

**ITEM 16:**

Consider a 10-year update to the Pine Log State Forest Management Plan (Lease No. 3688).

**LOCATION:**

Bay and Washington counties

**APPLICANT:**

Florida Forest Service (FFS)

**STAFF REMARKS:**

*Background*

Pine Log State Forest (PLSF), Florida's first state forest, is comprised of approximately 8,036.82 acres located in northwestern Bay and southwestern Washington counties on State Road 79, about thirteen miles north of Panama City Beach. The forest was purchased in 1936 and is managed for timber, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and ecological restoration using an ecosystem management approach. The unique features of PLSF include the Blueberry Slash Pine Plantation planted in 1937, and Pine Log Creek, which runs through the northern portion of the forest. Little Crooked Creek and Ditch Branch also traverse the property. Landcover consists of mature longleaf pine, stands of young pine, titi swamps, and cypress ponds.

In the mid-1930s, at the request of President Roosevelt, Florida Governor David Sholtz appointed a Conservation Committee which authorized the acquisition, development, and management of a system of state forests and parks, and appropriated funds for this purpose. PLSF was the first state forest obtained through this program. In 1936, 6,670 acres were purchased from Henderson-Waits Lumber Company. In 1938, 240 acres were purchased from private landowners and an additional acre was obtained through a quitclaim deed. Beginning in 2009, 174 acres in the southern part of the forest were donated to PLSF by the Department of Transportation in exchange for land lost due to the widening of Highway 79.

The primary mission of the 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 FCSF center on the multiple-use concept, as defined in sections 589.04(3) and 253.034(2)(a), Florida Statutes (F.S.).

Multiple-use management for FCSF 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; and
- Provide research and educational opportunities related to natural resource management.

### *Management Plan Overview*

In 2017, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) completed an inventory and natural community mapping project on PLSF and created a current and historic natural community type maps. Ten natural community types are found on PLSF. The predominant natural communities are sandhill and mesic flatwoods. FNAI also identified eight altered landcover types. There are twenty-six endangered or threatened plant and animal species documented on PLSF.

A review of information contained in the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Master Site File has determined there are three archaeological sites and one archaeological resource group found within PLSF.

PLSF offers many recreational opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast including camping, wildlife viewing, picnicking, hiking, bicycling, swimming, fishing, and hunting. The forest is an Operation Outdoor Freedom program site and provides recreational and rehabilitative opportunities to wounded veterans.

The PLSF 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 PLSF, efforts 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 goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and short-term goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to section 253.034, F.S., the Division of State Lands began compiling the short-term goals from each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The Division has included short-term goals from this management plan 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 PLSF Management Plan Advisory Group and was reviewed at a public hearing on September 29, 2021. No comments from the public were received.

### *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 PLSF 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 PLSF is recommended for potential surplus.

### *State Land Management Review Team*

A Land Management Review (LMR) was conducted in January 2019. The review team found that the property is managed in accordance with the purposes for which it was acquired and the

management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. One consensus recommendation was offered:

- 1) The team recommended the FFS continue to work on conducting growing season burns.

The 2019 LMR notes were reviewed as part of developing this plan and the agreed upon changes and recommendations were made to this management plan.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the management plan.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE**

**APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DEFER**

**WITHDRAW**

**NOT APPROVE**

**OTHER:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Pine Log State Forest

### Land Management Plan Short-term Goals

Goal (ST)	Details of Goal	Objective	Details of Objective	Measures
2	Public Access and Recreational Opportunities	2	Evaluate the potential for additional public access and recreational areas on FCSF that are compatible with multiple-use management	List of viable access points and visitor opportunities for consideration
7	Hydrological Preservation and Restoration	3	Conduct or obtain a site assessment / study to identify potential hydrological restoration needs.	Assessment conducted

Source: Florida DEP, Office of Environmental Services, Revised 2019.

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEAD AGENCY: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS),  
 Florida Forest Service (FFS)  
 COMMON NAME: Pine Log State Forest  
 LOCATION: Bay and Washington Counties  
 ACREAGE TOTAL: 8,036.82 acres

Historic Natural Communities*	Approximate Acreage**
Sandhill	2,359
Mesic Flatwoods	1,816
Floodplain Swamp	1,123
Wet Flatwoods	1,088
Wet Prairie	582

Historic Natural Communities*	Approximate Acreage**
Baygall	73
Clastic Upland Lake	60
Dome Swamp	49
Basin Swamp	19
Depression Marsh	1

\* 947 Acquisition acres have not been FNAI surveyed  
 \*\* Acreage discrepancies may occur based on FNAI polygons

TIITF LEASE AGREEMENT NUMBER: 3688  
 USE: Single  Multiple

MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FDACS, Florida Forest Service  
 Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission  
 Northwest Florida Water Management District  
 Department of State, Division of Historical Resources

RESPONSIBILITY

General Forest Resource Management  
 Wildlife Resources and Laws  
 Water Resources  
 Historical and Archaeological Resource Management

DESIGNATED LAND USE: Multiple-Use State Forest  
 SUBLEASES: None  
 ENCUMBRANCES: None  
 TYPE ACQUISITION: Fee Simple  
 UNIQUE FEATURES: Home to Blueberry Slash Pine Plantation, one of the oldest slash pine plantations in the Florida panhandle, planted in 1937  
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL: Four (4) known sites  
 MANAGEMENT NEEDS: Adequate funding for recreation plan, reforestation, boundary surveying, road maintenance, listed species survey, and habitat restoration  
 ACQUISITION NEEDS: 66,782 Additional acreage in the Optimal Management Boundary  
 SURPLUS ACREAGE: None  
 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: Pine Log State Forest Liaison Committee, 2014 and 2019 Land Management Reviews, Management Plan Advisory Group and Public Hearing, and FDEP Acquisition and Restoration Council Public Hearing - -  
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