

Sand Mountain

Partnerships & Regional Incentives

Bay, Washington

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>1994</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>34,361</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>19,828</i>
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	<i>\$26,637,412</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>14,534</i>
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$28,755,469</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Sand Mountain project will conserve and restore one of the largest remaining tracts of longleaf pine sandhill in the Florida panhandle. Until the early part of this century, the country north of St. Andrews Bay was high longleaf–pine sandhill interrupted by deep depressions holding shallow sand–bottomed lakes. The lakes still pock the area, but pine plantations and residential developments have replaced most of the sandhill. The project will protect the watersheds of the lakes and of Econfina Creek (the source of Panama City’s water). The Sand Mountain project will maintain habitat critical to the survival of several rare species that live only around these lakes such as Gholson’s blazing star, Panhandle meadowbeauty, the Florida black bear, and gopher tortoise. The project will provide a large scenic area where the public can enjoy many recreation activities, from hiking to hunting. This project may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non- motorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites.

General Description

This project protects the largest remaining tract of high quality, natural xeric uplands of Florida’s New Hope Ridge and Fountain Slope physiographic regions. The high rolling pinelands drop down to classic examples of steephead ravines, unique Sandhill Upland Lakes, and a portion of a nearly pristine stream. Much of the sandhills are of excellent quality, having a nearly intact ground cover of wiregrass and dropseed, but those owned by the Rosewood Timber Company have been cleared and planted in sand pine. At least 18 species of rare or endangered plants inhabit the project. The Slope Forests in the steepheads shelter several species, while around the Sandhill Upland Lakes are four globally imperiled plant species found nowhere else in the world. The project also contains a large part of the watershed of Econfina Creek, nearly pristine in terms of water quality. Three archaeological sites are known from the project and there is moderate potential for more. Development threatens the northern part and the lakes in the southern part.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Gholson's blazing star</i>	G1/S1
<i>Crystal Lake nailwort</i>	G3T1/S1
Shaggy ghostsnail	G1/S1
Oval pigtoe	G2/S1S2
Apalachicola cave isopod	G1G3/S1S2
<i>quillwort yellow-eyed grass</i>	G2/S2
<i>smoothbark St. John's wort</i>	G2/S2
<i>karst pond xyris</i>	G2G3/S2
<i>thread-leaf sundew</i>	G4/S1
Dougherty Plain cave crayfish	G2G3/S2

Public Use

This project would be designated as a state forest with such uses as hiking, hunting, fishing, swimming, camping and environmental education.

Acquisition Planning

1995

The larger longleaf pine sandhill tracts (essential) — Deltona, St. Joe and John Hancock Mutual Life Ins. Co.—should be acquired first. NFWFMD has acquired the Rosewood ownership in Phase II and a portion of the Deltona ownership. In 1994, the project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$10,363,475.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the ARC placed this project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category in the Florida Forever list.

Coordination

NFWFMD is an acquisition partner.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Sand Mountain project are: to conserve and protect environmentally unique and irreplaceable lands that contain native, relatively unaltered flora and fauna representing a natural area unique to, or scarce within, a region of this state or larger geographic area; to conserve and protect significant habitat for native species or endangered and threatened species; to conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, in order to enhance or protect significant surface water, coastal, recreational, timber, fish or wildlife resources which local or state regulatory programs cannot adequately protect; and to provide areas, including trails, for natural- resource-based recreation.



Manager(s)

FFS

Management Prospectus**Qualifications for state designation**

The large areas of natural longleaf pine sandhills and restorable pine plantations in the project make it desirable for management as a state forest.

Conditions affecting intensity of management

The pine plantations in the project will require restoration. Other than this, there are no known disturbances that will require extraordinary attention, so management intensity is expected to be typical for a state forest.

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

Once the core area is acquired, FFS will provide public access for low-intensity, non-facilities- related outdoor recreation. Initial activities will include securing the site, providing public and fire management accesses, inventorying resources, and removing trash. FFS will provide access to the public while protecting sensitive resources. The project's natural resources and threatened and endangered plants and animals will be inventoried to provide the basis for a management plan. Long- range plans for this project will generally be directed toward restoring disturbed areas to their original conditions, as far as possible, as well as protecting threatened and endangered species. Much of the pinelands has been cleared and planted in sand pine and requires restoration. An all-season burning program will use, whenever possible, existing roads, black lines, foam lines and natural breaks to contain fires. Timber management will mostly involve improvement thinning and regeneration harvests. Plantations will be thinned and, where appropriate, reforested with species found in natural ecosystems. Stands will not have a targeted rotation age. Infrastructures will primarily be in disturbed areas and will be the minimum required for management and public access. FFS will promote environmental education.

Revenue-generating potential

FFS will sell timber as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions. These sales will provide variable amounts of revenue, but the revenue-generating potential for this project is expected to be low.

Cooperators in management activities

NWFWMD has purchased land along Econfinia Creek within the project boundary. The District will cooperate with FFS in the management of this corridor. FFS will also cooperate with and seek the assistance of other state agencies, local government entities and other interested parties as appropriate.

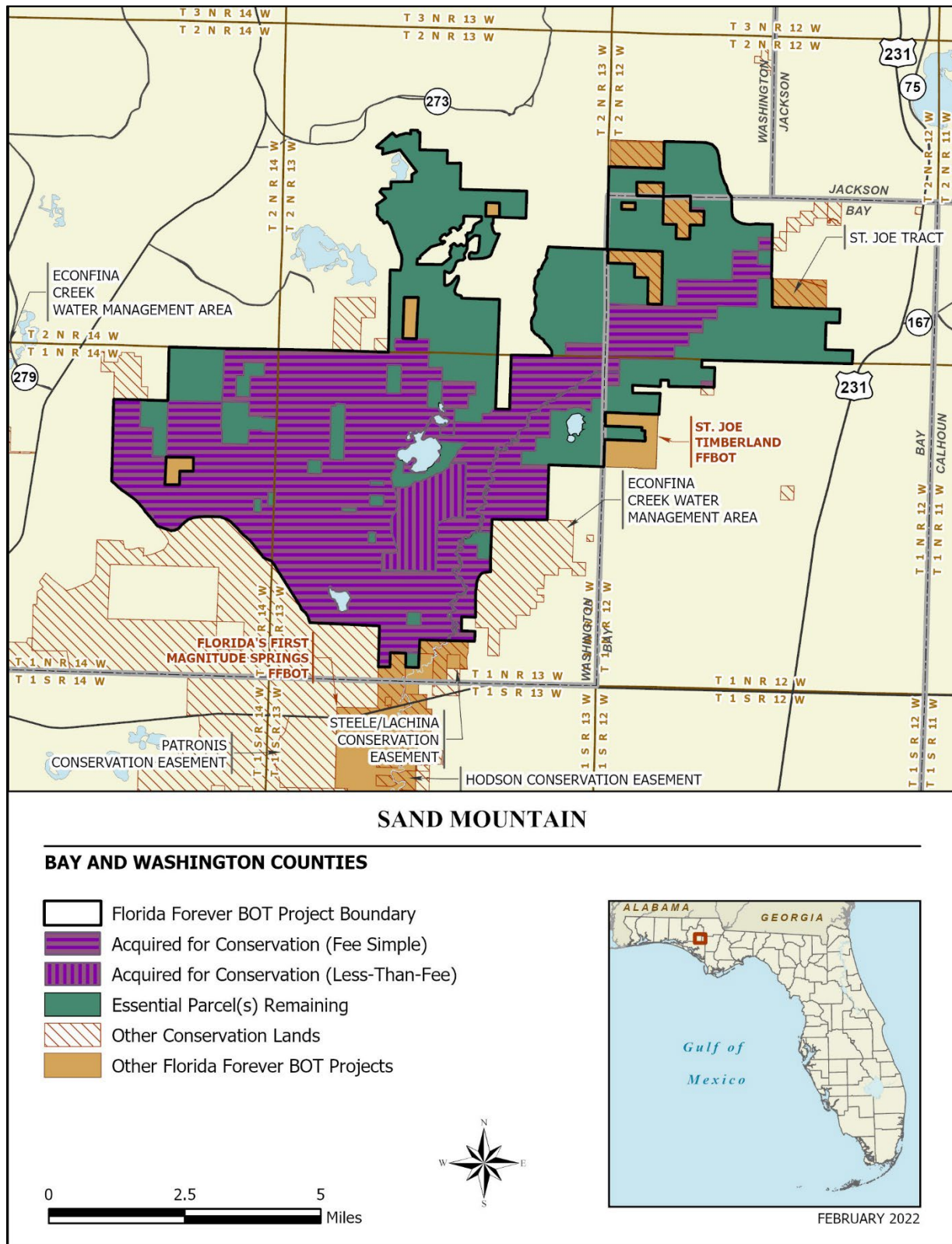


Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	\$148,370	\$148,370
OPS	\$0	\$0
Expense	\$70,000	\$50,000
OCO	\$234,900	\$15,000
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$453,270	\$213,370

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





Map 1: FNAI, February 2022