

**ITEM 11:**

Vote on whether to amend the Florida's First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project Boundary to add two parcels totaling approximately 37.6 acres in Hernando County with a tax assessed market value of \$535,365.

**LOCATION:**

Hernando County

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

The Mud Spring amendment proposed by Greg Driskell with Natural Resource Planning Services and SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzer, adds two parcels in Hernando County totaling approximately 37.6 acres to the Florida's First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever project. The property is owned by Zeneda Partners (2/5 interest) and Norman Curtis (3/5 interest). The parcels have a combined tax assessed value of \$535,365.

The parcels are adjacent to Weekiwachee Preserve, owned by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and are proposed for fee simple acquisition. The landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The property includes Mud Spring, a second magnitude spring with a large pool estimated at 200-300 feet across. The spring outflow forms the headwaters of the Mud River and flows 1.5 miles to the Weeki Wachee River. Mud Spring, Mud River and Weeki Wachee River are all designated as Outstanding Florida Waters. The property also fronts on the Mud River and includes salt marsh and a tidal creek with two smaller spring vents along its edge.

The property is proposed to be managed by the Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Program which has provided a management prospectus. Acquisition of the Mud Spring parcels would provide a public kayak/canoe launch, swimming and public picnicking. Invasive exotic species management of Brazilian pepper found on the site in addition to habitat management on 23 acres of uplands dominated by 50-year-old slash pine.

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The parcels total less than 1,000 acres, have a tax assessed value of less than \$2 million, and are less than 10% of the size of the overall project to which it is being added. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

*Project History:*

Florida's First Magnitude Springs was first approved on the CARL list in 1991 to preserve and protect Florida's most famous and important natural and recreational resources. The primary goals of management of the Florida's First Magnitude Springs project are to preserve land around springs, karst windows, and springs to aid in the protection of the Floridan Aquifer from the effects of commercial, residential, and agricultural runoff; clearcutting and mining; and unsupervised recreation.

The Florida's First Magnitude Springs project includes over 16,583 acres with 5,972 acres remaining and is ranked number one in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category on the 2020 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2018) is \$28,441,797.

*FNAI Review:*

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways, with approximately 80% of the site contributing to Natural Floodplain Function, Surface Water Protection and FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>DHR</b>	<b>FFS</b>	<b>Lynetta Griner</b>	<b>FWC</b>	<b>Bill Palmer</b>	<b>Elva Peppers</b>	<b>DEP</b>	<b>Selected</b>
Florida's First Magnitude Springs: Mud Spring								



To: Deborah Burr, DEP/OES  
From: Dale R. Jackson, FNAI  
Date: July 23, 2020  
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project:

### Florida's First Magnitude Springs –Mud Springs, Hernando County

The primary goal of the Florida First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project is to protect Florida's largest (first order) artesian springs and the Floridan Aquifer that supplies them with water. These springs provide not only clean fresh water but also abundant opportunities for recreation, as well as some protection for rare animals such as cave crayfish. Currently, the project includes approximately 19 springs in 14 counties, mostly in the panhandle and northern peninsula (2019 Florida Forever annual report).

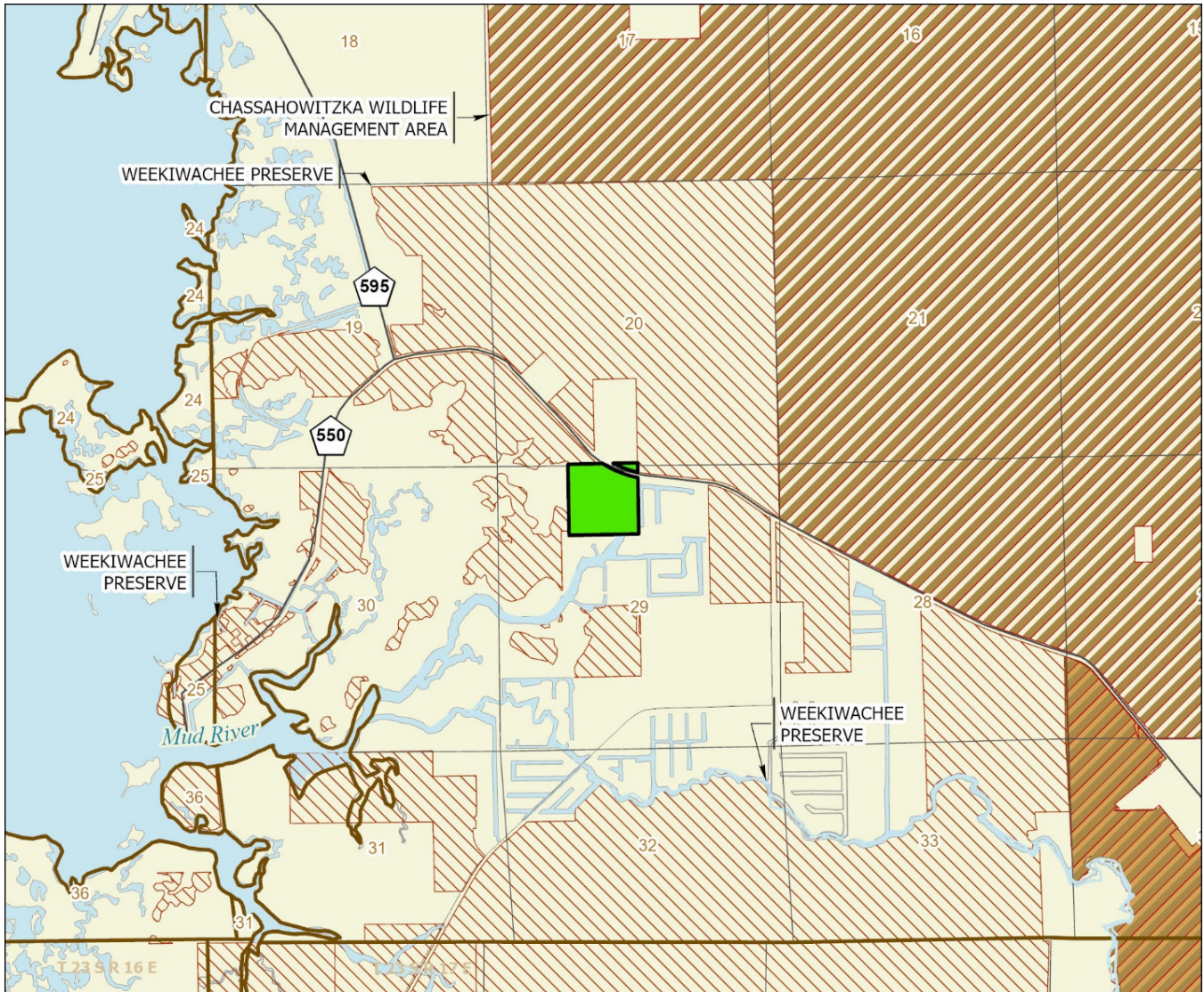
The 38-acre Mud Springs boundary amendment proposal in western Hernando County lies 3.5 miles west of US 19 along Cortez Boulevard, which crosses the site's northeast corner. Running south from Cortez Boulevard, Mary's Fish Camp Road transects the site's western half and provides access. The square tract contacts Weekiwachee Preserve (Southwest Florida Water Management District), which is contiguous with Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area, at three points.

The site contains Mud Spring, a second magnitude spring with a large pool estimated at 200-300 feet across. The spring outflow forms the headwaters of the Mud River, which flows 1.5 miles to the Weeki Wachee River. The site is popular with canoeists, kayakers, and fishers.

Mud Spring lies in the northeastern quarter of the tract. The western portion of the property reaches salt marsh associated with the Gulf of Mexico; a tidal creek in the northwestern corner contains two small spring vents. Frontage along the Mud River occurs along the southern edge of the site. Per the application, 23 acres of uplands (60% of site) are dominated by slash pines (mesic flatwoods) greater than 50 years of age. An infestation of Brazilian pepper on site has been reduced but still requires management. Residential development has encroached from the east and south to the borders of the property.

The FNAI database contains only one record of rare species on site – the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*, G5T4/S4, N, N), based on its being considered abundant regionally by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The applicant notes that manatees sometimes enter the spring in winter.

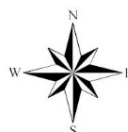
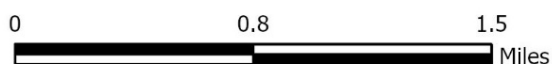
The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) at the end of this memo is based on the Florida Forever Conservation Needs Assessment developed by FNAI. The data used in that analysis represent a standardized, statewide perspective of natural community distributions based primarily on data from the Cooperative Land Cover Map. The proposed addition contributes substantially to protection of Ecological Greenways, Natural Floodplain Function, and Surface Water Protection.



### FLORIDA'S FIRST MAGNITUDE SPRINGS PROPOSED ADDITION

#### HERNANDO COUNTY

- Proposed Florida Forever BOT Project Addition
- Florida Forever BOT Projects
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands



JULY 2020



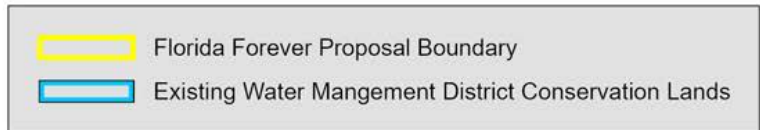
## Florida's First Magnitude Springs Proposed Addition

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSAL BOUNDARY AS OF JULY 2020

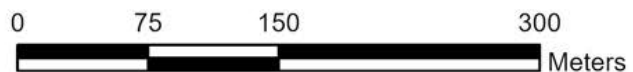


Map Produced by: N. Pasco, July 2020

Background: World Imagery Resolution = 0.3 meter



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## Florida's First Magnitude Springs Addition: Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20200717

GIS ACRES = 38.31

MEASURES	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	0.61	2%
Priority 3	8.90	23%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Total Acres	9.51	25%
<b>B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	30.80	80%
Priority 3	0.33	0%
Priority 4	1.39	4%
Priority 5	0.39	1%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Total Acres	32.91	86%
<b>B3: Ecological Greenways</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	38.14	100%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Total Acres	38.14	100%
<b>B4: Under-represented Natural Communities</b>		
Upland Glade (G1)	0.00	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0.00	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0.00	0%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0.00	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0.00	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0.00	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0.00	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0.00	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0.00	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0.00	0%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0.00	0%
Total Acres	0.00	0%
<b>B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species</b>		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	1	
<b>C4: Natural Floodplain Function</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	13.73	36%
Priority 3	16.62	43%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Total Acres	30.36	79%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>C5: Surface Water Protection</b>		
Priority 1	30.52	80%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Priority 7	0.00	0%
Total Acres	30.52	80%
<b>C7: Fragile Coastal Resources</b>		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0.00	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0.00	0%
Coastal Wetlands	7.67	20%
Total Acres	7.67	20%
<b>C8: Functional Wetlands</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	4.73	12%
Priority 3	5.89	15%
Priority 4	0.06	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Total Acres	10.67	28%
<b>D3: Aquifer Recharge</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Total Acres	0.00	0%
<b>E2: Recreational Trails (miles)</b> (prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
<b>F2: Arch. &amp; Historical Sites (number)</b> 0 sites		
<b>G1: Sustainable Forestry</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	1.11	3%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	0.00	0%
Total Acres	1.11	3%
<b>G3: Forestland for Recharge</b> 0.00 0%		

<sup>a</sup>Acres of each resource in the project and percentage of project represented by each resource are listed except where noted. This analysis converts site boundary into pixels, which causes slight differences from GIS acres; this effect is greatest on small sites.