

**ITEM 11:**

Vote on whether to amend the Apalachicola River Florida Forever Project Boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately 347 acres in Gulf County with a tax assessed market value of \$583,762.

**LOCATION:**

Gulf County

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

The Chipola River and Seven Springs Lake amendment proposed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), adds five parcels in Gulf County totaling approximately 347 acres to the Apalachicola River Florida Forever project. The property consists of five parcels owned by the Quarter Portions, Inc. The five parcels have a combined tax assessed value of \$583,762.

The five parcels are adjacent to the Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area (ARWEA) boundary and are proposed for fee simple acquisition. The landowner has been contacted and is a willing seller. The FWC has confirmed that the parcels would be managed as part of the ARWEA. The property is also adjacent to a county boat landing, Seven Springs Lake and the Chipola River. The property contains floodplain swamps and provides habitat for the state listed Barbour's map turtle and alligator snapping turtle. If acquired it would provide increased connectivity to public lands, expand recreational opportunities, benefit wildlife and habitat, protect water quality and provide additional protection to the conservation area from encroaching development.

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The parcels total less than 1,000 acres, have a tax assessed value of less than \$2 million, and are less than 10% of the size of the overall project to which it is being added. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

*Project History:*

Apalachicola River was approved on the CARL list in 1991 to conserve the rich bluffs and ravines along the upper Apalachicola River, unique in North America, that provide critical habitat for many rare plants and animals; to conserve and restore these important ecosystems and their plant and animal resources through purchase because regulation cannot adequately protect them; to provide areas for natural-resource-based recreation; and to preserve several significant archaeological sites.

The Apalachicola River project includes over 56,016 acres with 47,888 acres remaining and is ranked 11th in the Critical Natural Lands category on the 2020 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2018) is \$47,632,038.

*FNAI Review:*

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways and Aquifer Recharge. The proposed site also contributes 91% to Surface Water Protection and Habitat Conservation Priorities, and 66% of the site contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas by providing additional habitat for the Florida black bear.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>DHR</b>	<b>FFS</b>	<b>Lynetta Griner</b>	<b>FWC</b>	<b>Bill Palmer</b>	<b>Elva Peppers</b>	<b>DEP</b>	<b>Selected</b>
Apalachicola River: Chipola River and Seven Springs Lake								



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[Florida Natural Areas Inventory](#)

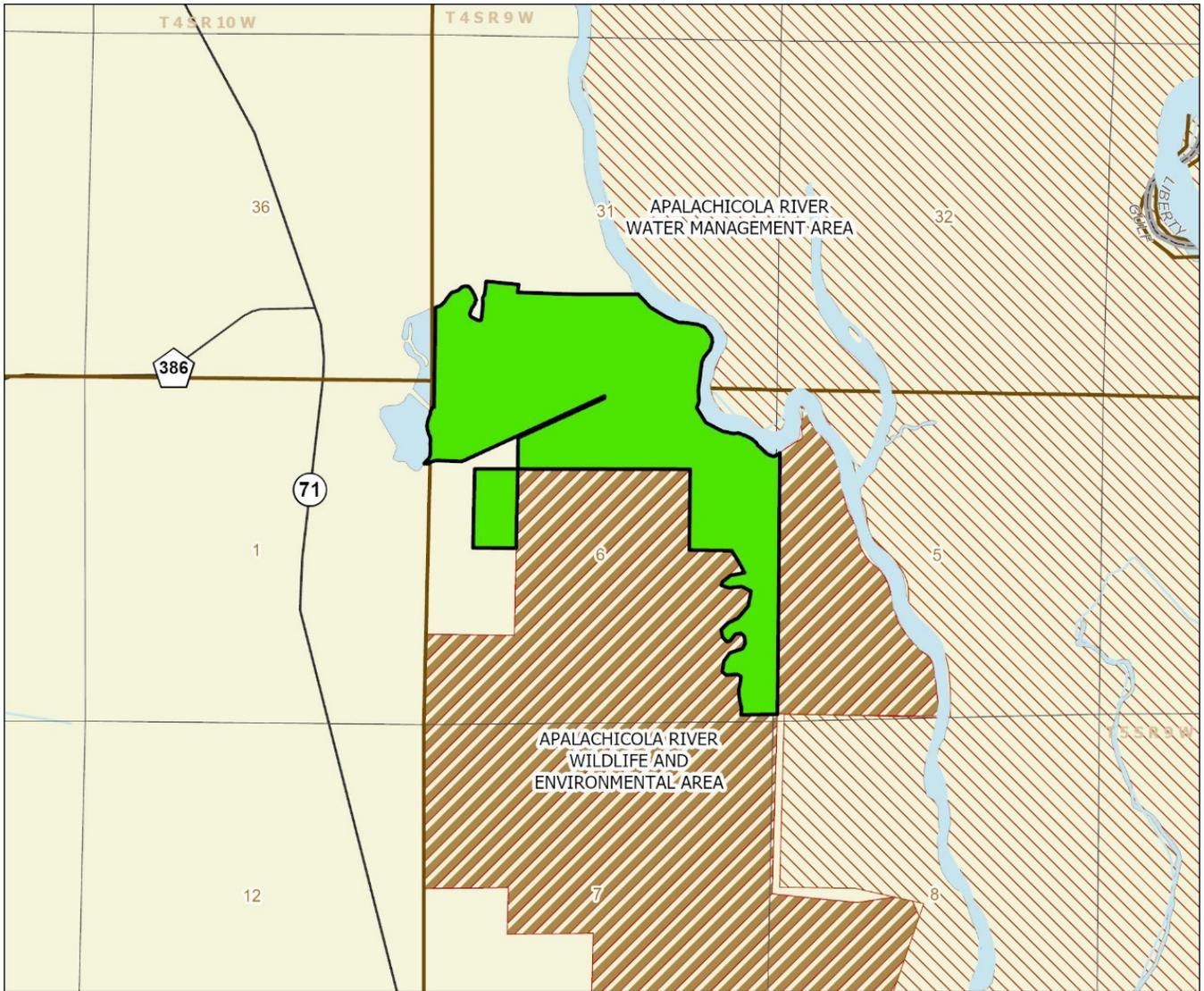
To: Deborah Burr, DEP/OES  
From: Dale R. Jackson, FNAI  
Date: July 23, 2020  
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project:  
Apalachicola River – Chipola River and Seven Springs Lake property, Gulf County

The major goals of the Apalachicola River Florida Forever (FF) Project are to protect the water quality of the river and Apalachicola Bay as well as the unique diversity of natural communities and species that occur along the upper and middle river. The proposed addition includes 347 acres located just south of Wewahitchka on the western bank of the Chipola River, a major tributary of the Apalachicola River, in northeastern Gulf County. The property lies 1.5 miles south of the nearest FF project tract. Except for one point connection, the site is a contiguous block that is bordered on the south and southeast by the northern portion of the 108,287-acre Apalachicola River Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA). The potential addition is proposed for fee-simple acquisition from a willing seller, with management by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as part of the WEA.

More than half of the site (54% per proposal) supports floodplain swamp along the Chipola River. GIS landcover analysis cited in the application (p. 5 map) indicates 61 acres (17% of site) of scrub/scrubby flatwoods, an under-represented natural community ranked G2 by FNAI; however, aerial photography shows that this is incorrect and that the area is cleared pasture. The eastern portion (ca. 60%) of Seven Springs Lake (ca. 30 acres) lies within the northwestern corner of the site. Immediately east of the lake is upland predominantly covered by pine forest with hardwoods. The site supports one house but is otherwise undeveloped.

The FNAI database contains only one record of rare species on site – the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*, G5T4/S4, N, N), based on its being considered abundant regionally by the FWC. However, as noted in the proposal narrative, numerous rare species of mussels, fishes, and turtles are known from the Chipola River, which immediately borders the site and would benefit from its protection.

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) at the end of this memo 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 community distributions based primarily on data from the Cooperative Land Cover Map. The proposed addition contributes substantially to protection of Ecological Greenways, Natural Floodplain Function, Surface Water Protection, and Functional Wetlands.



### APALACHICOLA RIVER PROPOSED ADDITION

#### GULF COUNTY

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

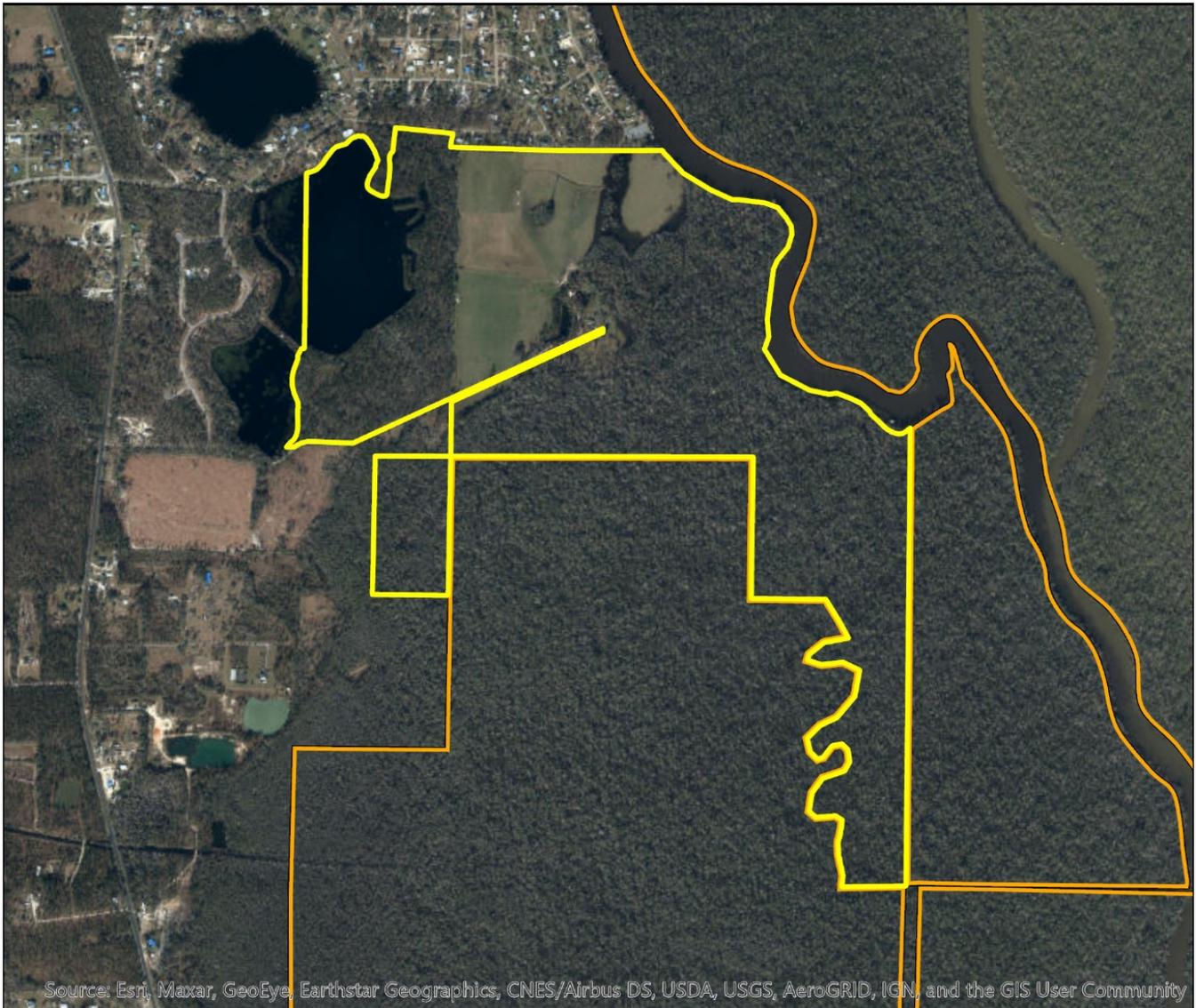


JULY 2020



## Apalachicola River Proposed Addition

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSAL BOUNDARY AS OF JULY 2020



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Map Produced by: N. Pasco, July 2020

Background: World Imagery Resolution = 0.3 meter



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## Apalachicola River Addition: Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20200717

GIS ACRES = 347

MEASURES	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	182	53%
Priority 3	47	13%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities</b>		
Priority 1	227	65%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	27	8%
Priority 5	6	2%
Priority 6	56	16%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>B3: Ecological Greenways</b>		
Priority 1	26	8%
Priority 2	321	92%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>B4: Under-represented Natural Communities</b>		
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%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species</b>		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>C4: Natural Floodplain Function</b>		
Priority 1	148	42%
Priority 2	72	21%
Priority 3	25	7%
Priority 4	4	1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>71%</b>

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>C5: Surface Water Protection</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	252	73%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	64	18%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Priority 7	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>91%</b>
<b>C7: Fragile Coastal Resources</b>		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>C8: Functional Wetlands</b>		
Priority 1	147	42%
Priority 2	57	16%
Priority 3	2	< 1%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>D3: Aquifer Recharge</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	29	8%
Priority 4	3	< 1%
Priority 5	89	26%
Priority 6	226	65%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>E2: Recreational Trails (miles)</b> (prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>0.0</b>	
<b>F2: Arch. &amp; Historical Sites (number)</b>		
		1 sites
<b>G1: Sustainable Forestry</b>		
Priority 1	29	8%
Priority 2	4	1%
Priority 3	3	< 1%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	60	17%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>G3: Forestland for Recharge</b>		
	4	1%

<sup>a</sup>Acres 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 greatest on small sites.