

West Aucilla River Buffer

Less-Than-Fee

Jefferson

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2007
<i>Project Acres</i>	710
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	0
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	710
<i>2020 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$2,562,557

Purpose for State Acquisition

The West Aucilla River Buffer project is 710 acres in northeastern Jefferson County, located approximately four miles north of US 90, and east of County Road 257. The project will support the protection of the Aucilla River watershed.

This project will increase landscape linkages by preserving 544 acres of Priority 4 Ecological Greenway habitat. The project also protects 37 acres with natural floodplain functions, and a total of 683 acres that provide surface water protection. There is a total of 130 acres of functional wetlands that would be protected in this proposal, with 36 acres being ranked as Priority 1.

General Description

The West Aucilla River Buffer is a 710-acre project in two parcels. The northeast tract (253 acres) adjoins a segment of the Upper Aucilla Conservation Area (UACA) of the SRWMD for about 0.4 miles along the project's eastern boundary. The second tract (468 acres), approximately 0.5 miles southwest of the first, is 0.6 miles due west of another segment of the UACA. It does not include any river frontage.

Approximately 70 percent of the proposal has been heavily altered by past land management practices, and includes pine plantations, wildlife food plots, pastures and other clearings, and an artificial lake.

Approximately 30 percent of the proposal is in relatively intact natural communities on both tracts. These are primarily isolated forested wetlands (dome and basin swamps), Aucilla River floodplain forest, and small fragments of upland hardwood forests on upland slopes.

The northern tract contains a portion of Parker Pond, a 24-acre artificial lake created by a stream impoundment. The lake is bisected by Government Farm road. The western shoreline of the lake grades into a cypress and black gum swamp, with some dead trees scattered into the lake edge, a result of impoundment long ago. At the eastern end of the lake is an overflow ditch that runs in an east-west orientation, through uplands to the Aucilla River floodplain. Wildlife food plots, pastures, and other clearings make up the remainder of the site's disturbed uplands.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

FNAI Elements	Score
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4

Public Use

The West Aucilla River Buffer is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the landowner has committed to allowing handicap-access hunting as the only form of public access.

Acquisition Planning

2007

On June 15, 2007, the ARC added the West Aucilla River Buffer project to the B list of the Florida Forever Priority List. This less-than-fee project was submitted by the landowner, Mr. Carl Joiner. In 2007, the 721-acre project had a tax assessed value of \$322,849.

On December 14, 2007, the ARC voted to move the West Aucilla River Buffer to Group A of the 2008 Florida Forever priority list.

2011

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

Coordination

No partnerships for acquisition have been proposed. The SRWMD is not interested because it has no river frontage.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the West Aucilla River Buffer would be managed for conservation purposes by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.

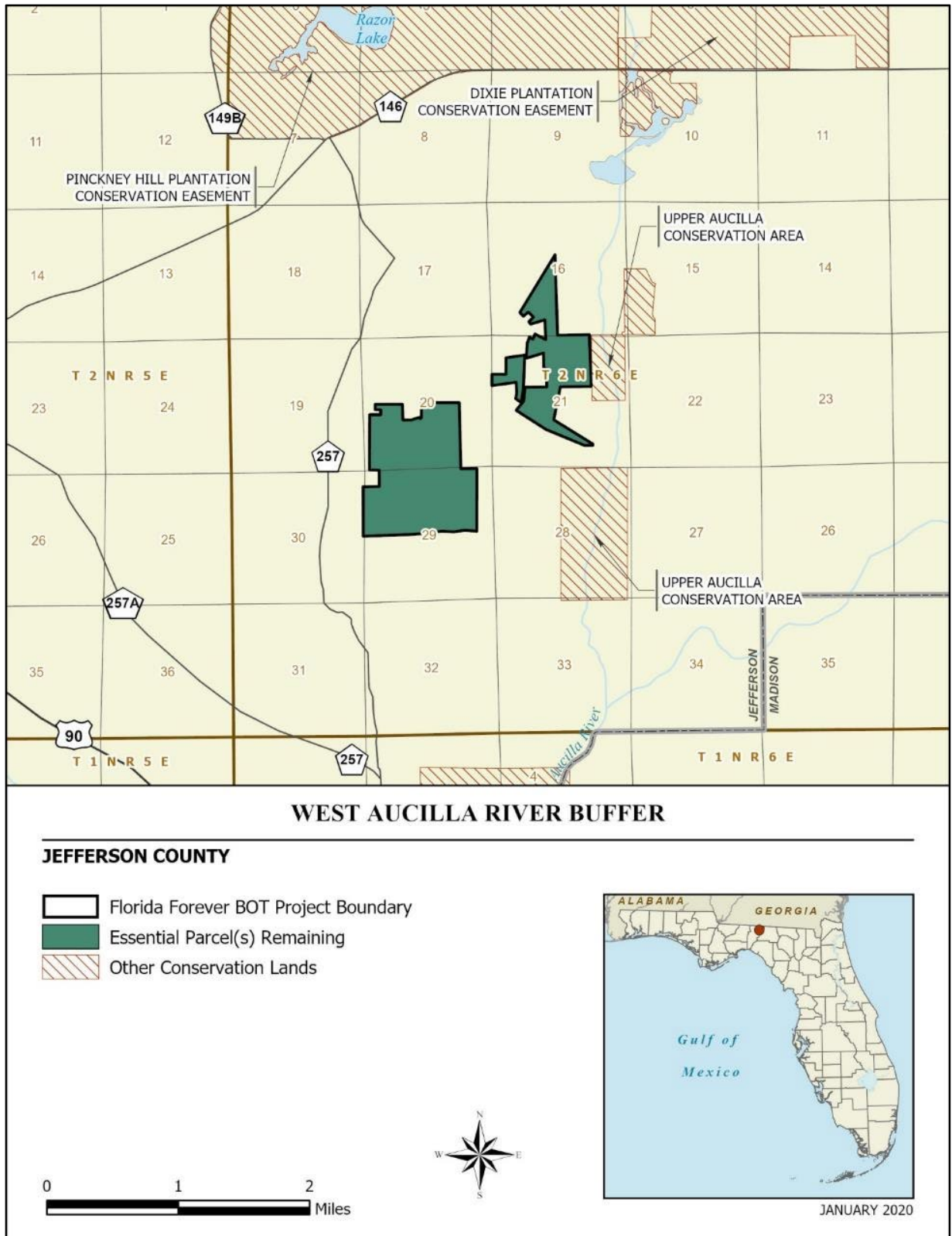
Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the West Aucilla River Buffer 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.





Map 1: FNAI, January 2020