

Camp Blanding to Raiford Greenway

Critical Natural Lands

Baker, Bradford, Clay, Union

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2010
<i>Project Acres</i>	33,978
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,695
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	32,282
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$51,546,234

Purpose for State Acquisition

Public acquisition of the Camp Blanding-Raiford Greenway project will provide a landscape connector between Camp Blanding on the southeast, the Northeast Florida Timberlands (when acquired) on the east, and the Raiford to Osceola Greenway (when acquired) to the west. A key focus of the project is to permanently link disconnected habitat for species like the Florida black bear and other important focal wildlife species. The project will protect extensive wetland systems and multiple blackwater streams, including the New River and its headwaters (which originate within the project area). The project will also provide opportunities for resource-based recreation.

General Description

The original Camp Blanding-Osceola Greenway was divided to create two projects that maintain ecological connectivity among existing and proposed conservation lands; the Camp Blanding-Raiford Greenway and Raiford-Osceola Greenway. The original project is located in Baker, Bradford, and Clay counties, southwest of Jacksonville, 10 miles east of Lake City, and 16 miles north of Gainesville. Together these projects form a continuous conservation corridor from 2 to 6.5 miles wide, and connects and adjoins the Camp Blanding Military Reservation, Osceola National Forest, and Northeast Florida Timberlands Florida Forever project. The most common community type within the project boundary is mesic flatwoods, of which most acres are in silviculture operations, and a smaller number of acres are in a relatively natural condition. Sandhill communities total only about 230 acres but may have substantial ecological value. The forested wetlands are the least disturbed natural areas. There are several large basin swamps, including (with approximate acreages) Turkey Creek Swamp (7,000 acres) and New River Swamp (4,000 acres). Dome swamps, wet flatwoods, and baygalls represent the remaining 15-20,000 acres. Floodplain swamps extend over approximately 4,000 acres of the project area. Several flatwoods lakes are also present and an important blackwater stream, the New River. Physiographic features of interest include the Trail Ridge, the eastern boundary of the Cody Scarp. The Camp Blanding-Raiford Greenway project consists of approximately 33,973 acres of land from the northwest corner of Camp Blanding Military Reservation to the southwest tip of Nassau County.

Additionally, the Camp Blanding- Raiford Greenway Florida Forever project will be acquired in fee simple with multiple landowners.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>giant orchid</i>	G2G3/S2
Southeastern weasel	G5T4/S3?

Public Use

This project could have significant natural resource-based public recreational and educational potential if portions of the project were available to the public. All trails throughout the project have potential for being multiple-use trails with hiking, horseback riding, and bicycling. Other recreational opportunities would include camping, picnicking, and hunting.

Acquisition Planning

2003

On December 5, 2003, the ARC added the Camp Blanding–Osceola Greenway project to Group A of the Florida Forever 2004 Priority list. This fee-simple and less-than-fee project, sponsored by OGT and Conservation Florida, consisted of approximately 153,000 acres, multiple ownerships, and a 2002 taxable value of \$28,508,089. The essential parcels were identified as the Plum Creek and Wachovia ownerships.

2006

On October 13, 2006, the ARC approved a redesign to the essential parcels within the project. The number and acreage of essential parcels was revised by removing 106 parcels (64,250 acres) and adding 52 parcels (10,180 acres) which resulted in a declassification of 54,070 acres currently designated essential. The new essential parcel configuration retained a narrower greenway connection between Camp Blanding, Raiford WMA, and the Osceola National Forest.

2010

On June 11, 2010, the ARC approved a redesign of the Camp Blanding–Osceola Greenway Florida Forever project that divided and reduced the expansive project into Camp Blanding–Raiford Greenway (33,973 acres) and Raiford - Osceola Greenway (67,673 acres). After the most recent boundary change in 2010, the Camp Blanding to Raiford Greenway project had a historic, estimated tax assessed value of \$92,890,463.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Critical Natural Lands category.

Coordination

Conservation Florida and OGT are acquisition partners on this project.



Management Policy Statement

Areas of the project purchased in fee-simple will be managed to further the long-term protection of the site's plant and wildlife resources, promote sound stewardship of land, timber and water resources, and provide the public with access and quality recreational opportunities where possible.

Manager(s)

FFS and FWC

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The project would contribute to a landscape linkage of substantial ecological value, a critical component of a conservation corridor extending from central Florida to southeast Georgia. Sizable populations of white-tailed deer and other game species occur within the project and portions of the project are within a designated Strategic Habitat Conservation Area for black bear, Florida mouse, and striped newt. The project provides additional habitat for many focal species, which are indicators of natural communities, and suitable habitat conditions for other wildlife species. Most of the acreage consists of slash and loblolly pine plantations. Through thinning, introduction of prescribed fire and sustainable forestry management practices, the project will be quickly transformed from management for silvicultural products to an area managed for its ecological and recreational benefits. The project's size and diversity make it suitable for use and management as a state forest and WMA, contingent upon acquiring fee simple title to the property.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The Camp Blanding-Raiford Greenway consists of medium-need tracts that will require up-front resource management, including frequent use of prescribed fire where appropriate. Approximately 69 percent of the project area has disturbed ground cover due to past silviculture. Consequently, additional effort will be required to restore it to a desired future condition. FWC and FFS propose to work cooperatively to assess site management needs and develop the conceptual management plan (CMP) for the site. Examples of situations that may require cooperative effort include restoring mesic and wet flatwoods previously managed for timber production, removing or thinning off-site timber species to promote regeneration of native ground covers and appropriate tree species, and reforesting recently harvested areas. As part of the unified management approach, the managing agencies will conduct a historic vegetation analysis to assist in determining appropriate desired future conditions and identify appropriate restoration methods and tools. This effort will help conserve habitats and populations of imperiled or rare species.

Other unified management priorities will include protecting and restoring sensitive wetlands, and the identification, control, and follow-up monitoring of exotic species. Restoration methods will also include thinning dense pine stands to decrease canopy cover and facilitate restoring native groundcovers. Protecting and restoring sensitive wetlands on the project would be a priority. It is also possible that



recreational trails on the parcels could function as firelines, provide access for prescribed burning equipment, and provide an opportunity for wildlife viewing. Exotic plant species (tung oil tree, air potato, mimosa and others), have been observed in the project area. Air potato and mimosa are listed as Category I (most adversely affecting Florida's ecology) by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council; the tung oil tree is listed as Category II (increased abundance in Florida). Although observed infestations appear to pose no imminent threat to the ecological integrity of the project, there would be surveillance for, and removal of, such infestations of exotic invasive species.

Due to the presence of imperiled or rare species expected to occur within the proposed project, it is anticipated that resource inventories would be an initial priority under the unified management approach. Environmentally sensitive areas such as erosion-prone sites, listed species habitats, outstanding natural areas, and wetlands, are to be identified during the initial resource inventory to implement appropriate protective measures for each specific area. Such inventories are considered vital to unified management planning efforts directed at facility and infrastructure development, and design and implementation of recreational use programs.

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

During the first year after acquisition, both agencies - operating under the unified management approach - anticipate emphasis on site security, posting boundaries, public access for low-intensity outdoor recreation, fire management, resource inventory, and removing trash. Both managing agencies will meet frequently to coordinate task assignments, and cooperate with, and seek the assistance of other state agencies, local governments, and other appropriate participants as it affects management of the project site. Both agencies will participate in the joint development of a CMP specifying area management goals and objectives. Long-term goals would emphasize ecosystem multiple use management and conserving the site's natural resources including timber, fish and wildlife, and water. These goals would include restoring habitat and hydrology and conserving and protecting listed species of flora and fauna.

Following completion of plant community inventory and historic vegetation analysis, quantified vegetation management objectives would be developed pursuant to an objective-based vegetation management process. Where practical, disturbed sites would be restored to conditions expected to occur in naturally functioning ecosystems, including re-establishment of species expected to occur naturally on specific sites. Management would emphasize enhancement of abundance, and spatial distribution of imperiled or rare species. Essential roads would be stabilized to provide all-weather public access and management operations. Programs providing multiple recreational uses would also be implemented.

Both agencies will work towards the development of a fire management plan that will apply prescribed burning in a manner that maximizes natural resource protection and enhancement. Whenever possible, existing roads, black lines, foam lines, and natural breaks will be used to contain, and control prescribed and natural fires. Where appropriate, practical, and in pursuit of natural resource management



objectives, timber resources will be managed with acceptable silvicultural practices. Thinning timber, introducing prescribed fire and sustainable forestry management practices could provide silvicultural products, ecological benefits and recreational benefits. Archaeological and historic sites would be managed in coordination with DHR. The DHR lists 12 such sites in the project area. Both agencies will work towards development of a road plan identifying roads to be used for vehicular access by the public, and roads for administrative use.

Unnecessary roads, fire lanes, and hydrological disturbances would be abandoned or restored as practical. The road plan would ensure that the public has appropriate access and sensitive resources are protected. Infrastructure development would be the minimum required to serve needs of the public, including provisions for facilities necessary for the security and management of the project area.

Revenue-generating potential

Timber sales would be conducted as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions, under a multiple-use management concept. Management would seek to improve the other revenue-generating potential of areas currently serving forest products production by improving wildlife diversity and resource-based recreation in such areas. Additional revenue would be generated from sales of hunting licenses, fishing licenses, wildlife management area permits, and other special hunting permits. Some revenues might be realized in the future from recreational user fees and ecotourism activities, if such projects could be economically developed. Fifteen percent of all gross revenues will be returned to the county from which those funds were generated. Both agencies have agreed to a unified management framework whereby all CARL management funds, site generated revenues, and management expenditures are to be evenly divided between FFS and FWC.

Cooperators in management activities

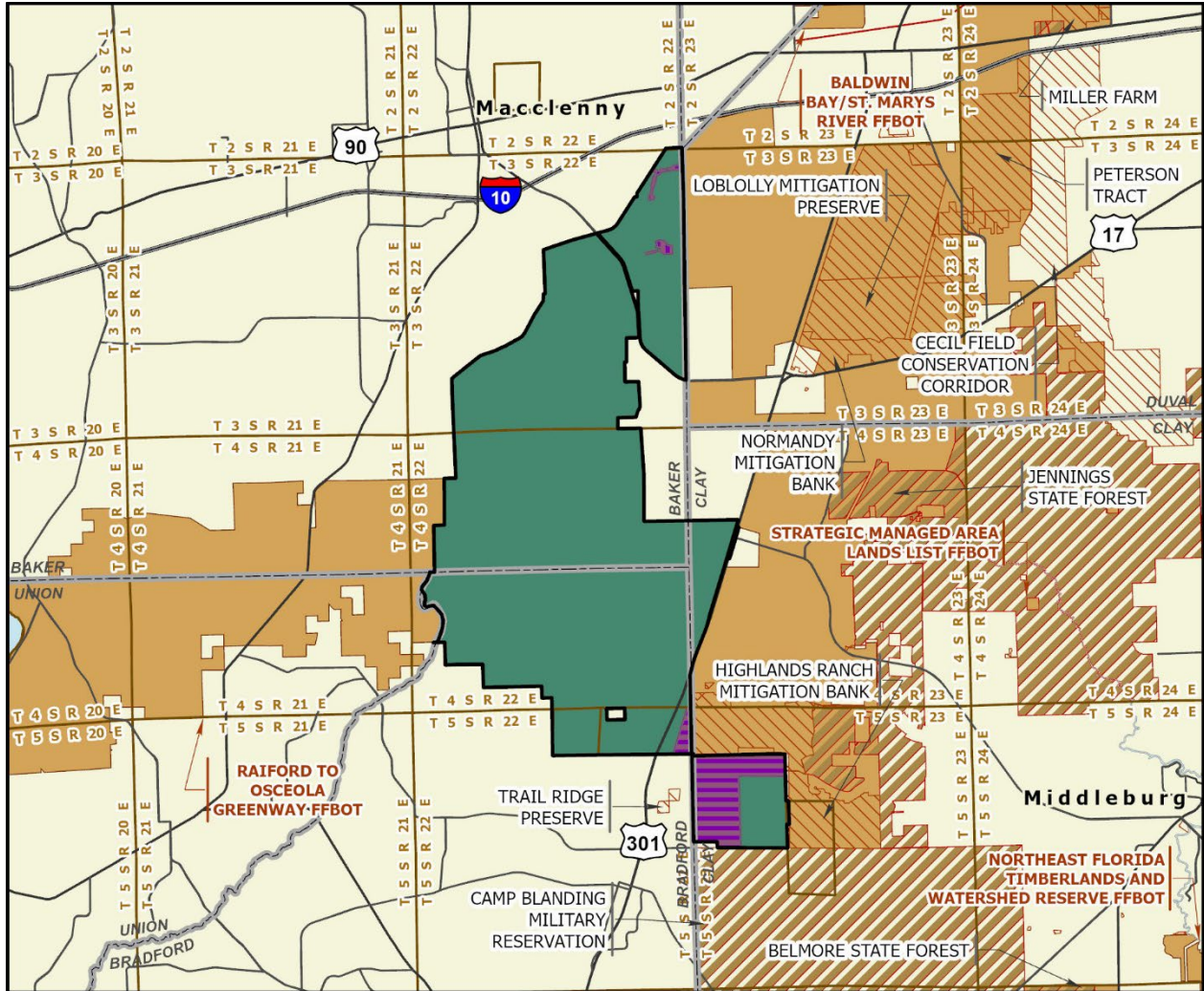
The two agencies have agreed to a unified management framework whereby all LATF management funds, site generated revenues, and management expenditures are to be evenly divided between FFS and FWC. The unified managers (FFS and FWC) should cooperate with other state and local governmental agencies, including the Florida Department of Corrections, SJRWMD, State Armory Board, SRWMD, and USFS in managing the area.

Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS and FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Resource Management	\$1,747,592	\$969,434
Administration	\$77,713	\$10,388
Support	\$153,462	\$13,047
Capital Improvements	\$3,441,310	\$323,273
Visitor Services and Recreation	\$3,363	\$58
Law Enforcement	\$42,880	\$42,880
TOTAL	\$5,436,320	\$1,359,080

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

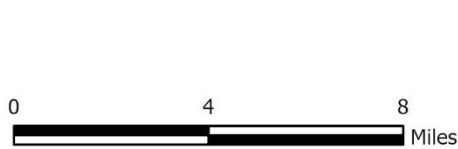




CAMP BLANDING TO RAIFORD GREENWAY

BAKER, BRADFORD, AND CLAY COUNTIES

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



FEBRUARY 2022

Map 1: FNAI, February 2022