

# Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest

Less-Than-Fee

Escambia, Santa Rosa

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2014
<i>Project Acres</i>	99,544
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	2,088
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$6,387,200
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	97,457
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$135,288,879

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest project would preserve working forest lands and provide resource protection for the Escambia River watershed. The project will enhance coordination and completion of adjacent conservation land acquisitions and increase the amount of forest land available for sustainable resource management. The project will support state water quality and quantity by maintaining the quality and natural functions of the land, water, and wetland systems.

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation prepared by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory shows that 95 percent of the site contributes to protecting surface water, 100 percent to aquifer recharge, 21 percent to functional wetlands, and 18 percent to natural floodplain functions. About 87 percent of the site contributes to ecological greenways.

## General Description

The Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest Florida Forever project is located in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. The Lower Escambia River Water Management Area bisects the two main tracts of the proposal. The Perdido River Water Management Area is about six miles south of the proposal in Escambia County. Two of the easternmost tracts of the proposal are adjacent to the western boundary of Blackwater River State Forest. These two tracts are adjacent to the Wolfe Creek Forest Florida Forever Project which, in conjunction with the Clear Creek/Whiting Field Florida Forever Project, would form a continuous corridor between Blackwater River State Forest and Naval Air Station Whiting Field. State Road 89 passes through the proposal area.

The property has been managed for commercial timber production and, to a much lesser extent, private hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor recreation. Prescribed fire is used for site preparation for planting, particularly of longleaf pine stands. If a conservation easement is established on the property, the application outlines a plan to plant longleaf pine stands for the purposes of ecological restoration and sustainable forestry with a 5-year rotation of prescribed fire. The proposed project is located on the Escambia Terraced Lands and on the western side of the Blackwater Hills, uplands that are underlain by sand, gravel, silt, and clay.

A small, fragmented proportion of the upland areas (totaling less than 450 acres) remains as upland pine in somewhat natural condition. Before it was converted to pine plantations, upland pine was the dominant natural community within the proposed project. Bottomland forest is the most extensive natural community within the proposed project. It occurs as a closed-canopy forest on terraces and levees in floodplains of larger streams and rivers. Loblolly pine had been planted on the upper slopes of the community, creating moderately dense pine stands.

Agricultural land and pastures comprise only a small part of the proposal and include food plots for wildlife. Other ruderal areas include cemeteries, utility rights-of-way, sand pits, clearings, and successional hardwood forests that often develop along the interface between planted pine stands and adjacent agricultural land.

Rare plants such as Florida Flame Azalea and White-top pitcher plant are found in the forest. Rare animals that have been documented on this site include gopher tortoise, the alligator snapping turtle, little blue heron, the swallow-tailed kite and Bachmann's sparrow.

### FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Turk's cap lily</i>	G5/S1
Gulf crayfish	G4/S1
Harlequin darter	G5/S1
<i>Florida flame azalea</i>	G3/S3
<i>Panhandle lily</i>	G3/S3
<i>hairy-peduncled beaksedge</i>	G3/S3
Alligator snapping turtle	G3/S3
Alligator gar	G3G4/S3
Southeastern crowned snake	G5/S2S3
Bluenose shiner	G3G4/S3S4

### Public Use

Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the owner has indicated an interest in making the site available for some limited research or educational efforts.

### Acquisition Planning

The Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest was submitted as a conservation easement by The Conservation Fund (TCF) for the timber investment and the management company Resource Management Services (RMS), LLC. RMS is a timber investment and management organization and conducts silvicultural operations on multiple continents.



**2014**

On August 15, 2014, the ARC voted to allow this proposal to be evaluated, subsequently on December 12, 2014, the ARC voted to add this project to the Florida Forever list in the Less-than-Fee category.

**2021**

DEP acquired 2,115 acres fee simple from Evergreen Timberco FL, LLC to be managed by FFS as an addition to Blackwater River State Forest

**Coordination**

There were no confirmed acquisition partners when this project was added. However, the landowner is in contact with the Federal Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service to match some federal funding with Florida Forever funding. The applicants may explore other less-than-fee acquisition opportunities as well. The landowner is interested in phased acquisition.

**Management Policy Statement**

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest would be managed for conservation purposed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.

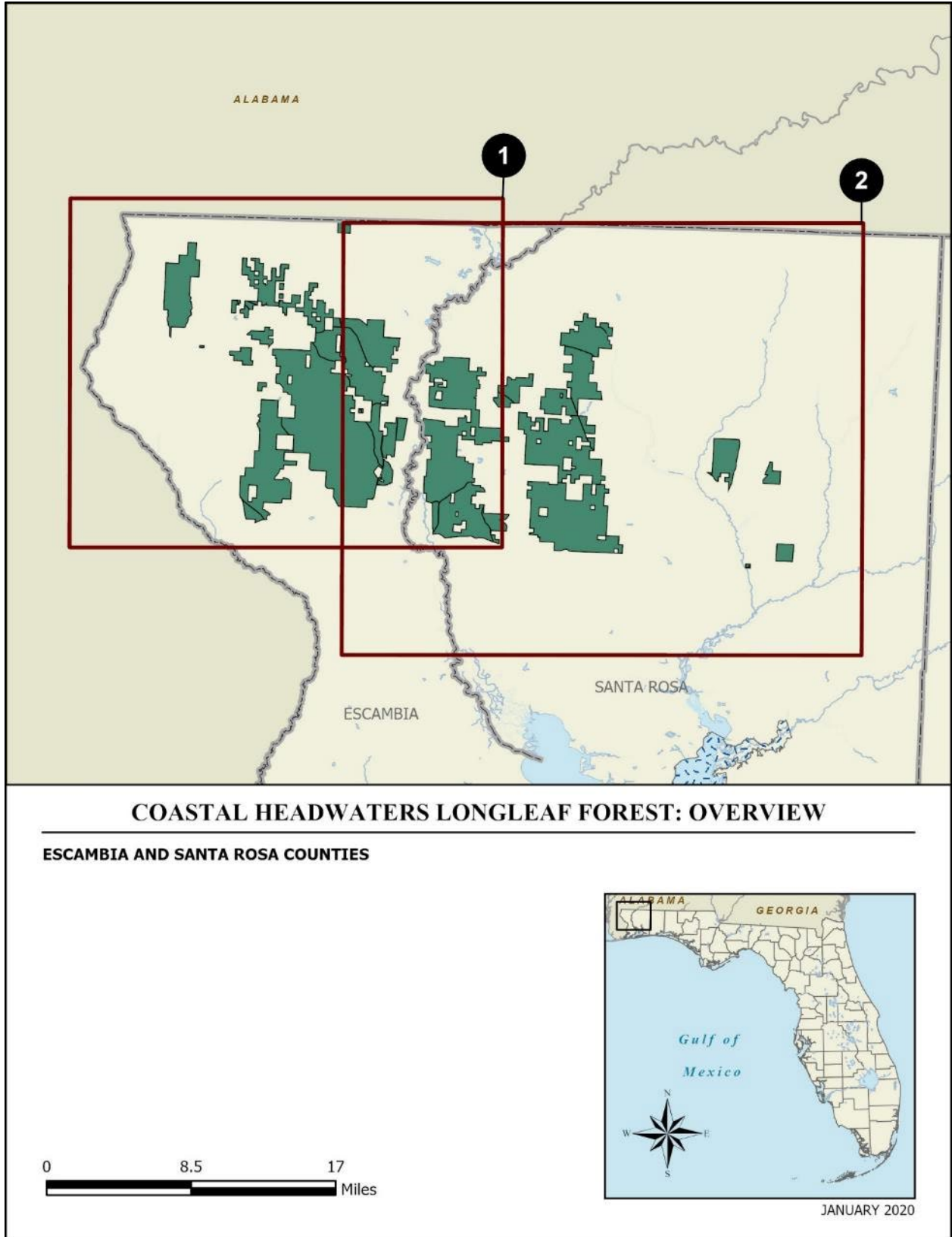
**Manager(s)**

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued compliance with the conditions of the conservation easement would be coordinated by OES.

**Management Prospectus**

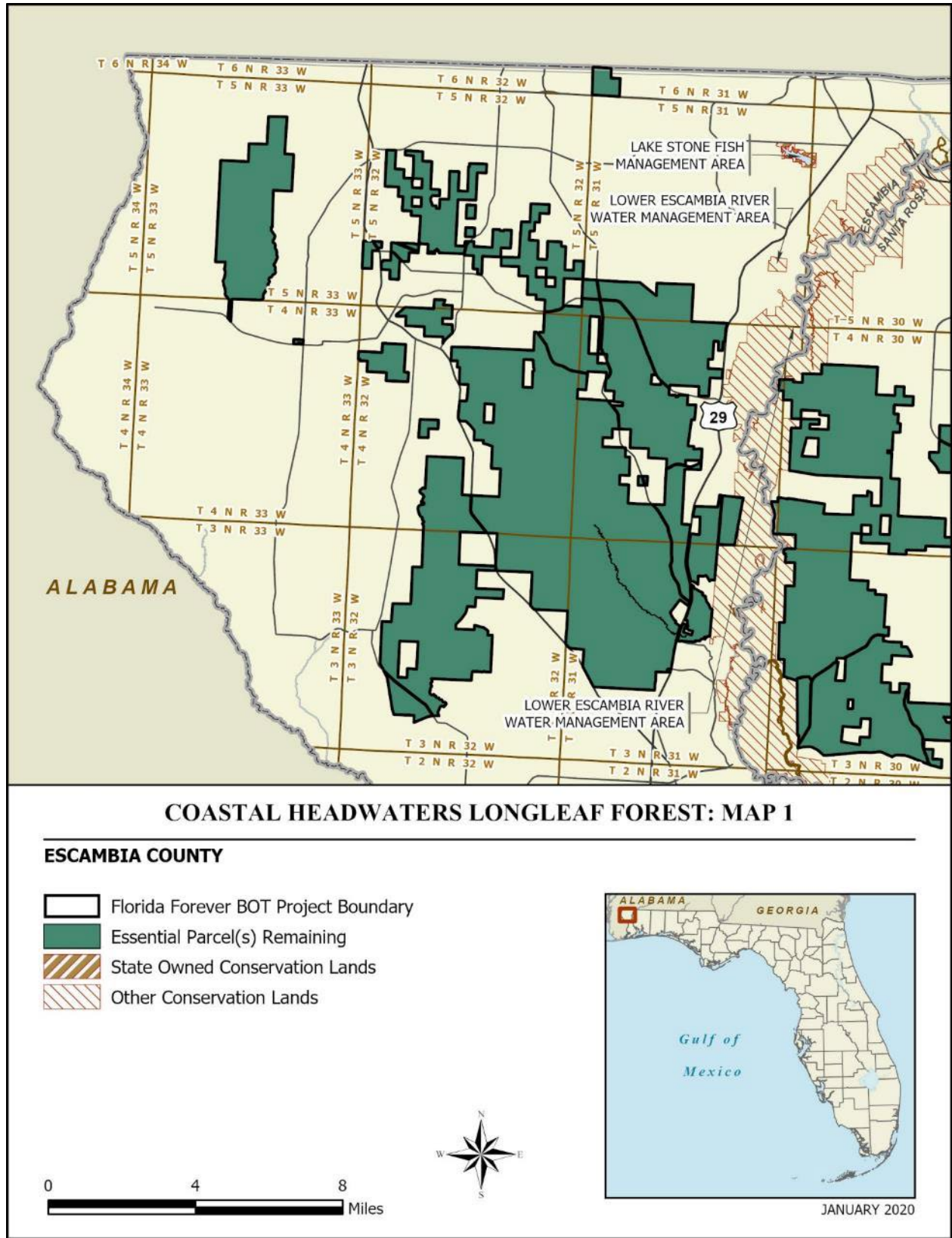
OES will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020

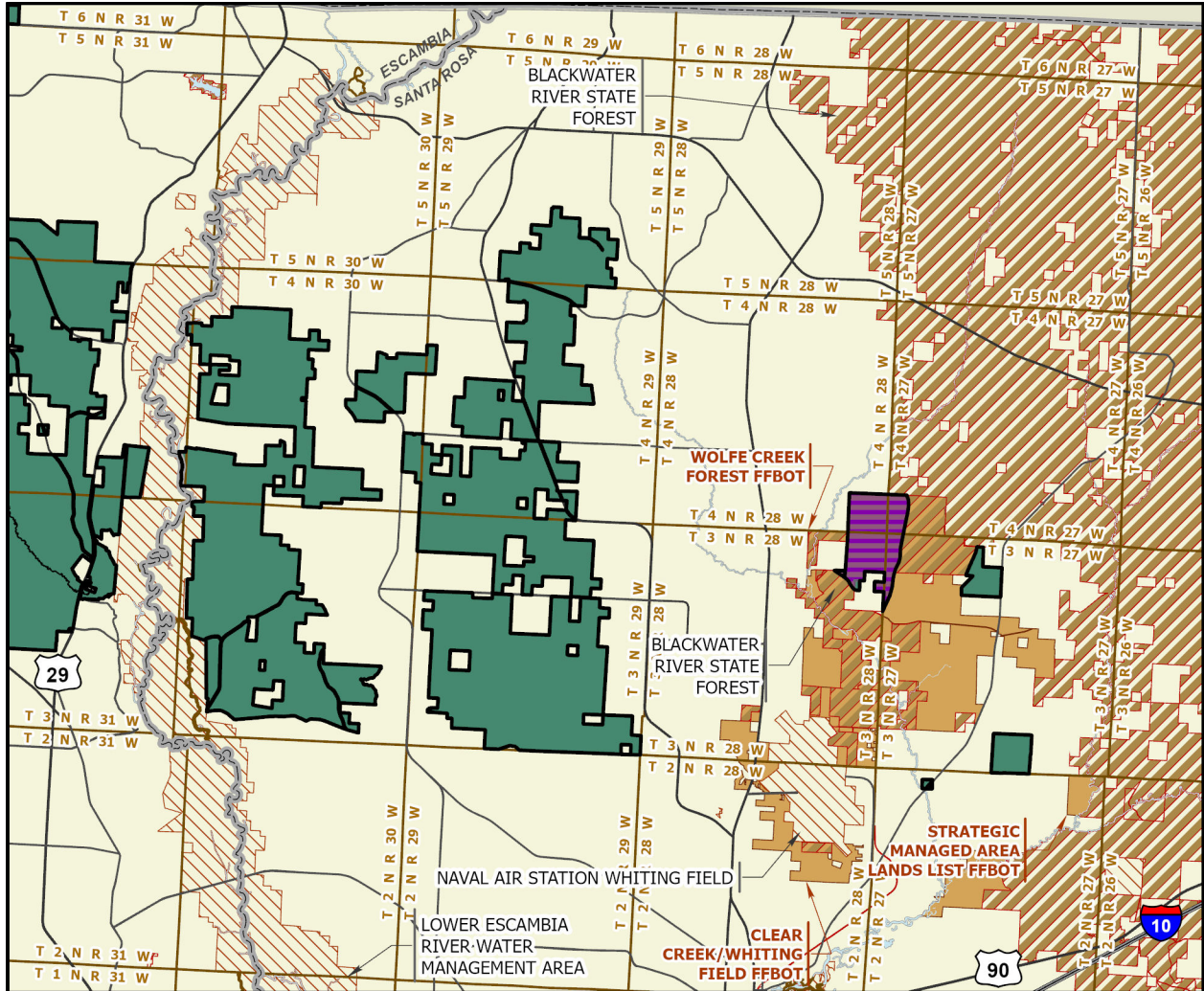




Map 2: FNAI, January 2020







**COASTAL HEADWATERS LONGLEAF FOREST: MAP 2**

**ESCAMBIA AND SANTA ROSA COUNTIES**

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



MAY 2022

Map 3: FNAI, May 2022