

ITEM 11:

Vote on whether to amend the Rainbow River Corridor Florida Forever project boundary to add 14 parcels totaling approximately 47.78 acres in Marion County with a tax assessed market value of \$87,209.

LOCATION:

Marion County

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The Nine Island Cove boundary amendment proposed by Rainbow River Conservation Inc., adds 14 parcels in Marion County totaling approximately 47.78 acres to the Rainbow River Corridor Florida Forever project. The 14 parcels have a combined tax assessed market value of \$87,209.

The 14 parcels within the Nine Island Cove property are proposed for fee-simple acquisition. The parcels are owned by six property owners, with the West family as the principal owner of 40.67 acres. The landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The City of Dunnellon has committed to manage the property as a city park and provided a management prospectus.

The proposal would protect almost a mile of frontage on the Withlacoochee River. The parcels in Nine Island Cove contain shallow wetlands, coves, natural springs, hardwood forest, and successional forest. The addition of the Nine Island Cove property would extend the Rainbow River Corridor, increase nesting and breeding areas on Lake Rousseau, expand recreational and educational opportunities in the area, and provide enhanced watershed and water quality protection for the Withlacoochee River.

The proposal meets the Florida Forever 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 proposed for addition.

Project History:

The Rainbow River Corridor project was approved by the Acquisition and Restoration Council in 2007. The project aims to conserve the remaining undeveloped land along the Rainbow River to improve landscape linkages to existing conservation lands and create a conservation corridor. The project will protect rare species habitat, provide surface-water protection, aquifer recharge and increase public resource-based recreation in the region.

The Rainbow River Corridor project includes 1,178 acres with 1,129 acres remaining and is ranked 18 in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category on the 2021 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value of the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2019) is \$10,072,734.

FNAI Review:

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 98% of the Nine Island Cove site contributes to ecological Greenways and 88% contributes to FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities. The site also contributes to Surface Water Protection (72%), Aquifer Recharge (58%), and Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (58%).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

| Project | DHR | FFS | Lynetta Griner | FWC | Bill Palmer | Elva Peppers | DEP | Selected |
|--|------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Rainbow River Corridor: Nine Island Cove | | | | | | | | |



To: Deborah Burr, DEP/OES
 From: Dale R. Jackson, FNAI
 Date: May 21, 2021
 Subject: Proposed boundary modification (addition) to Florida Forever BOT Project--
 Florida Keys Ecosystem: Dixon properties, Monroe County

The major goal of the Rainbow River Corridor Florida Forever (FF) Project is to protect most of the undeveloped or minimally developed private land remaining along the Rainbow River, a large spring-run stream tributary of the Withlacoochee River. Designated as a Florida Aquatic Preserve and Outstanding Florida Water, this spring-fed river emerges from Rainbow Springs and flows for approximately 6 miles before entering the Withlacoochee River at Dunnellon. The project would help to restore and maintain water quality and habitat along one of Florida's largest spring-run streams, which provides abundant recreational opportunities as well as habitat for rare and common species within its waters and in adjacent uplands. As of 2019, the project included 1,171 acres, of which 42 have been acquired (2019 Florida Forever Five-Year Plan).

The proposed addition includes 49 acres (52.94 GIS acres) situated in a bend in the Withlacoochee River (2,750 feet river frontage per proposal) in southwestern Marion County (the river is the boundary with Citrus County) at the city of Dunnellon. The tract is ca. 0.625 mile west of the mouth of the Rainbow River and extends narrowly northward from the river for 0.6 mile. The tract is subdivided into 16 parcels with eight owners, although one owner owns 40.67 acres (83%, to be listed for sale); a second owner owns 6.26 acres (13%). The property is proposed for fee-simple protection.

Except for a small clearing in the northeast, the tract is undeveloped and forested, although it is mostly surrounded by development associated with the city of Dunnellon. The southern third of the property is wetlands. Open water "coves" just north of the river (with some spring input and resembling floodplain lakes but actually formed from historic phosphate pits) are bordered by cypress (floodplain swamp), but most of the remainder of the tract is covered principally by hardwoods, with a portion representing upland hardwood forest. The northern-most section shows soil characteristics of sandhill, but fire exclusion has produced successional hardwood forest on these soils.

The uplands have a well-developed, mature canopy of hardwoods and pines with a few north-south dirt roads visible in 1990s aerial photography. The Florida Cooperative Landcover depicts a north-south road with two small loops in the northern half of the property. Most of these are not visible in recent aerial photographs because of dense forest canopy. The application indicates there are no paved roads on the property, only a single dirt road and some walking trails. Land immediately east

of the site supports residential development and a public school facility. Additional residential development lies immediately to the northwest of the site.

The FNAI database contains no records of rare species on site, although the adjacent river is known to support the Suwannee cooter (*Pseudemys concinna suwanniensis*), and wading birds are expected along the floodplain. The Florida Breeding Bird Atlas shows snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*), and little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*) as breeding in the area.

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 (by percent of site, not total acreage) to protection of Ecological Greenways, Surface Water Protection, and Aquifer Recharge. Twenty-three percent of the site supports Under-represented Natural Communities (12 acres of upland hardwood forest).

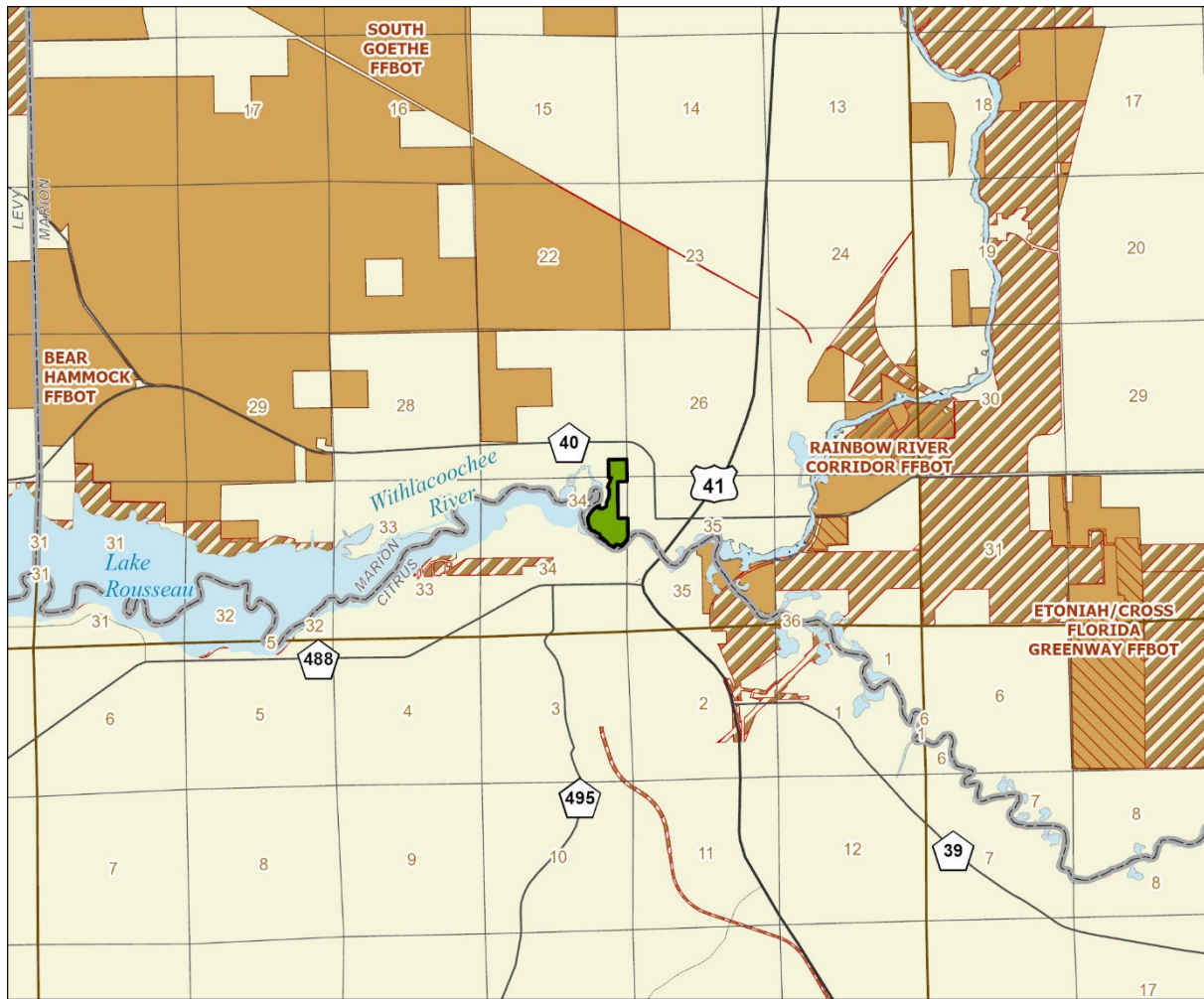
Rainbow River Corridor Addition (Nine Islands Cove): Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20210513

GIS ACRES = 52.94

| MEASURES | Resource Acres ^a | % of project |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 19.57 | 37% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 11.23 | 21% |
| Total Acres | 30.86 | 58% |
| B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 20.74 | 39% |
| Priority 6 | 25.41 | 48% |
| Total Acres | 46.15 | 88% |
| B3: Ecological Greenways | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 51.43 | 98% |
| Priority 6 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 51.43 | 98% |
| B4: Under-represented Natural Communities | | |
| 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) | 12.12 | 23% |
| Total Acres | 12.12 | 23% |
| B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species | | |
| G1 | 0 | |
| G2 | 0 | |
| G3 | 0 | |
| G4 | 0 | |
| G5 | 0 | |
| Total | 0 | |
| C4: Natural Floodplain Function | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 13.23 | 25% |
| Priority 6 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 13.23 | 25% |


| MEASURES (continued) | Resource Acres ^a | % of project |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|
| C5: Surface Water Protection | | |
| Priority 1 | 37.53 | 71% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.67 | 1% |
| Priority 5 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 6 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 7 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 38.20 | 72% |
| C7: Fragile Coastal Resources | | |
| Fragile Coastal Uplands | 0.00 | 0% |
| Imperiled Coastal Lakes | 0.00 | 0% |
| Coastal Wetlands | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 0.00 | 0% |
| C8: Functional Wetlands | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 15.85 | 30% |
| Priority 6 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 15.85 | 30% |
| D3: Aquifer Recharge | | |
| Priority 1 | 19.29 | 37% |
| Priority 2 | 11.18 | 21% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 6 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 30.47 | 58% |
| E2: Recreational Trails (miles) <small>(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)</small> | | |
| Land Trail Priorities | 1.0 | |
| Land Trail Opportunities | 0.0 | |
| Total Miles | 1.0 | |
| F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number) | | |
| Total Sites | 0 sites | |
| G1: Sustainable Forestry | | |
| Priority 1 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 2 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 3 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 4 | 0.00 | 0% |
| Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands | 0.00 | 0% |
| Total Acres | 0.00 | 0% |
| G3: Forestland for Recharge | | |
| Total Acres | 0.00 | 0% |

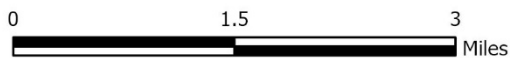
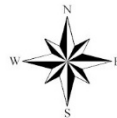
^aAcres of each resource in the project and percentage of project represented by each resource are listed except where noted. This analysis converts site boundary into pixels, which causes slight differences from GIS acres; this effect is most noticeable on small sites.



**RAINBOW RIVER CORRIDOR PROPOSED ADDITION
(NINE ISLAND COVE)**

MARION COUNTY

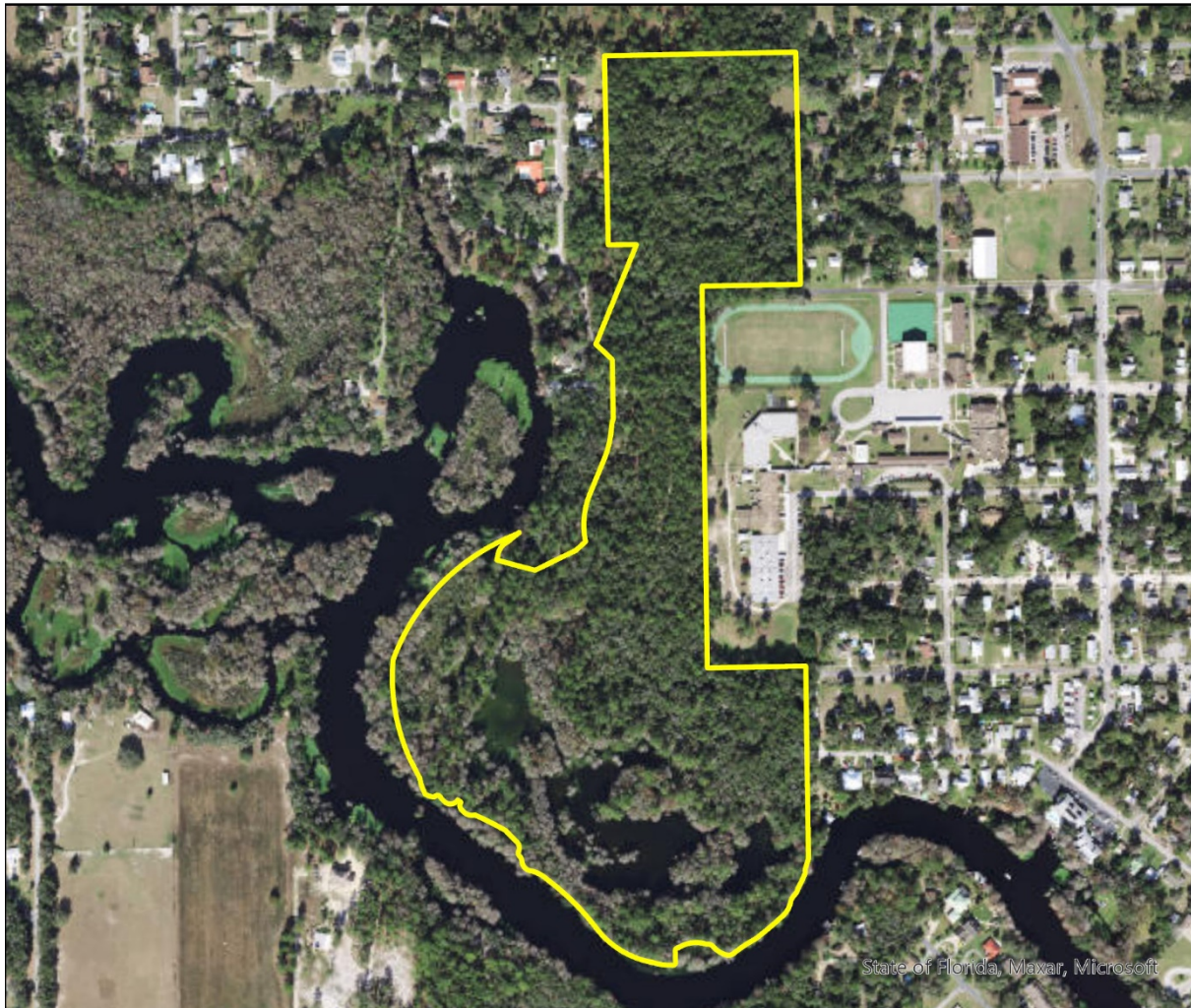
-  Proposed Florida Forever BOT Project Addition
-  Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  State Aquatic Preserve



MAY 2021

Rainbow River Corridor Proposed Addition (Nine Island Cove)

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF MAY 2021



State of Florida, Maxar, Microsoft

Map Produced by: N. Pasco, May 2021

Background: World Imagery Resolution = 0.3 meter



1018 Thomasville Road
Suite 200-C
Tallahassee, Florida 32303
850-224-8207
fax 850-681-9364
www.fnai.org

