

Apalachicola River

Critical Natural Lands

Calhoun, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Liberty

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1991
<i>Project Acres</i>	57,142
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	8,282
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$10,120,682
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	48,860
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$49,153,394

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Apalachicola River project will greatly increase protection of the river's waters, preserve the productive and significantly unique Apalachicola Bay, and provide the public with scenic outdoor-recreation areas from the Torreya State Park south to Wewahitchka and the Dead Lakes. The high plateaus, steep bluffs and deep ravines of the northern Apalachicola River valley are some of the most significant natural features of the southeastern Coastal Plain, with many northern, rare, and endemic plants and animals, such as the nearly extinct Florida Torreya tree.

General Description

This project contains much of Florida's remaining upland glades natural community, which is not currently protected within state-owned conservation lands, and includes 16 endemic plant species occurring nowhere else in Florida. It consists of an upper and lower section along the Apalachicola River:

- The upper section on the east side of the river includes a large tract on the east bank, running south from near Chattahoochee to Torreya State Park, including rich upland and floodplain forests and most of the upland glades in the state. It shelters several extremely rare plants such as the Florida Torreya. The Land property, west of the former area, contains floodplain forest important for southeastern and gray bats. This tract is part of the Southeastern Bat Maternity Caves Florida Forever project. The Sweetwater Creek tract connects Torreya State Park with a Nature Conservancy preserve and includes some of the deepest steephead ravines in the state, with unique hardwood forests harboring many rare plants and animals. The uplands between the steepheads are a sand pine plantation which can be restored to long leaf pine.
- The lower, western section located mostly south of State Road 20 is owned by The Forestland Group and includes approximately 44,000 acres of primarily floodplain and bottomland forest with some areas of uplands. These lands along the Apalachicola River have a high potential for discovery of archaeological sites not yet documented by Florida's DHR. All these areas are threatened by timbering and unrestricted vehicular access.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
<i>Florida torreya</i>	G1/S1
Gulf sturgeon	G3T2T3/S2?
Eastern indigo snake	G3/S2?
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Gholson's blazing star</i>	G1/S1
<i>Apalachicola rosemary</i>	G1/S1
Torrey pygmy grasshopper	G1/S1
Brother spike	G1G2/S1
<i>Apalachicola wild indigo</i>	G2/S1
<i>fringed campion</i>	G2/S1
Purple bankclimber	G2/S1S2
<i>Baldwyn's spiny-pod</i>	G3/S1

Public Use

The project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition which would limit public use, however consideration of fee-simple acquisition could expand public use opportunities. In either acquisition scenario, the project will provide habitat for wildlife including the Florida black bear and provide buffers for other conservation lands such as the St. Joe Timberland Apalachicola River and the Southeastern Maternity Bat Cave in Jackson County. Forestry uses could continue under a well-crafted forest stewardship management plan. Portions of the project purchased in fee simple would be managed as state parks or preserves, WMAs, or state forests, and allow such uses as hiking, nature appreciation, limited hunting and fishing and boat launching.

Acquisition Planning

1990

On December 7, 1990, the LAAC separated the Apalachicola River and Bay CARL project into two projects: Apalachicola Bay, and Apalachicola River, Phase I. The Apalachicola River, Phase I project included the Aspalaga Landing tract (800 acres/2 owners), Atkins tract (3,210 acres/7 owners), and Gadsden County Glades (1,912 acres/13 owners) and had an estimated tax value of \$4,532,300.

1992

On April 7, 1992, the LAAC approved a 4,570-acre addition to the project boundary. It consisted of 30 owners and a taxable value of \$1,813,157.

1995

On July 14, 1995, the LAAC approved a 374-acre addition (Land property) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owner and had a taxable value of \$282,712. The tract is across from the Gadsden Glades tract and nearly adjacent to the Sneads Cave site of the Southeastern Bat Maternity Caves project.



1996

On December 5, 1996, the LAMAC transferred the Atkins/Trammell tract (approximately 3,210 acres) and the Hatcher tract (approximately 544 acres within the 9,145-acre Sweetwater site) to the Less-than-Fee category. A 613-acre conservation easement was acquired on the Hatcher tract in 2002.

1999

On May 6, 1999, the LAMAC designated an additional 11,800 acres (Lake Wimico) as essential.

2001

On April 6, 2001, the ARC removed the Atkins/Trammell tract site (approximately 3,210 acres) from the project because the resources had been compromised and negotiations had reached an impasse.

2002

On April 25, 2002, the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 2,242-acre addition (Corbin/Tucker site) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by TNC, consisted of 2 owners, David Corbin and Ken Tucker, and had a taxable value of \$1,106,820. On August 15, 2002, the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 1,514-acre addition of the Trammel tract (that was previously part of the 3,210-acre Atkins/Trammell tract that was removed on April 6, 2001) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Trammel, and had a taxable value of \$430,000.

2003

On February 7, 2003, the ARC approved a fee simple and less-than-fee 3,113-acre addition to the project boundary. Sponsored by TNC, it consisted of four landowners, five tracts, and had a 2002 taxable value of \$764,996. The tracts break down as follows: Soterra Crooked Creek tract, 447 acres; Soterra Connector tract, 117 acres; Thompson tract, 304 acres; Hatcher tract, 160 acres; and TNC Dupuis/Traveler's tract, 1,846 acres. On October 17, 2003, the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 1,244-acre addition (Glenn Summers tract) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owner, Glenn Summers, and had a taxable value of \$91,645.

2007

On December 23, 2007, the NFWFMD purchased a 1,544-acre conservation easement from Robert D./Kay S. Trammell and Robert Douglas Trammell and Meredith Trammell Roop for \$2,985,108. The CE is known as the Trammell tract.

2010

On September 30, 2010, DRP purchased 553 acres known as Torreya State Park Addition for \$1,418,000 from Plum Creek. DRP will manage this.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project into the Florida Forever category of Critical Natural Lands projects.

2017

In 2017, The Forestland Group, purchased acreage along the Apalachicola River formerly owned by Neal Land and Timber and proposed a less-than-fee purchase of more than 37,000 acres as the Upper



Apalachicola River Ecosystem Florida Forever project, and added another 700 acres of the Skyland Ranch tract proposed for fee-simple. The proposal totaled 37,895 acres and had a tax assessed value of \$5,756,412 in 2017. ARC approved this as a stand-alone project in October. In December, the ARC moved to combine the newly approved Upper Apalachicola River Ecosystem project into the boundary of the existing Apalachicola River project, in the Critical Natural Lands category.

In calendar year 2017, a total of 288.26 acres in this project were acquired in this project were acquired using Florida Forever program funding.

2020

On August 21, 2020, the ARC approved an addition of 347 acres adjacent to the Apalachicola River WEA in Gulf County to the project boundary.

2021

DSL was awarded a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund for \$31 million to acquire in fee approximately 32,000 acres within this project. Additional funds were awarded to FWC to assist with start-up management of the land once acquired.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Apalachicola River project are: to conserve the rich bluffs and ravines along the upper Apalachicola River which are unique in North America and which provide important habitat for many rare plants and animals; to conserve and restore these important ecosystems and their plant and animal resources; to provide areas for natural resource based recreation; and to preserve several significant archaeological sites. The project should be managed under the single-use concept, with management activities being directed toward the preservation of steephead streams, hardwood forests, glades, and archaeological sites, the removal of pine plantations, and restoration of natural pine forests. The project, when completed, will include most of the bluffs and ravines in private ownership and will connect Torreya State Park, TNC Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravine Preserve, Apalachicola River WEA, Apalachicola River Water Management Area and Apalachicola National Forest. Protection of the ecosystem will also help conserve Apalachicola Bay and the Gulf of Mexico. It has the appropriate size and location to achieve landscape-scale management goals.

Manager (s)

If acquired in fee, the lower and middle sections of this project would be managed by FWC as part of the Apalachicola River WEA, while the acres in the upper section (north of SR20) would be managed by DRP as part of Torreya State Park. The portions of the project near the Torreya State Park and east of the river will be high-need management areas with emphasis on public recreational use and development compatible with resource protection and management. During an initial 10-year period in which DRP will restore natural pine forests on the Sweetwater Creek tract, the site will be a low-need management area.



Management Prospectus

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The unique and sensitive forests, glades, and streams on the east side of the Apalachicola River qualify these lands as wildlife management areas, state forests, parks, and preserves. The Atkins tract on the west side of the river has the size and wildlife resources to qualify as a wildlife management area.

Management implementation, Public access, Site security and Protection of infrastructure

Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural and cultural resource protection, and efforts toward the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management.

Revenue-generating potential

No significant revenue is expected to be generated in the first several years, nor any significant facilities developed initially after the lands are placed under management of DRP. The degree of future revenue generated will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities.

Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$105,910	\$105,910
OPS	\$0	\$0
Expense	\$30,000	\$30,000
OCO	\$168,000	\$13,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$303,910	\$148,910

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP (Sweetwater)</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$83,306	\$72,319
OPS	\$24,960	\$44,720
Expense	\$16,800	\$49,730
OCO	\$101,252	\$1,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$226,318	\$167,769

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

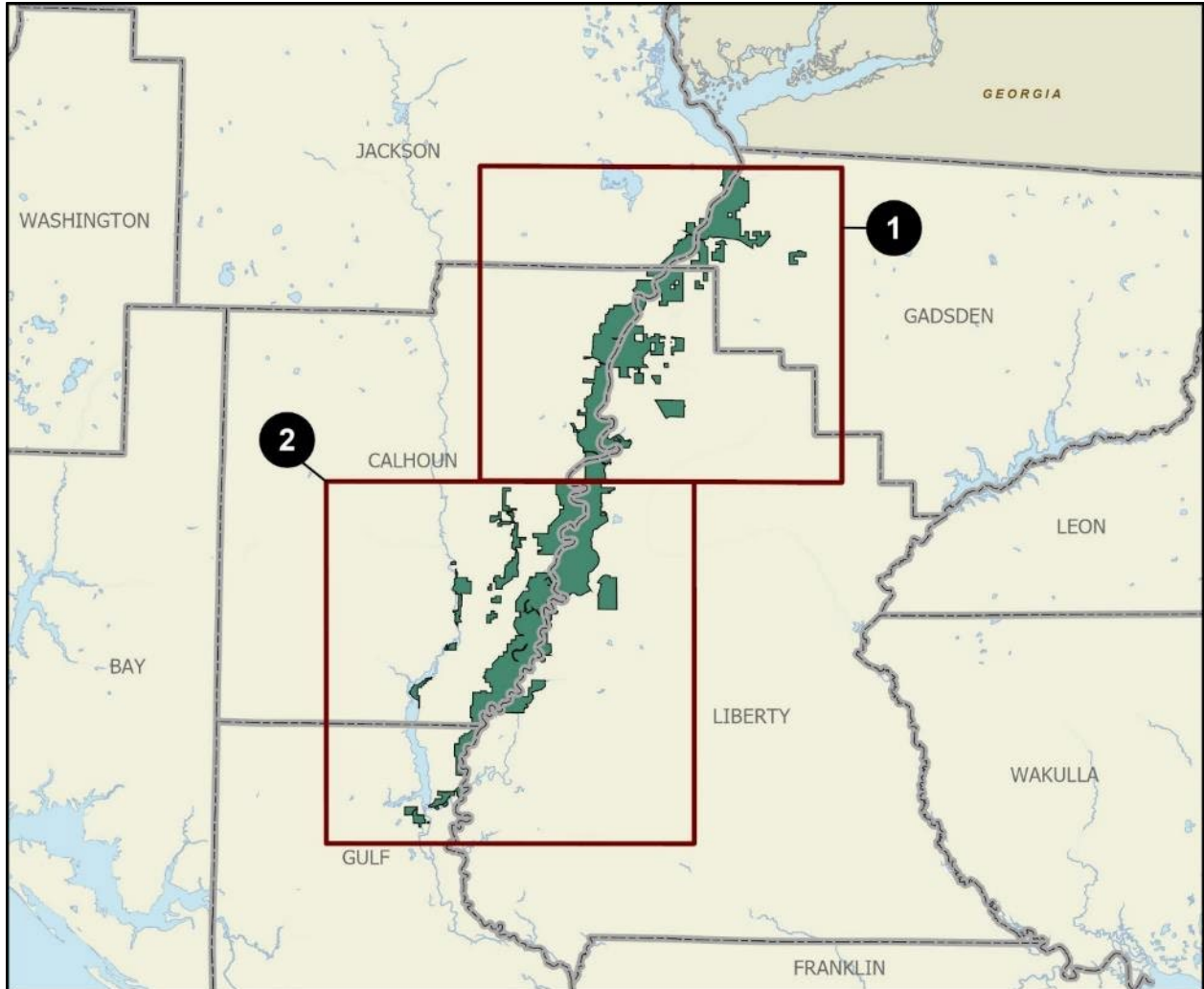


Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP (North)</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$72,319	\$72,319
OPS	\$44,720	\$44,720
Expense	\$49,730	\$49,730
OCO	\$81,527	\$1,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$248,296	\$167,769

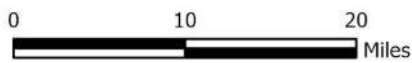
Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





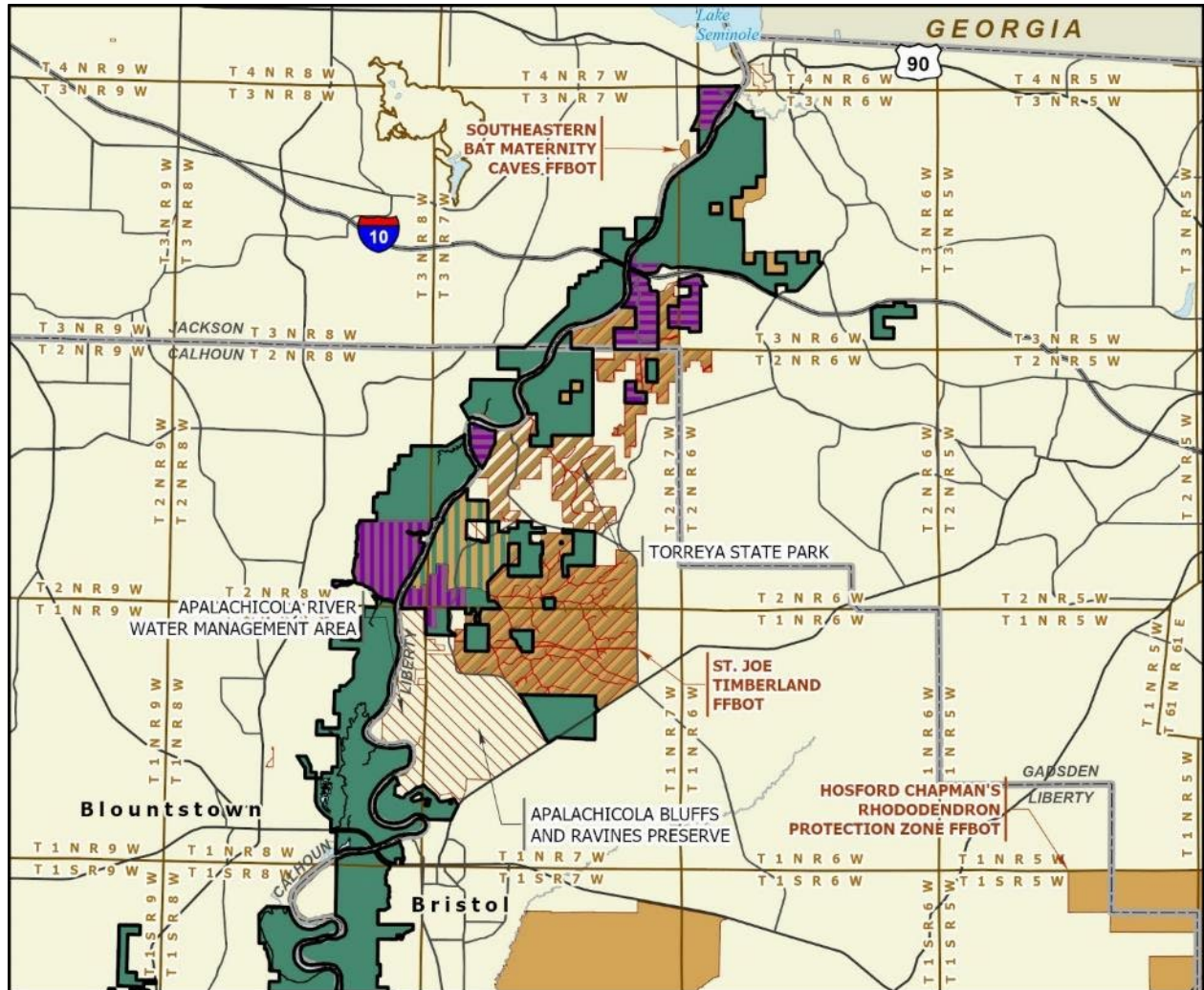
APALACHICOLA RIVER: OVERVIEW

CALHOUN, GADSDEN, GULF, JACKSON, AND LIBERTY COUNTIES



JANUARY 2020

Map 1: FNAI, January 2020



APALACHICOLA RIVER: MAP 1

CALHOUN, GADSDEN, JACKSON, AND LIBERTY COUNTIES

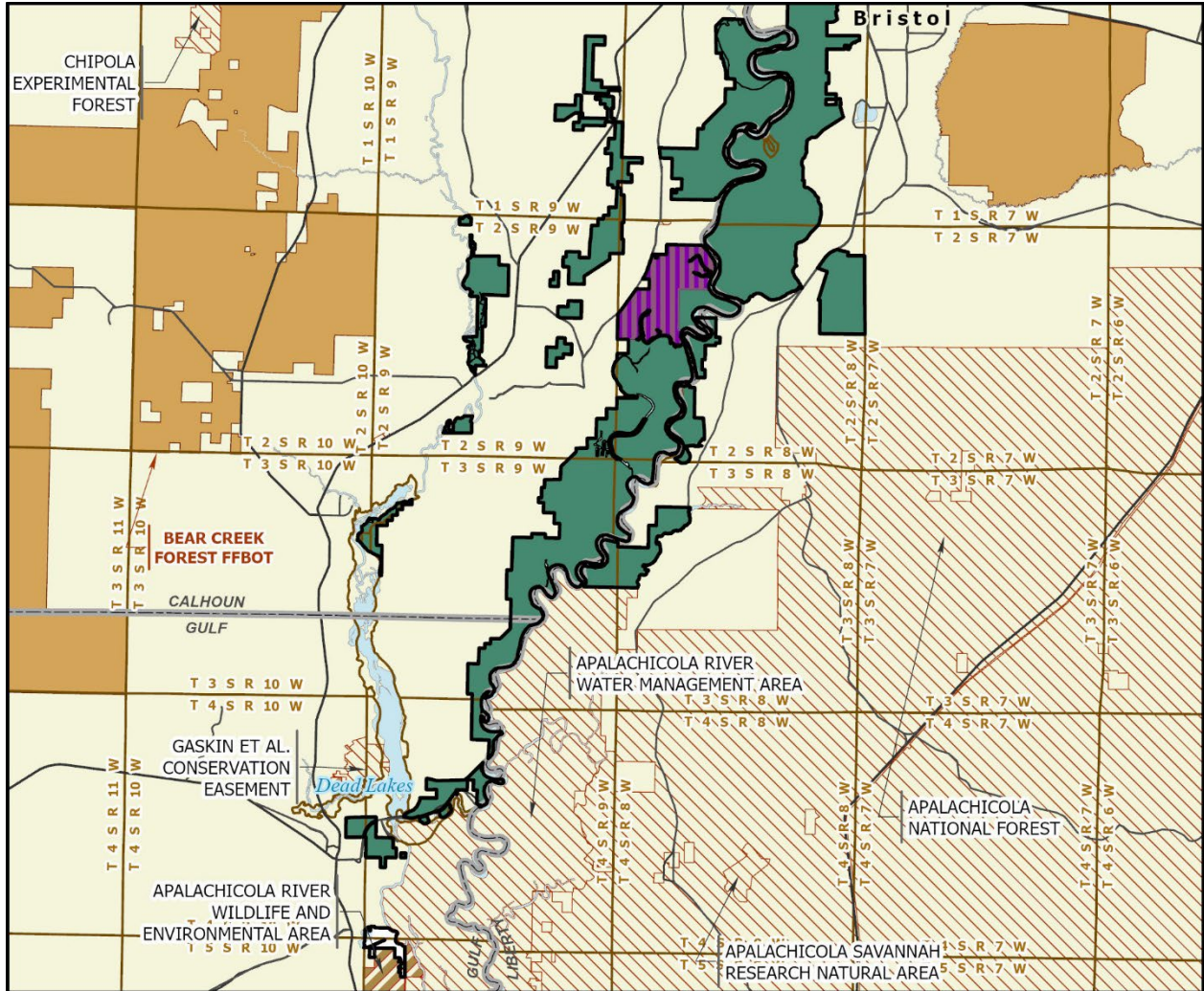
-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
-  TNC Owned Lands Within Project
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects



JANUARY 2020

Map 2: FNAI, January 2020

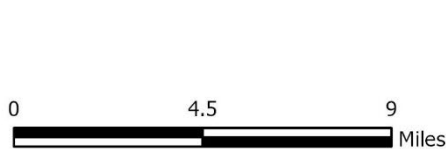




APALACHICOLA RIVER: MAP 2

CALHOUN, GULF, AND LIBERTY COUNTIES

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects



JANUARY 2021

Map 3: FNAI, January 2021