

Pringle Creek Forest

Partnerships and Regional Incentives

Flagler County

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2012
<i>Project Acres</i>	8,446
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	0
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	8,446
<i>2021 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$13,009,593

Purpose for State Acquisition

The Pringle Creek Forest project will enhance the landscape mosaic of conservation lands that provides protection of the Pellicer Creek watershed and its tributaries. Acquisition of the project would contribute to surface water protection of Pringle and Pellicer creeks as well as the Matanzas River. Acquisition will retain functioning natural systems that reduce the possibility of flood damage and water supply shortages, and ensure and improve upon the ecosystem services this property provides for capturing, storing, filtering and slowly releasing clean water to Pellicer Creek and its significant downstream estuary. The project will protect numerous native, rare and imperiled plant and animal species and imperiled natural communities.

General Description

Pringle Creek originates in the northern portion of the project and flows north into Pellicer Creek, which then flows eastward into the estuarine waters of the Matanzas River. Pringle Creek itself is surrounded by a mostly natural forested wetland corridor. Aquifer recharge is thought to be high on this site due to the functional wetlands.

Over one-half of Pringle Creek Forest consists of North Florida slash pine plantations planted on former mesic and wet flatwoods communities. Over one-third of the project is represented by dome and basin swamps impacted by logging of cypress. The rest of the property is categorized as baygall, blackwater stream, hydric hammock, mesic/wet flatwoods, floodplain swamp, marsh/prairie, scrubby flatwoods and mesic hammock natural communities.

FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>celestial lily</i>	G3/S3



Public Use

The property has potential for public uses such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, picnicking, primitive camping, nature interpretive trails and geocaching. At this time, some of these activities could be offered on existing roads without the need for major development. The current roads could serve as trails suitable for hiking, biking and horseback riding. Currently, there is a hunting lease on the property.

Acquisition Planning

Pringle Creek Forest was submitted by Flagler County and DEP's Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. Being on the Florida Forever Priority List is a requirement for getting acquisition grant funding with the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, associated with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association. Flagler County and the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve plan to pursue Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program funding for this project. This project was placed on the Florida Forever Priority List as a Partnerships and Regional Incentives project.

Coordination

Flagler County is anticipating being an acquisition partner on this site, but with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association rather than the state. The St. Johns River Water Management District is supportive of this project. However, they have not committed to any assistance with funding of the acquisition.

Management Policy Statement

This proposal meets the following public purposes as identified in section 259.032(3), Florida Statutes, to varying degrees: To conserve, protect, manage, or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, and forests, if the protection and conservation of such lands is necessary to enhance or protect significant surface water, groundwater, coastal, recreational, timber, or fish or wildlife resources which cannot otherwise be accomplished through local and state regulatory programs; to promote water resource development that benefits natural systems and citizens of the state; to provide areas, including recreational trails, for natural resource-based recreation and other outdoor recreation on any part of any site compatible with conservation purposes; and to conserve open spaces suitable for greenways or outdoor recreation which are compatible with conservation purposes.

Manager(s)

Flagler County is the proposed manager.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for State Designation

Most of the property (77 percent) is wetlands, with most uplands in silviculture and about 2,500 acres of the jurisdictional wetlands also in silviculture production. Flagler County plans to, over time, convert silviculture areas back to their historic natural communities.





Pringle Creek Forest is within the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program's targeted watershed boundary. This will qualify the parcel for federal acquisition funding under the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program reserves 15 percent of its appropriated funds for acquisitions within National Estuarine Research Reserve-targeted watersheds. The Florida Forever listing is a prerequisite for funding through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. Additional management obligations and details will be presented in a later comprehensive land management plan.

Conditions Affecting Intensity of Management

Managing this property is not anticipated to require intense management due to the proposed activities.

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

Implementing the intended uses of this property would begin immediately upon acquisition. It is anticipated that environmental studies and archaeological and cultural resource surveys would be initiated as part of or immediately following the acquisition process. The development of passive recreation plans, permitting and construction of the improvements would have a goal of initiation within 5 years.

No infrastructure other than pumphouses for the wells is presently on the property. Planned infrastructure includes the installation of restroom facilities, a parking facility, picnic tables, limited camping facilities, and nature trails with bird watching stations. Flagler County Parks and Recreation will perform groundskeeping and maintenance on the facilities and improvements. Flagler County Land Management will oversee natural community restoration and maintenance. Security will be provided by the Flagler County Sheriff's Office.

Revenue-generating Potential

The revenue generating potential is limited to the harvesting of existing silviculture stands. It is premature to speculate on the revenue potential as it is unknown whether the current owner intends to harvest merchantable timber as part of the purchase and sale terms. Development, operation and maintenance costs for natural communities, activities, passive recreation and camping will be provided by Flagler County via grants and general revenue funding. The county will assume responsibility for managing the park utilizing existing staff. Flagler County Parks and Recreation personnel will maintain park features and facilities, and the county's Land Management Department will monitor and conduct natural resource activities. Volunteer and educational groups will be welcomed and encouraged to become involved in the management and care of the park.

Cooperators in Management Activities

Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve is an anticipated co-manager of the Pringle Creek Forest property. However, these obligations and restrictions may shape future management activities and partnerships.



