

Lower Perdido River Buffer

Less-Than-Fee

Escambia County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	<i>2002</i>
<i>Project Acres</i>	<i>7,728</i>
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	<i>5,458</i>
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	<i>2,271</i>
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	<i>\$5,506,551</i>

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Lower Perdido River Buffer project will increase public recreational and educational opportunities by enhancing access to the Perdido River. The Lower Perdido River Buffer project will preserve a riverine area, providing a scenic viewshed for canoeing and kayaking. Additionally, the project will preserve forest land for sustainable management of natural resources.

General Description

The Perdido River, a focus of this project, is a sand-bottom blackwater stream that starts in southern Alabama. It has a low relief that is typical of many rivers in the lower Gulf Coastal Plain. The river has no first-magnitude or second-magnitude springs but depends on rainfall for most of its water, and its flow has substantial fluctuations. The high flows have caused erosion bends upstream that created large and medium-size sandbars, suitable for camping, along much of the river's inner upstream of State Road 184. The river is exceptionally winding, with few straight stretches of more than 200 yards. There are numerous fallen trees (generally Atlantic white cedar) but most have been cut to allow small boats to pass below Barrineau Park. The river is about 100 yards wide at the mouth of Perdido Bay but is only about 30 yards wide near Barrineau Park. The Lower Perdido River Buffer project includes land on the eastern Florida side of the river from roughly the center of Escambia County (near the Barrineau Park community) downstream to the river's mouth on Perdido Bay. This project has approximately 5,053 acres of functional wetlands that will be protected through acquisition. Approximately 2,094 acres have been identified that provide groundwater recharge, and approximately 1,056 acres of forest have been identified that maintain natural groundwater recharge functions.





FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
<i>Florida pondweed</i>	G1/S1
<i>Escambia crayfish</i>	G2/S1S2
<i>Louisiana yellow-eyed grass</i>	G2G3/S1
<i>West Florida cowlily</i>	G5T2T3/S2
<i>Rusty grave digger</i>	G3/S3
<i>primrose-flowered butterwort</i>	G3G4/S3

Public Use

The Lower Perdido River Buffer project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, the owner is willing to sell limited access points to the Perdido River fee simple; this would allow river access for launching and landing canoes and small boats.

Acquisition Planning

2002

On June 6, 2002, the Acquisition and Restoration Council added the Lower Perdido River Buffer project to Group A of the 2002 Florida Forever Project List. The project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$217,336.

The project property was entirely owned by International Paper when the project was added to the list. The specific locations of the small access sites along the river for fee-simple will be determined during the negotiation process.

2006

On May 31, 2006, the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) purchased 5,456 acres to create Perdido River Water Management Area. Almost all this acreage was within the project boundary.

2009

On January 27, 2009, NFWFMD established the 4.2-acre Herndon conservation easement.

2011

On December 9, 2011, the project was placed in the Less-Than-Fee category.

Coordination

The acquisition partnership is expected to include local, state and NFWFMD funding sources. Contribution funding percentages have not been determined.

Management Policy Statement

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

Manager(s)

Escambia County will manage the access points on fee-simple portions of the project once they are determined. If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Lower Perdido River Buffer





would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued conservation easement compliance would be coordinated by the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of State Lands. Escambia County will manage the access points once they are determined.

Management Prospectus

DEP's Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.

Qualifications for State Designation

Acquisition of the Lower Perdido River Buffer project with a combination of a conservation easement and the outright purchase of select access points will benefit the public in several major ways including: keeping wetland and marsh habitats located within a major metropolitan statistical area free from the pressures of development; using the conservation easement to keep the majority of the land in private hands; and allowing, at selected points, riverine access for the public for boating and fishing.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

The Perdido River itself appears to be free of major structural alterations and point sources of pollution that substantially affect either flow or water quality. Hence, no major restoration efforts along the immediate river corridor are necessary. Nonetheless, all areas of minor structural alterations (e.g., houses, boat ramps and highway crossings) should be examined in the future to determine if they are contributing to erosion, siltation or pollution.

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

Management of the property would depend on the nature and provisions of the conservation easement.

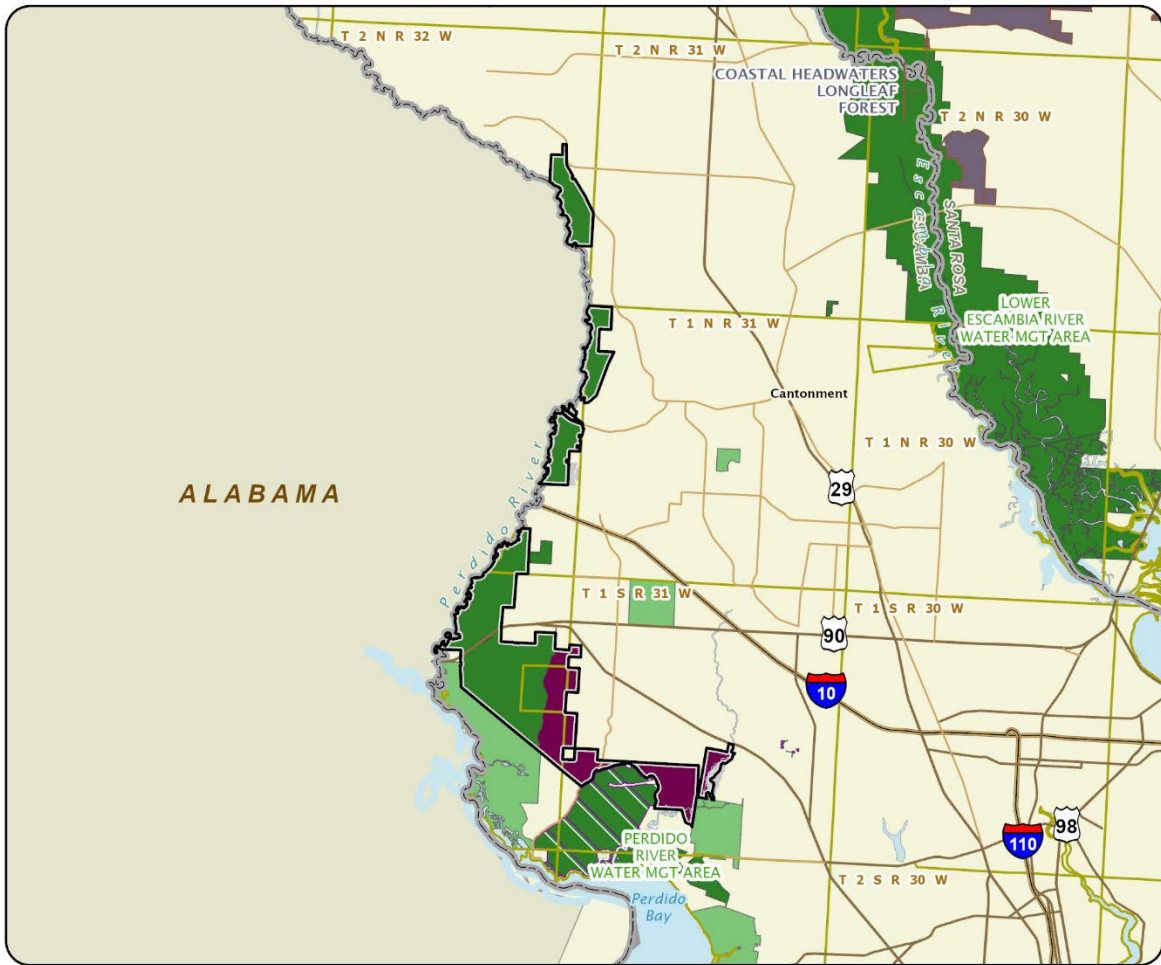
Revenue-generating Potential

Revenue generation potential is minimal since the project is to be acquired less-than-fee. Areas acquired fee simple would not be expected to generate revenue.

Cooperators in management activities

Escambia County would manage access points to the river.





LOWER PERDIDO RIVER BUFFER

ESCAMBIA COUNTY

