

# Lower Perdido River Buffer

Less-Than-Fee

Escambia County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2002
<i>Project Acres</i>	7,728
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	5,458
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$12,085,069
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	2,270
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$7,825,817

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Lower Perdido River Buffer project will increase public recreational and educational opportunities by enhancing access to the Perdido River. The project will preserve a riverine area, providing a scenic viewshed for canoeing and kayaking. Additionally, the project will preserve forest land for sustainable management of natural resources.

## General Description

The Perdido River, a focus of the project, is a sand-bottom blackwater stream that starts in southern Alabama. It has a low relief that is typical of many rivers in the lower Gulf Coastal Plain. The river has no first-magnitude or second-magnitude springs but depends on rainfall for most of its water, and its flow has substantial fluctuations. The high flows have caused erosion bends upstream that created large and medium-size sandbars, suitable for camping, along much of the river's inner upstream of State Road 184. The river is exceptionally winding, with few straight stretches of more than 200 yards. There are numerous fallen trees (generally Atlantic white cedar), but most have been cut to allow small boats to pass below Barrineau Park. The river is about 100 yards wide at the mouth of Perdido Bay but is only about 30 yards wide near Barrineau Park. The Lower Perdido River Buffer project includes land on the eastern Florida side of the river from roughly the center of Escambia County (near the Barrineau Park community) downstream to the river's mouth on Perdido Bay. The project has approximately 5,053 acres of functional wetlands that will be protected through acquisition. Approximately 2,094 acres have been identified that provide groundwater recharge, and approximately 1,056 acres of forest have been identified that maintain natural groundwater recharge functions.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<b><u>FNAI Elements</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
<i>Florida pondweed</i>	G1/S1
Escambia crayfish	G2/S1S2
<i>Louisiana yellow-eyed grass</i>	G2G3/S1
<i>West Florida cowlily</i>	G5T2T3/S2
Rusty grave digger	G3/S3
<i>primrose-flowered butterwort</i>	G3G4/S3

**Public Use**

The Lower Perdido River Buffer is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the owner is willing to sell limited access points to the Perdido River fee simple; this would allow river access for launching and landing canoes and small boats.

**Acquisition Planning**

**2002**

On June 6, 2002, the Acquisition and Restoration Council added the Lower Perdido River Buffer project to Group A of the 2002 Florida Forever Project List. The project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$217,336.

When added to the list, the project property was entirely owned by International Paper. The specific locations of the small access sites along the river for fee-simple acquisition will be determined during the negotiation process.

**2006**

On May 31, 2006, the Northwest Florida Water Management District purchased 5,456 acres, almost all of which is within the project boundary, to create the Perdido River Water Management Area.

**2009**

On January 27, 2009, the Northwest Florida Water Management District established the 4.2-acre Herndon conservation easement.

**2011**

On December 9, 2011, the project was placed in the Less-Than-Fee category.

**Coordination**

The Division of State Lands will oversee monitoring of the easement. Escambia County will manage the access points on fee-simple portions of the project once they are determined. The acquisition partnership is expected to include local, state and Northwest Florida Water Management District funding sources. Contribution funding percentages have not been determined.

**Management Policy Statement**

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Lower Perdido River Buffer would be managed for conservation purposes by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.





### **Manager(s)**

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Lower Perdido River Buffer would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued conservation easement compliance would be coordinated by the Division of State Lands. Escambia County will manage the access points once they are determined.

### **Management Prospectus**

The Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.

### **Qualifications for State Designation**

Protecting the Lower Perdido River Buffer with a combination of a conservation easement and the outright purchase of select access points will benefit the public by keeping wetland and marsh habitats located within a major metropolitan statistical area free from the pressures of development; using the conservation easement to keep the majority of the land in private hands; and allowing, at selected points, riverine access for the public for boating and fishing.

### **Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management**

The Perdido River itself appears to be free of major structural alterations and point sources of pollution that substantially affect either flow or water quality. Hence, no major restoration efforts along the immediate river corridor are necessary. Nonetheless, all areas of minor structural alterations (e.g., houses, boat ramps and highway crossings) should be examined in the future to determine if they are contributing to erosion, siltation or pollution.

### **Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure**

Management of the property would depend on the nature and provisions of the conservation easement.

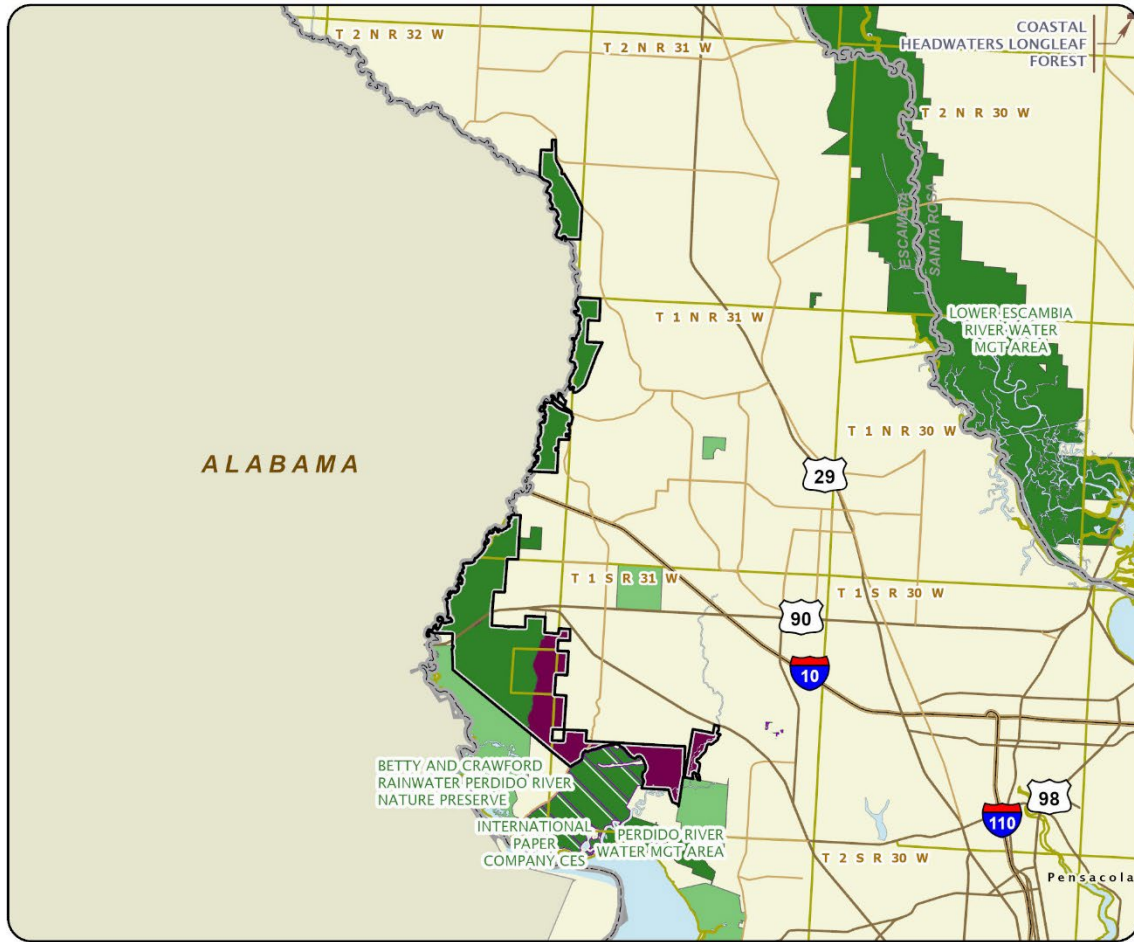
### **Revenue-generating Potential**

Revenue generation potential is minimal since the project is to be acquired less-than-fee. Areas acquired fee simple would not be expected to generate revenue.

### **Cooperators in Management Activities**

Escambia County would manage access points to the river.





### LOWER PERDIDO RIVER BUFFER

#### ESCAMBIA COUNTY

