

# Middle Chipola River

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Calhoun and Jackson Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	1996
<i>Project Acres</i>	14,761
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	2,497
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$828,600
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	12,264
<i>2021 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$36,928,874

## Purpose for State Acquisition

Flowing through a landscape of farm fields, the Chipola River exposes the limestone bedrock of Jackson and Calhoun counties on its way to join the Apalachicola River in a swampy wilderness. The Middle Chipola River project will protect remnants of the unique hardwood forests in this region for 30 miles along the high banks of the river and maintain water quality. The project provides habitat for several rare plants and animals including mussels, turtles and cave-dwelling crayfish. The Middle Chipola River project will preserve the abundant archaeological remains in and along the river and ensure public access to the river for fishing, swimming and simple enjoyment.

## General Description

The project encompasses a strip of land on either side of the Chipola River from Florida Caverns State Park to State Road 20, almost 8,000 acres of mostly second-growth hardwood forest. The river is a major tributary and drainage basin of the Apalachicola River. The river itself has an interesting combination of alluvial and spring-run characteristics. Its high banks underlain by limestone support several rare plants, one of which is the globally imperiled ciliate-leaf chickseed; it is among eight plants of conservation concern on the site. Rare to imperiled animal species include alligator snapping turtle, at least four bivalve mollusks, five rare fishes, three rare salamanders and Barbour's map turtle. The project will help protect the water quality of the river (an Outstanding Florida Water and state canoe trail) and preserve public access to the river. The project contains 43 archaeological sites, mostly underwater scatters, and the potential for more is high. The scenic riverbanks are attractive for development and the river is vulnerable to intensive agriculture and mining.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<b><u>FNAI Elements</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Chipola slabshell	G1/S1
Southern elktoe	G1/S1
<i>ciliate-leaf tickseed</i>	G1G2/S1
Gulf moccasinshell	G2/S1
Southern snaketail	G1G2/S1S2
Miccosukee mayfly	G1G2/S1S2
Oval pigtoe	G2/S1S2
Shiny-rayed pocketbook	G2/S1S2
Rayed creekshell	G2G3/S1
Apalachicola cave isopod	G1G3/S1S2
Georgia blind salamander	G2/S2

**Public Use**

The project will be managed as an addition to Florida Caverns State Park and as a canoe trail, with opportunities for canoeing, boating, fishing, hiking and camping. The project may also help complete the Florida National Scenic Trail, a statewide non-motorized trail that crosses several Florida Forever project sites. The trail is a congressionally designated national scenic trail.

**Acquisition Planning**

**1996**

Middle Chipola 1996: Essential tracts are Land (acquired), Trammell (impasse) and Florida Public Utilities Co. (acquired). Waddell’s Mill Pond: Essential tracts are Waddell Plantation ownership and smaller archaeologically significant parcels west and adjacent to Waddell Plantation.

On October 30, 1996, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council adopted criteria for establishing a Less-Than-Fee acquisition category: resource value of the project/tract can be adequately protected through a less-than-fee instrument; seller is willing to accept a conservation easement and the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council has determined that the projects or site’s acquisition objectives can be met by acquiring a less-than-fee interest; and manager is willing to oversee a less-than-fee-simple instrument.

In 1996, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council combined the Middle Chipola project with the Waddell’s Mill Pond project and added 170 acres to the Middle Chipola boundary.

On December 5, 1996, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council transferred the Rex Lumber/McRae (impasse), Trammell, Myers, Manor, Myrick and Waddell Plantation ownerships (3,633 acres) to the Less-Than-Fee category. None of the less-than-fee parcels have been acquired.

**1998**

On December 3, 1998, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 3,415 acres to the project boundary.





### **1999**

On February 11, 1999, the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added 5 acres to the project boundary. The addition includes two entrances to the Hollow Ridge Cave system and is adjacent to other public land.

### **2002**

On June 6, 2002, the Acquisition and Restoration Council combined the Less-Than-Fee Middle Chipola project with the Full Fee Middle Chipola project, and moved both projects to Group A.

### **2005**

In 2005, the Acquisition and Restoration Council moved the project to the Group B list.

### **2011**

On December 9, 2011, the Acquisition and Restoration Council placed the Middle Chipola River project in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category.

### **2017**

On October 20, 2017, the Acquisition and Restoration Council amended the boundary of the project near US Highway 90, adding 6 acres, placing a single-ownership parcel near a popular access to the river completely within the boundary for future acquisition.

### **2018**

On August 24, 2018, Acquisition and Restoration Council members voted to add four parcels totaling 156 acres in Jackson County to the project; these parcels surround the Peacock Bridge boat ramp. The Florida Natural Areas Inventory reports that this addition contributes to Ecological Greenways, Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas, Natural Floodplain Function, Surface Water Protection and Aquifer Recharge. More than half 85 percent contributes to Florida Natural Areas Inventory Habitat Conservation Priorities and Sustainable Forestry.

### **2020**

On December 11, 2020, the Acquisition and Restoration Council approved an addition of 49.41 acres in Jackson County to the project boundary.

### Coordination

The Northwest Florida Water Management District has acquired portions of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York parcels (Waddell's Mill Pond), as well as approximately 1,217 acres east/southeast of the project connecting with the Florida Caverns State Park and ultimately the Middle Chipola Project. The Northwest Florida Water Management District will retain title to the Mutual Life Insurance Company parcels. There are no acquisition partners for less-than-fee parcels.

### Management Policy Statement

The primary objectives of management of the project are to conserve a corridor of natural communities along the Chipola River and provide the public with controlled recreation access to the river. Achieving these will protect the unique collection of rare plants and animals in this part of the Apalachicola River basin. It will also help to protect the significant archaeological resources of the riverbed and shores.





The project should be managed under the single-use concept. Management activities should be directed toward the preservation of resources. Consumptive uses such as hunting or logging should not be permitted immediately adjacent to the river. Managers should control public boat access to the river; thoroughly inventory the natural and archaeological resources of the river; burn fire-dependent pine flatwoods in a pattern mimicking natural lightning-season fires, using natural firebreaks or existing roads for control; reforest pine plantations along the river with original species; strictly limit timbering in natural hardwood forests adjacent to the river; and monitor management activities to ensure that they are actually protecting the water quality and scenic values of the river. Managers should limit the number and size of recreational facilities (such as boat ramps and camp sites) to ensure that they do not harm the most sensitive resources and site them in already disturbed areas when possible.

This project includes all the undeveloped land along the Chipola River from Florida Caverns State Park to State Road 20 and has the configuration, location, and size to achieve its primary objectives.

### Manager(s)

The Division of Recreation and Parks will manage the land next to the Florida Caverns State Park and a seven-mile stretch adjacent to “Look and Tremble Shoals.” Any conservation easements acquired in this project will be monitored by the Division of State Lands. The Northwest Florida Water Management District will manage the properties to which they hold title.

### Management Prospectus

#### **Qualifications for State Designation**

The portion of the Middle Chipola River project lying between Florida Caverns State Park and the State Road 167 bridge downriver from the park would complement the park in its resource and management goals. Restoration and maintenance of natural communities will be incorporated into long-range management efforts and disturbed areas will be restored to conditions expected to occur in natural systems. The Division of Recreation and Parks will encourage resource-based recreation and environmental education in conjunction with overall public use in the park. The management plan developed to define resource management and public use of the property will define the extent and placement of compatible infrastructure. The primary focus of any negotiated conservation easements will be protection of the floodplain along the Chipola River, maintenance of natural areas and control of invasive exotic plants.

#### **Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management**

The property will be a high-need management area. Protection and perpetuation of the property’s resources (particularly as related to caverns, bats and restoration of logged areas) will be the primary emphasis. Compatible resource-based recreation is expected to be emphasized in the long term.





### **Management Implementation, Public Access, Site Security and Protection of Infrastructure**

Short-term management efforts will concentrate on site security, control of vehicular access and the development of a resource inventory and public-use plan. Public use will be allowed for low intensity, non-facility related outdoor recreation activities in the short term.

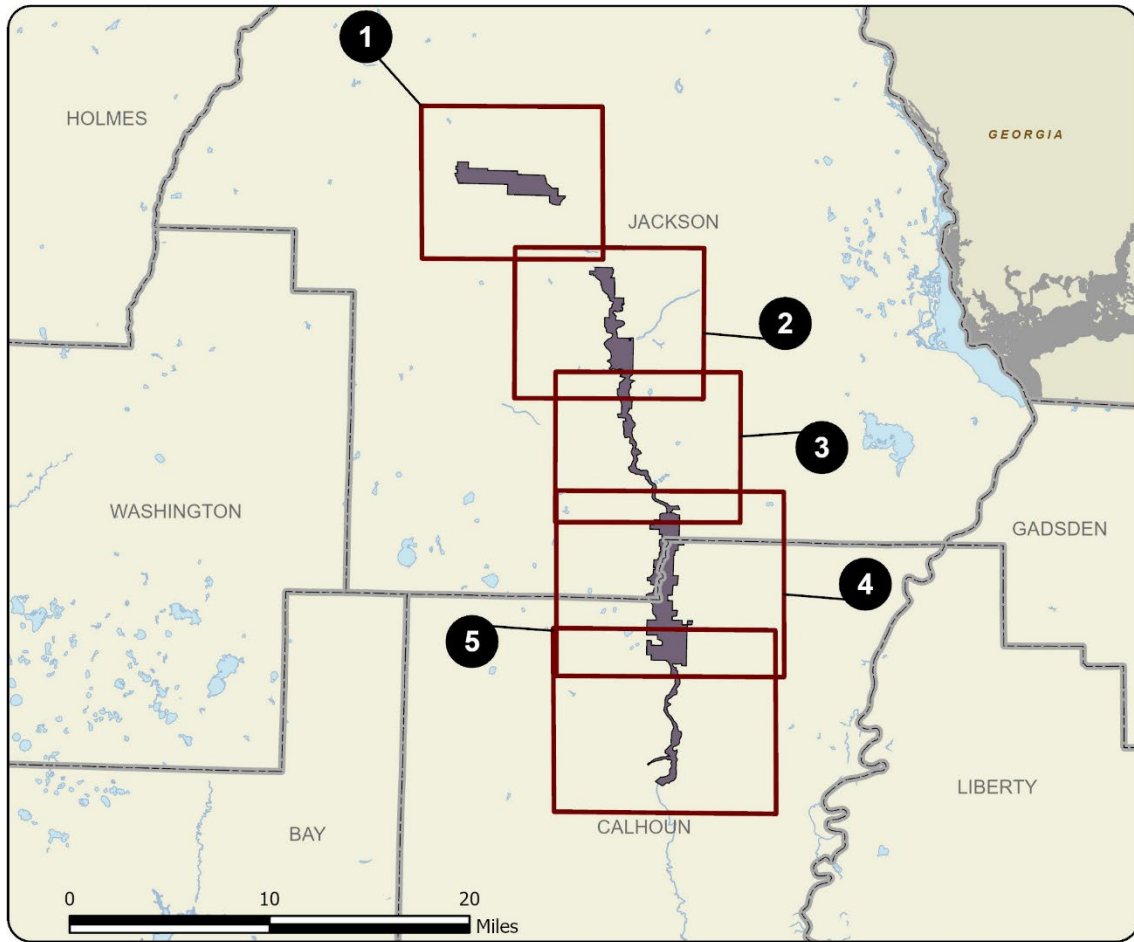
### **Revenue-generating Potential**

No significant revenue is expected to be generated from this addition initially. After acquisition, it will likely be several years before any significant public facilities might be developed. The amount of any future revenue will depend on the nature and extent of public use identified in the management plan developed the property.

### **Cooperators in Management Activities**

No cooperators are recommended for this tract. However, consultation with the Northwest Florida Water Management District on water-related matters and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on wildlife issues will be enlisted as needed.

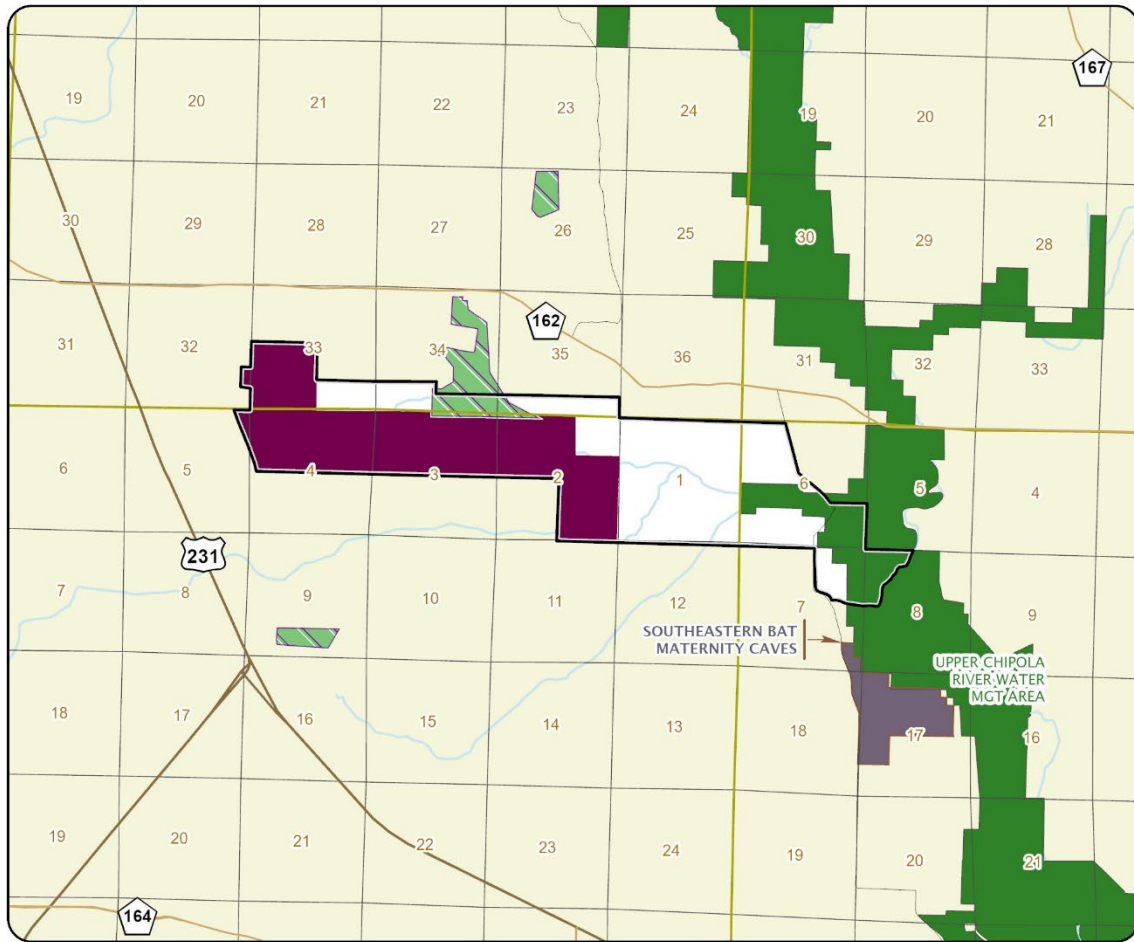




### MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: OVERVIEW

#### CALHOUN AND JACKSON COUNTIES



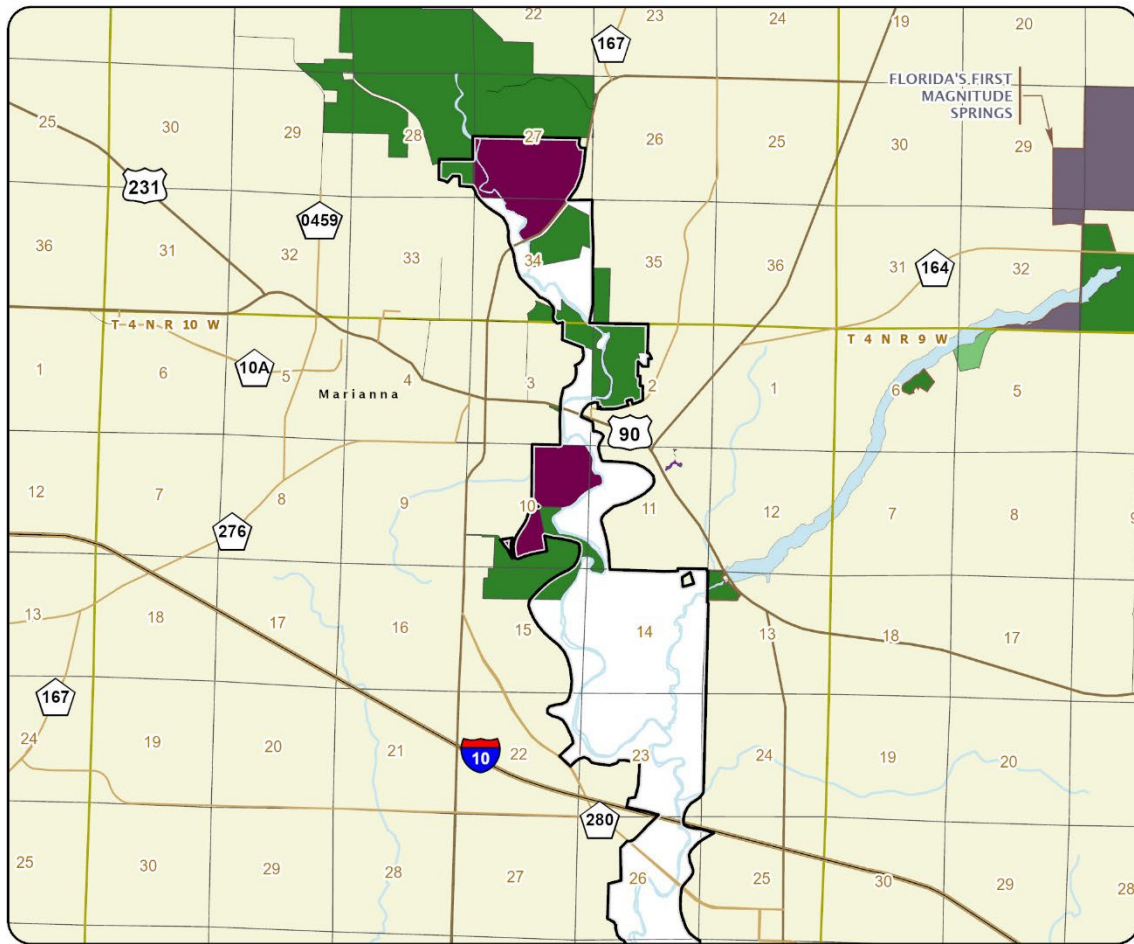


MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: MAP 1

JACKSON COUNTY

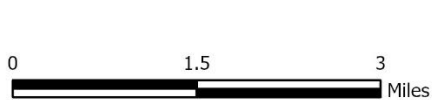




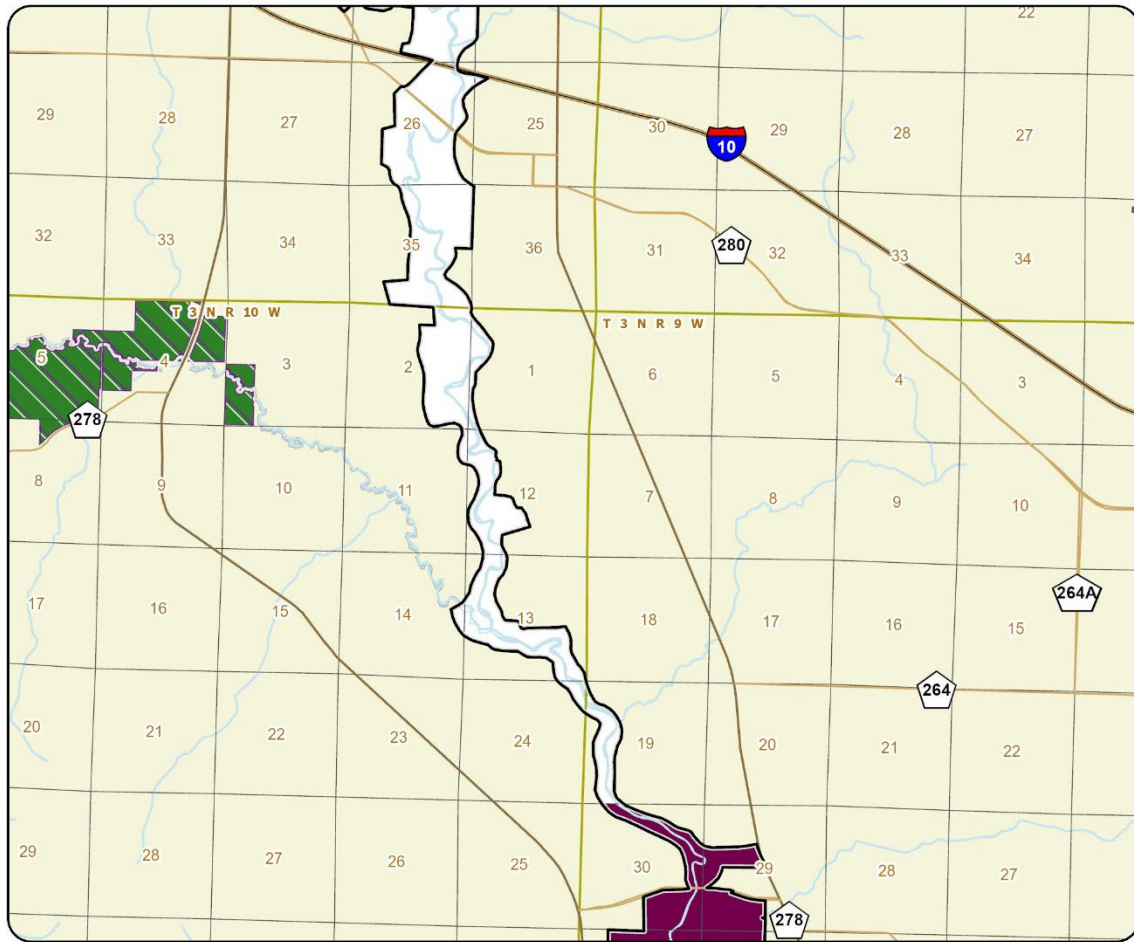


MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: MAP 2

JACKSON COUNTY

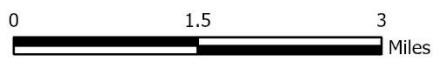


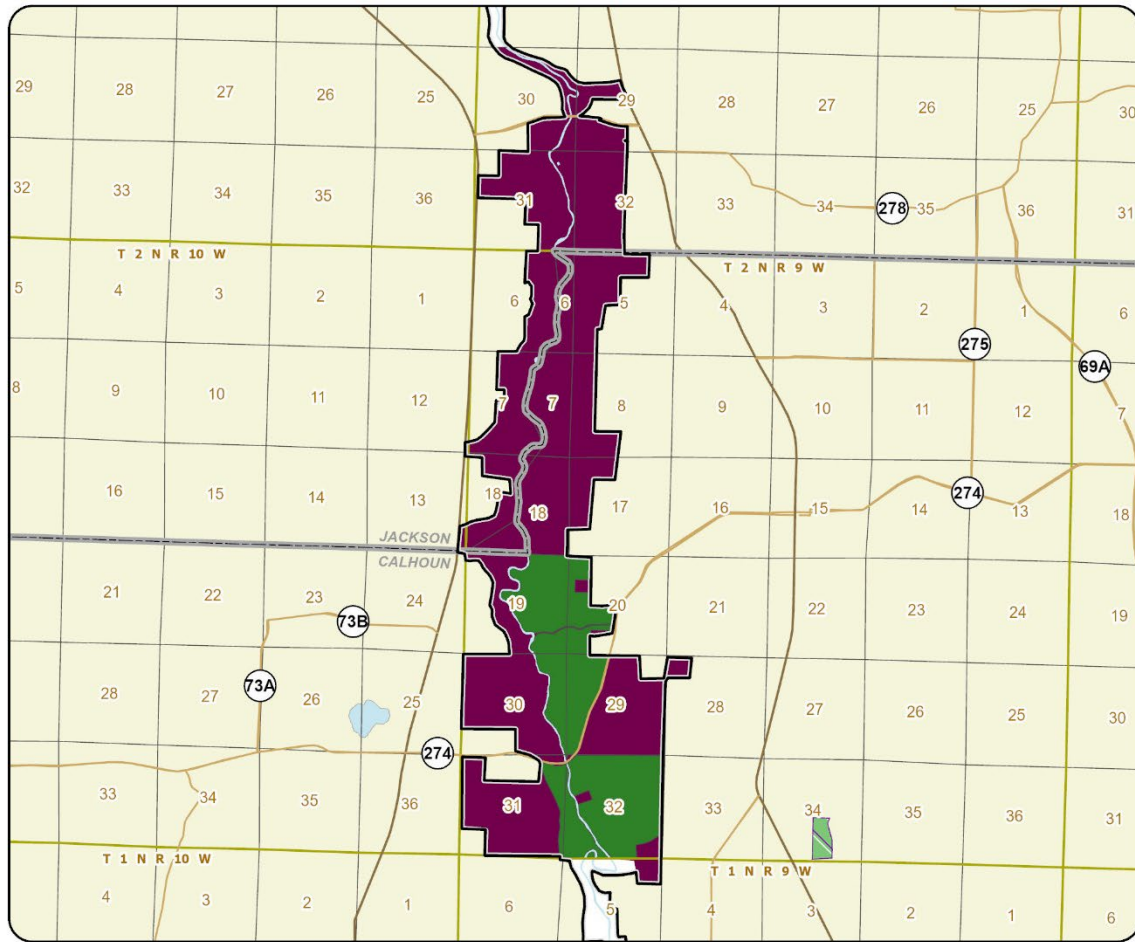




MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: MAP 3

JACKSON COUNTY

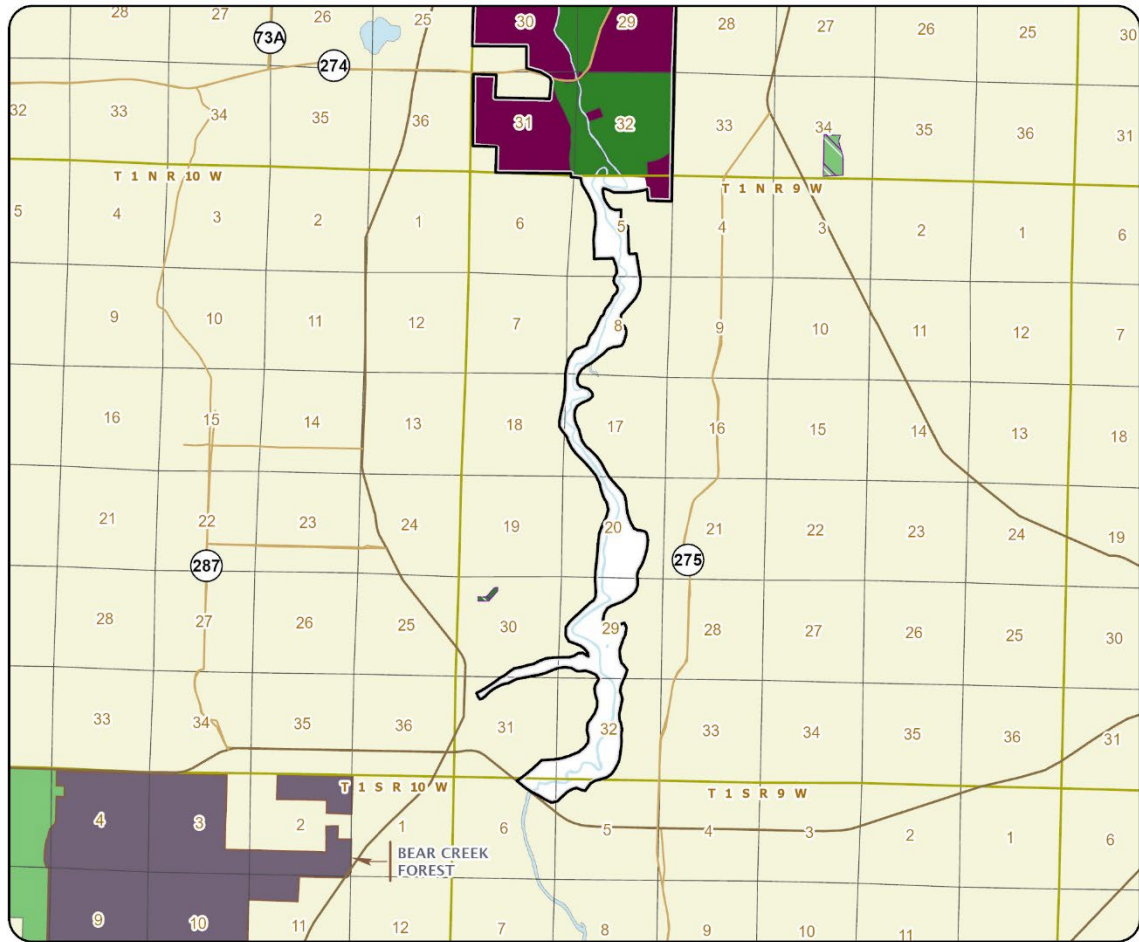




MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: MAP 4

CALHOUN AND JACKSON COUNTIES





MIDDLE CHIPOLA RIVER: MAP 5

CALHOUN COUNTY

