

Ichetucknee Trace

Critical Natural Lands

Columbia County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1997
<i>Project Acres</i>	2,786
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,079
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	1,707
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$18,683,437

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Ichetucknee Trace project will protect the route of a major underground conduit supplying local springs with fresh water and will improve the quality and quantity of water within Ichetucknee Springs State Park. Acquisition will also provide the public with recreational and geological education opportunities.

General Description

A dry valley known as the Ichetucknee Trace runs north and east of Ichetucknee Springs; this trace marks the path of a major underground channel that delivers groundwater to local springs. Though Ichetucknee Springs State Park protects the springs and much of the Ichetucknee River, limerock mining and other land uses near the area's sinks pose a threat to the channel that flows to the springs. Limerock mines and sinks along the trace have exposed the conduit in some areas, leaving these areas vulnerable to pollutants from mining and encroaching development.

The goal of the Ichetucknee Trace project is to preserve the quality and quantity of water flowing into the first magnitude Ichetucknee Springs by protecting the trace. The Ichetucknee Trace project includes two active limerock mines and seven sinkhole sites. More than 80 percent of the 450-acre limerock mine has no natural communities on it, but a small area of upland mixed forest and floodplain forest remains northeast of the mines. The majority of the areas around the five sinkholes are highly disturbed but include some fair quality forests.

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
Santa Fe cave crayfish	G1/S1
North Florida spider cave crayfish	G1G2/S1S2
Pallid cave crayfish	G1G2/S1S2
Hobbs's cave amphipod	G2G3/S2S3



Public Use

This project qualifies for use as a fish management area, recreation park or geologic site. With appropriate contouring, the water-filled mine pits could serve as a recreational fishery or fish hatchery and a county park.

Acquisition Planning

1996

This project was ranked for the first time on December 5, 1996.

1999

On July 29, 1999, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council added 636 acres: Rose Sink (since acquired); Saylor Sink (acquired); and Clay Hole Creek.

2000

In January 2000, the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (BOT) authorized the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands to purchase 60 acres outside the project boundary.

On July 18, 2000, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council added 200 acres to the project.

2002

On August 9, 2002, the Trust for Public Land donated a two-acre parcel around Rose Sink to the state.

2003

On August 15, 2003, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added 7.8 acres to the project boundary.

On August 15, 2003, ARC approved the acquisition of the McCormick Sink Site (147 acres) within the project boundary.

2006

On December 8, 2006, ARC approved moving the project from Group B to Group A of the Florida Forever Priority List.

2007

On February 16, 2007, ARC approved a fee-simple, 120-acre addition (Kirby parcel within the Limerock Mines Site) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by John Hankinson, Jr., consisted of one landowner (B. L. Kirby), and one parcel with a taxable value of \$26,160. DEP's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) will manage this essential parcel.

On June 15, 2007, ARC approved a fee-simple, 1,050-acre addition (Sinks Addition) to the project boundary. The proposal was sponsored by 1000 Friends of Florida, consisted of 34 parcels, 18 landowners and a taxable value of \$1,397,263. The O'Stern-Pittman Tract, Bishop Tract, Ichetucknee Springs East Addition and acreage added to the existing Limerock Mines Site and Ichetucknee Springs North make up this addition. DRP will manage these essential parcels.



**2010**

On December 29, 2010, 12.96 acres in Rose Sink (Kirby Mine Area), valued at \$214,372, was donated by TPL. DRP will manage this acreage.

2011

On December 9, 2011, this project was placed in the Critical Natural Lands category.

Coordination

Columbia County is considered an acquisition partner for this project. The Trust for Public Land is an intermediary.

Management Policy Statement

The project should be managed under the multiple-use concept. Management activities should be directed first toward conservation and restoration of resources and second toward integrating carefully controlled consumptive uses such as fishing. Managers should control access to the project; limit public motor vehicles to one or a few main roads; restrict the use of fertilizers, herbicides and gasoline-powered boats to protect water quality; inventory the resources; contour the mine pits to provide shallow littoral zones for colonization by aquatic plants and animals; recontour spoil piles so they can be revegetated with native trees, shrubs and grasses; reforest cleared, but unmined, areas with original species; control exotic pest plants that may invade the disturbed parts of the site; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually preserving resources. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities, ensure that they avoid the most sensitive resources and site them in already disturbed areas when possible.

Manager(s)

DRP is recommended as lead manager for the site adjacent to the existing state park, and Columbia County as lead manager for the other nine sites. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is recommended as co-manager for the limerock mine site.

Management Prospectus**Qualifications for State Designation**

The project site can be used for a variety of compatible recreational activities such as canoeing, hiking, biking, picnicking, environmental education and nature studies. It also qualifies as a fish management area.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Habitat restoration will require intense management activities involving extensive earthmoving and some actual excavation of quarry pit perimeters to create desired gradual slopes and provide additional shallow littoral zones. Importantly, this excavation work will be vital from a public safety standpoint as existing quarry sides are perpendicular. Considerable mining refuse is anticipated to be present and will need to be removed. Some actual salvage or demolition may be necessary. Earthmoving to abolish some roads and spread available soil will be extensive but will allow plant succession to proceed. Because there is no valuable habitat to manage, succession is the appropriate strategy. Earthmoving will allow





work on planned vehicle access and parking in areas where eventual erosion to lakes can be precluded. Some fencing to prohibit or direct vehicular and non-vehicular access will be necessary. Plant community inventory and restoration of disturbed mined areas by planting or other techniques will be secondary to major initial physical reconfiguration of the landscape and mine pits.

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

During the first year after acquisition, emphasis will be on site security, posting boundaries, fencing, public access, resource inventory and removal of existing refuse. A conceptual management plan will be developed by DRP, Columbia County and FWC describing future resource management. Because of the expense of excavating and earth moving and prerequisite planning/bidding, most of this actual work will not be scheduled for year one. Year two will concentrate on accomplishment of initial phases of conceptual plan (earth moving and excavation). This work will proceed into year three, when some infrastructure work on facilities will commence. Long-range plans will stress fish and wildlife habitat creation and management and family fishing opportunities. Future infrastructure may include a universally accessible fishing pier, docks for canoes and small boats, an informational pavilion and designated hiking and biking trails. However, it is important to note that management activities will stress protection of water quality.

Revenue-generating Potential

Some potential for the sale of timber exists on this property. Additional revenue-generating potential would be the sale of fishing licenses, special use, or entrance fees.

Cooperators in Management Activities

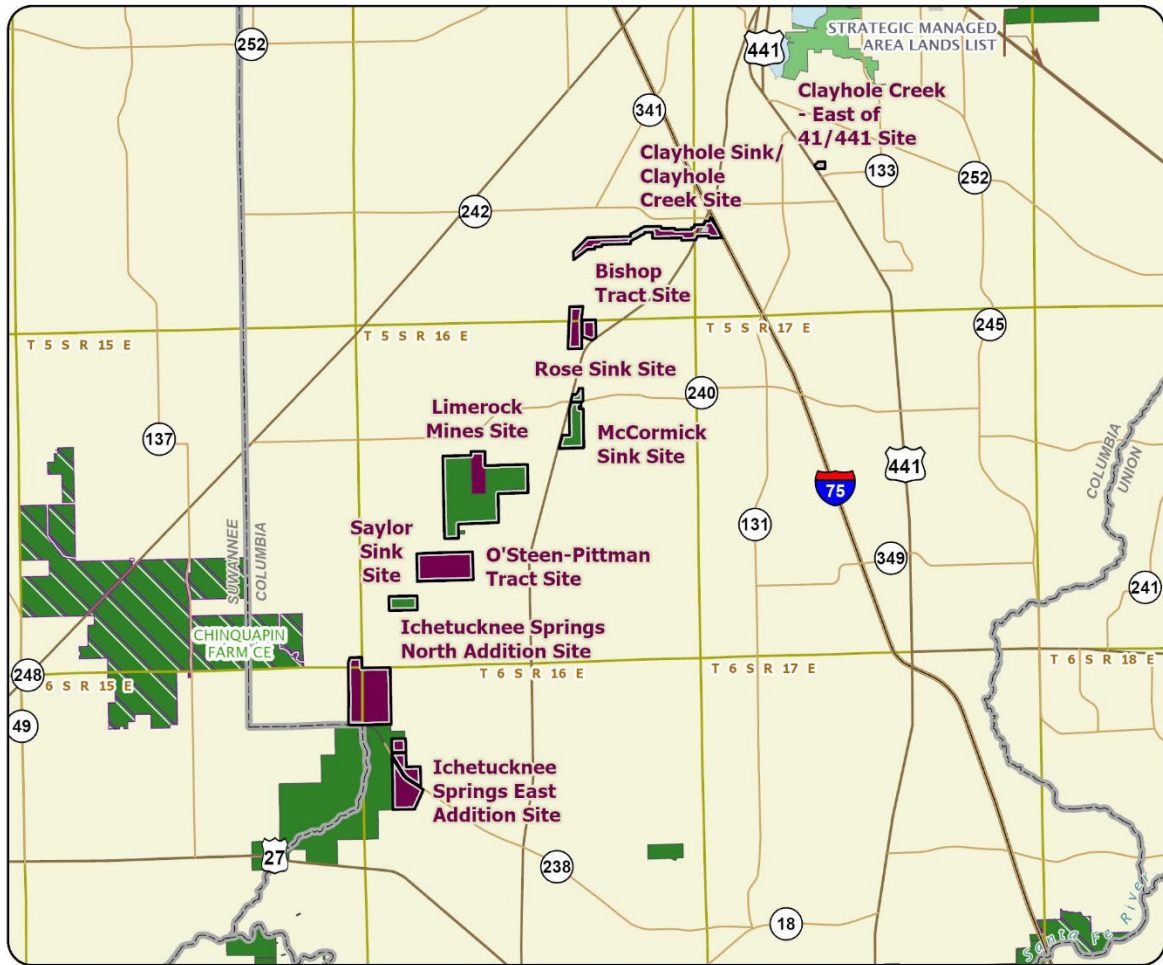
DRP, Columbia County and FWC will cooperate with various government agencies in managing the area.

Management Cost Summary

<u>FWC</u>	<u>Startup</u>	<u>Recurring</u>
Source of Funds	CARL/SGTF	CARL/SGTF
Salary	\$40,000	\$75,000
OPS	\$10,000	\$10,000
Expense	\$20,000	\$200,000
OCO	\$35,000	\$20,000
FCO	\$0	\$20,000
TOTAL	\$105,000	\$325,000

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





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COLUMBIA COUNTY

