

North Waccasassa Flats

Less-Than-Fee

Gilchrist County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2018</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>15,606</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>541</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>15,065</i>
<i>2025 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$76,336,254</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The North Waccasassa Flats project will benefit water quality by protecting natural floodplain functions, functioning wetland systems and groundwater recharge areas. The project will also protect the headwaters of a tributary of the Santa Fe River as well as strategic and rare species habitats.

General Description

The project is in Gilchrist County and is bisected by County Road 340. The eastern and western boundaries consist of numerous rural-residential and agricultural properties. The southern boundary is a livestock operation. The project area is also crossed by a highway, a former rail line, a newly constructed pipeline and near utility transmission corridors. Important established conservation areas nearby include Fort White Wildlife and Environmental Area to the north and Bell Ridge Longleaf Wildlife and Environmental Area to the west. There are also numerous state parks, county parks and private conservation easements along the Santa Fe River to the north and along the Suwannee River to the west. Most of the project area is completely undeveloped, though there are many miles of unpaved roads servicing forestry and hunting activities.

Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2

Public Use

North Waccasassa Flats is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access.



Acquisition Planning

This area has been considered for conservation projects in the past, including a 1980s proposal under the Conservation and Recreational Lands program for a 56,000-acre state forest. At that time, the landowner did not want to sell in a phased schedule. The Suwannee River Water Management District also proposed a planned 34,000-acre project overlapping this area.

2017

On October 31, 2017, the Conservation Fund sponsored the 14,153-acre proposal for the North Waccasassa Flats.

2018

On April 20, 2018, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) voted to add this proposal to the Florida Forever Priority List.

2022

On December 9, 2022, ARC approved the addition of five parcels totaling approximately 562 acres in Gilchrist County with a tax-assessed market value of \$1,405,936 (Carroll Property).

2024

On November 22, 2024, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) acquired a 540.6-acre conservation easement in Gilchrist County from Robert and Lori Carroll.

In December 2024, ARC approved the addition of six parcels totaling approximately 890.47 acres in Gilchrist County to the project boundary.

Coordination

This area has also been considered for acquisition through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Rural and Family Lands Protection Program and by Suwannee River Water Management District; partnership opportunities between the two may be possible.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the project 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 North Waccasassa Flats project would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring to confirm continued conservation



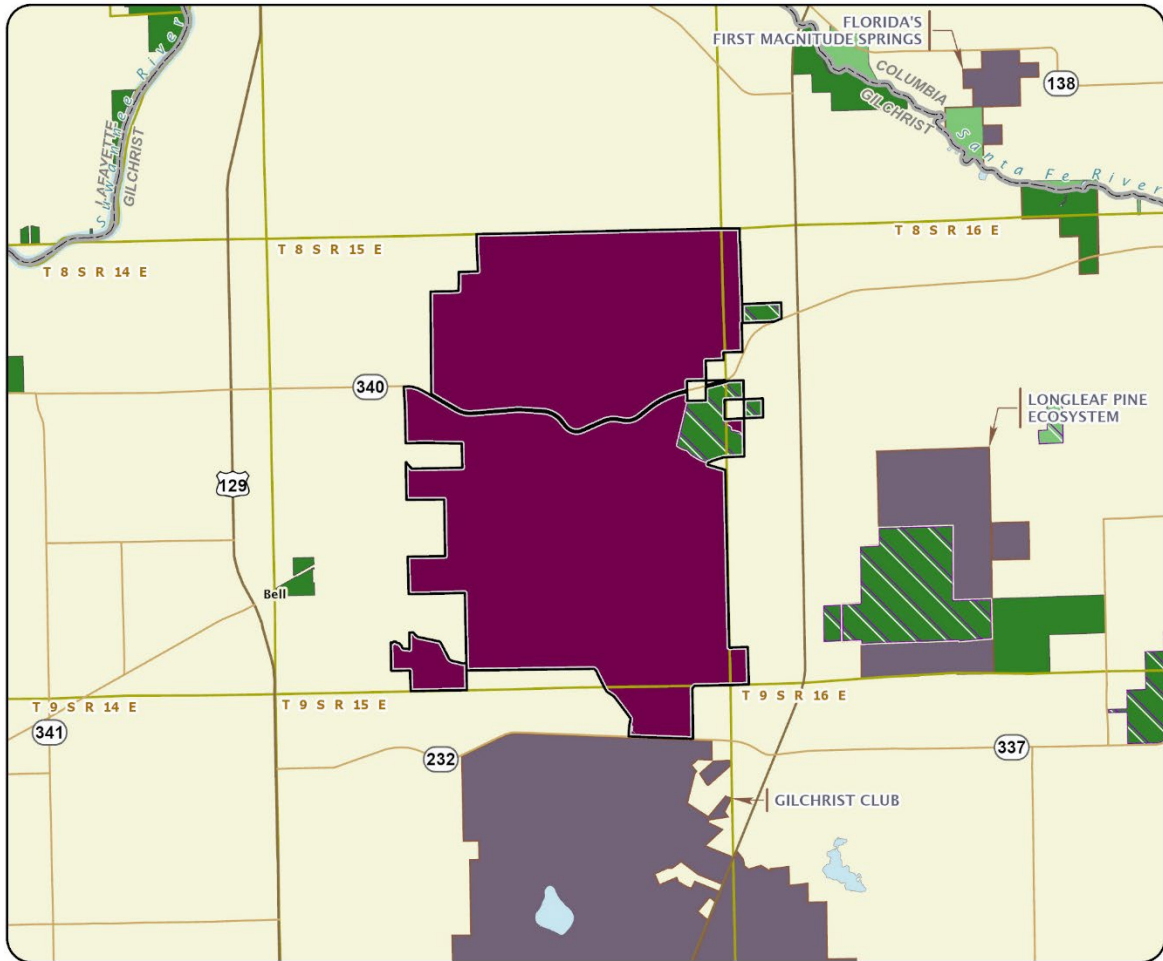


easement compliance would be coordinated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands.

Management Prospectus

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.





NORTH WACCASASSA FLATS

GILCHRIST COUNTY

