

# Waccasassa Watershed

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Levy County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2023
<i>Project Acres</i>	20,455
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	33
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	20,422
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$87,784,372

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Waccasassa Watershed project will help ensure the water quality and quantity of Chunky Pond, Waccasassa River, Waccasassa Bay and the Waccasassa watershed. The project will also help to increase connectivity amongst conservation lands, including two Outstanding Florida Waterways: Waccasassa Bay State Preserve and Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve.

## General Description

The Waccasassa Watershed project contains 65 parcels under several ownerships, totaling about 20,416 acres in Levy County. The project was created by combining several proposals, including Chunky Pond, Little Pine Ranch, Trailhead Blue Springs and Waccasassa Bay Headwaters. The Waccasassa Watershed project shares a border with Levy County's Devil's Hammock Conservation Area and Levy County's Blue Springs Park. The project is within 0.5 miles of Goethe State Forest, and about 3 miles from Devil's Hammock Wildlife Management Area and the Upper Waccasassa Conservation Area. The project's close proximity to a variety of conservation lands expands the protection of surface water and imperiled species habitat.

The Waccasassa Watershed project will help to conserve several natural community types including hydric hammock, basin swamp, mesic hammock, wet flatwoods and floodplain swamp, among others. A variety of rare species have been documented on the project such as the hooded pitcherplant, swallow-tailed kite, Florida hasteola and gopher tortoise. The Waccasassa Watershed project also lies in priority 1, 2 and 5 of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network.

The Chunky Pond property includes the headwaters of Mule Creek, which flows into the Waccasassa River. The property also includes portions of wetlands with little alteration, and these areas likely host a variety of migratory birds, reptiles and amphibians.

The Little Pine Ranch property features basin swamps on about a third of the site, with evidence of past logging. However, pond cypress was codominant in the canopy, along with slash pine and red maple. The property is predominantly made up of pine plantations and mixed scrub-shrub wetland.



The Trailhead Blue Springs property is a working cow/calf cattle ranch, with the Waccasassa River crossing the northern portion of the site. Levy County’s Blue Springs Park surrounds three sides of the property and features two springs, one of which is second magnitude. Acquisition of Trailhead Blue Springs would help to maintain the water quality of the spring, river and the watershed.

The Waccasassa Bay Headwaters property is mostly made up of pine plantation and hydric hammock. There are also wetlands in good condition on site, which likely provide habitat for migratory birds, amphibians and reptiles.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<b><u>FNAI Elements</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
Florida black bear	G5T2/S4
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
<i>Florida hasteola</i>	G1/S1
Gopher frog	G2G3/S3
<i>Variable-leaved Indian-plantain</i>	G3/S3
Litle blue heron	G5/S4

**Public Use**

Property within the Waccasassa Watershed project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. Due to the lack of public access, there will not be any public resource-based outdoor recreation potential for the project.

**Acquisition Planning**

**2023**

On October 13, 2023, the Acquisition and Restoration Council voted to combine the Chunky Pond, Litle Pine Ranch, Trailhead Blue Springs and Waccasassa Bay Headwaters properties to create the Waccasassa Watershed Florida Forever project. The project is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

**Coordination**

The project was proposed by Alachua Conservation Trust, Florida Conservation Group and the landowner. Alachua Conservation Trust, through its partnership with the National Resources Conservation Services Regional Conservation Partnership Program, may be partners in acquisition of the project.

**Management Policy Statement**

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

**Manager**

If acquired as less-than-fee, management would remain with the landowners. Periodic monitoring of the site’s management to confirm continued compliance with the conditions of the conservation easement would be coordinated by the Division of State Lands.

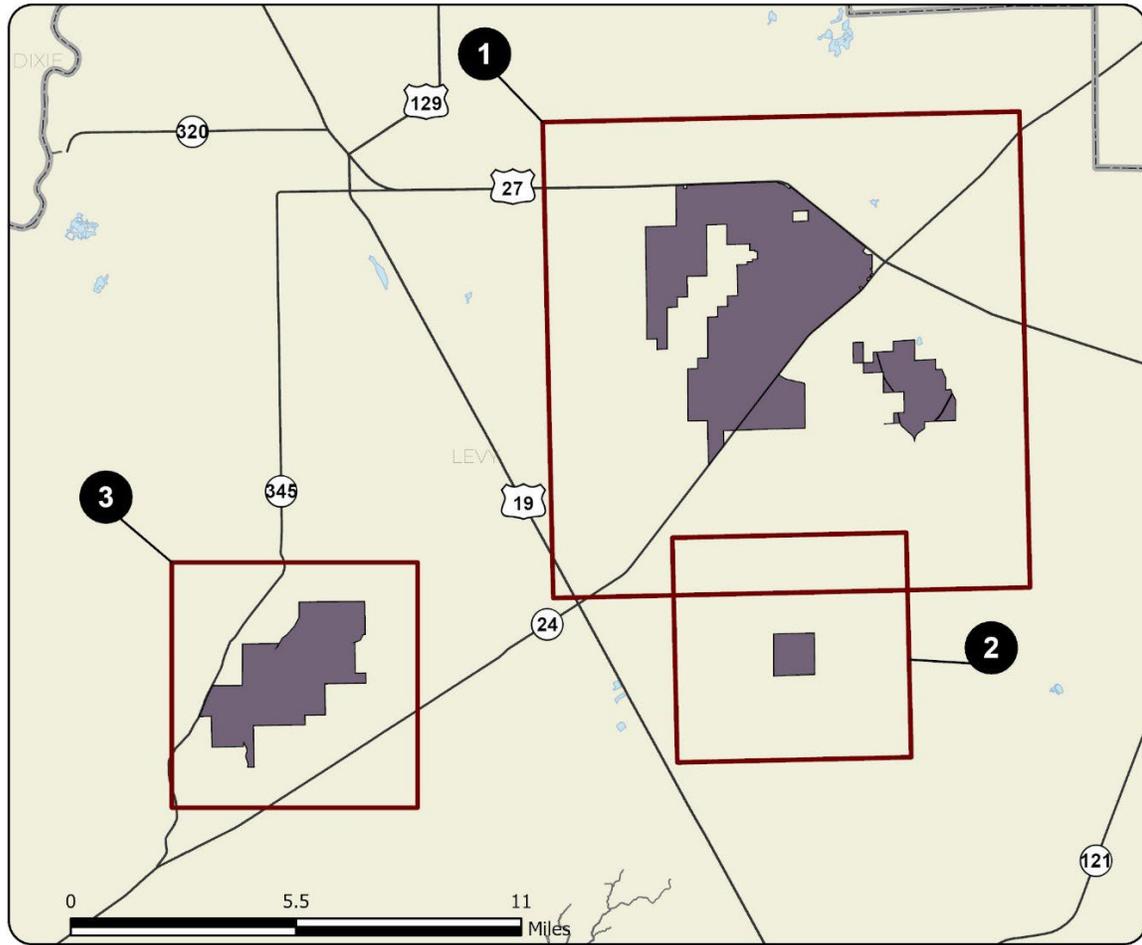




### Management Prospectus

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

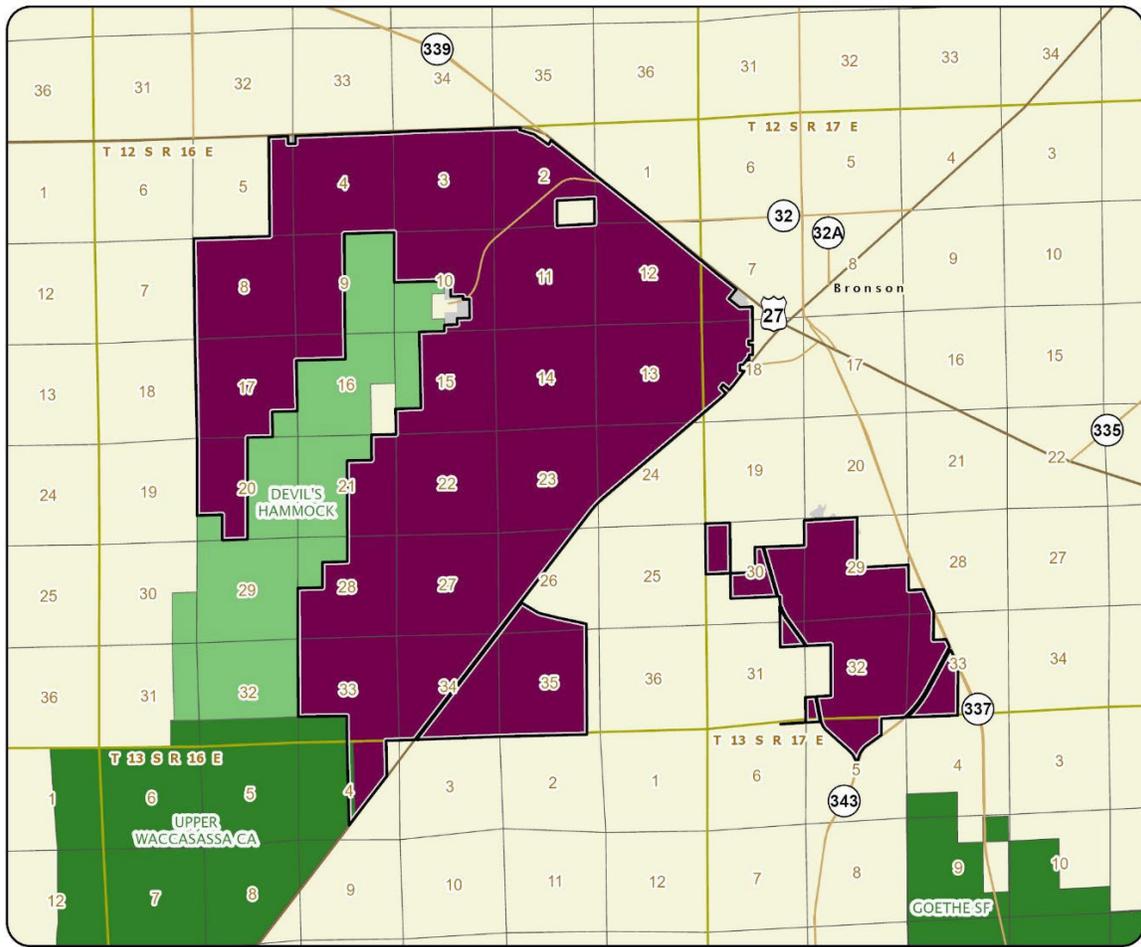




**WACCASASSA WATERSHED: OVERVIEW**

LEVY COUNTY

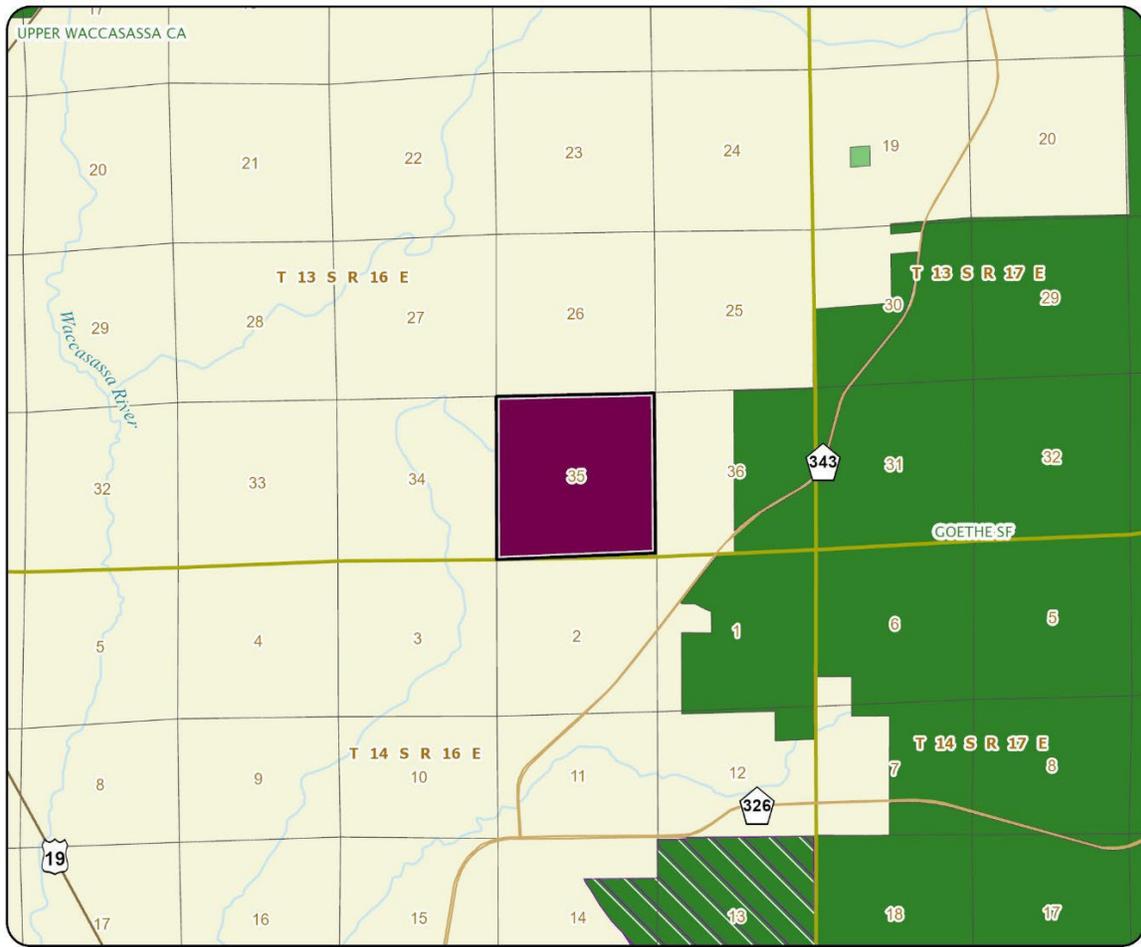




WACCASASSA WATERSHED: MAP 1

LEVY COUNTY



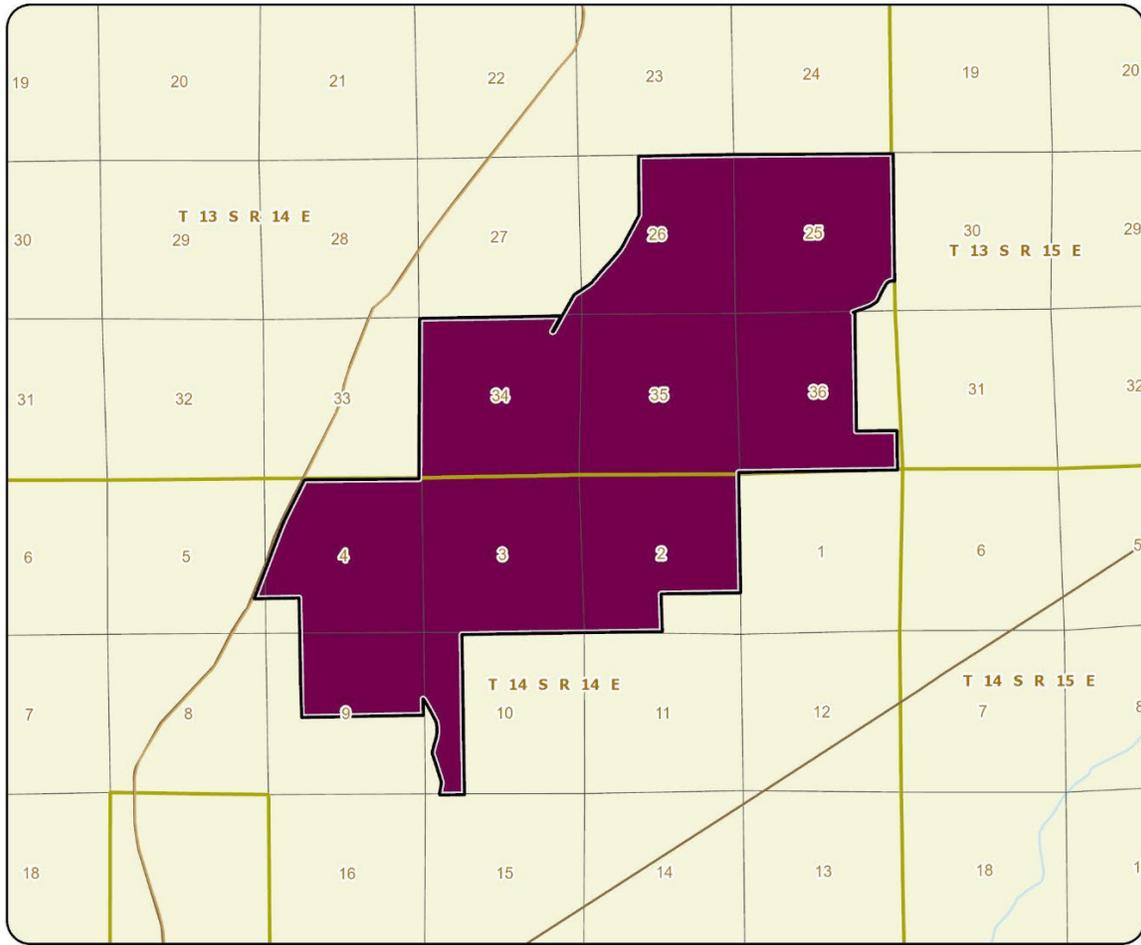


WACCASASSA WATERSHED: MAP 2

LEVY COUNTY

-  Florida Forever Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcels Remaining
-  State Conservation Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  Less-Than-Fee Acquisition





**WACCASASSA WATERSHED: MAP 3**

**LEVY COUNTY**

-  Florida Forever Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcels Remaining

