

Ochlockonee River Conservation Area

Less-Than-Fee

Gadsden and Leon Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2005
<i>Project Acres</i>	4,994
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	1,933
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	3,060
<i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$27,442,011

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project will protect a portion of the Ochlockonee River watershed (including six miles of river frontage) while maintaining a scenic and undeveloped rural area outside expanding urbanized areas. The project will preserve habitat for various species, protect forested land, and support the owner’s ongoing efforts to restore the property to a natural, longleaf pine community. This project will also provide an opportunity to manage the site in coordination with the adjacent Tall Timbers conservation lands.

General Description

This project is in western Leon County on the eastern bank of the Ochlockonee River. It is connected to the Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, contiguous to the east with the Foshalee Plantation conservation easement. The Hiamonee Plantation conservation easement (Tall Timbers) also abuts the project’s eastern boundary south of State Road 12. The project area is important to the water quality of the Ochlockonee River, which is an Outstanding Florida Water Body; four tributaries, two of which are partially impounded, run through the project.

Elevations across the proposal range from about 100 feet above mean sea level along the river to 230 feet in the northeastern uplands. Most of the site’s uplands likely supported longleaf pine-dominated upland forest with a rich groundcover including wiregrass and other herbs. Most of this has been degraded for agriculture (including silviculture). However, some tracts have returned to a shortleaf /loblolly pine-dominated community with a relatively diverse groundcover. Slopes on-site generally support hardwood forests. Seepage slope communities may also be present.





FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>Flyr's brickell-bush</i>	G3/S2
<i>Turk's cap lily</i>	G5/S1
White-breasted nuthatch	G5/S2
Little blue heron	G5/S4
White ibis	G5/S4
Colonial Wading Bird Colony	G5/SNRB

Public Use

The Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access.

Acquisition Planning

2005

In 2005, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy established the 500-acre River Ridge Plantation conservation easement.

On January 25, 2005, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) voted to add the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project to Group A of the 2005 Florida Forever Priority List. This less-than-fee project was sponsored by Woodlands Company Inc. and consisted of approximately 3,105 acres, two owners and had a taxable value of \$1,067,948.

2006

On October 13, 2006, ARC approved a less-than-fee 1,025-acre addition to the project boundary. Sponsored by the Woodlands Company Inc., it consisted of two parcels owned by James Dahl and had a taxable value of \$200,198. The parcels are in Gadsden and Leon counties and are designated as essential.

2007

In 2007, Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy established a second River Ridge Plantation conservation easement spanning 614.75 acres.

2010

On February 19, 2010, ARC added a 31-acre linear conservation easement to the project boundary. The easement consisted of two parcels, owned by James Dahl, valued at \$93,935.

2011

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

2016

On December 16, 2016, ARC approved a boundary amendment that removed 63 acres from the project boundary in Gadsden County, west of the Ochlockonee River. The amendment also added 664 acres in





Leon County, east of the Ochlockonee River. In total, the amendment created a net gain of 601 acres to the project boundary with a tax-assessed value of \$844,328.

Note: The 31-acre linear easement added in February 2010 remains in the boundary, but this 2016 boundary alteration also included a notice from the landowner rescinding their earlier (2010) commitment to public access.

Coordination

Acquisition of this project will be coordinated with the Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy. In 2005, this organization acquired a 497-acre conservation easement through a donation. In 2007, another 615 acres were donated to Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy as part of the River Ridge Plantation Conservation Easement.

Management Policy Statement

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project would be managed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement. Donated conservation easements will be managed and monitored by the respective conservation group(s).

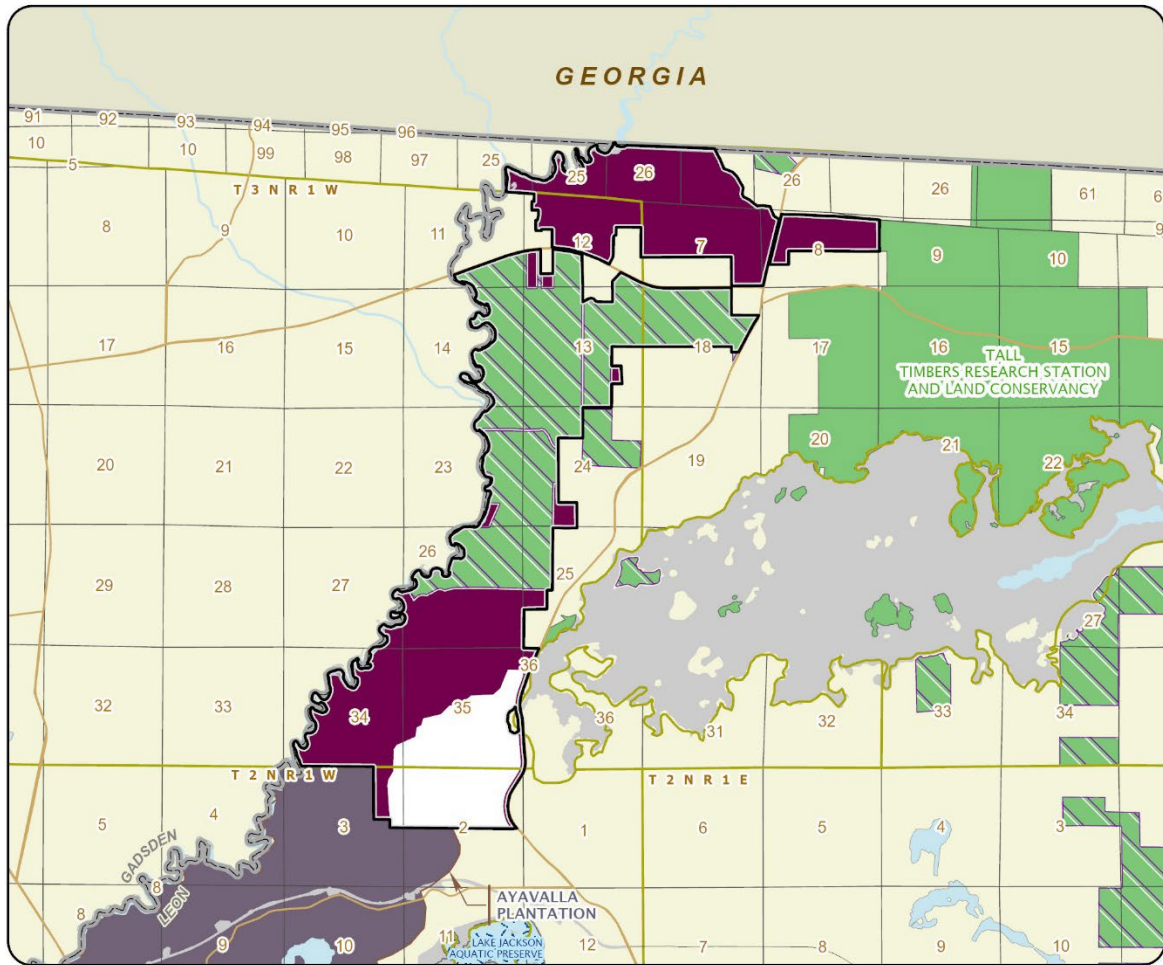
Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area project 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. The Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy currently monitor their conservation easements acquired through donation.

Management Prospectus

DEP's Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner. The Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy will monitor the River Ridge Plantation easements.





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