

### Revisions to ARC Meeting Materials

Item	Document	Page	Original	Revision
Agenda	<a href="#">Item 8</a>	1	Item 8: ... Upper Yellow River (formerly known as Welannee Watershed Forest) ...	Delete: Upper Yellow River (formerly known as...)
2	<a href="#">Meeting Summary</a>	10	In Attendance:	In Attendance: Added Alan Davis, FFS
8	<a href="#">FF 2020 Cycle 2 PERs</a>	1	Item 8: ...Upper Yellow River (formerly known as Welannee Watershed Forest)...	Delete: Upper Yellow River (formerly known as...)
8	<a href="#">Agenda Item</a>	1	Proposal Table: Upper Yellow River	Proposal Table: Replace with Welannee Watershed Forest
8	<a href="#">Welanne Watershed Forest PER</a>	Cover	(Upper Yellow River)	Delete
8 PER	<a href="#">Welanne Watershed Forest PER</a>	1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Paragraph: Therefore, this proposed project would ideally be re-named as the “Upper Yellow River” Florida Forever project upon addition to the Florida Forever list and for project ranking purposes. Re-naming the proposed project will minimize confusion and be more consistent with typical Florida Forever project nomenclature.	Delete sentences.
9	<a href="#">Agenda item</a>	1	DSL Staff Remarks: Welannee Watershed Forest (renamed Upper Yellow River)	Delete: (renamed Upper Yellow River)
9	<a href="#">Agenda item</a>	1	Proposal Table: Upper Yellow River	Proposal Table: Replace with Welannee Watershed Forest
9	<a href="#">Agenda Item</a>	2	Project Vote Table 1: Upper Yellow River	Project Vote Table 1: Replace with Welannee Watershed Forest

# Acquisition and Restoration Council Meeting Agenda

**Council Meeting:** October 9, 2020

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Webinar meeting:  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1976113075723297038>  
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**Accessibility information:** Pursuant to the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this workshop/meeting is asked to advise the agency at least 5 days before the workshop/meeting by contacting: Office of Environmental Services at (850) 245-2555. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service 1(800) 955-8771 (TDD) or 1(800) 955-8770 (Voice).

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**Item 1:** Call to Order/Announcements

**Item 2:** Consider the August 21, 2020 meeting and September 1 and 2, 2020 regional hearing summaries.

## ARC STAFF REPORTS

**Item 3:** Items approved by the Division of State Lands via the online negative response process since the August 2020 ARC meeting.

**Item 4:** 2020 Annual update on the Division of State Lands conservation easement monitoring program.

**Item 5:** Annual [Land Management Review](#) Team findings and the Land Management Uniform Accounting Council 2020 [Annual Report](#) and [Biennial Report](#).

**Item 6:** Division of State Lands Acquisition Progress Review Presentation.

## FLORIDA FOREVER

**Item 7:** Hear presentations and take Public Testimony on the Florida Forever 2020 Cycle 2 Proposals and other Florida Forever Projects.

**Item 8:** Consider project evaluation reports for [Abington Ranch](#), [Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration](#), ~~[Upper Yellow River](#)~~ (formerly known as Welannee Watershed Forest) and [Withlacoochee River Addition](#) 2020 Cycle 2 Florida Forever proposals.

**Item 9:** Vote on whether to add five 2020 Cycle 2 Florida Forever proposals to the 2021 Florida Forever Priority List.

## Summary of the September 2, 2020 Acquisition and Restoration Council Regional Public Hearing

**Date:** September 2, 2020  
**Location:** GoToWebinar  
**Time:** 3:00 PM Central/4:00 PM Eastern

### **In Attendance:**

Shauna Allen, DEP, ARC Staff Director  
Deborah Burr, DEP, Division of State Lands (DSL)  
Adam Bass, Conserveflorida.org  
Keith Bryant, Bay County  
Josee Cyr, Bay County  
Merrill Emfinger, DEP, DSL  
Larame Ferry, FWC  
Simone James, DEP, DSL  
Keith Singleton, DEP, DSL  
Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife  
Alan Davis, FFS

Ms. Allen opened the hearing with an orientation to the webinar. Ms. Burr chaired the meeting on behalf of DEP. Ms. Burr noted that there were several managing agency personnel in attendance as well.

Ms. Burr outlined the ARC Florida Forever selection and ranking process and the five new proposals being considered for Cycle 2. She then asked Ms. Allen to call for public comment.

Mr. Kent Wimmer, Defenders of Wildlife, expressed support for the excellent conservation properties presented in the hearing. He mentioned that he also emailed a letter and maps sharing how these projects will contribute to closing gaps in the Florida Ecological Greenway network. On behalf of the Defenders he asked that Crayfish Habitat Restoration and the Welannee Watershed Forest proposals be added to the 2020-2021 Florida Forever List citing their significant features and benefits to listed and native wildlife.

There was no further comment. Ms. Burr adjourned the meeting at 4:12 pm

**ITEM 8:**

Consider project evaluation reports for Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration, ~~Upper Yellow River (formerly known as~~ Welannee Watershed Forest) and Withlacoochee River Addition 2020 Cycle 2 Florida Forever proposals.

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

On June 12, 2020, ARC voted to move five 2020 Cycle 2 proposals on for more detailed review. The Division of State Lands (DSL) with input from partner agencies have subsequently prepared an evaluation report for each proposal. A copy of each report is included as backup to this item.

Public notice was posted for receiving public testimony on the 2020 Cycle 2 proposals approved by ARC in June. The DSL held virtual public hearings on September 1 and 2, 2020 and preceding this item at the October 9, 2020 ARC meeting. The public notices were posted in the Florida Administrative Register and the following newspapers: Panama City News Herald, Lake Okeechobee News, Citrus County Chronicle and newszap.com.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acquisition Type</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Prospective Manager</b>
Abington Ranch	3,656	Fee Simple	Okeechobee	DRP
Bluefield to Cow Creek	10,942	Less-than-fee	St. Lucie/ Okeechobee	
Crayfish Habitat Restoration	2,348	Fee Simple	Bay	FWC
Welannee Watershed Forest	8,370	Less-than-fee	Okaloosa	
Withlacoochee River Addition	1,645	Less-than-fee	Citrus/Hernando	

**DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Approve the project evaluation reports.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

**APPROVE**

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

**DEFER**

**WITHDRAW**

**NOT APPROVE**

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

*Welannee Watershed Forest*  
~~*(Upper Yellow River)*~~  
*(Okaloosa County)*

Less-than-Fee

*Florida Forever Project Evaluation Report*

*Prepared by:*  
*Division of State Lands*  
*Office of Environmental Services*

*Submitted to the Acquisition and Restoration Council*  
*October 2020*



Proposed Land Manager: Landowners (monitoring by DEP)  
Acres: 8,370  
Just Value: \$10,669,747  
Application Date: May 16, 2020  
Project Sponsor: Conservation Florida, Inc.

## ***Executive Summary***

The Welanee Watershed Forest is proposed as a less-than-fee acquisition and is comprised of two ownerships containing approximately 8,370 acres along the eastern and western banks of the Upper Yellow River, ranging from the north boundary of the Yellow River Water Management Area (16,500 acres managed by the Northwest Florida Water Management District), northward to the Florida-Alabama border and east of Blackwater River State Forest. The proposed project contains two large timber tracts: the first is approximately 7,193 acres owned by H.T.L. Family Limited Partnership (HTL) that stretches along both sides of the Yellow River from the north boundary of the Yellow River Water Management Area (YRWMA) to the Alabama state line. The second tract contains approximately 1,177 acres owned by U.I.L. Family Limited Partnership (UIL) that is located on the east side of the Yellow River which it borders for 3.6 miles. A Florida Forever project proposal site assessment team toured the property on July 15, 2020.

In 2002, the Upper Yellow River project was added to the Florida Forever Priority List as a fee simple acquisition proposal. Formerly owned by Rayonier, most of the Upper Yellow River property was purchased by the current owners in 2005. In 2011, the Upper Yellow River project was removed from the Florida Forever priority list as the land was no longer available for acquisition. The current proposed project, Welanee Watershed Forest includes the same properties as the original Upper Yellow River project boundary and is now proposed as less-than-fee. ~~Therefore, this proposed project would ideally be re-named as the “Upper Yellow River” Florida Forever project upon addition to the Florida Forever list and for project ranking purposes. Re-naming the proposed project will minimize confusion and be more consistent with typical Florida Forever project nomenclature.~~

The project’s 8,370 acres are comprised of approximately 30% floodplain forest and wetlands, and 70% uplands, most of which is planted pine plantation that has been historically planted with loblolly pine. The project contains more than 500 acres of longleaf pine and, as loblolly pine is harvested, the owners are transitioning suitable uplands to longleaf pine. The project is managed under a very active prescribed fire regime, with the longleaf burned on a two-year rotation and other upland areas burned on a three-year rotation. The facilities and equipment for the management of the project’s forest resources are located on-site. The project is managed not only for its timber resources, but also with the purpose of restoring longleaf pine habitat, particularly groundcover for wildlife. The property is managed to promote healthy populations of game wildlife such as whitetail deer and turkey.

Additional funding to assist with acquisition has been secured through federal grants from the Forest Legacy Program and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Forest Legacy Program requires a non-federal match of 25% which could be met with Florida Forever funds, if acquired.

If acquired as less-than-fee, the properties would continue to be managed by the landowners, with periodic monitoring by the Division of State Lands. These properties would be designated as essential and appropriate as a stand-alone project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category if approved for addition to the 2021 Priority List.

**ITEM 9:**

Vote on whether to add five 2020 Cycle 2 Florida Forever proposals to the 2021 Florida Forever Priority List.

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

In May 2020, the Division of State Lands (DSL) received five Florida Forever project proposals for Abington Ranch, Bluefield to Cow Creek, Crayfish Habitat Restoration, Welannee Watershed Forest (~~renamed Upper Yellow River~~) and Withlacoochee River Addition. Council members and staff reviewed the applications and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) preliminary resource information and heard public testimony at the June 12, 2020 public hearing. ARC voted to move all five proposals to full review on June 12, 2020.

Florida Forever assessment teams visited the five proposal areas in July and August. The DSL staff then prepared project evaluation reports based on the information provided by the ARC member agencies, FNAI and other agency contributors. FWC has also provided a resource analysis of each proposal that has been transmitted to ARC. Regional public hearings on the proposals were held (virtually) on September 1 and 2, 2020 and preceding this item at the October 9, 2020 ARC meeting. The meeting summaries for the September regional hearings are provided in Item 2.

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ACRES</b>
Abington Ranch	Okeechobee	Fee Simple	3,656
Bluefield to Cow Creek	St. Lucie/Okeechobee	Less-than-fee	10,942
Crayfish Habitat Restoration	Bay	Fee Simple	2,348
Welannee Watershed Forest	Okaloosa	Less-than-fee	8,370
Withlacoochee River Addition	Citrus/Hernando	Less-than-fee	1,645

**DSL STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote on proposals to be added as projects to the 2021 Florida Forever priority list.

Consider, if approved by a roll call vote as a Florida Forever project, adding Abington Ranch fee-simple project to the Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector Florida Forever project boundary by a second roll call vote of ARC.

Consider, if approved by a roll call vote as a Florida Forever project, adding the Withlacoochee River Addition less-than-fee project to the Withlacoochee River Corridor Florida Forever project boundary by a second roll call vote of ARC.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote to approve the Florida Forever project proposals.

<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>
Abington Ranch								
Bluefield to Cow Creek								
Crayfish Habitat Restoration								
Welannee Watershed Forest								
Withlacoochee River Addition								

Vote to amend existing Florida Forever project boundaries to include new project lands.

<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>
Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector: Abington Ranch								
Withlacoochee River Corridor: Withlacoochee River Addition								