

South Goethe

Critical Natural Lands

Levy and Marion Counties

| | |
|---|--------------|
| <i>Year Added to Priority List</i> | 2006 |
| <i>Project Acres</i> | 11,706 |
| <i>Acquired Acres</i> | 356 |
| <i>Remaining Project Acres</i> | 11,350 |
| <i>2024 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i> | \$33,395,567 |

Purpose for State Acquisition

The South Goethe project will provide a landscape corridor from Goethe State Forest to the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area (MHCCFG) along the Withlacoochee River. The project will provide a significant buffer along the southern boundary of the state forest while enhancing the forest and its associated habitat through restoration.

General Description

The South Goethe Florida Forever project is to be considered for fee simple acquisition. The two tracts are principally separated by County Road 40. The Robinson tract (north of County Road 40) is contiguous with the southern boundary of Goethe State Forest in southeastern Levy County. The 3.6-mile shared boundary runs along an unpaved woods road for much of its length. The Marino tract is south of the Robinson tract, mostly on the south side of County Road 40; however, the tract extends northward across County Road 40 and shares a common boundary of 0.25 mile with the Robinson tract. At its closest point, the Robinson tract approaches within 0.46 miles of MHCCFG, which lies along Lake Rousseau (impounded in the Withlacoochee River) to the south.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

| <u>FNAI Elements</u> | <u>Score</u> |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Gopher tortoise | G3/S3 |
| Florida black bear | G5T4/S4 |
| <i>longspurred mint</i> | G2/S2 |
| Gopher frog | G2G3/S3 |
| Bald eagle | G5/S3 |

Public Use

Management programs would be oriented towards conservation and protection of wildlife species. The primary land management goals are to restore, maintain and protect all native ecosystems; to integrate compatible human use; and to ensure long-term viability of species considered rare.



The Florida Forest Service (FFS) will promote recreation and environmental education in the natural environment. It is anticipated that interpretative and user recreation facilities will be developed and the use of low impact, rustic facilities will be stressed in the natural or restored areas of the project. In more heavily impacted areas, FFS will explore the possibility of an off-highway vehicle trail system. While portions of these impacted areas will be restored to a natural state, other portions could potentially provide a network of trails for off-highway enthusiasts.

Acquisition Planning

2006

On December 8, 2006, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added the South Goethe Forest Addition to Group A of the Florida Forever Priority List. This full-fee project was sponsored by FFS. The project has 6,152 acres and a tax-assessed value of \$1,157,483.

2007

On June 15, 2007, ARC approved a fee-simple, 5,553-acre addition (Cold Springs Tract) to the project boundary. The proposal was sponsored by the Rainbow River Conservation, Inc., consisted of 33 parcels, a single ownership (Throgmartin-Henke Development LLP) and a taxable value of \$10,416,820. FFS is the recommended manager. The parcels have been designated essential.

2011

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

2021

A 350-acre conservation easement (Cold Springs Villages Conservation Easement) was acquired by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for the establishment of a gopher tortoise recipient site.

Coordination

This property is proposed as a fee simple acquisition. No acquisition partnerships have been proposed at this time.

Management Policy Statement

The primary land management goals for the management of the tract are to restore, maintain and protect in perpetuity all native ecosystems; to integrate compatible human use; and to ensure long-term viability of species considered native, rare and imperiled. This ecosystem and multiple use approach will guide the management activities on this project.

Manager(s)

The property is proposed to be managed by FFS.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

The project's size and diversity make it desirable for use and management as a state forest. Most of the acreage of this project consists of planted mesic and wet flatwoods and sandhills. With thinning,





introduction of prescribed fire and sustainable forestry management practices, the project could be quickly transformed from management for silvicultural values to an area managed for its ecological and recreational benefits.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Much of the project's flatwoods and sandhill areas have been disturbed by silvicultural operations and will require restoration efforts. Timber thinning will provide revenue for restoration activities as well as promote the re-generation of native ground covers and canopy. Development of facilities would be kept to a minimum to assure a high-quality recreational experience. As such, development would be confined to areas of previous disturbance.

Protection and restoration of sensitive wetlands on this project will be a priority. Restoration efforts will focus on introducing prescribed fire, thinning dense pine stands, and restoring native groundcovers. The level of management intensity and related management costs is expected to initially be high to obtain the necessary information and resources to restore and manage this system as a state forest. Once accomplished, long-term management costs are expected to be light to moderate to maintain this area as a state forest.

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

The initial and intermediate management efforts will concentrate on resource inventory, restoring and reforesting areas where harvesting has occurred, hydrological restoration, providing site security and assessing public and fire management access. Inventories of the site's natural resources and imperiled species will be conducted to provide a basis for the formulation of a management plan. Because of the numerous roads throughout the property, a plan will be needed to identify which roads will be needed for vehicular access by the public, for administrative use and which are unnecessary and should be closed. Steps will be taken to ensure the public is provided appropriate access. Burning goals for this project will be to establish an all season prescribed burning program on all of the fire dependent community types. Whenever possible, existing roads, black lines, foam lines and natural breaks will be used to contain and control prescribed and natural fires. Timber management activities will primarily consist of restoration harvests and improvement cuts aimed at restoring and perpetuating native ground covers. Stands will not have a targeted rotation age but will be managed to maintain a broad diversity of age classes. This will provide habitat for the full spectrum of species that would be found in the natural environment and enhance biodiversity. FFS will promote recreation and environmental education in the natural environment. It is anticipated that interpretative and user recreation facilities will be developed and the use of low impact, rustic facilities will be stressed in the natural or restored areas of the tract. In the more heavily impacted areas of the tract, FFS will explore the possibility of an off-highway vehicle trail system. While portions of these impacted areas will be restored to a natural state, other portions could potentially provide a network of trails for off-highway enthusiasts. There is also potential for obtaining funding for both acquiring the parcel as well as implementing the trail





system. Unnecessary roads, fire lines and hydrological disturbances will be abandoned and/or restored to the greatest extent practical.

Revenue-generating Potential

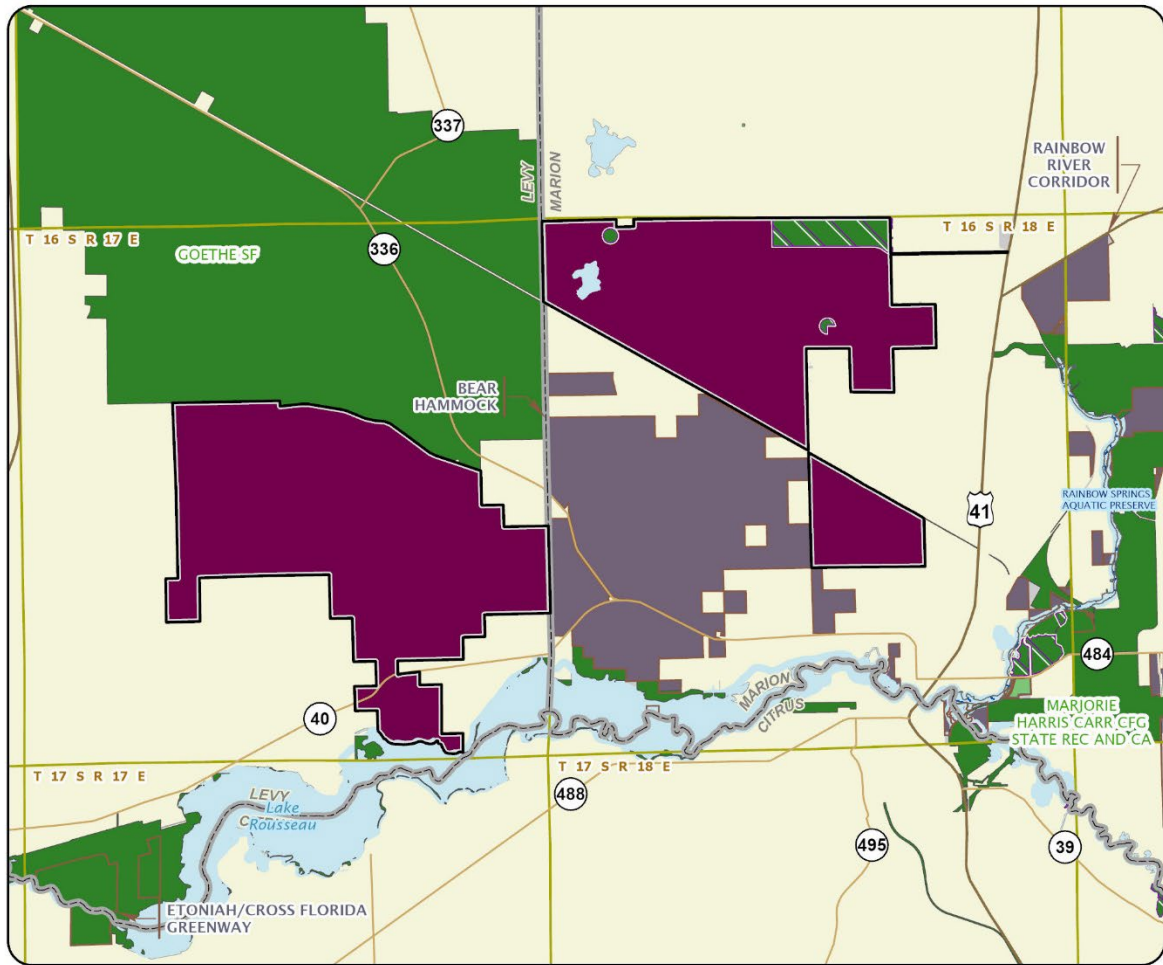
Timber sales will be conducted as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions. These sales will primarily take place in planted pine stands and will provide a variable source of revenue dependent upon a variety of factors. Due to the existing condition and volume of the timber resources on the property, revenue-generating potential of this project is expected to be moderate to high. Some revenues might be realized in the future from recreational user fees and ecotourism activities. Florida Forever capital project expenditures are going to be needed on this parcel for prescribed fire, vegetative and hydrologic restoration, improved public access/use and facilities (both public and administrative). It is anticipated that some of the existing roads and trails may be used as multi-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and biking. This Management Prospectus is not intended to be an application for capital project funding; however, as more information is gathered, and an analysis of the site is completed, FFS intends to apply for capital project funds.

Management Cost Summary

| FFS | Startup | Recurring |
|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Source | CARL | CARL |
| Salary (2 FTE) | \$72,104 | not provided |
| OPS | \$0 | not provided |
| Expense | \$263,000 | not provided |
| OCO | \$593,720 | not provided |
| TOTAL | \$928,824 | not provided |

Source: Management Prospectus as originally submitted





SOUTH GOETHE

LEVY AND MARION COUNTIES

