



**LAKE  
COUNTY**  
FLORIDA

# Collaboration saves Taxpayers Thousands

## A Case Study

### Highlights

- Up-to-date information is critical to decision making
- Local creation and maintenance of Aerial Imagery is cost prohibitive
- Collaboration and Communication are key to good data acquisition

### Return on Investment (ROI)

- \$150,000 in cost avoidance by acquiring updated imagery
- Assisting decision makers by providing current imagery
- Fulfills the FDOR triennial imagery requirements per Florida Statute 195.022

### Contact Us

For more information, contact:  
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In the world of Geographic Information Systems (GIS), there is a wealth of information available to those who know where to look. And a fair amount of that data is free. Lake County's GIS Division has been able to avoid a considerable cost to tax payers by locating and obtaining just such free data in the form of Aerial Photography.

### Background:

From property assessment, planning and zoning, environmental impact, and other county functions on one hand, to local businesses, realtors, and private citizens on the other, all can gain tremendous insight and decision-making advantage by using geographic, spatial data. But the key is to use up-to-date data. Trying to assess land from an out of date photo produces bad decisions that can effect everything from the use of that land to tax obligation. It is imperative that current aerial photography is available to all who need it.



2008 Imagery



2009 Imagery

### The Issue:

Aerial photography is expensive and demands great technical skill and resources to create it and turn it into a usable format. It would be beyond the scope and expertise of local governments to create and maintain their own imagery. The solution in the past has been to hire consultants who specialize in aerial imagery and who have trained staff and state of the art equipment, but that has required the Lake County GIS Division to budget thousands of dollars every two years to keep the available imagery current enough to be useful. For the 2008 imagery, \$230,000 was spent to update half foot resolution imagery.

### The Solution:

In late November, 2009, the GIS Division learned from the Central Florida GIS User Group—a regional group of GIS professionals who communicate and collaborate with each other on new and emerging information and technology—that the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) had taken on the task and expense of obtaining new aeriels earlier that year. SJRWMD is a state agency established to manage Florida's water resources for the benefit of everyone. In performing their function, they recognize the need to have current, quality aerial imagery of their entire district and Lake County is almost entirely within that district.



Contact was made with SJRWMD and they agreed to supply Lake County with a free copy of their 2009 aerial imagery. The only cost involved was postage to ship an external hard drive to and from Palatka, FL on which to copy the imagery—approximately \$10.00.

Initial inspection of the new imagery reminded staff that a small portion of Lake County—the southwest portion of the Green Swamp—fell within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). So SWFWMD was contacted and they were persuaded to waive their replication fee, since Lake County is another government entity and the two generally work together and share resources, as well as with SJRWMD. SWFWMD was able to place the needed imagery files on their FTP site for free download, thereby avoiding additional shipping costs.

All the new, imagery was loaded into Lake County's central GIS database and made available to county users, and to the public at large through the GIS Interactive Web Map.

**The Benefit:**

Through professional collaborations—first with Central Florida GIS User Group, then SJRWMD and SWFWMD—Lake County has saved it's tax payers approximately \$150,000. Additional coordination with the City of Lady Lake has allowed that city to provide this new imagery on *their* web map for free, as well. And by Lake County then sharing the data with it's citizens through it's GIS Interactive Web Map, both private and public decision-makers can take advantage of current data to enhance their business processes and become more efficient and cost effective.