

ITEM 9:

Vote on whether to amend the St. Johns River Blueway Florida Forever Project Boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately ± 272 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed market value of \$722,020.

LOCATION:

Putnam County

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The Woodpecker Trail amendment proposed by the Putnam Land Conservancy adds five parcels in Putnam County totaling approximately ± 272 acres to the St. Johns River Blueway Florida Forever project. The five parcels are owned by Brothers Properties LLC. The parcels have a combined tax assessed value of \$722,020 and are proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The Woodpecker Trail property is located along the St. Johns River approximately two miles south of the City of Palatka. To the west, the property adjoins the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area. Dunns Creek Conservation Area and Dunns Creek State Park lie across the river approximately two miles to the south and southeast. The property is within the Ocala to Osceola Conservation Corridor and is identified as Priority 5 within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN). The property is currently used for timber and pasture. The southern portion of the site supports floodplain swamps along the river. Most of the remaining upland portions of the site are dominated by pine plantation and mixed/hardwood pine forest. Improvements include two pole barns, a mobile home, and unpaved roads and clearings associated with current uses. All landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers.

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The parcels have a tax assessed value of less than \$5 million. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

Project History:

The St. Johns River Blueway Florida Forever project in St. Johns County was added to the Florida Forever Priority List in 2002. The project will preserve the last remaining undeveloped shoreline of the St. Johns River and several of its tributaries. The project will also expand access to natural resource-based recreation opportunities including boating, canoeing, hiking, camping and bicycling for northeast Florida visitors. The project contains multiple recorded archaeological and historical resources.

The St. Johns River Blueway project includes over 26,481 acres with 15,570 acres remaining and is ranked number five in the Climate Change Lands category on the 2025 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2024) is \$1,887,457,347.

FNAI Review:

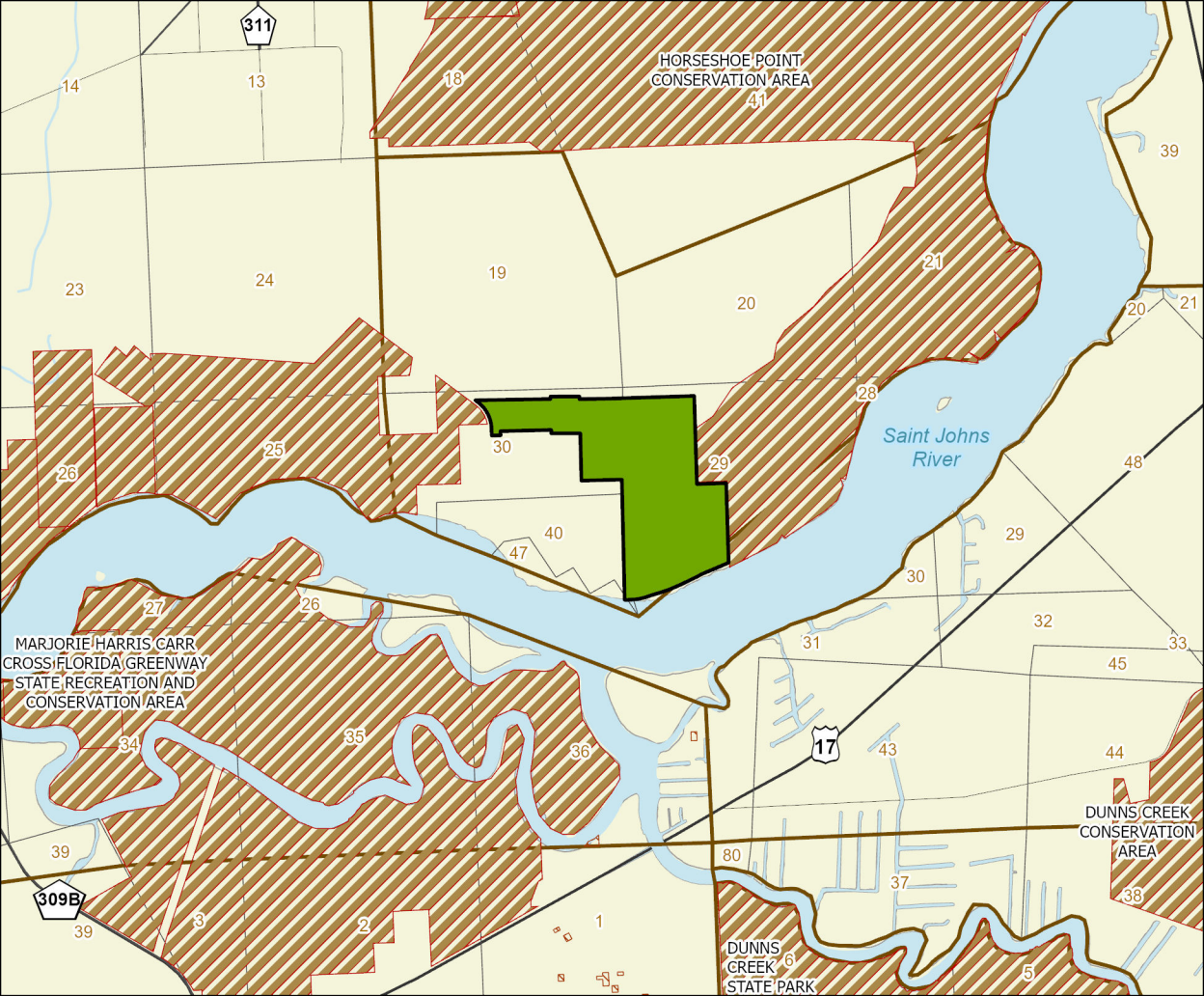
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 95–100% of the proposal contributes to Surface Water Protection, Ecological Greenways, and Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas. 81% of the proposal contributes to Aquifer Recharge, and roughly half contributes to Sustainable Forestry, Natural Floodplain Function, Functional Wetlands, and FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

	DHR	FFS	Griner	DEP	FWC	Palmer	Peppers	Watts	Gamblin	Select
Project										
South Goethe: Warm Springs Ranch										



ST. JOHNS RIVER BLUEWAY FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT WOODPECKER TRAIL ADDITION BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

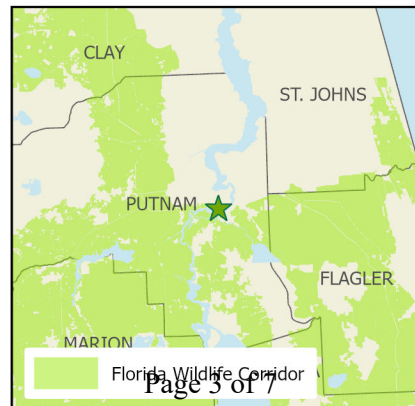
PUTNAM COUNTY

- Florida Forever Proposed Addition
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands



0 2 Miles

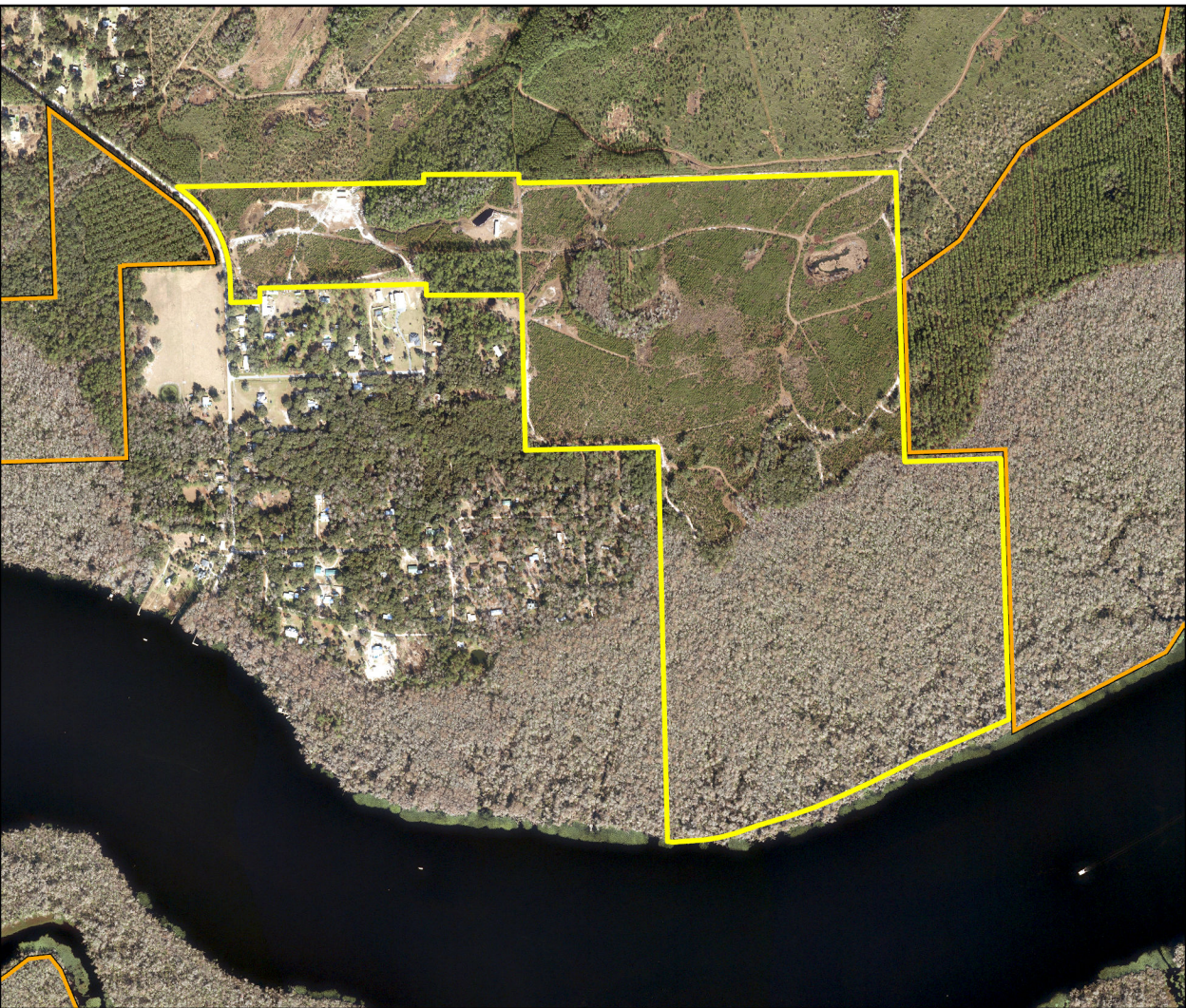
May 2025 ARC Meeting



Page 3 of 7

ST. JOHNS RIVER BLUEWAY FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT
WOODPECKER TRAIL ADDITION BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF APRIL 2025



Map Produced by: FL Natural Areas Inventory, N. Pasco, April 2025

Background: FDOT 2023 Aerial Imagery Resolution = 0.2 meter



Florida Forever Proposed Addition

Existing State Conservation Lands



May 2025 ARC Meeting

0.4

Page 4 of 7



St. Johns River Blueway Addition (Woodpecker Trail Addition): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 20250422

GIS ACRES = 272

MEASURES	Resource Acres^a	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	141	52%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	117	43%
Total Acres	258	95%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	52	19%
Priority 5	58	21%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	110	41%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	266	98%
Total Acres	266	98%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
Upland Glade (G1)	0	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0	0%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0	0%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	1	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	90	33%
Priority 3	25	9%
Priority 4	10	4%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	125	46%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres^a	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	53	19%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	219	81%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	272	100%
C7: Fragile Coastal Resources		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
C8: Functional Wetlands		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	90	33%
Priority 3	22	8%
Priority 4	10	4%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	122	45%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	222	81%
Total Acres	222	81%
E2: Recreational Trails (miles) (prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number)		1 sites
G1: Sustainable Forestry		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	25	9%
Priority 4	107	40%
Priority 5	11	4%
Total Acres	143	53%
G3: Forestland for Recharge		
	0	0%

^aAcres of each resource in the project and percentage of project represented by each resource are listed except where noted. This analysis converts site boundary into pixels, which causes slight differences from GIS acres; this effect is most noticeable on small sites.

To: Meghan Lauer, DEP/OES
From: Dale R. Jackson, Ph.D., FNAI
Date: May 12, 2025
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: St. Johns River Blueway – Woodpecker Trail Addition (Putnam County)

The St. Johns River Blueway FFBOT project is designed to preserve the last remaining shorelines of the St. Johns River and several of its tributaries in one of the fastest growing areas in the state. In addition to securing greater recreational access, the project would facilitate the protection of archaeological and historical resources that are common along the river corridor. The ca. 271.8-acre Woodpecker Trail Addition property is proposed as an addition to the project. The property is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The site is situated on the northern (western) bank of the St. Johns River, just south-southeast of Palatka in east-central Putnam County. Substantial local tracts of river shoreline and adjacent uplands are within Horseshoe Point Conservation Area, which borders the eastern edge of the proposal and is separated only by a road from the northwestern portion of the proposal. Murphy Creek Conservation Area lies across the river to the southwest. To the west, these units adjoin Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area. Dunns Creek Conservation Area and Dunns Creek State Park lie across the river 1-2 miles to the south and southeast. The nearest unprotected tracts of Florida Forever project lands are within Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever BOT Project - Caravelle Ranch (5 miles west) and Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor Florida Forever BOT Project (4 miles east). The nearest tracts within the St. Johns River Blueway project lie downstream ca. 10 miles to the north-northeast.

The southern roughly 40% of the site supports floodplain swamp (cypress) along the river corridor (0.5 mile of river frontage). Most of the remaining upland portion of the site has been converted to pine plantation, although there also are a dome swamp, two patches of mixed/hardwood-pine forest, an excavated pond, and an extremely disturbed depression or excavation site. Additional disturbances include two pole barns, a mobile home, and unpaved roads and clearings associated with silvicultural and possibly other operations.

The tract lies within a region in which the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission considers the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*; G5T4/S4, N, N) to be frequent. The FNAI database has no additional records of rare/listed species on site, although records of nesting bald eagles and wading birds are known from the general area.

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) below is based on the Florida Forever Conservation Needs Assessment developed by FNAI. The data used in that analysis represent a standardized,

statewide perspective of natural resources. All or most (95–100%) of the proposal contributes to Surface Water Protection (priorities 2 and 4), Ecological Greenways (priority 5), and Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (priorities 3 and 5). 81% of the proposal contributes to Aquifer Recharge (priority 6), and roughly half contributes to Sustainable Forestry (priorities 3, 4, and 5), Natural Floodplain Function (priorities 2, 3, and 4), Functional Wetlands (priorities 2, 3, and 4), and FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities (priorities 4 and 5).