

Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway

Critical Natural Lands

Citrus, Clay, Levy, Marion and Putnam Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1995
<i>Project Acres</i>	96,716
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	46,151
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	50,565
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$217,049,391

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project will protect large expanses of flatwoods, sandhills and scrub in central Putnam County, extending to the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway (MHCCFG) along the Ocklawaha River. The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project will fill gaps in the greenway and guarantee habitat for imperiled species like the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*), Florida scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) and Etoniah rosemary (*Conradina etonia*). The project will support the expansion of outdoor resource-based recreation along the greenway, which is a unique piece of public conservation land that crosses the entire Florida peninsula from the Withlacoochee River to the St. Johns River and provides opportunities for long-distance hiking, fishing, camping and hunting.

General Description

The project consists of a large tract extending north from MHCCFG to Clay County, and four smaller tracts designed to fill in gaps in state ownership along the greenway. The original Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project is important habitat for the Florida black bear in northeast Florida. The site includes many acres of pine plantation and cutover flatwoods, but also high-quality sandhill, a unique white-cedar swamp along Deep Creek, and patches of sand pine scrub near Etoniah Creek that harbor at least a dozen rare species including southern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger niger*), gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*), eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), Florida pine snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus mugitus*), rare crayfish species and seven rare plants, including the only known site of the federally listed Etoniah rosemary. The smaller tracts include high-quality floodplain swamps along the Ocklawaha River, mixed forest land near U.S. 441 south of Ocala, and disturbed pinelands between the old Cross Florida Barge Canal and the Withlacoochee River. Eight archaeological sites are known on the project.

The greatest threat to the project area is intensive logging, but the uplands on the larger tracts are suitable for residential development. The smaller sites would lose their value as connectors if developed for residences.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
<i>Etonia rosemary</i>	G1/S1
Florida scrub-jay	G1G2/S1S2
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Eastern indigo snake	G3/S2?
Florida mouse	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
<i>Boom's quillwort</i>	G1/S1
Gopher tortoise acrolophus moth	G1/S1
Blind pocket gopher cave cricket	G1G2/S1S2
<i>bog spicebush</i>	G3/S1
<i>Florida spiny-pod</i>	G2/S2

The Cross Florida Greenway connectors will form part of a conservation and recreation area, and the majority of the Etoniah tract will become a state forest. The various parts of the project will offer opportunities for hiking, hunting, fishing, and nature appreciation. Acquisition would also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

Acquisition Planning

Etoniah Creek

Phase I tracts include Stokes and Agricola, formerly Deltona, Union Camp, Manning and Interlachen Lake Estates Subdivision. Life-of-the-South (Odom) is also an essential tract. Phase II includes other large ownerships, such as Roberts, as well as other smaller tracts and subdivisions.

Cross Florida Greenway

Phase I includes the westernmost segment (Deep Creek Corridor) consisting of a portion of the Miller family ownerships and approximately 14 other owners.

Cross Florida Greenway Phase II

The priority tract within this portion of the project is the Inglis Island site (acquired by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Office of Greenways and Trails.

1994

On July 20, 1994, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council added 210 acres to the boundaries of the predecessor projects.





1995

On December 7, 1995, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council approved the addition of 2,664 acres to the project boundary. The addition included lakeshore and lake bottom associated with Rodman Reservoir. A second modification was made to allow the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to acquire, on the state's behalf, a large ownership (Odom) not identified in the original Phase I area. Acquisition of the canal easement areas is also a priority.

1996

On March 15, 1996, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council approved adding 141 acres to the project boundaries.

On December 5, 1996, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council transferred the Georgia-Pacific ownership (18,146 acres) to the Less-Than-Fee category.

1998

On October 15, 1998, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council designated as essential an additional 9,870 acres (Georgia-Pacific and seven smaller tracts in a corridor between two already acquired tracts, and portions of the Roberts ownership).

2000

On August 22, 2000, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added 2,110 acres to the project.

2001

On January 25, 2001, ARC added 1,543 acres to the project boundary in the Deep Creek area.

On May 1, 2001, ARC added 1,110 acres to the boundaries of the project.

2003

On February 25, 2003, the project was added to Group A of the Florida Forever priority list.

2007

On April 13, 2007, ARC approved an 85-acre fee-simple addition (known as Foxtrotter Ranch) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails, consisted of one landowner, Richard Simon, and had a taxable value of \$2,267,908. DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails will manage the site. The house (approximately 2.5 acres) is not included in the addition. However, it may be donated to the state subsequent to acquisition.

2008

In June 2008, 1.19 acres (owned by the Harrington's) were purchased by the Florida Forest Service (FFS) for \$15,000 using Florida Forever funds.





In September, October and November 2008, FFS used Florida Forever funds to buy the following acreages: 1.08 acres (Fred Yankee, LLC) for \$13,500; 0.87 acres (Goddard) for \$23,000; (Land Reclamation, Inc.) for \$15,000; (Cann) for \$23,000; 1.21 acres (Martin) for \$14,000; 1.27 acres (Vehoski) for \$14,000; 1 acre (Murray) for \$15,000; 1.25 acres (Uttech) for \$11,500; 2.5 acres (Lachmansingh) for \$25,000; 3.61 acres (Chapman) for \$37,500; 2.53 acres (Thornton) for \$23,000; 1.27 acres (Dubay) for \$14,000; 1.24 acres (Hood) for \$15,500; 1.25 acres (Contreras) for \$14,000; and 1.24 acres (South) for \$14,000.

2009

On January 21, 2009, SJRWMD purchased 208 acres for \$474,363 (Plum Creek).

On June 1, 2009, the Nochaway Mitigation Bank was created (4,075.77 acres).

In October 2009, 1.25 acres were purchased from Margaret Vail for \$14,000.

In November 2009, 1.25 acres were purchased from Kenneth/Diane Schwing for \$15,500.

On December 10, 2009, FFS purchased 1.43 acres for \$13,500 and will manage this tract.

2010

On November 4, 2010, FFS purchased 106 acres (Moore) for \$405,000 using Florida Forever funds. FFS will manage this tract.

2011

On January 3, 2011, FFS purchased 1.29 acres (Williams) for \$18,000 using Florida Forever funds.

On May 2, 2011, FFS purchased 1.25 acres (Cearley) for \$12,000.

On August 3, 2011, FFS purchased 3.69 acres (Interlachen Lakes Estates) for \$27,500.

On August 30, 2011, Florida Communities Trust purchased 1,268 acres to create Nine Mile Swamp Park. Approximately 1,216 acres of the park are within the project boundary.

On December 9, 2011, ARC recommended a 1,509-acre reduction to the project boundary containing residential development, commercial buildings, and other infrastructure and placed this project in the Critical Natural Lands category.

2012

On September 21, 2012, the Board of Trustees acquired 1.25 acres for \$6,000 to be managed as part of the Etoniah Creek State Forest.

On December 27, 2012, SJRWMD acquired the Bear Track Bay tract (625 acres) as Department of Transportation mitigation.





2013

On December 20, 2013, SJRWMD acquired the Highbrighton conservation easement on approximately 2,478 acres, of which approximately 849 acres are within the project boundary.

2015

On April 30, 2015, SJRWMD exchanged the Bear Track Bay tract (625 acres) for two new parcels and retained a conservation easement on the property.

2018

On August 24, 2018, ARC members voted to amend the project by adding two parcels in Putnam County, totaling 48 acres, to the project boundary. The addition was proposed by Patrick E. Troxel and is near the town of Satsuma.

On October 19, 2018, ARC members voted to amend the project by adding the O'Connor Tract, comprised of 10 parcels totaling approximately 821 acres in Putnam County, to the project boundary. This includes approximately 120 acres that are submerged by the Rodman Reservoir.

2020

In January 2020, a 3,562-acre conservation easement was acquired from Wetlands Preserve, LLC in Putnam County for \$3,380,000. DEP's Division of State Lands will serve as the easement monitor for the property.

In February 2020, a 47.96-acre property was acquired fee-simple from the Estate of Eddie Elray Troxel for \$22,500. This will be managed by DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks as part of MHCCFG. Two donations containing 74.77 acres were acquired and will be managed by FFS as part of Etoniah Creek State Forest.

2021

DEP acquired fee simple 1,889.71 acres in Marion County from Florida Power and Light Company that will be managed by DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks as an addition to MHCCFG.

2022

On December 9, 2022, ARC voted to add approximately 1,469 acres (Interlachen Timberlands, 906 acres, and J-Mil, 563 acres) to the project boundary.

DEP acquired a conservation easement in Putnam County totaling 215.91 acres from Wetland Preserve, LLC.

2023

DEP acquired a conservation easement in Putnam County totaling 2,393 acres from Green Ox LLC, Putnam LLC, and Sapwood LLC.





DEP acquired, in fee, 2,231 acres in Putnam County from Susan Miller Calkins, Willy the Losen and Putnam County.

2024

On April 12, 2024, ARC approved the addition of the Suttlemyre Forest project proposal (1,513 acres) in Putnam County to the project boundary.

In May 2024, DEP acquired an 855.35-acre conservation easement in Putnam County from Charles O'Connor Jr. Trust and a 226.87-acre conservation easement in Clay County from Gator Timber & Land, LLC.

In June 2024, ARC approved the addition of four parcels totaling approximately 495.96 acres in Putnam County. ARC also approved the addition of four parcels totaling approximately 397.2 acres in Putnam County.

On July 15, 2024, DEP acquired, in fee, 30.07 acres in Putnam County from Daniel and Judi Tilton.

In September 2024, ARC approved the addition of three parcels totaling approximately 60.28 acres in Putnam County. ARC also approved the addition of one parcel totaling approximately 9.98 acres in Putnam County.

In November 2024, ARC approved the addition of six parcels totaling approximately 71 acres in Marion and Putnam counties, and the addition of two parcels totaling approximately 28.86 acres in Marion and Putnam counties.

In December 2024, ARC approved the addition of one parcel totaling approximately 26.2 acres in Marion County to the project boundary.

Coordination

SJRWMD was the intermediary in the acquisition of the Manning tract and has provided information and expertise on several other tracts. DEP's Office of Greenways and Trails used additions and inholding funds to acquire Inglis Island. DEP's Division of State Lands will assume the lead on acquisition of the remaining tracts.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway 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 a larger geographic area; to conserve and protect significant habitat for native, endangered and threatened species; to conserve, protect, manage or restore important ecosystems, landscapes and forests in order to enhance or protect significant natural resources; and to provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural-resource-based recreation.





Manager (s)

FFS proposes to manage the 57,000-acre Etoniah Creek portion of the project and DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks will manage the remaining lands near the old Cross Florida Barge Canal. FFS will monitor compliance with the terms of any less-than-fee purchase agreement.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

The large size, restorable pine plantations, and diversity of the Etoniah Creek portion of this project make it highly desirable for management as a state forest. MHCCFG includes scenic and historic rivers, lakes, wetlands and uplands. It is also near, or contiguous with, many other state-owned lands. The MHCCFG portion of this project (along with the lands already in the greenway) has the configuration, location and the resources to qualify as a state recreation area.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Because there are no known major disturbances in the Etoniah Creek portion that will require extraordinary attention, management intensity is expected to be typical for a state forest. Lands in the MHCCFG portion are generally moderate-need tracts.

Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure

Once the core area of the Etoniah Creek portion is acquired, FFS will provide access to the public for low-intensity outdoor recreation. Initial activities will include securing the tract, providing public and fire management access, inventorying resources and removing trash. FFS will provide access to the public while protecting sensitive resources. The tract's natural resources and threatened and endangered species will be inventoried to provide the basis for a management plan. Long-range plans for the Etoniah Creek portion will generally be directed toward restoring disturbed areas to their original conditions, as far as possible, as well as protecting threatened and endangered species. 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 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.

Infrastructure will primarily be in disturbed areas and will be the minimum required for management and public access. FFS will promote environmental education. For the MHCCFG portion, activities within the first year after acquisition will primarily consist of site security, resource inventory, removal of trash, and resource-management planning. Long-range activities proposed include a multi-purpose trail and facilities for public access.

Revenue-generating Potential

In the Etoniah Creek portion of the project, FFS will sell timber as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions. These sales will provide a variable source of revenue, but the revenue-generating potential for this project is expected to be moderate. In the MHCCFG portion, no revenues





are expected to be generated within the first three years after acquisition. However, as the portion is developed during its 20-year facility development plan, revenues will be derived from user fees, the sale of products from the lands (limerock berm and timber) and the sale of surplus lands.

Cooperators in Management Activities

FFS will cooperate with and seek the assistance of other state agencies, local government entities and interested parties as appropriate. Currently, properties along MHCCFG are managed in partnership with Marion County, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and private individuals for recreational purposes.

Management Cost Summary

<u>DRP</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	LATF	LATF
Salary	\$36,380	\$36,380
OPS	\$72,660	\$72,660
Expense	\$62,301	\$46,362
OCO	\$3,167	\$0
FCO	\$100,000	\$0
TOTAL	\$274,508	\$155,402

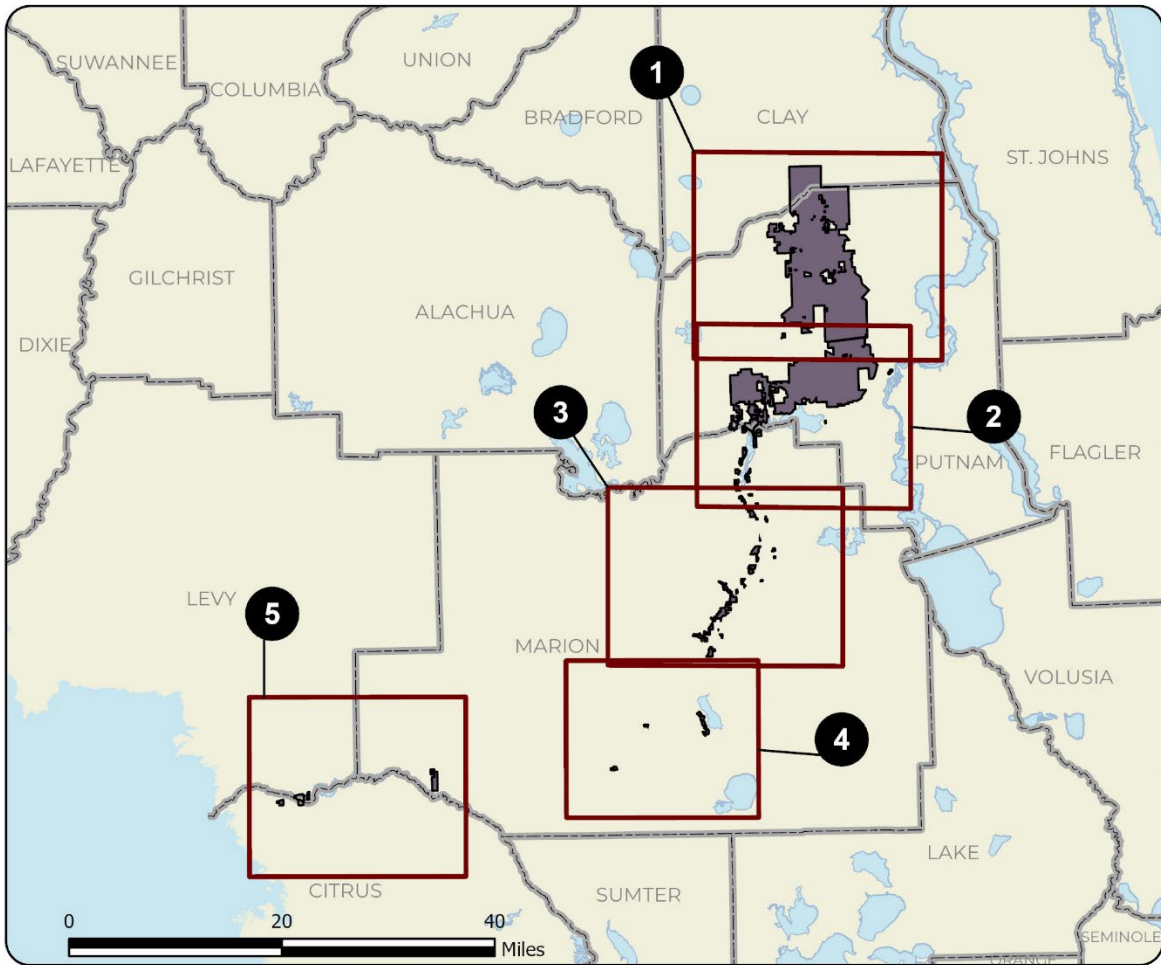
Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

Management Cost Summary

<u>FFS</u>	<u>1996/97</u>	<u>1997/98</u>
Source of Funds	LATF	LATF
Salary	\$45,337	\$56,487
OPS	\$0	\$3,000
Expense	\$11,225	\$22,825
OCO	\$43,320	\$50,500
FCO	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$99,882	\$132,812

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted

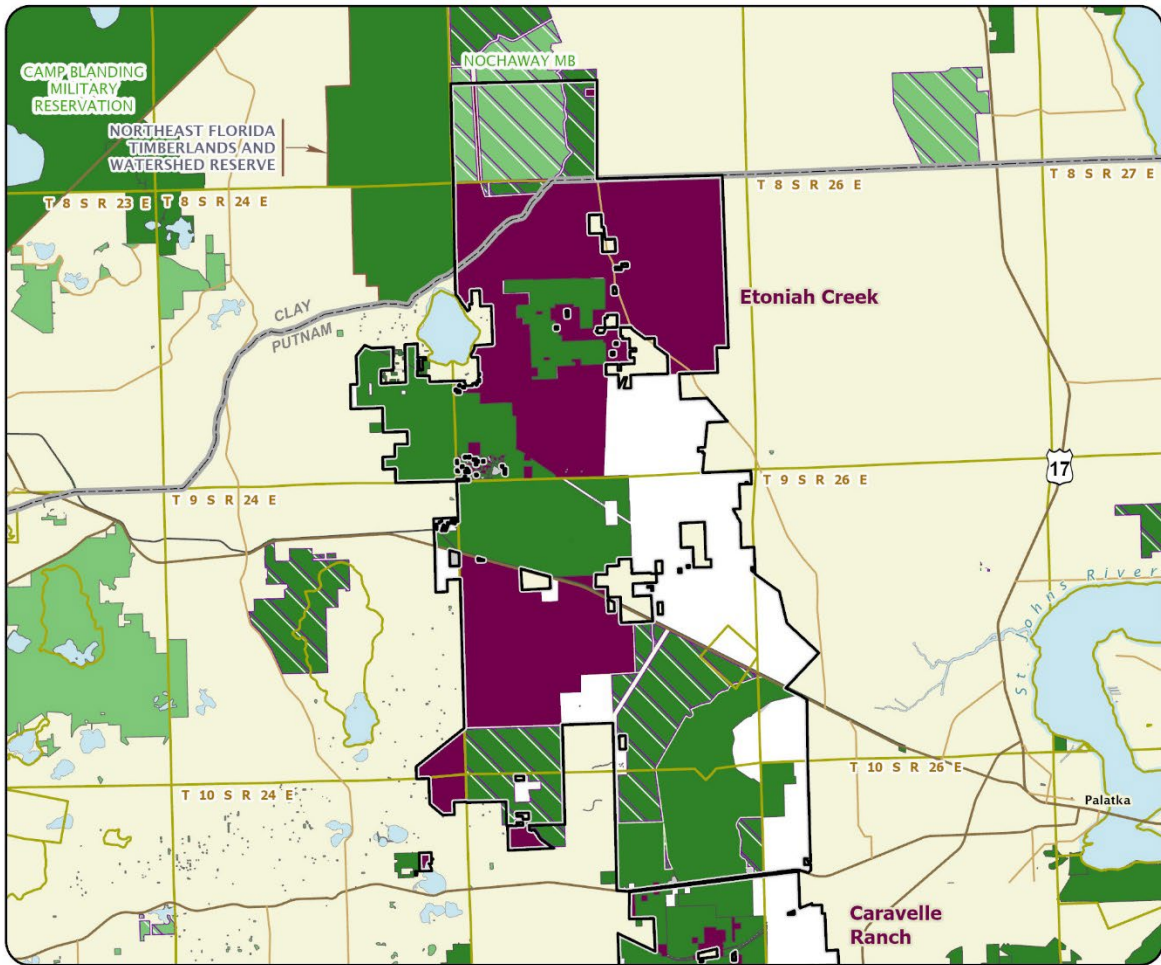




ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: OVERVIEW

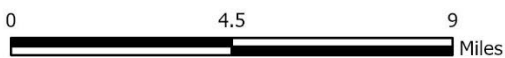
CITRUS, CLAY, LEVY, MARION, AND PUTNAM COUNTIES

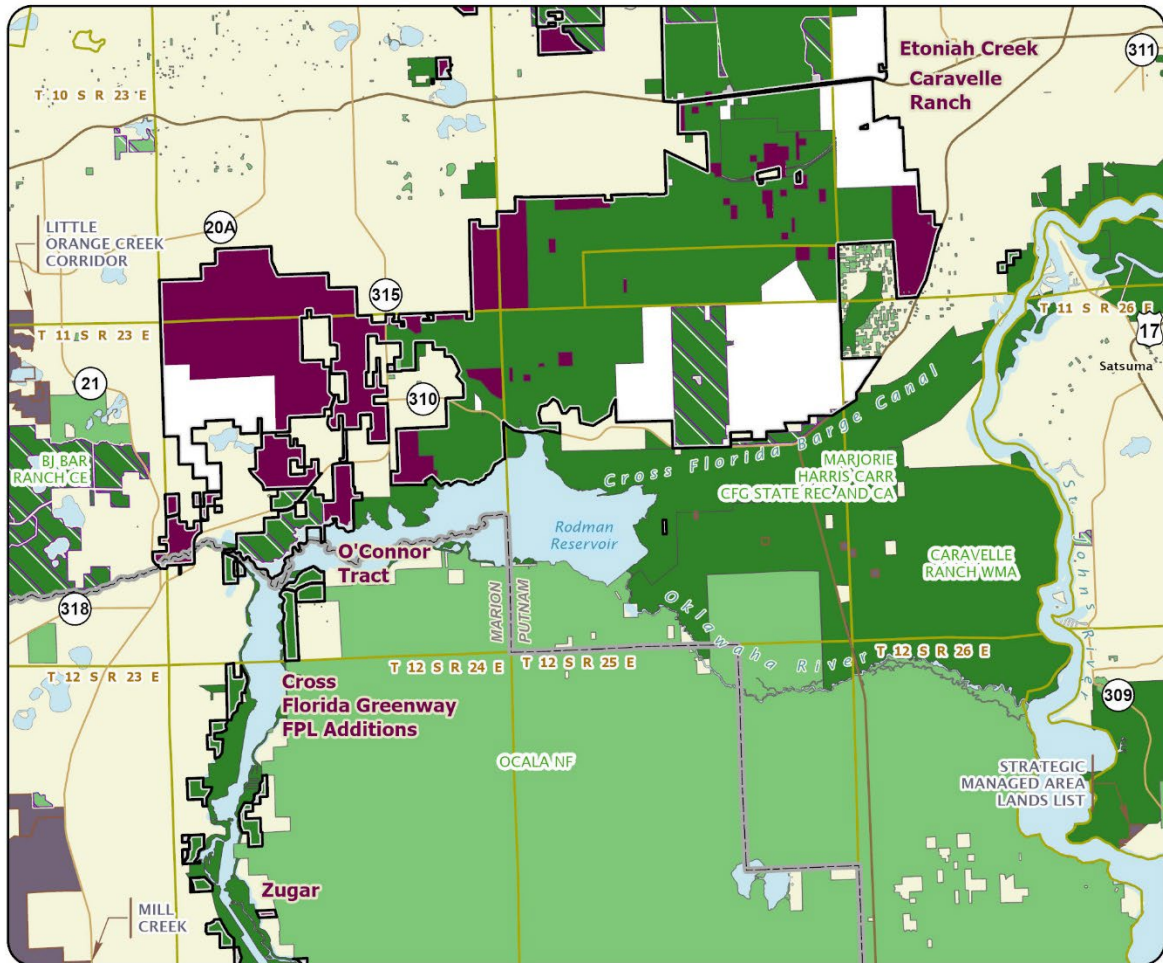




ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: MAP 1

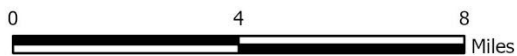
CLAY AND PUTNAM COUNTIES

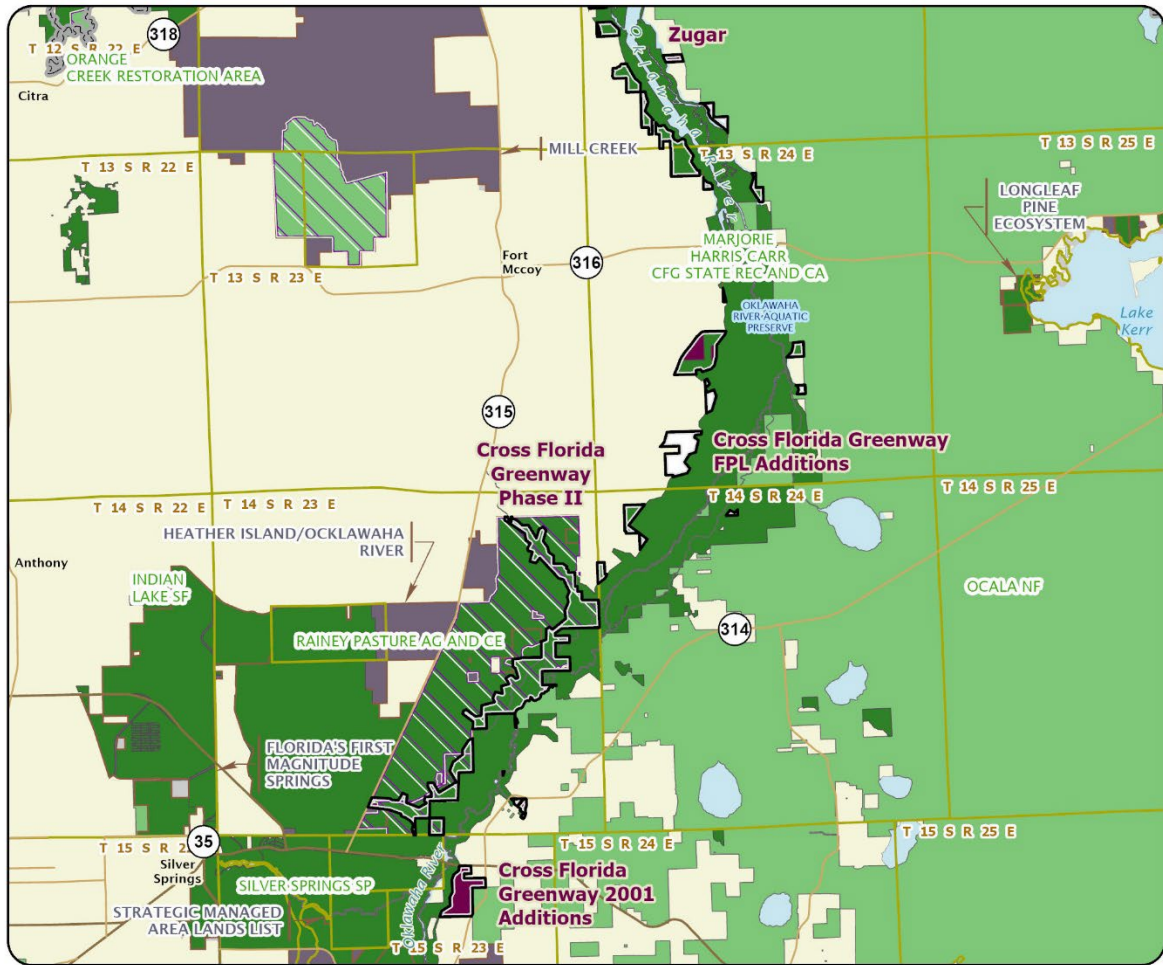




ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: MAP 2

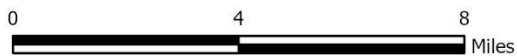
MARION AND PUTNAM COUNTIES

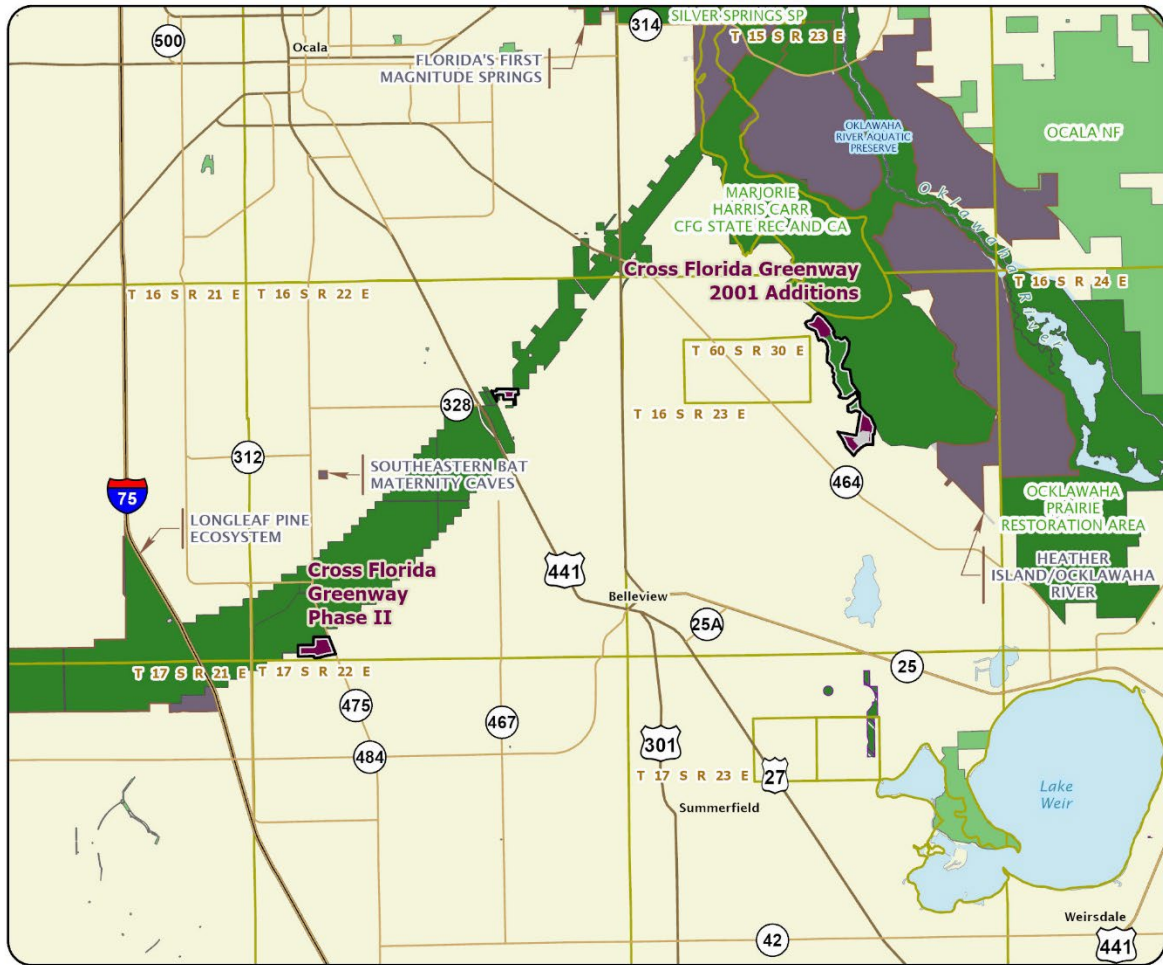




ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: MAP 3

MARION COUNTY

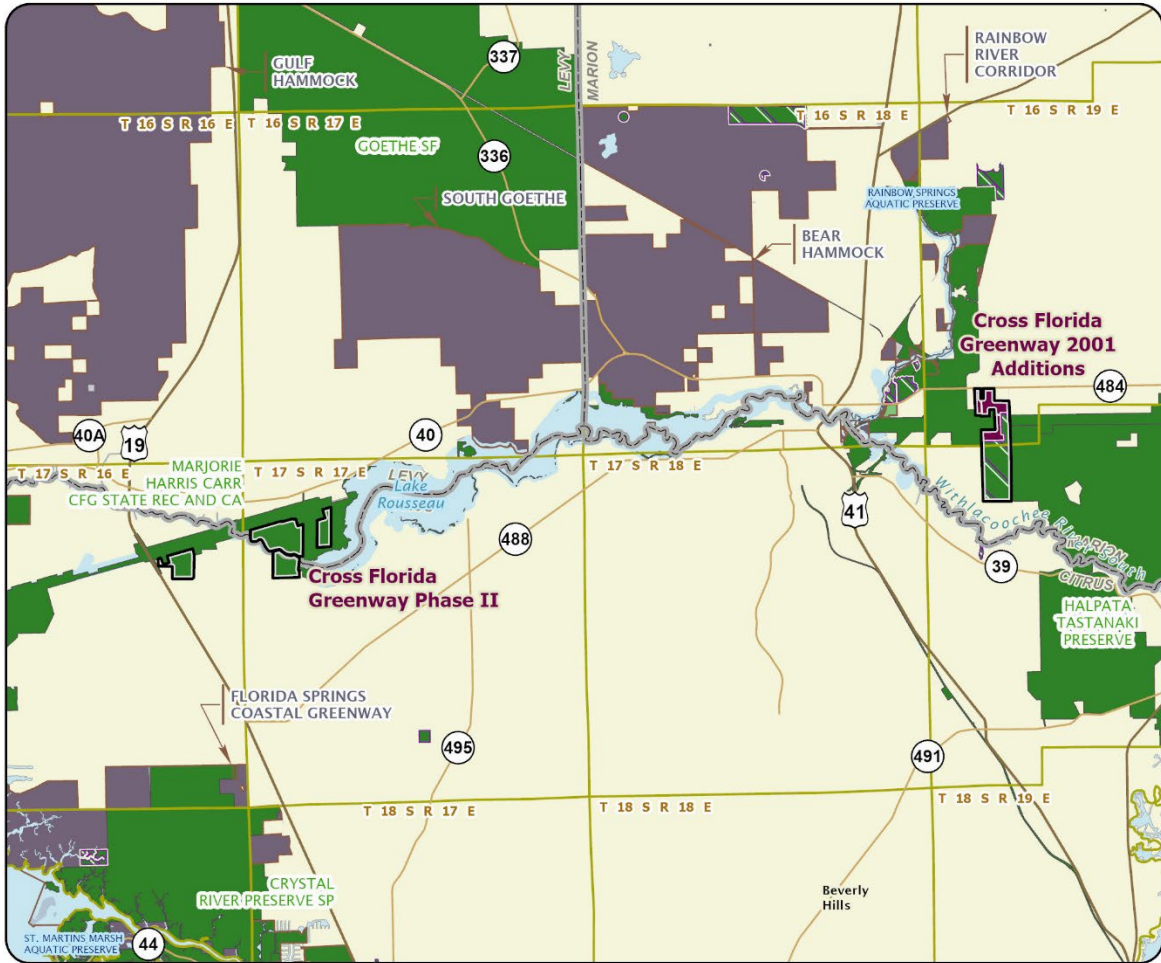




ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: MAP 4

MARION COUNTY





ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY: MAP 5

CITRUS, LEVY, AND MARION COUNTIES

