

Ochlockonee River Conservation Area

Less-Than-Fee

Gadsden, Leon

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2005
<i>Project Acres</i>	4,994
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,113
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	3,881
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$21,603,251

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project will protect a portion of the Ochlockonee River watershed, including six miles of river frontage, while maintaining a scenic and undeveloped rural area outside an expanding urban area. The project will preserve habitat for wildlife and game species, protect forested land, and support the owner's ongoing efforts to restore the property to a natural longleaf pine community. This project will also provide an opportunity to manage the site in coordination with the adjacent Tall Timbers conservation lands.

General Description

This project is in western Leon County on the eastern bank of the Ochlockonee River. It is connected to the Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy (TTRSandLC)-contiguous to the east with the Foshalee Plantation conservation easement. South of SR 12, the Hiamonee Plantation conservation easement abuts the proposal's eastern boundary. Lands included within the proposal are important to the water quality of the Ochlockonee River, a state-designated Outstanding Florida Water Body despite degradation from upstream sources. Water quality of both Lake Talquin and Lake Iamonia are also directly tied to the river's condition. The proposal includes a portion of this alluvial river's floodplain. Four tributaries, two of which are partially impounded, run through the project.

Elevations across the proposal range from about 100 feet above mean sea level along the river to 230 feet in the northeastern uplands. Most of the site's uplands likely supported longleaf pine-dominated upland forest, with a rich groundcover including wiregrass and other herbs. Most of this has been degraded for agriculture, including silviculture; however, some tracts have returned to a shortleaf/loblolly pine-dominated community with a relatively diverse groundcover. Slopes on site generally support hardwood forests, although it is possible that seepage slope communities may have been present.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Flyr's brickell-bush</i>	G3/S2
<i>Turk's cap lily</i>	G5/S1
White-breasted nuthatch	G5/S2
Little blue heron	G5/S4
White ibis	G5/S4
Bird Rookery	G5/SNRB

Public Use

The Ochlockonee River Conservation Area is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the boundary modification approved by the ARC on February 09, 2010 is committed to public access by the landowner, Mr. James Dahl, who has designed a public park on the north boundary to support river access for canoes, kayaks, and small boats at Highway 12 and picnic and play areas for families and a primitive camp area near oxbow lake, private island. Hiking and off-road and paved bike trails are proposed. Also, an environmental education program/facility is in the planning stages.

The project is located within the Meridian Trail High Priority Multi-Use Recreational Trail Network Opportunity Corridor. The project is also partially within the Upper Ochlockonee River Low Priority Paddling Recreational Trail Network Opportunity Corridor.

Acquisition Planning

2005

On January 25, 2005, the ARC voted to add the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project to Group A of the Florida Forever 2005 Priority List. This less- than-fee project, sponsored by the Woodlands Company Inc. of Quincy, consisted of approximately 3,105 acres, two owners, and a 2003 taxable value of \$1,067,948.

2006

On October 13, 2006, the ARC approved a less-than-fee 1,025-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the Woodlands Company, consisted of two parcels (one landowner, James Dahl) and a 2005 taxable value of \$200,198. The parcels are in Gadsden and Leon counties and are designated as essential.

2010

On February 19, 2010, the ARC added to the boundary an approximately 31-acre linear conservation easement (comprising portions of two parcels owned by James Dahl, valued at \$93,935) to the boundary.



2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Less-Than-Fee category of projects.

2016

In December 2016, the ARC approved a boundary amendment that deletes the disjunct 63 acres in Gadsden County, west of the Ochlockonee River, and adds 664 acres east of the Ochlockonee River in Leon County, a net gain of 601 acres. The added acreage has a tax-assessed value of \$844,328. The 31-acre linear easement added in February 2010 remains in the boundary, but this 2016 change to the boundary also included a notice from the landowner rescinding their earlier (2010) commitment to public access.

Coordination

Acquisition of this project will be coordinated with the Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy. This organization acquired a 497-acre conservation easement through a donation in 2005. Another 615 acres was donated to Tall Timbers in 2007 as part of the River Ridge Plantation Conservation Easement.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area would be managed for conservation purposed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement. The donated conservation easements will be managed/monitored by the respective conservation groups.

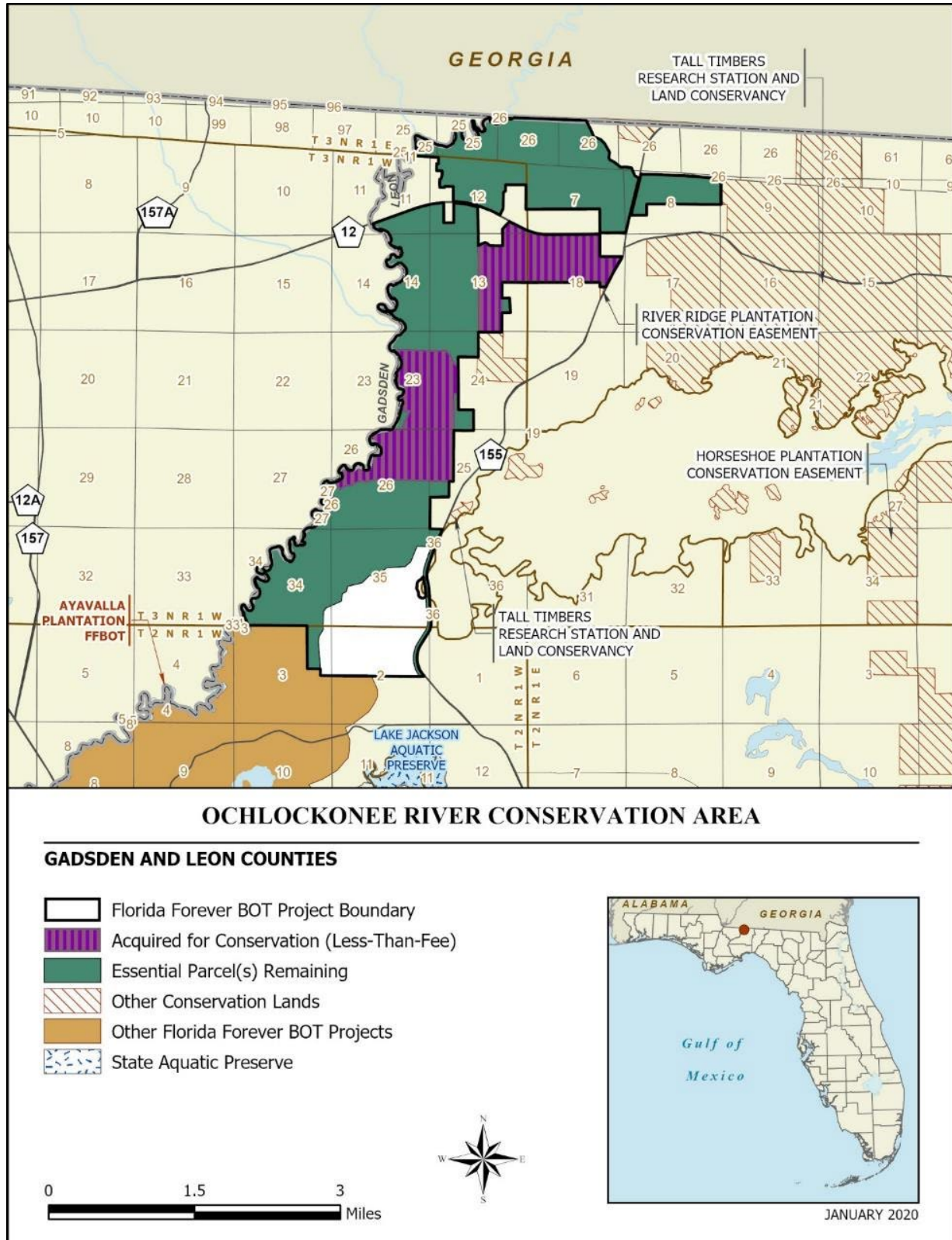
Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area 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. The Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy (TTRSandLC) monitors the conservation easements they acquired through donation.

Management Prospectus

OES will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner. The Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy will monitor the River Ridge Plantation easements purchased by or donated to them.





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020

