ITEM 9:

Consider the Plank Road State Forest Management Plan (Lease No. 4806).

LOCATION:

Leon and Jefferson County

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Plank Road State Forest (PRdSF) consists of 9,043.5 acres along the upper St. Marks River corridor in Leon and Jefferson Counties. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (Trustees) holds fee simple title. Its name is derived from the historic wood plank road which was constructed in the mid-1800's with the purpose of transporting cotton and other goods from Newport, where the St. Marks River ceases to be reasonably navigable, to the Georgia line. The road was never finished and only made it to what is currently US 27, east of Tallahassee. Although there are no signs of the original plank road, what is now a paved portion of Old Plank Road makes up part of the PRdSF boundary on the west. The St. Marks River is the dominant feature flowing through the forest. The intact forested wetlands of PRdSF provide a water quality buffer for this Outstanding Florida Water, as well as protection of numerous springs, including the second magnitude Horn Spring located on the boundary of the adjacent State Park, and to the first magnitude St. Marks Spring just to the south.

The property is habitat for an abundance of wildlife and serves as a corridor between the St. Marks River Headwaters, L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) to the Aucilla Wildlife Management Area (WMA), St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, and the Gulf of Mexico. As lead-managing agency, the Florida Forest Service will manage PRdSF for the conservation and protection of natural and historical resources, and for resource based public outdoor activities and education which are compatible with the conservation and protection of these public lands.

The primary mission of the Florida Forest Service (FFS) is to "protect Florida and its people from the dangers of wildland fire and manage the forest resources through a stewardship ethic to assure they are available for future generations". Management strategies for PRdSF center on the multiple-use concept, as defined in sections 589.04(3) and 253.034(2)(a) F.S. Implementation of this concept will utilize and conserve state forest resources in a harmonious and coordinated combination that will best serve the people of the state of Florida, and that is consistent with the purpose for which the forest was acquired. Multiple-use management for PRdSF will be accomplished with the following strategies:

- Practice sustainable forest management for improved forest health and efficient generation of revenue in support of state forest management objectives;
- Provide for resource-based outdoor recreation opportunities for multiple interests;
- Restore and manage healthy forests and native ecosystems ensuring the long-term viability of populations and species listed as endangered, threatened or rare, and other components of biological diversity including game and nongame wildlife and plants;
- Protect known archaeological, historical, and cultural resources;

- Restore, maintain, and protect hydrological functions related to water resources and the health of associated wetland and aquatic communities.
- Provide research and educational opportunities related to natural resource management.

Management Plan Overview

In 2018, the FNAI completed an inventory and natural community mapping project on PRdSF and a historic natural community type map was created. Eleven natural community types are found on PRdSF. The predominant natural community is floodplain swamp, followed by mesic hammock. There are seven endangered or threatened animal species documented on PRdSF.

A review of information contained in the DHR's Florida Master Site file has determined that there are eleven recorded archaeological sites on PRdSF. FFS will consult with DHR's public lands archaeologists as necessary to determine an appropriate priority and frequency of monitoring at each of the listed sites, as well as any protection measures that might be required. All archaeological and historical sites within the state forest will be monitored at least annually. FFS field staff will monitor the listed sites to note condition and any existing or potential threats.

The primary recreation objective is to provide the public with dispersed outdoor recreational activities that are dependent on the natural environment and to provide outdoor recreation events to wounded veterans through Operation Outdoor Freedom (OOF). FFS will continue to promote and encourage public access and recreational use by the public while protecting resources and practicing multiple-use management. Recreation activities available on PRdSF include nature study, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing.

The PRdSF is a participant in a Firewise community program. Communities in wildfire prone areas must work together to be fully prepared for wildfire. A "Fire Adapted Community" incorporates people, buildings, businesses, infrastructure, cultural resources, and natural areas to prepare for the effects of wildfire. The Fire Adapted Community concept serves as an umbrella to the various programs that help communities become more fire adapted. The FFS has implemented the Fire Adapted Community concept for prevention statewide. Specifically, in the area adjacent to or nearby PRdSF, efforts in this regard will continue to identify communities at risk and to contact their representatives.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term (ST) goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and ST goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to changes to Section 253.034, F.S., the Division of State Lands tracks the status of ST goals in each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The ST goals from this management plan are included as part of this item.

Public Involvement

FFS responds to public involvement through liaison panels, management plan advisory groups, public hearings, and through ongoing direct contact with user groups. The plan was developed with input from the PRdSF Management Plan Advisory Group and was reviewed at a public hearing on September 27, 2019. No members of the public were present at the public meeting.

Surplus Lands

On conservation lands where FFS is the lead manager, FFS assesses and identifies areas for potential surplus land. This consists of an examination of: resource and operational management needs, public access and recreational use, and GIS modeling and analysis. The evaluation of

PRSF by FFS has determined that all portions of the area are being managed and operated for the original purposes of acquisition, therefore, no portion of the PRdSF is recommended for potential surplus.

State Land Management Review Team

This property has not been subject to a recent review by an inter-agency land management review team.

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

( ) APPROVE
( ) APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
( ) DEFER
( ) WITHDRAW
( ) NOT APPROVE
( ) OTHER:_____

Plank Road State Forest
Land management plan short term goals

Goal (ST)	Details of Goal	Objective	Details of Objective	Measures
2	Public Access and Recreational Opportunities	4	Solicit and organize a liaison committee. The committee should consist of a mix of local residents, community leaders and special interest group representatives (canoe vendors, hunters, trail hikers, military, organized equestrian groups, etc.), environmental groups, and other public / private entities to establish communication and seek constructive feedback regarding the management of PRdSF.	Liaison group is organized, meetings are held.

Source: Florida DEP, Office of Environmental Services, Revised 2018.

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEAD AGENCY: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Forest Service
COMMON NAME: Plank Road
LOCATION: Leon and Jefferson Counties
ACREAGE TOTAL: 9,043.5 acres

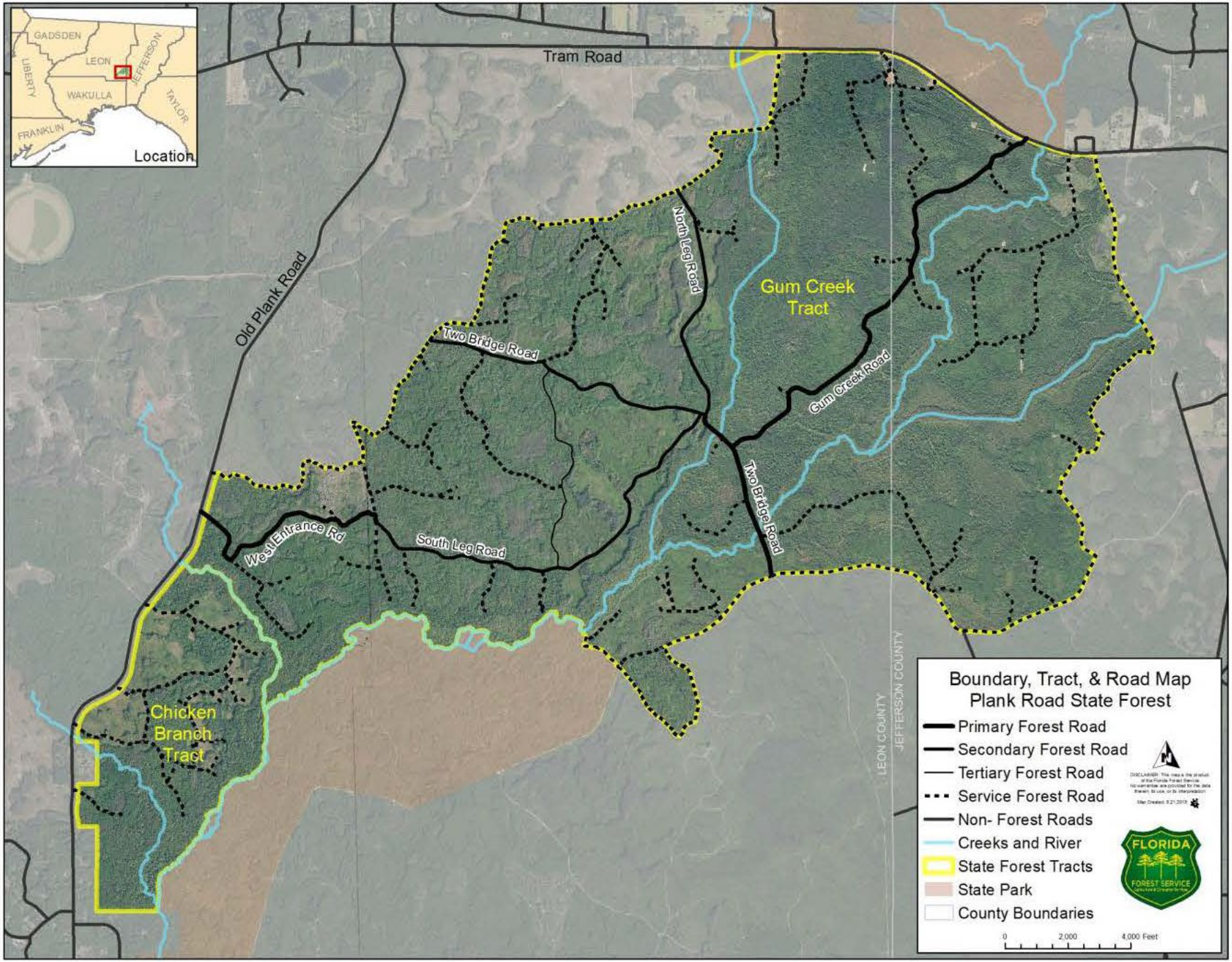
Historic Natural Communities	Approximate Acreage
Basin swamp	1,260
Bottomland forest	766
Dome swamp	415
Floodplain swamp	1,999
Mesic flatwoods	1,328
Sandhill	502

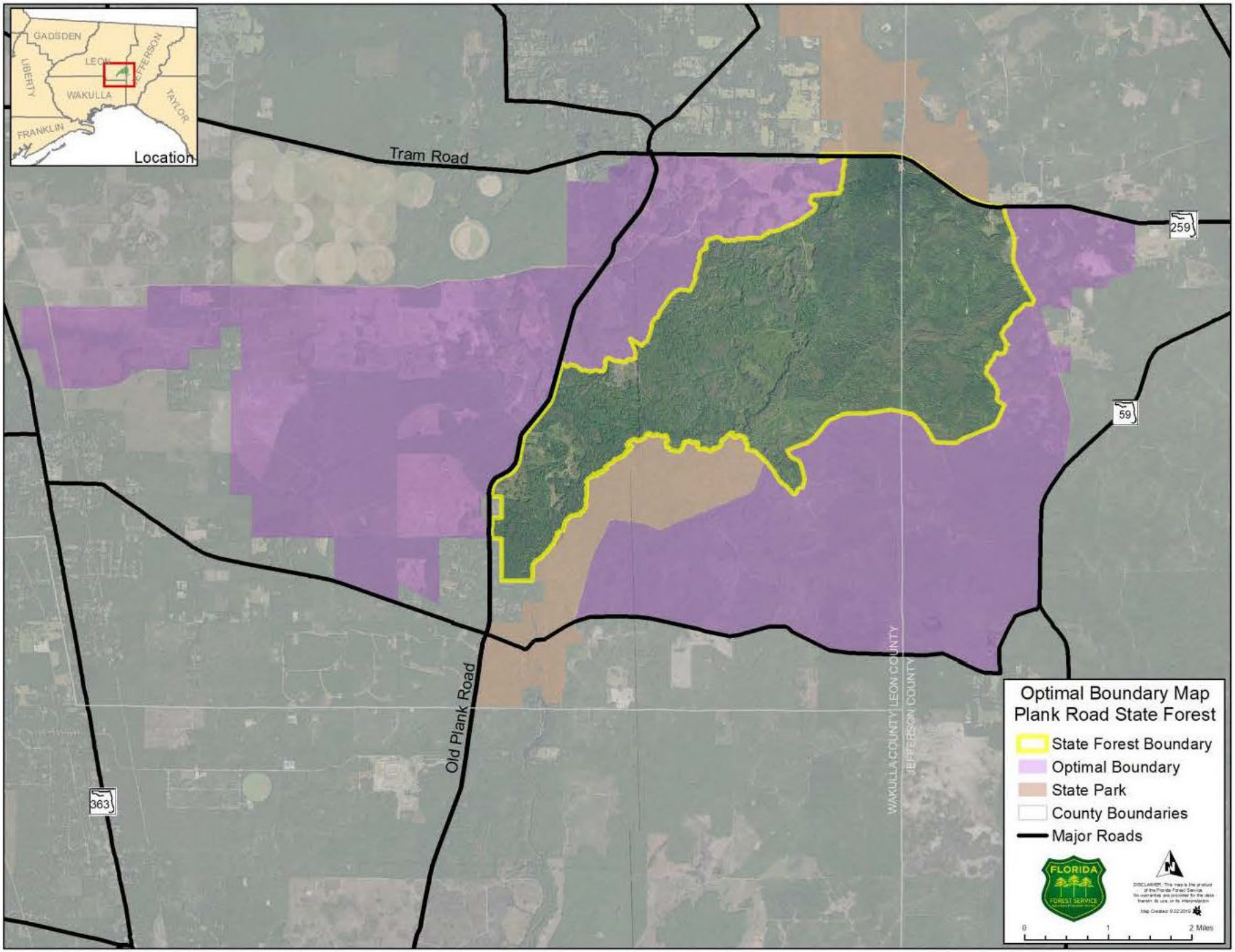
Historic Natural Communities	Approximate Acreage
Shrub bog	195
Sinkhole lake	4
Upland hardwood forest	9
Upland pine	238
Wet flatwoods	2,326

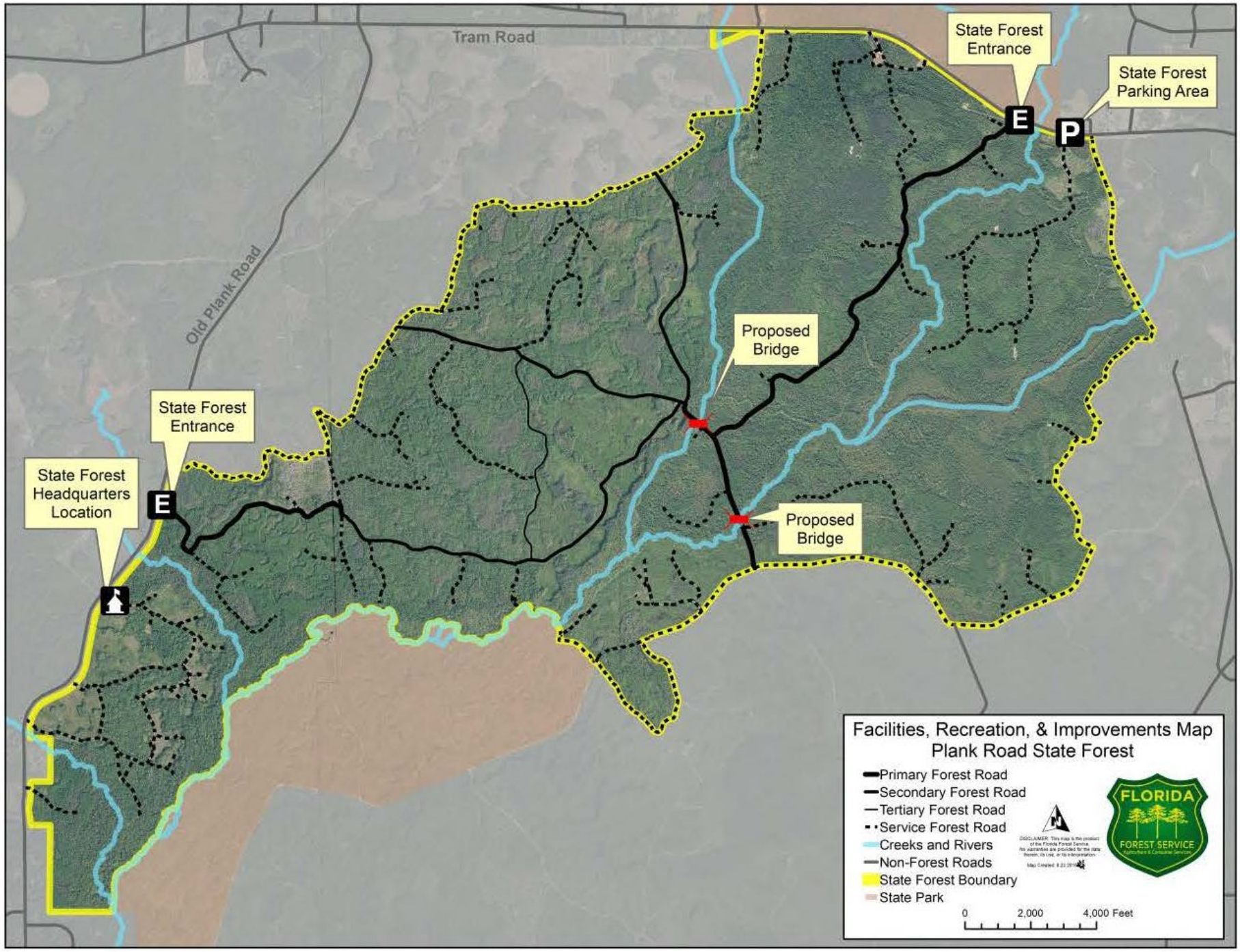
TIITF LEASE AGREEMENT NUMBER: 4806
USE: Single ___ Multiple _X_

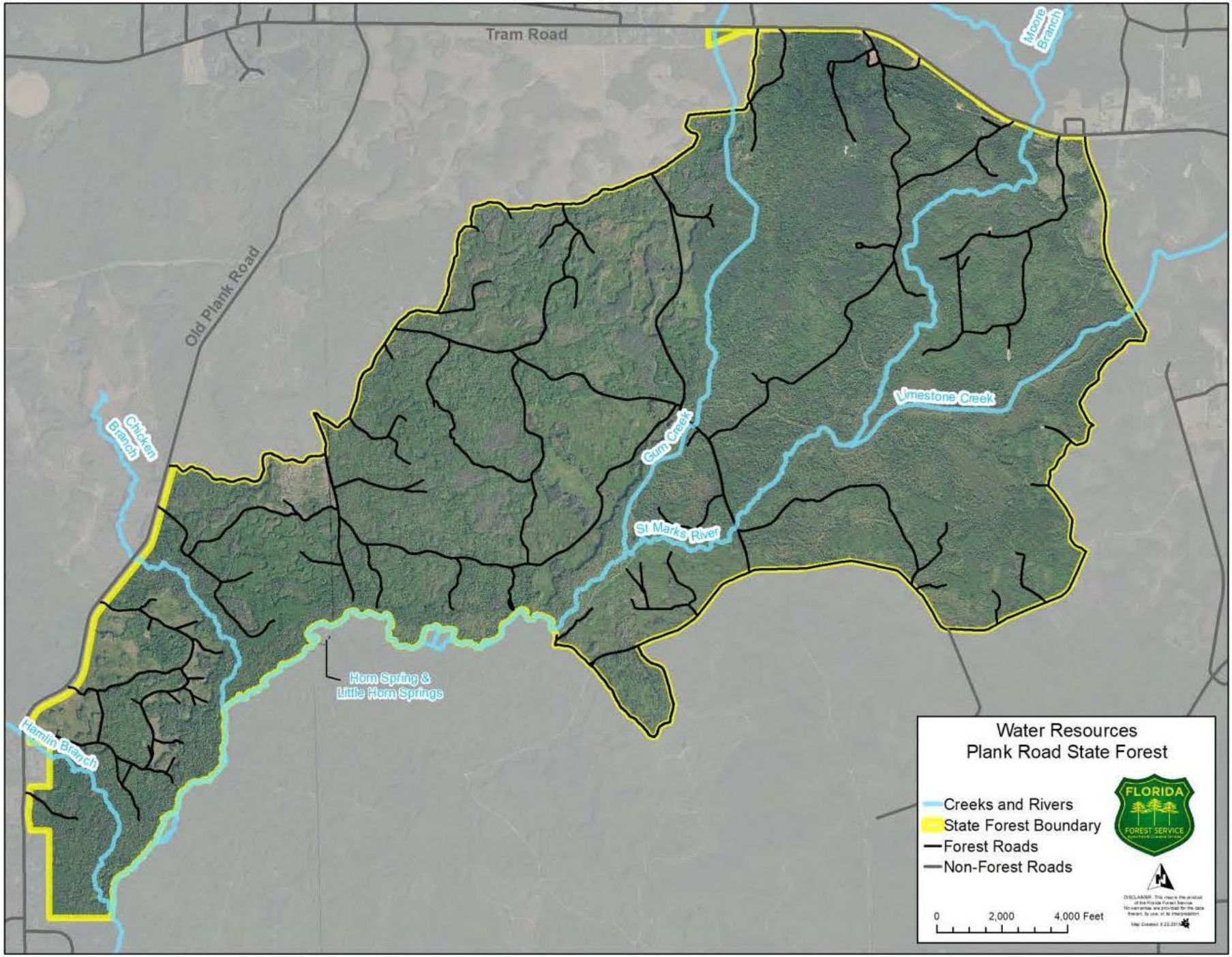
MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY
FDACS, Florida Forest Service	General Forest Resource Management
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	Wildlife Resources and Laws
Northwest Florida Water Management District	Water Resource Protection and Restoration
Department of State, Division of Historical Resources	Historical and Archaeological Resource Management

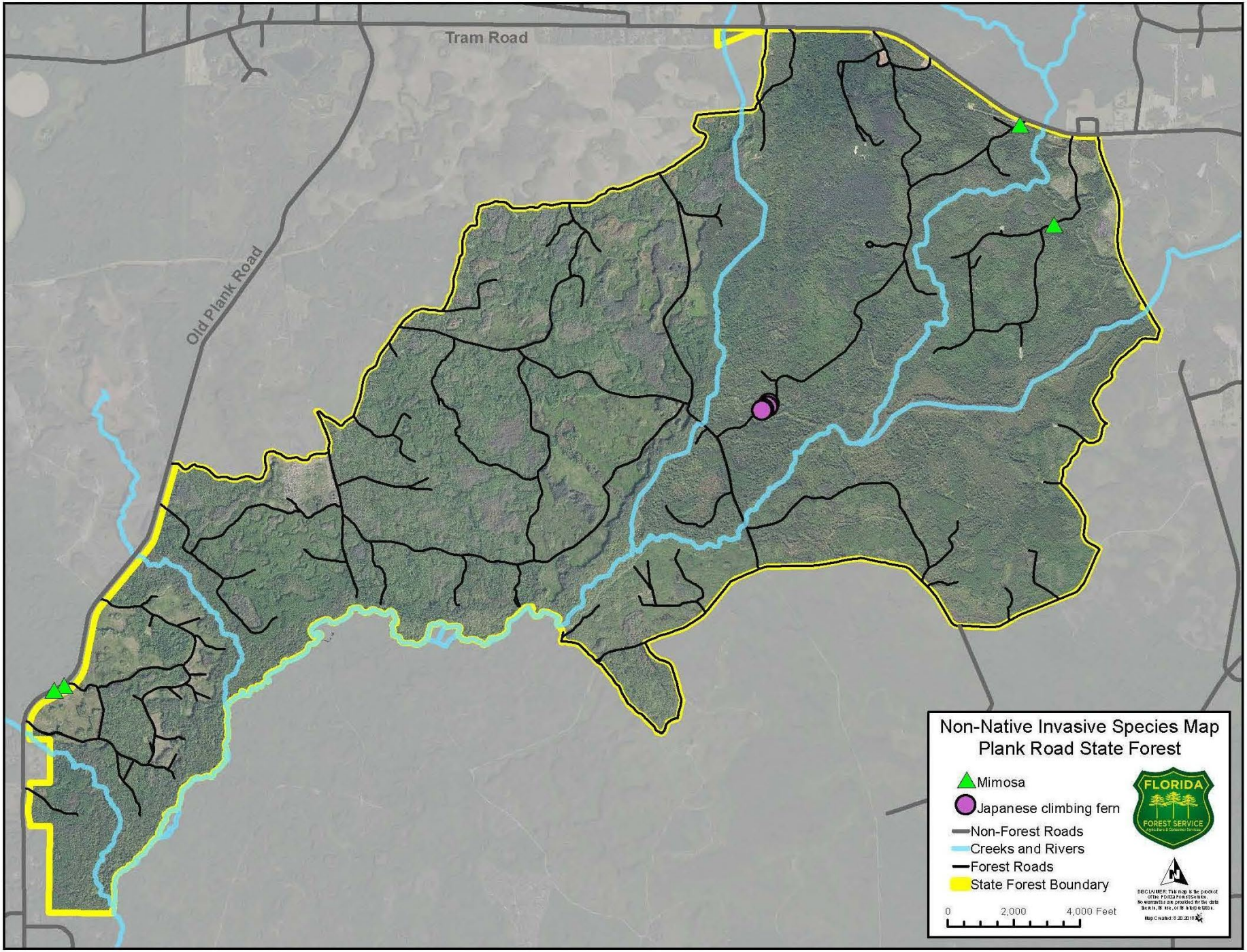
DESIGNATED LAND USE: Multiple-Use State Forest
SUBLEASES: None
ENCUMBRANCES: Non-exclusive common road easements along adjacent property boundary; oil, gas and mineral reservations; Natural Gas Pipeline Easement; Easement in favor of Talquin Electric Cooperative, Inc.
TYPE ACQUISITION: Division of State Lands – Land Acquisition Trust Fund
UNIQUE FEATURES: St. Marks River and associated floodplain
ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL: 12 known sites
MANAGEMENT NEEDS: Restoration and maintenance of native ecosystems, reintroduction of historic fire regimes, and improve public access
ACQUISITION NEEDS: Acquisitions of adjacent uplands needed to increase spring shed buffer, improve access and eliminate potential conflicts created by common road easements
SURPLUS ACREAGE: None
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Management Plan Advisory Group and Public Hearing, and DEP Acquisition and Restoration Council Public Hearing

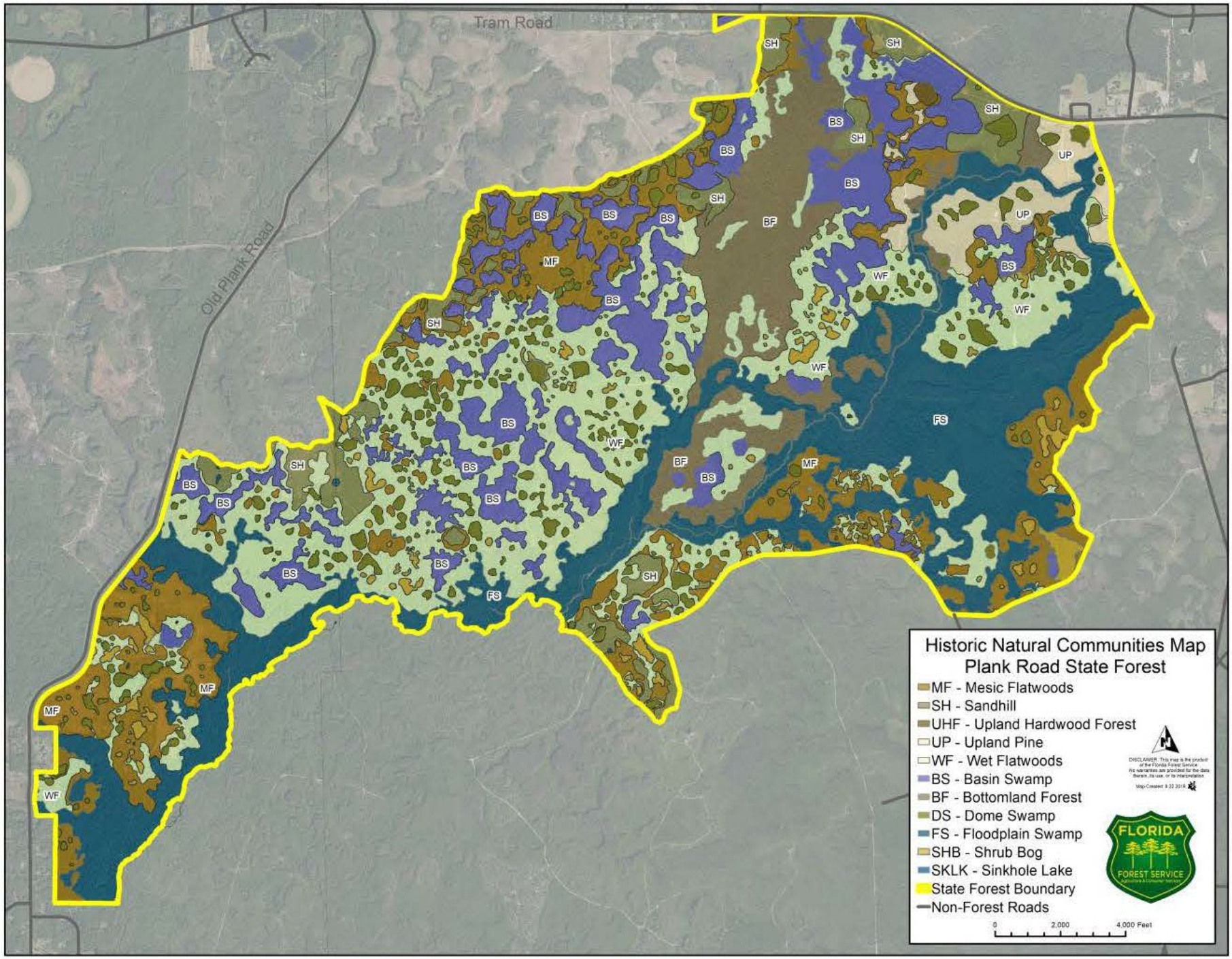

GADSDEN
LEON
LIBERTY
JEFFERSON
WAKULLA
TAYLOR
FRANKLIN
Location
Tram Road
Old Plank Road
North Leg Road
Gum Creek Tract
Two Bridge Road
Gum Creek Road
Two Bridge Road
West Entrance Rd
South Leg Road
Chicken Branch Tract
LEON COUNTY
JEFFERSON COUNTY
Boundary, Tract, & Road Map
Plank Road State Forest
Primary Forest Road
Secondary Forest Road
Tertiary Forest Road
Service Forest Road
Non- Forest Roads
Creeks and River
State Forest Tracts
State Park
County Boundaries
0
2,000
4,000 Feet
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE


GADSDEN
LEON
LIBERTY
JEFFERSON
WAKULLA
TAYLOR
FRANKLIN
Location
Tram Road
259
59
363
Old Plank Road
WAKULLA COUNTY
LEON COUNTY
JEFFERSON COUNTY
Optimal Boundary Map
Plank Road State Forest
State Forest Boundary
Optimal Boundary
State Park
County Boundaries
Major Roads
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE
0
1
2 Miles


Tram Road
Old Plank Road
State Forest Entrance
State Forest Parking Area
E
P
Proposed Bridge
Proposed Bridge
State Forest Entrance
State Forest Headquarters Location
E
Facilities, Recreation, & Improvements Map
Plank Road State Forest
Primary Forest Road
Secondary Forest Road
Tertiary Forest Road
Service Forest Road
Creeks and Rivers
Non-Forest Roads
State Forest Boundary
State Park
0
2,000
4,000 Feet
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE


Tram Road
Old Plank Road
Moore Branch
Chicken Branch
Gum Creek
Limestone Creek
St Marks River
Horn Spring & Little Horn Springs
Hamlin Branch
Water Resources
Plank Road State Forest
Creeks and Rivers
State Forest Boundary
Forest Roads
Non-Forest Roads
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE
0
2,000
4,000 Feet


Tram Road
Old Plank Road
Non-Native Invasive Species Map
Plank Road State Forest
Mimosa
Japanese climbing fern
Non-Forest Roads
Creeks and Rivers
Forest Roads
State Forest Boundary
0
2,000
4,000 Feet
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE


Tram Road
Old Plank Road
Historic Natural Communities Map
Plank Road State Forest
MF - Mesic Flatwoods
SH - Sandhill
UHF - Upland Hardwood Forest
UP - Upland Pine
WF - Wet Flatwoods
BS - Basin Swamp
BF - Bottomland Forest
DS - Dome Swamp
FS - Floodplain Swamp
SHB - Shrub Bog
SKLK - Sinkhole Lake
State Forest Boundary
Non-Forest Roads
0
2,000
4,000 Feet
FLORIDA
FOREST SERVICE