

**ITEM 5:**

Determine whether a 26.14-acre conservation easement in Jefferson County, Florida, over property belonging to Belle Terre Land Partners, LLC fulfills a clearly delineated state conservation policy and yields a significant public benefit.

**LOCATION:**

Jefferson County

**APPLICANT:**

Belle Terre Land Partners, LLC

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

Belle Terre Land Partners, LLC requests a determination that a conservation easement held by Tall Timbers Research, Inc. fulfills a clearly delineated state conservation policy and yields a significant public benefit pursuant to Section 196.26(4), Florida Statutes, to qualify for an *ad valorem* tax exemption for properties less than 40 acres in size. The easement was granted voluntarily to protect, in perpetuity, the ecological and scenic resources and the conservation interests and values of the Champion family while permitting compatible uses of the property that are consistent with the property's conservation values. It is not a regulatory easement granted to offset alteration or destruction of another habitat.

The owner submitted copies of the recorded conservation easement, baseline documentation report and management plan with the designated manager. The property consists of approximately 10.4 acres of Crow Pond, originally a hardwood swamp that was part of the surrounding spring-fed bottomland forest impounded in 1940, 4.48 acres of bottomland forest and 11.26 acres of disturbed uplands containing cultivated and fallow fields, planted pine and hardwood hedgerows. Crow Pond and the bottomland forest are designated as Special Natural Areas (SNAs) offering diverse, high quality aquatic and forested wetland habitats of conservation value in the St. Marks River Basin with future management focused on promoting biodiversity and sustaining ecological functions of these habitats. Listed species documented on the property include Southeastern American kestrel, bald eagle, wood stork, Florida black bear, gopher tortoise, Southern lady fern, Flyr's Brickell-bush, gopherwood buckthorn, croomia, cardinal flower, hairy fevertree, yellow-fringed orchard, and oval ladies' tresses. The property is within the St. Marks River Watershed in the Red Hills District of north Florida. It is adjacent to and shares a reciprocal conservation easement with the Schrieffer conservation easement to the west and Barron conservation easement to the south, encompassing 113.9 acres including the 36.21-acre Crow Pond.

The easement is managed for recreational hunting and fishing and aesthetic enjoyment. Crow pond is primarily used for fishing and duck hunting, while the surrounding forested wetland is used for deer and turkey hunting. The uplands are managed for cultivation of crops and planted pine. Selective timber harvesting is allowed with management provisions listed in the conservation easement. Invasive species are managed using prescribed fire, herbicides and mechanical treatments (including trapping and hunting for feral pigs).

Staff concludes that the property as described and managed pursuant to the conservation easement, baseline documentation and management plan fulfills several clearly delineated state conservation policies including being located within the Red Hills strategic habitat conservation

area, protecting natural floodplain functions, functional wetlands and aquifer recharge. Staff also concludes that the property as described and managed, yields a significant public benefit because of the presence of and management for threatened and endangered plant and animal species, inclusion in a protected landscape and maintenance and protection of a mature bottomland forest wetland complex with perennial springs and seeps in the St. Marks River watershed.

**DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Determine that the conservation easement fulfills a clearly delineated state conservation policy and that it yields a significant public benefit.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

Fulfills a clearly delineated state conservation policy:

Yes  No

Yields a significant public benefit:

Yes  No

Defer



## Conservation Easements under 40 acres in size Application

Use of this form is required for applications to the Acquisition and Restoration Council for determination of whether a conservation easement under 40 acres in size fulfills a clearly delineated state conservation policy and yields a significant public benefit pursuant to section 196.26(4), Florida Statutes. When possible please submit application packages (including maps) either electronically (preferred) or in an 8.5 x 11 paper size format.

### General Information

Owners Name: BELLE TERRE LAND PARTNERS LLC

Acres: 26.14

City or Town/Zip: MONTICELLO FL 32344

County: JEFFERSON

Property Address: 7874 GAMBLE RD MONTICELLO, FL 32344

Mailing Address: " " " " " "

Phone: 850-508-1647

Email: roger@rogerchampion.com

Submit complete applications to:  
[ARC\\_Mailinglist@FloridaDEP.gov](mailto:ARC_Mailinglist@FloridaDEP.gov)

Or by mail to:  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
Division of State Lands  
Office of Environmental Services  
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard., Mail Station 140  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000  
Phone: 850-245-2555

# Map 1 Location of Crow Pond Easements in the Red Hills Region



### Legend

- Red Hills Rivers
- Major Roads
- County Boundaries
- Open Water
- Urban Areas
- Crow Pond Easement
- Red Hills Plantations
- St. Marks River Basin

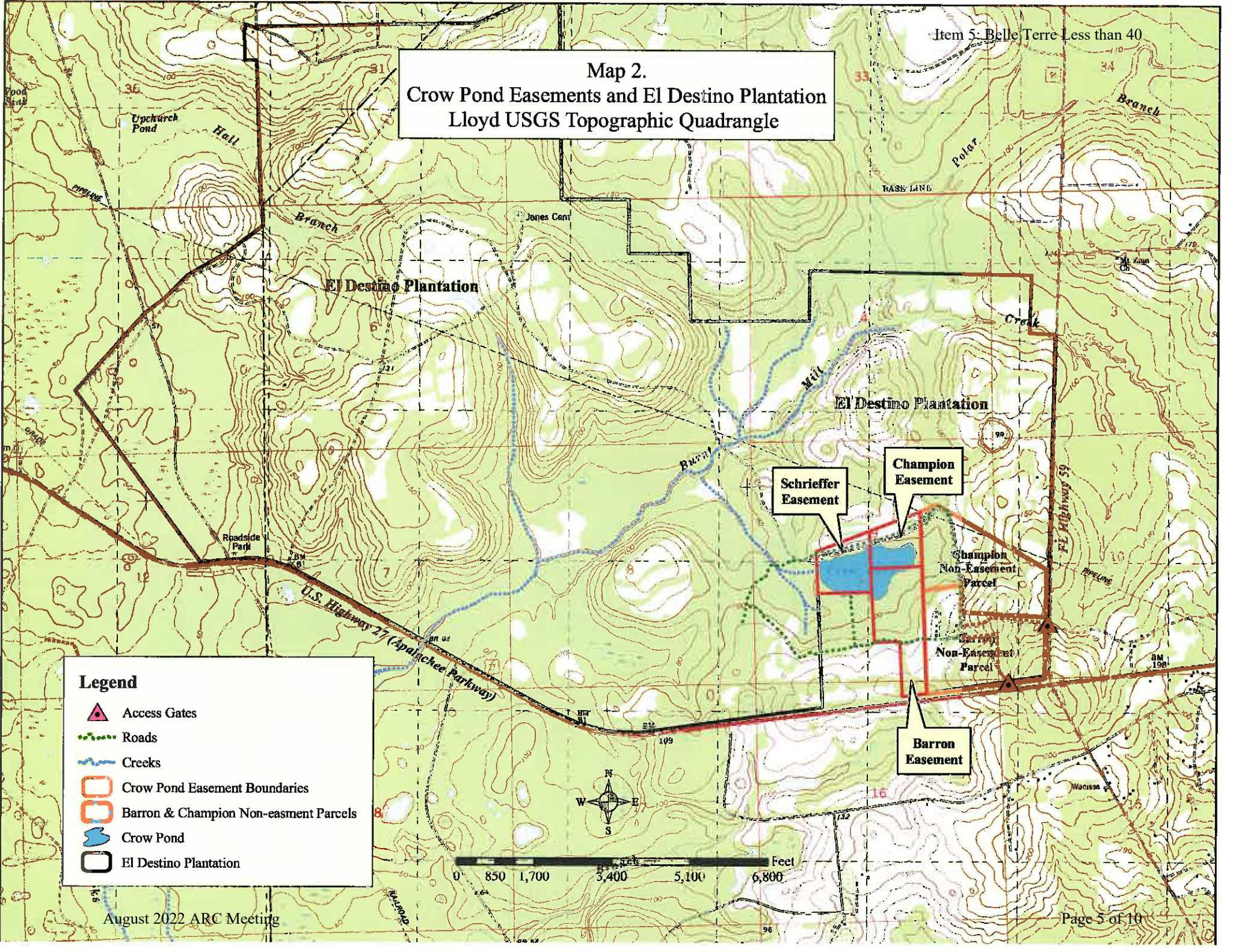


**Crow Pond Easements**





# Map 2. Crow Pond Easements and El Destino Plantation Lloyd USGS Topographic Quadrangle



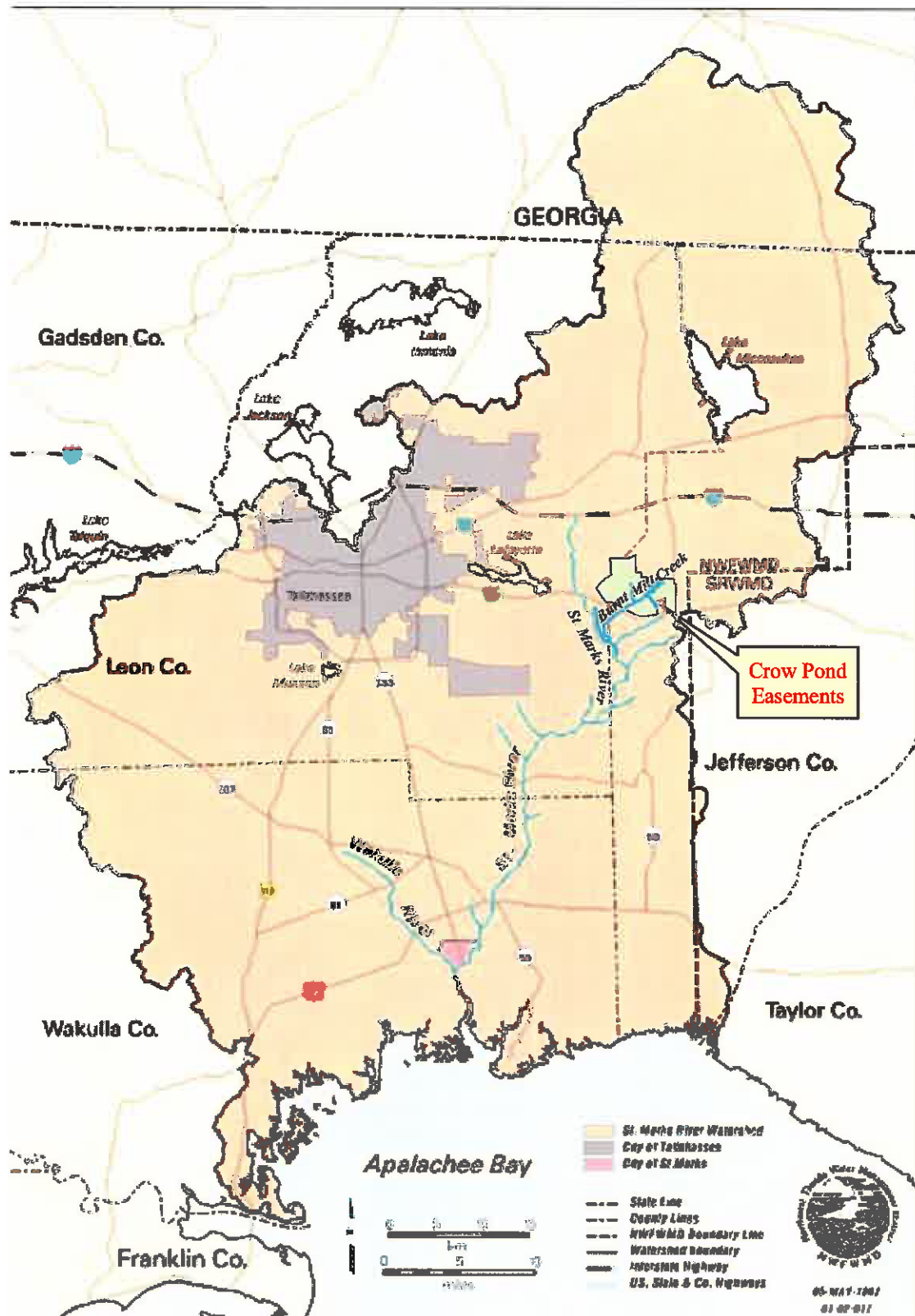
**Legend**

- Access Gates
- Roads
- Creeks
- Crow Pond Easement Boundaries
- Barron & Champion Non-easment Parcels
- Crow Pond
- El Destino Plantation

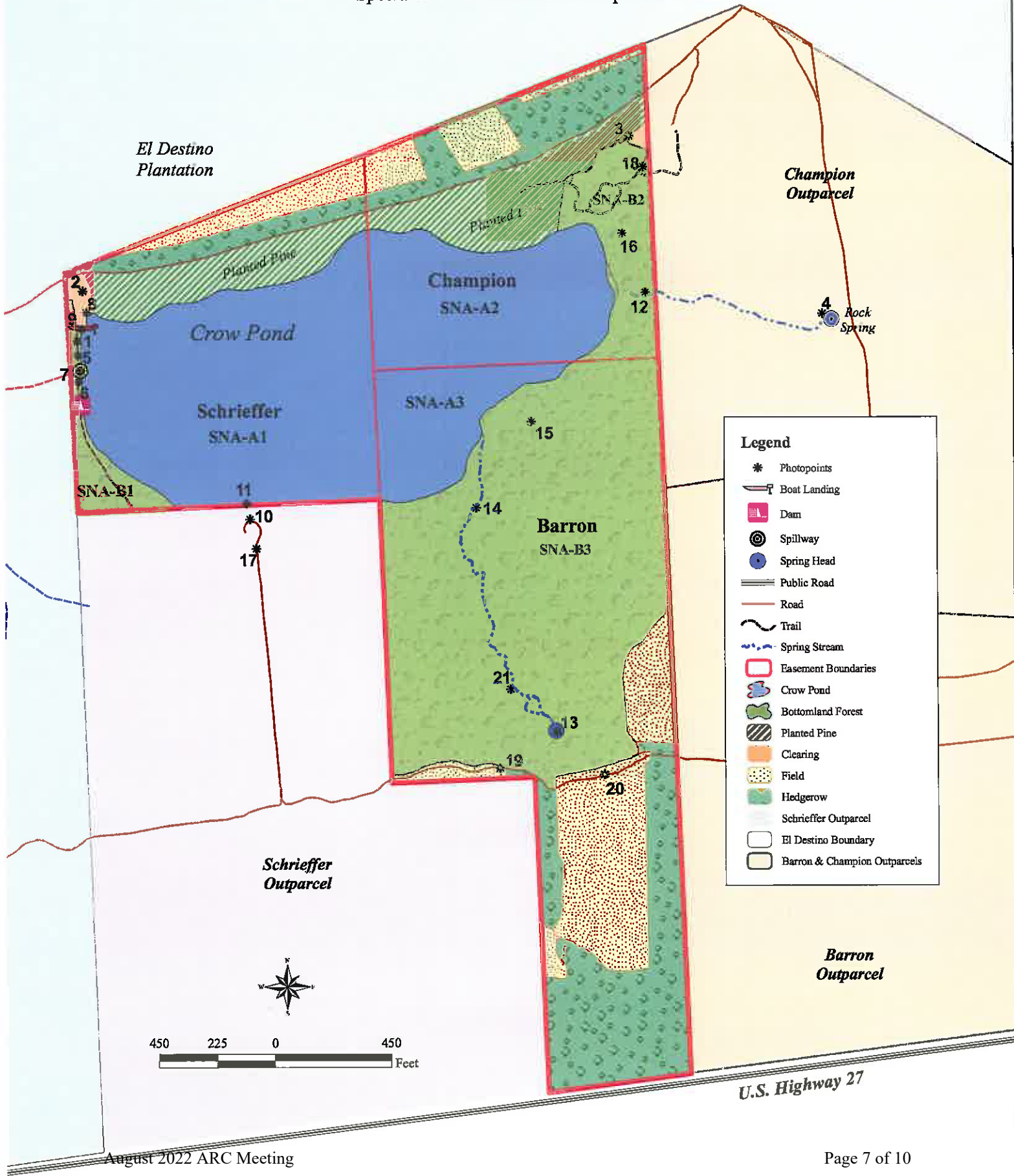




### Map 3 Crow Pond Easements St. Marks River Watershed



Map 4.  
Crow Pond Easements  
Special Natural Areas and Photopoints



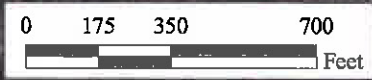


Map 5.  
Crow Pond Easements  
Aerial View



**Legend**

- Public Road
- Road
- Easement Boundaries
- Bottomland Forest
- Open Water Pond





**Appendix II. Endangered, threatened and special interest species known to occur or potentially could occur on the Crow Pond Easements.**

Common Name	Scientific Name	Designated Status	
		Florida	USFWS
<b>ANIMALS</b>			
<b>Amphibians</b>			
Gopher (=crawfish) frog	<i>Rana capito</i>	SSC	
<b>Reptiles</b>			
American alligator*	<i>Alligator mississippiensis</i>	SSC	T(S/A)
Suwannee cooter	<i>Pseudemys concinna suwanniensis</i>	SSC	
<b>Birds</b>			
Little blue heron*	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	SSC	
Snowy egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	SSC	
Tricolored (=Louisiana) heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	SSC	
Swallow-tailed kite*	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	R	
White ibis	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	SSC	
Southeastern American kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius paulus</i>	T	
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	T	T
Swainson's Warbler	<i>Limnithlypis swainsonii</i>	S	
Wood stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	E	E
<b>Mammals</b>			
Southeastern mouse-eared bat	<i>Myotis austroriparius</i>	S	
Florida black bear*	<i>Ursus americanus floridanus</i>	T	
<b>PLANTS</b>			
Southern lady fern*	<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	T	
Fly's brickell-bush	<i>Brickellia cordifolia</i>	E	
Gopherwood buckthorn	<i>Bumelia lycioides</i>	E	
Croomia	<i>Croomia pauciflora</i>	E	
Greenfly orchid	<i>Epidendrum conopseum</i>	C	
Heartleaf, wild ginger	<i>Hexastylis arifolia</i>	T	
Cardinal flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	T	
Crabapple*	<i>Malus angustifolia</i>	T	
Cinnamon fern*	<i>Osmunda cinnamomea</i>	C	
Royal fern*	<i>Osmunda regalis</i>	C	
Hairy fevertree*	<i>Pinckneya bracteata (=P. pubens)</i>	T	
Yellow-fringed orchid	<i>Platanthera ciliaris</i>	T	
Pink azalea*	<i>Rhododendron canescens</i>	C	
Oval ladies' tresses	<i>Spiranthes ovalis</i>	E	
Crane-fly orchid	<i>Tipularia discolor</i>	T	
Rain lily	<i>Zephyranthes atamasco</i>	T	

This list represents those endangered, threatened, and species of special concern animals and plants which have been documented to occur in Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, and Madison Counties, Florida. This list consolidates the Florida and federal official lists of endangered and

threatened species, and other species categorized in some way by the respective jurisdictional agencies as meriting special protection or consideration. The Florida lists of animals are maintained by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and constitute Rules 39-27.003, 39-27.004 and 39-27.005, respectively, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). The Florida lists of plants are administered and maintained by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services via Chapter 5B-40, F.A.C. The federal lists of animals and plants are administered by the U.S.D.A. Fish and Wildlife Service and are published in 50 CFR 17 (animals) and 50 CFR 23 (plants). The abbreviations used are:

- USFWS = United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- E = Endangered
- R = Rare
- T = Threatened
- T(S/A) = Threatened/Similarity of Appearance
- SSC = Species of Special Concern
- C = Commercially Exploited



**Figure 17.** A young American alligator sunning on a log.