

ITEM 5:

Consider a revision to the project evaluation report for the Strategic Managed Area Lands List Florida Forever Project.

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

In October 2018, ARC approved the Strategic Managed Area Lands List (SMALL) project evaluation report (PER) and addition to the Florida Forever Priority List. Sponsored by the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), the Florida Forest Service (FFS), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), SMALL is a collection of ownerships statewide that would augment or improve management of existing state-managed conservation lands, if acquired. Parcels included within the project have been identified as part of the optimum management boundary within the approved management plan of the respective managed area.

The original PER allowed each agency 10 ownerships (40 in total) to be included in the project boundary (ownership is defined as one or more property identification numbers with a single owner), and required proposed boundary amendments to be submitted for ARC consideration once per year at the April ARC meeting. The agency sponsors have requested that these specific conditions in the PER be modified to identify and pursue potential acquisitions more effectively. Additionally, DEP’s Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (ORCP) was not included as a project sponsor.

The proposed revisions to the SMALL PER were developed in collaboration with the five agencies/programs: DRP, FFS, FWC, OGT and ORCP. The revisions include the addition of the ORCP as a project sponsor, an increase in the total number of ownerships to 60 and removes the restriction of once per year for boundary amendment proposals.

Project Status

The SMALL project includes over 11,898 acres with 11,572 acres remaining and is ranked number eight in the Critical Natural Lands category on the 2021 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2019) is \$ \$51,010,162.

DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the revised project evaluation report.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

- APPROVE**
- APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:** _____
- DEFER**
- WITHDRAW**
- NOT APPROVE**
- OTHER:** _____

Strategic Managed Area Lands List
FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT
Multiple counties, statewide

Executive Summary

The Strategic Managed Area Lands List (SMALL) proposal is sponsored by the following ~~four~~ five state conservation land managing entities: the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), the Florida Forest Service (FFS), the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) and the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection (ORCP). It creates an additional funding source for the state managing agencies to acquire in fee a group of ~~40~~ up to 60 ~~parcels~~ ownerships (ownerships ~~which may be defined with~~ is defined as one or more property identification numbers with a single owner) strategic to the operation of conservation units under management. The DRP, FFS and FWC, will each include up to 15 ownerships; and as additional agencies within the Department of Environmental Protection, OGT and ORCP, will collectively include up to 15 ownerships. Acquiring and adding these parcels to managed areas would enhance the management efficiencies, the natural resources or ecosystem services for wildlife, water resources or habitat. ~~Each of the four agencies provided~~ Rationales for the ~~ten~~ initial strategic parcels/ownerships ~~they identified, and those~~ can be found in Appendix C.

All landowners for the initial project list were notified that their parcels were proposed for inclusion in the SMALL project so that, if they wished, they could remove their property from the boundary of the proposal, ~~modifying the boundary while it was being developed~~. At any time in the future, if an owner decides they no longer want their parcels included in the project (eliminate the possibility of future acquisition using Florida Forever funding), they can have their parcel removed. However, in accordance with Florida Statute, they must let the Division of State Lands know by sending a certified letter requesting the removal of their parcel from the SMALL project boundary. (A sample letter can be found in Appendix D.)

The purpose of this proposal is to assist in acquiring in fee those strategic parcels to be incorporated into existing managed conservation lands. Once a strategic parcel is acquired or recommended by the identifying agency for removal from the project, the agency may submit a boundary amendment application to add another owners' parcel in its place. This will ensure that ~~ten~~ no more than 60 ownerships/parcels remain on each agency's list are included in the project. ~~For efficiencies of the ARC,~~

~~boundary revisions from the four agencies will be brought annually in April to the ARC for consideration.~~ The proposal is best suited for the Critical Natural Lands category.

PURPOSE FOR ACQUISITION

The proposal area is a collection of ~~40~~up to 60 ownerships that would improve the efficiency of unit operations and management of essential natural resources, ecosystem service parcels, and linkage connectors for ~~four~~five of Florida's state agencies.

LOCATION AND PROXIMITY TO OTHER MANAGED AREAS

The lands proposed in each county that are identified for inclusion within SMALL are either located adjacent to or are inholdings within the outermost boundary of the following managed areas:

Alachua -Paynes Prairie State Park AND Newberry to High Springs Trail Corridor;

Bay - Camp Helen State Park

Broward - Dr. Von D. Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park;

Charlotte - Babcock-Webb Wildlife Management Area;

Clay - Jennings State Forest;

Collier - Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park;

Columbia - River Rise Preserve State Park AND Georgia to Cross City Trail Corridor – Columbia AND Palatka to Lake City Trail Corridor;

Miami-Dade - Ludlum Trail Corridor AND CSX Railroad Corridor;

Desoto - Peace River State Forest;

Dixie - Georgia to Cross City Trail;

Gadsden -Lake Talquin State Forest;

Gilchrist - Nature Coast Trail Corridor;

Hamilton - Florida National Scenic Trail-Morgan Easement;

Lafayette - Lafayette Forest Wildlife and Environmental Area;

Levy - Andrews Wildlife Management Area;

Madison - Georgia to Cross City Trail Corridor;

Manatee - Moody Branch Wildlife and Environmental Area;

Marion - Silver Springs State Park;

Orange - Charles H. Bronson State Forest;

Putnam - Welaka State Forest – Putnam AND Caravelle Ranch Wildlife Management Area;

Santa Rosa - Blackwater River State Forest;