

Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor

Less-Than-Fee

Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2016
<i>Project Acres</i>	103,076
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	6,369
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	96,707
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$151,562,069

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor project will enhance the connections of at least 15 conservation lands and conservation easements in this region of Florida and preserve natural areas for wildlife biodiversity. The project will protect surface waters and wetlands in this area, ensuring an adequate water supply for the current and the future needs of the natural systems and for the citizens of the state. Much of this land is silvicultural land, and this corridor would preserve these lands in an agricultural use. As a wildlife corridor among other conservation lands, the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor would help the long-term survival of larger and wide-ranging wildlife such as the Florida black bear.

General Description

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor has 19 different landowners in Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns counties. It is in the Eastern Flatwoods physiographic district described as coastal lowlands, with flatwoods and swamps on silty sand soils. The land stretches from State Road 100 in Flagler and Putnam counties on the southwest end, east to US Highway 1 in St. Johns County and to Interstate Highway 95 on the northeast side. It is generally one contiguous piece with several outparcels. There are several public conservation lands adjacent to this project, including the Matanzas State Forest, the Faver-Dykes State Park, the Pellicer Creek Conservation Area, and at the southern end, the Haw Creek Preserve State Park. The Pringle Creek Forest Florida Forever project and the Northeast Florida Blueway Florida Forever project also about this project on the eastern side.

Historically, this was a mix of mesic and wet pine flatwoods. Currently, the trees on this land are mainly stands of slash pine up to 40 years old, with understory that ranges from heavily wooded with shrubs to no understory in areas where the pines are bedded. Commercial pine plantations account for about half of the acreage. Natural uplands are about five percent of the project, with small patches of wet and mesic flatwoods.

Wetland communities make up most of the natural communities on the property, about 40 percent of the area. Vegetation is generally dominated by bald cypress or swamp tupelo and isolated wetlands are abundant throughout the property. Dome swamps dominated by pond cypress and open depression marshes are common within the pine plantation and flatwoods uplands.

Several natural lakes occur on the property: Speckled Perch Lake, Black Lake, and Tank Lake. They are located in a higher, more xeric portion of the property. Baygall vegetation dominated by loblolly bay and slash pine surrounding these lakes indicates the increased seepage originating from the xeric uplands.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>celestial lily</i>	G2/S2
<i>Florida beargrass</i>	G3/S3
<i>nodding pinweed</i>	G3/S3
<i>Florida mountain-mint</i>	G3/S3
Bachman's sparrow	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3

Public Use

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor is proposed for less-than-fee acquisitions and does not provide for public access. However, the project proposal has suggested recreational uses coordinated and hosted by the landowners once the state acquires the project area. Some parts of the property could be acquired in fee-simple to augment the adjoining and existing public lands. Fee simple acquisitions would be managed by the adjacent state conservation land manager.

Acquisition Planning

This project was sponsored in a proposal by the Conservation Trust of Florida and was presented to the ARC at the October 16, 2015 meeting.

Coordination

No partners in the acquisition were identified for this project.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor 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 the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued

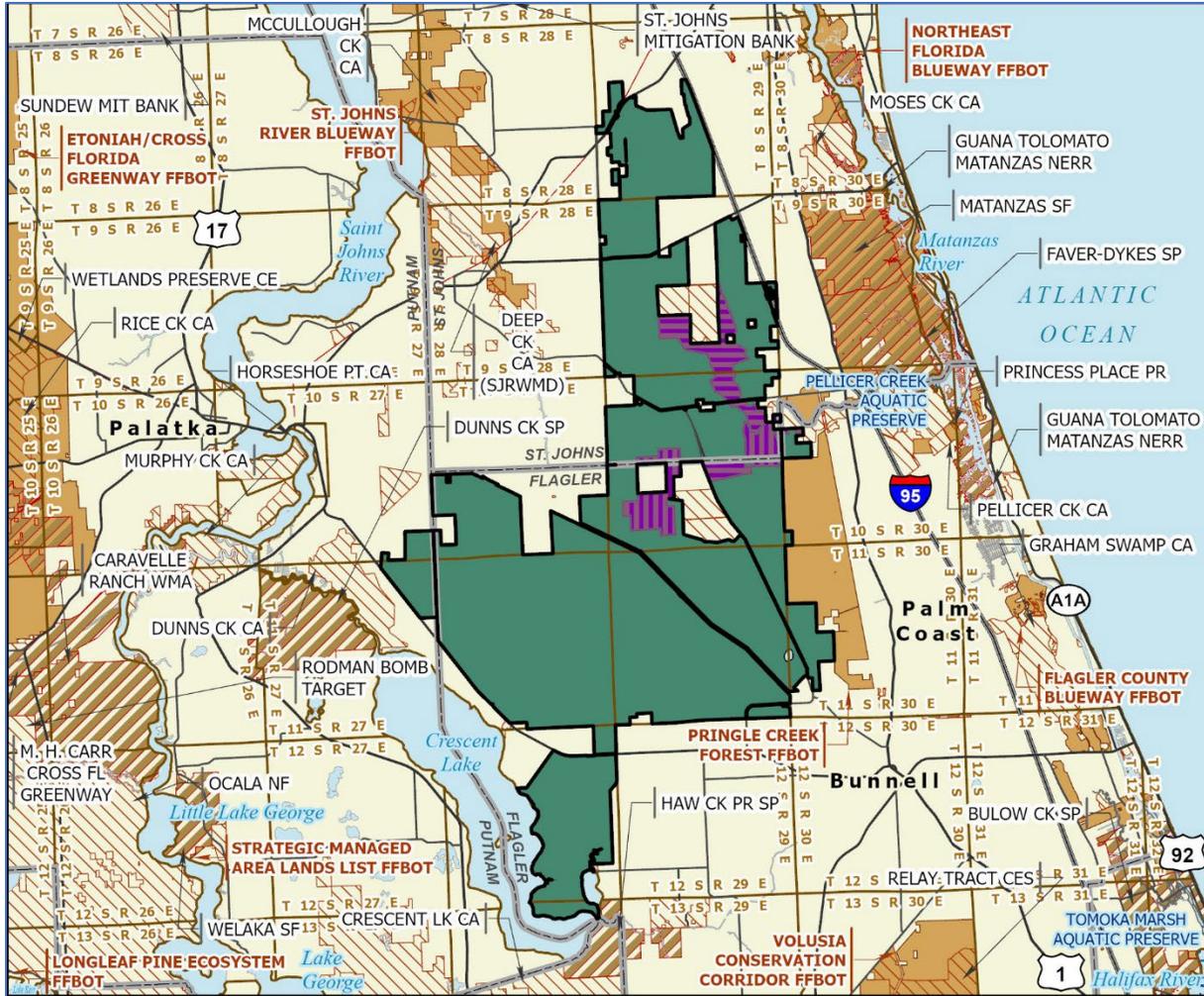


compliance with the conditions of the conservation easement would be coordinated by OES. There is a possibility that some of the parts of this area could be acquired in fee simple.

Management Prospectus

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





MATANZAS TO OCALA CONSERVATION CORRIDOR

FLAGLER, PUTNAM, AND ST. JOHNS 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
-  State Aquatic Preserve



FEBRUARY 2022

Map 1: FNAI, February 2022

