

# Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone

Less-Than-Fee

Gadsden, Liberty

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2002
<i>Project Acres</i>	6,923
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	0
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	6,923
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$10,942,054

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone will preserve habitat for one of only two core populations of the uniquely rare Chapman's Rhododendron, a federally listed plant that is endemic to only three Panhandle counties of Florida (Gulf, Gadsden and Liberty counties). The project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition. The western portion of the project would cover about 70 percent of the known Hosford area Chapman's Rhododendron; the eastern portion has greater potential for diverse forms of resource-based recreation. The project is located in an area the OGT has identified as a priority ecological greenway area. This area would augment the value of the Lake Talquin State Forest and support Gadsden County 's resource-based recreational opportunities. FWC identifies this area as potential habitat for numerous rare and imperiled species.

## General Description

The original boundary of the 3,262 acres extended west from State Road 267 in an irregular-shaped block on the west side of Lake Talquin. This project adjoins the Lines Tract of the Lake Talquin State Forest on the northwest side of Lake Talquin. The Wakulla Unit of the Apalachicola National Forest is approximately two miles to the south of this site. Roughly half of this site is historically flatwoods but, over the years, most of this has been converted to pine plantations. Nearly 75 percent of the site is now cultivated as pine plantations. Approximately 15 percent of the site is pine flatwoods. The project has about 1,414 acres of functioning wetlands that would be protected by this acquisition.

On October 24, 2002, 3,648 more acres were added to the project, creating a connection from Lake Talquin to Apalachicola National Forest, and bringing the project total to 6,923 acres.

### FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Chapman's rhododendron</i>	G1/S1
<i>zigzag silkgrass</i>	G3/S3
Eastern diamondback rattlesnake	G3/S3

#### Public Use

Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, upon coordination with the landowner, the project has the potential for a variety of forest-related activities. Currently the property is within the Robert Brent WMA, which is open to hunting, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding and nature-appreciation activities.

#### Acquisition Planning

##### **2002**

The Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone Florida Forever project was added to the 2002 Florida Forever project list at the June meeting of the ARC as a Group B project. The essential parcel is the St. Joe Timberlands and Blairwoods tract which makes the connection to the Lake Talquin State Forest (3,249 acres).

On October 24, 2002, the ARC approved the addition of 3,648 acres to the project boundary. This addition formed the connection from the Lake Talquin State Forest to the Apalachicola National Forest

##### **2011**

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Less-than-Fee category of Florida Forever projects.

#### Coordination

TNC and the FNAI are considered acquisition partners. No alternative funding sources have been identified for the project.

#### Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone 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 Hosford Chapman's rhododendron Protection Zone 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.

### **Qualifications for state designation**

The major communities represented on this site are flatwoods and sandhills. The project's location and diversity make it desirable as an addition to the Lake Talquin State Forest. Its management as a state forest, or its oversight as a conservation easement, will depend upon the level of title acquired by the Board of Trustees. The highest level of protection for the rare species would be accomplished by fee simple acquisition. Parcels acquired in fee simple would be added to the state forest, contingent on obtaining some level of public access to the site.

### **Conditions affecting intensity of management**

Portions of the project have been disturbed and will require restoration. Management on these sites would be structured toward creating optimal conditions for propagation of the rhododendrons. This would preclude more intensive restoration, such as some types of mechanical understory control and site preparation. Certain types of public use, if acquired, may be reduced in the most sensitive areas of the project. Additionally, water-resource development projects, stormwater management projects and any linear facilities are considered incompatible with this ecosystem and with the resource value of this project.

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

If the site is a less-than-fee acquisition, management and public use will be consistent with the terms of each conservation easement. Initial and intermediate management efforts will concentrate on site security, public access, fire management, resource inventory, reforestation of areas where off-site species have been harvested, natural regeneration of native species, and any restoration activity. Steps will be taken to ensure that the public is provided appropriate access while simultaneously affording protection of sensitive resources.

### **Revenue-generating potential**

Timber sales will be conducted as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystems. These sales will primarily take place in upland pine stands and provide a variable source of revenue, dependent on a variety of factors. Due to the existing condition of the timber resource on this property, the revenue potential of this project is expected to be medium.

### **Cooperators in management activities**

FFS will cooperate with and seek the assistance of other state agencies, local government entities and other interested parties as appropriate.

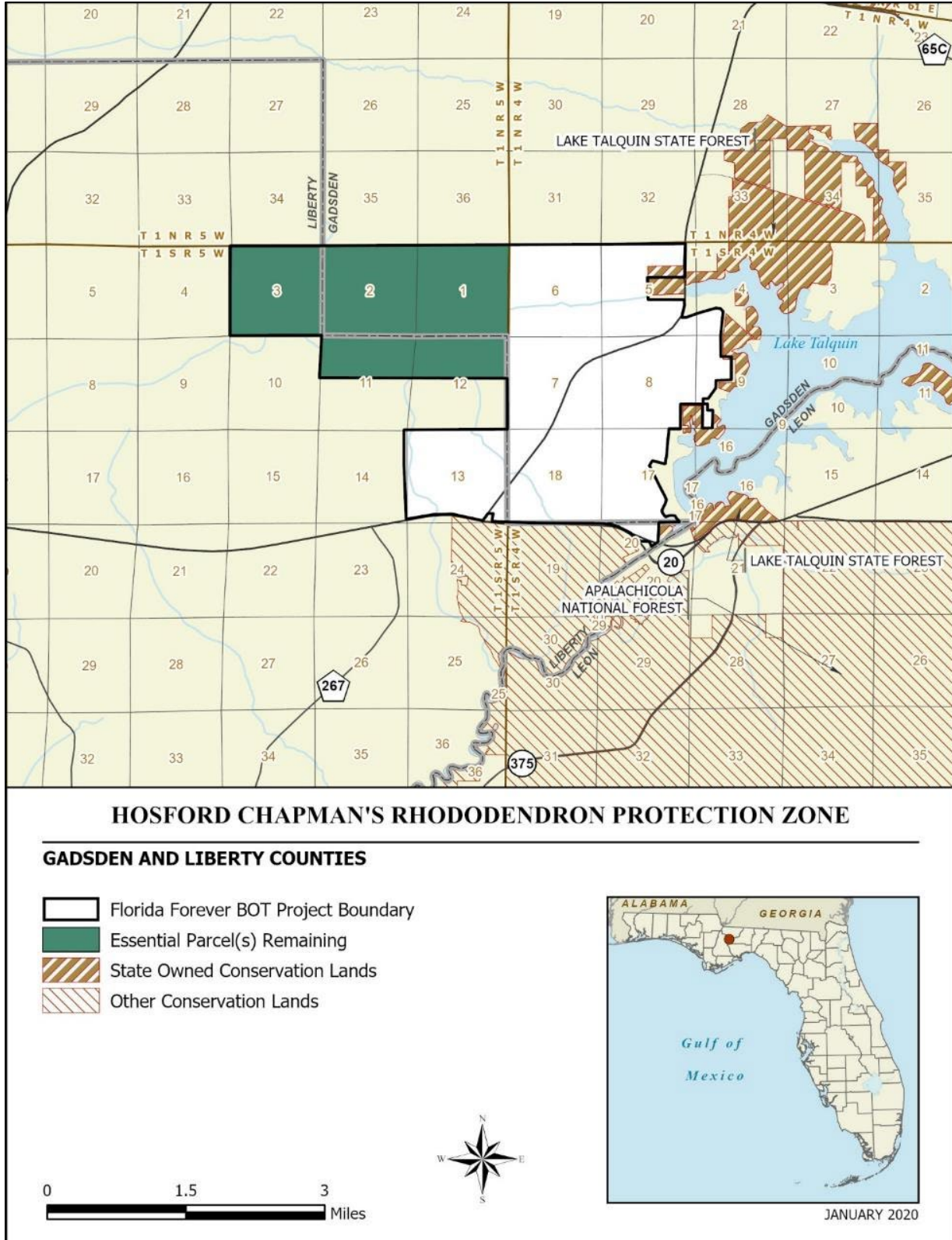


Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Salary (1 FTE)	\$29,000
OCO	\$40,900

*Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted*





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020