Terraces, Drainageway

i. Dominant Hydroperiod: Occasional to Frequent Flooding 6 to 10 months per year

a. Subsurface Soil Features: Highly Decomposed Hydrophytic Plant Materials Throughout ... R156BY010FL – Histisol Floodplain Marshes and Swamps

b. Subsurface Soil Features: Mineral Hardpan Which Slows Vertical Permeability (Argillic, Spodic, Mollic, or Umbric Horizon) ... R156BY011FL – Mineral Floodplain Marshes and Swamps

2 Geomorphic Position: Depressions, Dips, Low Broad Flats

i. Dominant Hydroperiod: Occasional to Frequent Ponding 6 to 10 months per year with depths 0 to 30 inches

a. Subsurface Soil Features: Highly Decomposed Hydrophytic Plant Materials Throughout ... R156BY020FL – Histisol Isolated Marshes and Swamps

b. Subsurface Soil Features: Mineral Hardpan which slows vertical permeability (Spodic, Argillic, Mollic, or Umbric Horizon) ... R156BY021FL – Mineral Isolated Marshes and Swamps

3 Geomorphic Position: Flat, Hammock

i. Dominant Hydroperiod: None to Frequent Flooding 2 months or less per year ... F156BY030FL – Wet Hardwood Forests

4 **Geomorphic Position: Flatwoods, Flats**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: Occasional to Frequent Ponding 2 to 4 months per year with depths 0 to 30 inches**

a. **Subsurface Soil Features: Spodic Horizon within 30 inches, an argillic horizon below 40 inches, or both ...** F156BY040FL – Sandy Pine Flatwoods and Hammocks

b. **Subsurface Soil Features: Argillic Horizon within 20 to 40 inches ...** F156BY041FL – Sandy Over Loamy Pine Flatwoods and Hammocks

B. Somewhat Poorly Drained Soil

1 **Geomorphic Position: Knolls, Rises**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: None to Rare Flooding less than 1 month per year ...** F156BY045FL – Sandy Scrubby Flatwoods on Rises and Knolls

C. Moderately Well to Well Drained Soils

1 **Geomorphic Position: Knoll, Hammock**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: None under Natural Conditions ...** F156BY050FL – Hardwood Forested Uplands

D. Somewhat Excessively to Excessively Drained Soils

1 **Geomorphic Position: Summits, Ridges, Dunes**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: None under Natural Conditions ...** F156BY060FL – High Sandy Pine and Scrub on Knolls and Ridges

II. Subaqueous Landscape

A. Subaqueous Soil Drainage

1 **Geomorphic Position: Riverine, River Channel, Streambed, Intermittent Stream, Canal**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: Very slow-moving to rapid water flow, fluctuating water levels dependent on local factors, free waters above the soil surface are permanent except in extreme drought, water in channelized bed is always moving ...** R156BY100FL – Subaqueous Freshwater Riverine Habitats

2 **Geomorphic Position: Lacustrine, Karst Lake, Lake Bed, Lake Shore, Seepage Lake**

i. **Dominant Hydroperiod: Stagnant water, fluctuating water levels dependent on local factors, free water above the soil surface is permanent except in extreme drought ...** R156BY150FL – Subaqueous Freshwater Lacustrine Habitats