

Ichetucknee Trace

Critical Natural Lands

Columbia

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>1997</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>2,786</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>1,069</i>
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	<i>\$33,950,174</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>1,717</i>
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$12,151,533</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

A dry valley known as the Ichetucknee Trace runs north and east of Ichetucknee Springs and marks the route of a major underground conduit supplying the springs with clear water. Though the Ichetucknee Springs State Park protects the springs and much of the Ichetucknee River that flows from them, limerock mining and other land uses near the sinks in the Trace pose a threat to that conduit of groundwater that flows to the springs. Limerock mines and sinks along the trace have exposed the conduit in some areas, leaving these areas vulnerable to pollutants from mining and encroaching development. Acquiring the nine project sites will help protect the trace and the underlying conduit and will improve the quality and quantity of Ichetucknee Springs water. Acquisition will also provide the public with a park and a fishing area.

General Description

The Ichetucknee Trace project includes two active limerock mines and seven other sinkhole sites. More than 80 percent of the 450-acre limerock mine has no natural communities on it, but a small area of upland mixed forest and floodplain forest remains northeast of the mines. The majority of the areas around the five sinkholes are highly disturbed but includes some fair quality forests. No rare plants or animals are known from the project.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
North Florida spider cave crayfish	G2/S2
<i>giant orchid</i>	G2G3/S2
Hobbs's cave amphipod	G2G3/S2S3
Pallid cave crayfish	G2G3/S2S3

Public Use

This project qualifies as a fish management area, recreation park, and geologic sites. With appropriate contouring, the water-filled mine pits could serve as a recreational fishery or fish hatchery and as a county park.

Acquisition Planning

The essential parcels are Anderson Mining (acquired) and Kirby (acquired) ownerships and all parcels within the addition. The Council amended the boundary to add 636 acres in 1999. This project was ranked for the first time on December 5, 1996. In January 2000, the BOT authorized DSL to purchase 60 acres outside the project boundary. If the 60 acres tract is acquired, the ARC and ultimately the BOT will consider whether to retain ownership or designate the tract surplus.

1999

On July 29, 1999, the LAAC added 636 acres: Rose Sink (since acquired); Saylor Sink (acquired); and Clay Hole Creek.

2000

On July 18, 2000, the LAAC added 200 acres to the project.

2002

On August 9, 2002, the Trust for Public Land donated the two-acre parcel around Rose Sink to the State of Florida.

2006

On December 8, 2006, the ARC approved moving the project from Group B to Group A of the Florida Forever (FF) Priority list. On August 15, 2003 the ARC added 7.8 acres to the project boundaries.

On December 8, 2006, the ARC approved moving the project from Group B to Group A of the Florida Forever Priority list. On February 16, 2007, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 120-acre addition (Kirby parcel within the Limerock Mines Site) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by John Hankinson, Jr., consisted of one landowner, B. L. Kirby, and a single parcel with a taxable value of \$26,160. OGT will manage this essential parcel.



2007

On June 15, 2007, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 1,050-acre addition (aka Sinks Addition) to the project boundary. The proposal was sponsored by the Thousand Friends of Florida, consisted of 34 parcels, 18 landowners, and a taxable value of \$1,397,263. The O'Stern-Pittman Tract, Bishop Tract, Ichetucknee Springs East Addition, and acreage added to the existing Limerock Mines Site and Ichetucknee Springs North make up this addition. OGT has agreed to manage the parcels adjacent to its proposed Columbia County Recreation Area as part of that area, and DRP will serve as the project manager for the remaining parcels. The added parcels have been designated as essential.

2010

On December 29, 2010, 12.96 acres in Rose Sink (Kirby Mine Area) valued at \$214,372 were donated by TPL. DRP will manage this.

2011

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

Coordination

Columbia County is considered an acquisition partner for this project. The Trust for Public Land is an intermediary.

Management Policy Statement

The primary objective of management of the Ichetucknee Trace project is to preserve the quality and quantity of water flowing into the first magnitude Ichetucknee Springs by preventing mines from disturbing a major conduit to the springs and by preventing groundwater contamination through major sinkholes. Achieving this objective will help to ensure the public can continue to enjoy recreation in the scenic springs and spring run. It will also provide additional recreational opportunities and geologic education. The project should be managed under the multiple-use concept: management activities should be directed first toward conservation and restoration of resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as fishing. Managers should control access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; restrict the use of fertilizers, herbicides, and gasoline-powered boats to protect water quality; inventory the resources; contour the mine pits to provide shallow littoral zones for colonization by aquatic plants and animals, and recontour spoil piles so they can be revegetated with native trees, shrubs, and grasses; reforest cleared, but unmined, areas with original species; control exotic pest plants that may invade the disturbed parts of the site; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually preserving resources. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources, and site them in already disturbed areas when possible.

Manager(s)

DRP is recommended as lead manager for the site adjacent to the existing state park, and Columbia County (County) as lead manager for the other nine sites. FWC is recommended as co-manager on the limerock mine site.



Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation

The project has the potential for a family fishing park, and the site can be developed for a variety of other compatible recreational activities such as canoeing, hiking, biking, picnicking, environmental education and nature studies. It therefore qualifies as a fish management area.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

Habitat restoration will require intense management activities involving extensive earth moving and some actual excavation of quarry pit perimeters to create desired gradual slopes and provide additional shallow littoral zones. Importantly, this excavation work will be vital from a public safety standpoint as existing quarry sides are perpendicular. Considerable mining refuse is anticipated to be present and will need to be removed. Some actual salvage or demolition may be necessary. Earthmoving to abolish some roads and to spread any available soil will be extensive but will then allow plant succession to proceed. Because there is no valuable habitat here to manage, succession is the appropriate strategy. Earthmoving will allow work on planned vehicle access and parking in areas where eventual erosion to lakes can be precluded. Some fencing to prohibit or direct vehicular and non-vehicular access will be necessary. Plant community inventory and restoration of disturbed mined areas by planting or other techniques will be secondary to major initial physical reconfiguration of the landscape and mine pits.

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

During the first year after acquisition, emphasis will be on site security, posting boundaries, fencing, public access, resource inventory and removal of existing refuse. A conceptual management plan will be developed by DRP, the County, and FWC describing future resource management. Because of the expense of excavating and earth moving and prerequisite planning/bidding, most of this actual work will not be scheduled for year one. Year two will concentrate on accomplishment of initial phases of conceptual plan (earth moving and excavation). This work will proceed into year three, when some infrastructure work on facilities will commence. Long- range plans will stress fish and wildlife habitat creation/management and family fishing opportunities. Programs providing multiple recreational uses will also be implemented and all management activities will stress protection of water quality in the mine pits. Future infrastructure may include a handicapped fishing pier, docks for canoes and small boats, an education/information pavilion and designated hiking/biking trails.

Revenue-generating potential

Some potential for sale of timber exists on this property. Additional revenue-generating potential would be the sale of fishing licenses, special use or entrance fees.

Cooperators in management activities

DRP, County, and FWC will cooperate with various offices of DEP and local government agencies in managing the area.



Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL/SGTF	CARL/SGTF
Salary	\$40,000	\$75,000
OPS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Expense	\$20,000	\$200,000
OCO	\$35,000	\$20,000
FCO	\$0	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$105,000	\$325,000

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





ICHETUCKNEE TRACE

COLUMBIA COUNTY

-  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



JANUARY 2020



Map 1: FNAI, January 2020