

*Florida  
Forever*

2012

PRESERVATION 2000

Save our Rivers



*Northwest Florida Water Management District*

*Land Acquisition Work Plan*

Program Development Series 2012-01

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER  
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
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Douglas E. Barr, Executive Director  
February, 2012

For additional information, write, call or visit our web site:

Northwest Florida Water Management District  
81 Water Management Drive  
Havana, Florida 32333-4712  
(850) 539-5999  
[www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us](http://www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us)

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## Introduction

Section 373.199(7), F.S. requires the Northwest Florida Water Management District (District) to update annually the Florida Forever Work Plan. To date, this is the tenth annual update of the 2001 Florida Forever Work Plan. Since 2006 this plan has been presented as a separate chapter in the Consolidated Annual Report as required by Section 373.036(7), F.S. This plan contains information on projects eligible to receive funding under the Florida Forever Act and also reports on land management activities, lands surplused and the progress of funding, staffing and resource management of projects for which the District is responsible.

## Florida Forever Program

In 1999, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Forever Act (Section 259.105, F.S.) which has continued the state's long-term commitment to environmental land acquisition, restoration of degraded natural areas, and high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities. The Florida Forever Program authorized issuance of up to \$300 million annually in bonds over a ten-year period to several state agencies and the five water management districts (WMDs). In 2008, the Florida Legislature reauthorized the Florida Forever Act for an additional ten years, to 2018. As part of the reauthorization, the water management districts allocation was reduced from \$105 million annually to \$90 million annually (see table below). The Legislature has not fully funded Florida Forever since 2009.

### Annual WMD Funding Distribution of Florida Forever Funds

Water Management District	Percent to Each WMD	Allocation
South Florida	35.0%	\$31,500,000
Southwest Florida	25.0%	\$22,500,000
St. Johns River	25.0%	\$22,500,000
Suwannee River	7.5%	\$6,750,000
Northwest Florida	7.5%	\$6,750,000

While previous programs focused almost exclusively on the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, the Florida Forever program is somewhat different in that it authorizes the use of up to half of the program funding for certain types of capital improvement projects. Eligible uses of these funds include water resource development, stormwater management projects, water body restoration, recreation facilities, public access improvements, and removing invasive plants, among others. The remaining fifty percent must be spent on land acquisition.

Since the inception of the District's land acquisition program, the goal has been to bring as much floodplain as possible of our major rivers and creeks under public ownership and protection. The Florida Forever Land Acquisition Program continues to increase the acres of wetland, floodplain and aquifer recharge areas acquired by the District. To date, over 224,775 acres have been protected for water resource purposes through the land acquisition efforts of the District either in fee simple or through conservation easements. A summary of the acquisitions and surplus completed by the District in 2011 is provided below.

### **Summary of Acquisitions and Surplus Completed in 2011**

<b>Property</b>	<b>Date Purchased</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source(s)</b>	<b>Water Management Area</b>
<b>Fee Simple Acquisitions</b>					
Neal	05/19/11	1,316.70	\$3,565,426.09	Florida Forever and General Fund	Apalachicola River
Panhandle	07/15/11	61.46	\$121,644.09	District Reserves	Econfina Creek
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>1,378.16</b>	<b>\$3,687,070.18</b>		
<b>Less-Than-Fee Acquisitions</b>					
M.C. Davis	03/17/11	1,095.3	\$1,642,950.00	DOD Funds	Choctawhatchee River
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>1,095.3</b>	<b>\$1,642,950.00</b>		
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>2,475.46</b>	<b>\$5,330,020.18</b>		

### **Acquisition Planning**

The District employs a watershed approach to select and prioritize the important water resource and natural systems within the major river basins of northwest Florida. Primary among the considerations in this process are how specific floodplain or buffer areas help satisfy the District's water resources and natural system protection objectives, the availability of funds, the seller's willingness, how different areas fit into the District's land management scheme, as well as the size, accessibility and overall condition of each property. Recommendations from interest groups, landowners, local governments, agency representatives and other interested parties are always welcome and are given full consideration in the acquisition process.

Subject to receiving funding for Florida Forever, the District's acquisition efforts this year will focus on the purchase of inholdings and additions to the existing water management areas (WMAs) as well as Conservation Easements in each of the existing WMA's. Existing WMAs include the Perdido River, Escambia River, Blackwater River, Yellow River, Garcon Point, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek, Econfina Creek, Chipola River, and Apalachicola River. All of these WMAs will be high priority areas for the acquisition of additions and inholdings. Acquisition efforts will be directed toward acquiring those properties which the District adjoins on one, two or three sides (additions) or those parcels which the District surrounds on all sides (inholdings).

In developing the annual update to the District’s Florida Forever Five Year Land Acquisition Work Plan, District staff shall review Florida Forever projects proposed by DEP, Division of State Lands, to minimize redundancy and to facilitate an efficient and mutually supportive joint land acquisition effort. District staff shall continue to coordinate the Land Acquisition Five Year Plan with the District’s FDOT regional mitigation plan developed under section 373.4137 F.S. to ensure the greatest possible cumulative benefit for water resources, wetland functions, and public benefits.

## Approved Acquisition Areas

The approved acquisition areas listed below are not presented on a priority basis. For each of these water bodies, it is desirable to acquire both the floodplain and a natural buffer zone to provide further water resource protection.

Rivers & Creeks Originating In Florida	Rivers and Creeks Originating Outside Florida	Springs	Lakes & Ponds	Other Ecosystems, Basins and Buffers
Wakulla River	Apalachicola River	St. Marks River near Natural Bridge	Lake Jackson	Southwest Escambia County Ecosystem
St. Marks River	Lower Apalachicola River Wetland	Spring Lake/ Spring Group Area	Sand Hill Lakes	Garcon Point Ecosystem
Econfina Creek and other Tributaries of Deer Point	Chipola River	Waddell Springs		West Bay Buffer
Lafayette Creek	Choctawhatchee River including Holmes Creek	Bosel Springs		Sandy Creek Basin
	Escambia River	Hays Springs		Apalachicola Bay/ St. Vincent Sound Buffer
	Blackwater River including Juniper, Big Coldwater and Coldwater creeks	Gainer Springs		
	Ochlockonee River and its major tributaries			
	Yellow and Shoal Rivers			
	Perdido River and Bay			

Groundwater Recharge Areas	Donated Lands
Such lands may be designated by the District as Recharge Areas for the Floridan, Sand-and-Gravel and other important aquifers.	The District will accept donations of lands within its major acquisition areas if those lands are necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of land and water resources.

Exchange Lands
The District may exchange lands it has acquired under the Florida Forever program for other lands that qualify for acquisition under the program. In an exchange, the District’s Governing Board establishes the terms and conditions it considers necessary to equalize values of the exchange properties. In all such exchanges, the District’s goal will be to ensure that is no net loss of wetland protection and that there is a net positive environmental benefit.

Mitigation Acquisitions
Under Florida law, unavoidable losses of natural wetlands or wetland functions require “mitigation” either through the acquisition or the restoration of other nearby wetlands. The District is often the recipient of such lands in the form of donations, and also serves as the mitigation agent for the Florida Department of Transportation. Whenever possible, the District attempts to acquire mitigation lands contiguous to its existing ownership, but since proximity to the original wetland impact is often paramount, the District at times must acquire or manage isolated tracts.

## **Note to Landowners**

It is important to note that the District's land acquisition process only involves willing sellers and is usually opportunity driven in that landowners initiate the process by offering parcels for sale.

This plan includes a number of areas the District has identified for purchase, subject to available funding and especially the presence of willing sellers. If your property is included in any of our acquisition areas or maps and you do not desire to sell your land to the District, Florida Statutes require the District to remove your property from the acquisition plan at the earliest opportunity. Please contact the Division of Land Management and Acquisition at (850) 539-5999 at any time if you wish to remove your property from possible purchase consideration. The District will maintain a list of such requests and annually adjust its acquisition plan accordingly.

## **Note on Less-Than-Fee Methods of Land Protection**

Florida's commitment to acquire the lands needed to permanently protect local water and environmental resources has resulted in the most successful program in the United States. However, there is not, and probably never will be, sufficient public funding available to acquire outright all the important water resource lands that need protection. Accordingly, the Florida Legislature has directed the state's water management districts to expend part of their land acquisition funding to purchase eligible properties using alternatives to "fee simple" acquisition. Under this scenario, the District buys a significant portion of the property rights the seller owns. In "less-than-fee" purchases, the District would attempt to acquire only those rights in property, i.e. development and land use conversion rights, that are needed to accomplish specific water resource and environmental protection goals.

Such less-than-fee methods can clearly provide a number of public benefits. One is that acquisition funding can be conserved, thereby enabling the protection of more land with limited funds. The property also continues in private ownership and thus remains on local property tax rolls. Moreover, the District does not incur the long-term costs of land management since the property's management and maintenance remains the landowner's responsibility. Not all properties are suitable nor are all landowners agreeable to less-than-fee acquisition, but the benefits make these kinds of transactions an attractive supplement to the District's usual fee simple land purchases.

## **DEP Florida Forever Priority List**

The DEP Florida Forever Priority List is contained in the Appendix. This list was approved by the Acquisition and Restoration Council in December 2011.

## **Florida Forever Goals and Numeric Performance Measures**

As outlined in Chapter 18-24, F.A.C., the District is required to report on the goals and measures for lands to be acquired under the Florida Forever program. The following page summarizes the goals and measures applicable to Northwest Florida Water Management District.

## *Florida Forever Goals and Numeric Performance Measures*

Reported as of October 1, 2011

Rule No.

(2)(d)1. For proposed acquisitions, see Section 5.1, (Florida Forever) Land Acquisition Five-Year Work Plan in the Consolidated Annual Report.

Acquisitions of lakes, wetlands, and floodplain areas to date =	187,112	Total acres
	14,887	Florida Forever acres
	368	Acres acquired FY
		2010/2011

(2)(d)2. Acquisitions for water resource development to date = 41,606 Total acres (incl. fee and l-t-f)  
3,663 Florida Forever acres (incl. fee and l-t-f)

(3)(a)2. Refer to Section 5.2, (Florida Forever) Capital Improvement Work Plan of the Consolidated Annual Report for funded capital improvements identified in SWIM, stormwater, or restoration plans.

(3)(a)3. NFWFMD lands to be treated for upland invasive, exotic plants = <100 acres  
Due to funding limitations, the District has not conducted surveys to identify the spatial distribution of invasive exotic plant infestation on District lands. It is known that invasive plant problems exist at varying levels on some District lands, and staff treat with herbicide as needed.

(3)(b) New water to be made available through Florida Forever funding for water resource development -  
Major water resource development accomplishment provided by additions to Econfina Creek Water Management Area. Additionally, Florida Forever funding contributed to the construction of a 750,000 gallon reuse storage facility for the City of Freeport to serve a 0.6 MGD reuse water service area. Funding for water supply development, including construction of water reuse facilities, is primarily provided through the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund, NFWFMD General Fund, and local funding. See the NFWFMD Water Resource Development Work Program report and Chapter 4, Water Supply, of the Consolidated Annual Report.

(4)(a)1. All NFWFMD lands are in need of and are undergoing management by the District.  
In need of restoration = 17,755 acres  
Undergoing restoration = 873 acres  
Restoration completed = 16,999 acres  
Restoration maintenance = 16,999 acres

(4)(a)3. Refer to Section 5.2, (Florida Forever) Capital Improvement Work Plan of the Consolidated Annual Report for capital improvements identified in SWIM, stormwater, or restoration plans.

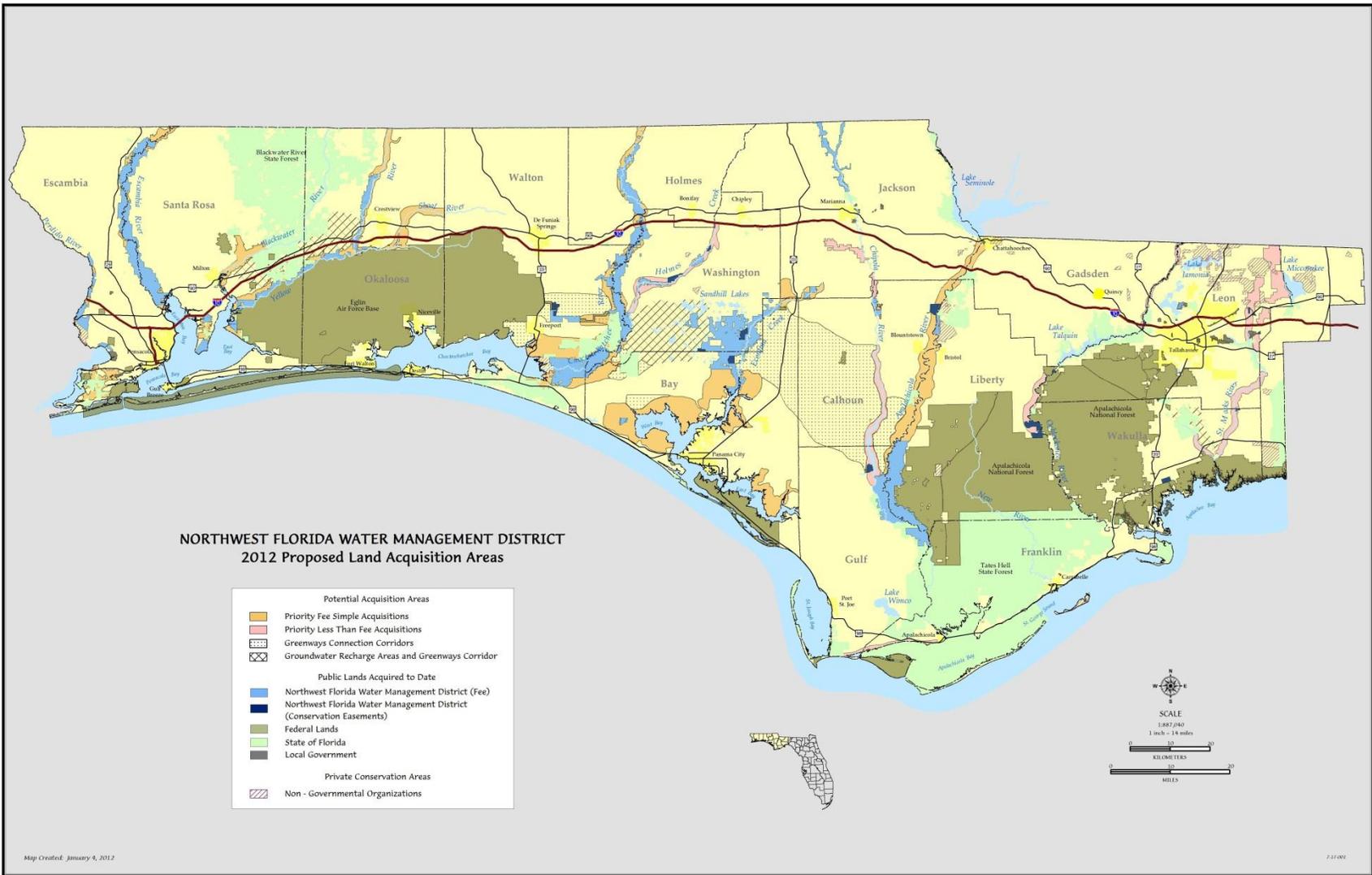
(4)(a)6. NFWFMD lands under upland invasive, exotic plant maintenance control = <1,000 acres

(4)(b) Refer to Section 4.1, Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program: FY 2011-2012 of the Consolidated Annual Report for quantity of new water made available through regional water supply plans.

(4)(c) See Section 5.1, (Florida Forever) Land Acquisition Work Plan (Table 2) of the Consolidated Annual Report for resource-based recreation facilities by type.

## **Land Acquisition Projects**

The Florida Forever Act, in particular Section 373.199(s) F.S., identifies information that must be included for each Florida Forever Project. Some of the required information is relatively general and applicable to all projects. To reduce the redundancies of this plan, general information is provided separately as part of the District's Five Year Plan for the Florida Forever Program. Specific land acquisition projects are individually identified and detailed information specific to the project is provided in the following pages.



**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
WEST REGION  
2012 Proposed Land Acquisition Areas**



# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Perdido River and Bay Basin**

The Perdido River serves as the state line, separating Florida from Alabama. The Perdido has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water and Special Water system, a canoe trail, and a recreation area. The upper part of the river is a shifting sand river system, which are unique to portions of Northwest Florida, south Alabama, southern Mississippi and extreme eastern Louisiana, while the lower end of the river is characteristic of a black water stream. Currently the District owns 6,257 acres in fee and 4 acres in less-than-fee between the Perdido River and Bay.

The project area is mostly undeveloped and contains a diverse list of species. Acquisition of any floodplain area along the Perdido River, whether in fee or less than fee, will significantly protect the water resources of the area as well as enhance water quality protection efforts for the Perdido Bay system.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands along the river, around the river mouth and designated tributaries.

The Perdido Bay is an estuarine system which receives fresh water from the Perdido River. Subsidiary embayments within the Perdido Bay estuary include Tarkiln Bay, Arnica Bay, Wolf Bay, Bayou La Launch and Bayou St. John. Perdido Key separates Perdido, Tarkiln, and Arnica bays, Bayou La Launch and Bayou St. John from the Gulf of Mexico. Big Lagoon adjoins Perdido Bay to the east, separating it from Pensacola Bay. Currently, the District owns 810.19 acres along Perdido Bay.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to the bay which can enhance water quality protection and mitigate for wetland impacts associated with DOT highway construction in southern Escambia County.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 1,447 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will depend upon such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Southwest Escambia County Ecosystem**

Several major estuarine drainages, including Jones Swamp, Bayou Grande, Big Lagoon, and Tarkiln Bay, intersect in southwest Escambia County. These, in turn, comprise portions of the Pensacola and Perdido bay watersheds. The proposed acquisition borders a major urban area and is experiencing encroachment from residential and commercial development. The project area is characterized by an undulating topography where remnants of ancient dune lines alternate with lower intervening swales that drain east or west, parallel to the Gulf coast. The wet prairies in the area are some of the last examples of what may be one of the most diverse plant communities in the southeast, supporting large stands of white-topped pitcher plants and almost 100 other plant species.

Protecting the ecological integrity of this area is very important to the quality of water resources in the Pensacola and Perdido bay systems. Acquisition will preclude new nonpoint pollution sources and will limit stormwater runoff by preventing channelization and placement of new impervious surfaces. Wetlands and upland buffers will be preserved, and riparian buffer zones will be maintained. Additionally, public access and use will be improved and fish, wildlife, and estuarine productivity will be protected.

This acquisition is consistent with a number of major initiatives designed to protect environmental and other public resources in the region. These include water quality treatment systems, acquisition programs for the Jones Swamp Wetland Preserve and the Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie, and efforts to prevent encroachment on NAS Pensacola. Together with nearby state parks, these acquisitions will provide for a major environmental reserve and greenway system within a rapidly urbanizing area.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 11,000 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

## **Groundwater Recharge Area**

Designated area has groundwater recharge potential.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Escambia River Basin**

Beginning at the confluence of the Conecuh River and Escambia Creek above the Florida-Alabama border and discharging into Escambia Bay, the Escambia River corridor contains a rich diversity of plant and animal species, as well as many rare fish and waterfowl. The Escambia River basin is broad and well drained in the upper reaches, and swampy below Molino, Florida. While the overall water quality is considered good, many point and non-point pollution sources empty into the river. Currently the District owns 35,413 acres along the river.

Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands around the river mouth and designated tributaries.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 6,644 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Garcon Point Ecosystem**

This proposed land acquisition project contains most of the Garcon Point Peninsula, which borders Pensacola, Escambia, East and Blackwater bays. The project area is largely undeveloped and includes a variety of natural communities that are in good to excellent condition. The entire tract provides considerable protection to the water quality of the surrounding estuary, as well as harboring a number of rare and endangered species. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Currently the District owns 3,245 acres.

The emergent estuarine marsh that borders several miles of shoreline within the project is an important source of organic detritus and nutrients, and serves as a nursery for many of the species found in Pensacola Bay. These wetlands function as both stormwater filtration and a storm buffer area, as well as providing erosion controls to the neighboring uplands. A minimum of 13 endangered or threatened species are known to live in the region including the recently listed federally endangered reticulated flatwoods salamander. The northern wet prairie portion is known to be an outstanding pitcher plant habitat.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 3,200 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Blackwater River Basin**

Originating in the Conecuh National Forest in Alabama, the Blackwater River has a large portion of its Florida watershed further protected by the Blackwater River State Forest. In all, nearly 50 miles of the river corridor is remote and undeveloped. As a result, the Blackwater is considered one of Florida's best preserved waterways. Acquisition by the Florida Division of Forestry will bring into public ownership much of the lower, least protected portion of river floodplain and estuary. The District will assist in these acquisitions as needed. Currently the District owns 382 acres along the river.

The acquisition area includes a large area of mature longleaf pine forest, considerable bottomland forest and marsh acreage, upland mixed forest, blackwater stream and seepage slope communities. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Some 380 acres have been acquired along the Blackwater immediately south of Milton.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 11,449 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Yellow/Shoal River Basin**

The Yellow River has its headwaters in Conecuh National Forest in Alabama and forms the northern border of Eglin Air Force Base (AFB) across much of eastern Santa Rosa and western Okaloosa counties. The proposed acquisitions would bring much of the remainder of the Yellow River floodplain in Florida under public ownership. Included in the project is a segment of the lower Shoal River, the largest tributary to the Yellow. Large private landowners own a majority of the floodplain in this project, but considerable areas of the bordering and buffer lands must also be acquired to ensure effective management and the protection of water resources. To accomplish these objectives, acquisition of the bordering land within the 100-year floodplain, along with an additional buffer of at least 50-feet, will be required. Highest priority will be given to tracts in the western portion of the project. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands. Currently the District owns 17,742 acres along the river.

Although the Yellow and Shoal rivers exhibit good overall water quality, both are fed largely by rainwater runoff and thus are highly susceptible to pollution from land use activities. The proposed purchase area would provide water quality protection from the Alabama border and encompass roughly 39,000 acres. Purchase of lands northwest of Eglin AFB, along the I-10 corridor, would provide approximately 52,000 acres of land that has excellent potential for future water resource development to supplement the strained potable water sources in southern Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties. Acquisitions in this area are recommended by the District Regional Water Supply Plan for Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton counties to protect future supply sources.

## **Public Access**

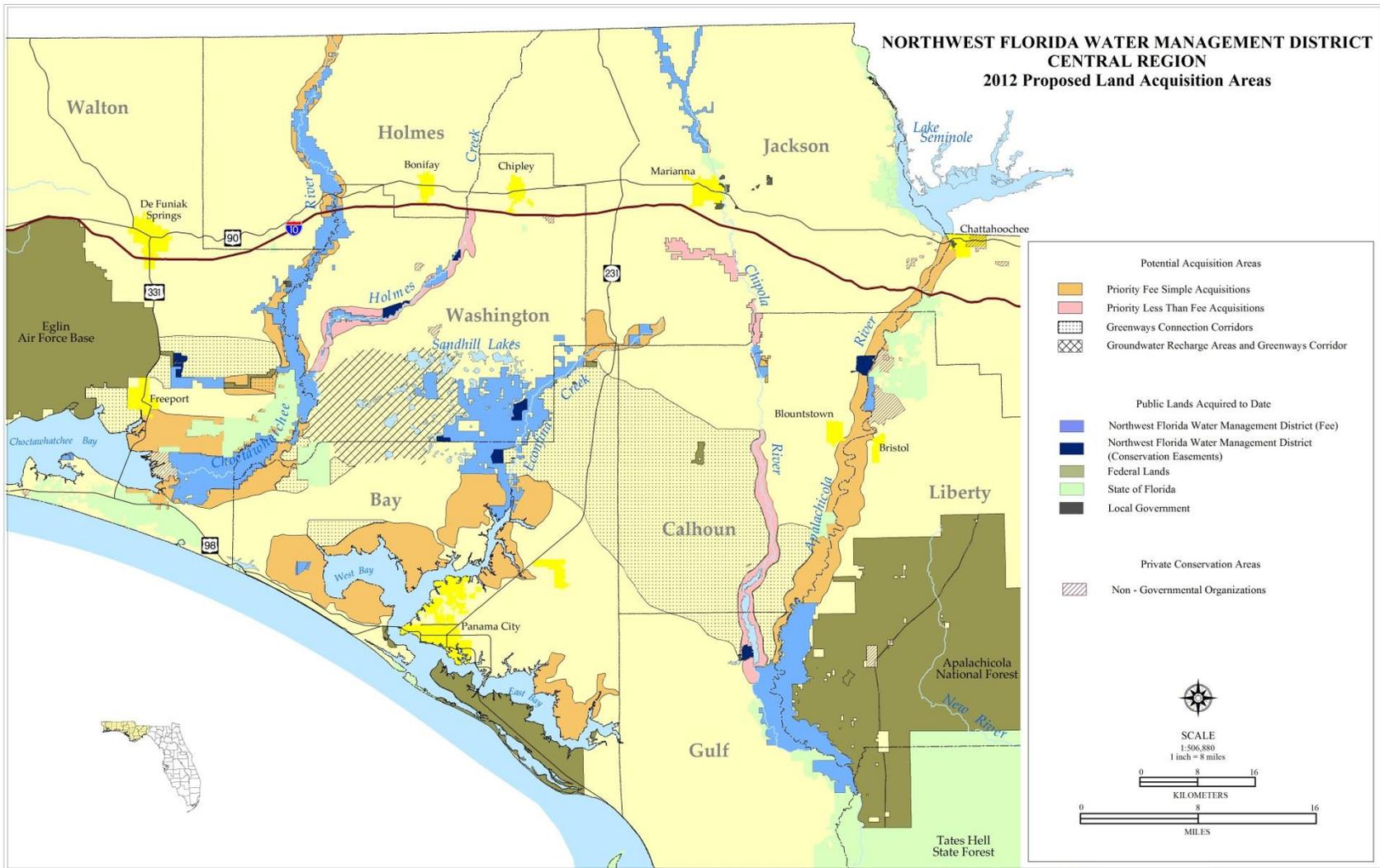
All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 40,682 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

## **Groundwater Recharge Areas**

In Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, the Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer is the principal source of potable water for public supply. The Sand-and-Gravel Aquifer is unconfined or poorly confined, making it particularly susceptible to contamination by land uses. Land acquisition along the I-10 corridor between the Yellow and Blackwater rivers in Santa Rosa County would protect recharge areas that are particularly important for future water supply sources.



# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Lafayette Creek**

Originating in south central Walton County, the Lafayette Creek drainage basin is located due east and north of Freeport, Florida. The main stem of the creek begins about seven miles east of Freeport and runs due west for about six miles before it turns south and empties into LaGrange Bayou/Choctawhatchee Bay. Additional purchases along the creek will protect many diverse natural communities and habitat types. In addition, any proposed acquisitions will also protect a portion of the water resources of Magnolia and Wolf creeks, both of which are significant tributaries to Lafayette Creek. Currently, the District owns 3,160 acres along the creek, including 420 acres for DOT mitigation purposes.

The area between the Choctawhatchee River and Eglin Air Force Base is part of the Northwest Florida Greenway Corridor which serves to protect open space stretching from the Apalachicola National Forest to Eglin Air Force Base. It is intended to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, sustain existing military lands and airspace, maintain the economic viability of forest lands and provide recreation. The District, in cooperation with Eglin Air Force Base, acquired a 1,095.3-acre conservation easement from Nokuse Plantation utilizing Department of Defense Readiness and Environment Initiative (REPI) funds. Acquisition of this Conservation Easement will ensure the protection of seepage streams within the Magnolia and Lafayette Creeks and buffer Eglin Air Force Base lands to the west.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 5,800 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek Basin**

Originating in Alabama and flowing into Choctawhatchee Bay, the Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek basin drains roughly 3,300 square miles of northwest Florida, encompassing the second largest floodplain in the state. Although the river basin exhibits more localized water quality problems than most in northwest Florida, the overall water quality is considered good. The river basin encompasses several springs and a variety of habitats including bottomland hardwood forests, marshes and Tupelo-Cypress swamps.

Due to the river corridor's undeveloped nature, the basin provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife, including several endangered plant and animal species. The river also serves as a breeding and migratory area for both the Alligator Gar and the Gulf Sturgeon. The District currently owns 63,388 acres along the river and/or creek in fee and less-than-fee. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands, around the river's mouth and designated tributaries such as Holmes Creek and such other projects that can mitigate for wetland impacts associated with DOT highway construction.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 55,064 acres have been identified for fee simple acquisition on the Choctawhatchee River and Holmes Creek, and 7,000 acres have been identified for possible less-than-fee acquisition on Holmes Creek. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **West Bay Buffer**

West Bay is the westernmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary. The bay supports notable shellfish and seagrass communities, important fisheries, and other environmental and economic resources. The West Bay watershed is characterized by extensive pine flatwoods, as well as hardwood forests, cypress wetlands, mixed-forested wetlands, freshwater marshes, wet prairie and other wetlands. Salt marshes, inland forested wetlands, and associated upland communities are especially prominent in several areas, including the Breakfast Point peninsula and adjacent to the Burnt Mill and Crooked Creek tributaries.

Like other estuaries, the bay is vulnerable to impacts associated with intensive residential and commercial development. Such potential impacts include the long-term effects of nonpoint source pollution and habitat loss and fragmentation. The proposed acquisition would help prevent such degradation by preserving intact an extensive ecosystem of forests, scrub, salt marshes, and freshwater wetlands. The acquisition would preclude new sources of pollution, prevent habitat loss and fragmentation, and protect the stability and integrity of littoral vegetation. Preserving intact the associated wetland and upland communities in the vicinity of the bay would also protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and maintaining the natural hydrology in the vicinity of the bay. The District currently owns 719 acres in the West Bay Buffer.

In addition to providing for water resource protection and public use, this acquisition will be consistent with several ongoing initiatives, including the West Bay Sector Plan. These initiatives also include efforts to restore seagrass communities in the bay and to improve the treatment and management of domestic wastewater.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 47,281 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Econfina Creek**

Econfina Creek is the major contributor to Deer Point Lake, which serves as the public water supply for Bay County, including Panama City, Panama City Beach and neighboring communities. The proposed purchases along the creek contain several spring-run streams, which are imperiled biological communities. The slope forest communities that border considerable lengths of the creek contain some of the highest species diversities encountered in Florida. The sand hills portion of the project features high rolling pinelands, steephead ravines and numerous sandhill upland lakes. Much of the sand hills area is of excellent quality, with nearly intact ground cover of wiregrass and dropseed. At least 18 species of rare or endangered plants inhabit the sand hills area. Because of the upland nature of the sand hills sites, the region is being developed with little regulatory restriction. The District currently owns over 43,762 acres in fee and less-than-fee, including the 2,155-acre Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands and parcels with significant recharge.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 39,679 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

## **Groundwater Recharge Areas**

The upper portion of the acquisition project is a significant recharge area of the Floridan Aquifer. The majority of the acreage purchased by the District and targeted for future purchase is one of the most important recharge areas for the Floridan Aquifer in northwest Florida. Recharge rates in the area have been estimated at 25 to 40 inches per year, and this recharge drives the spring flows along Econfina Creek, the largest tributary of the Deer Point Lake Reservoir. The reservoir currently provides approximately 50 million gallons per day for public supply and industrial water uses in Bay County.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Sandy Creek Basin**

Sandy Creek is a major tributary of East Bay, the easternmost embayment of the St. Andrew Bay estuary. The creek's basin is characterized by extensive pine flatwoods, as well as hardwood forests, saltmarshes, cypress wetlands, mixed forested wetlands, freshwater marshes, wet prairie and other wetlands. Salt and freshwater marshes, inland forested wetlands, and associated upland communities are especially prominent along the creek and its tributaries.

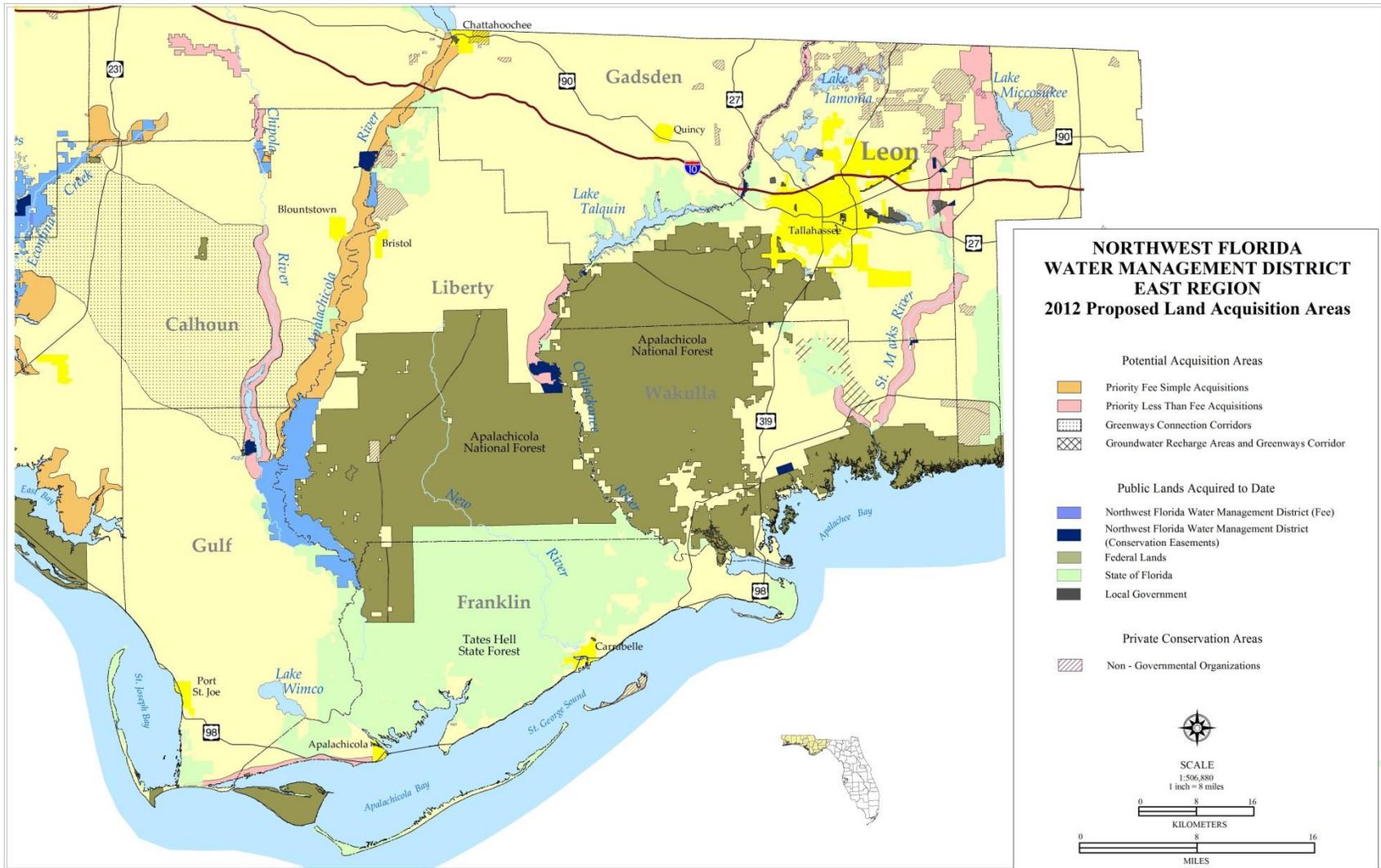
Preservation of the Sandy Creek basin will protect a major tributary basin of East Bay. In so doing, it would preserve water quality and a mosaic of interconnected upland, wetland, stream, and estuarine habitats. The acquisition would also protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and maintaining natural hydrology.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 15,000 acres have been identified for acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.



# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Chipola River Basin**

A new area along the Middle Chipola River has been identified for less-than-fee acquisition. The area is comprised of approximately 2,400 acres in northern Calhoun and southern Jackson counties. Acquisition of this tract will protect over 3.4 miles of the west bank and 4.25 miles of the east bank of the Chipola River. In 2009, the District acquired 1,377.76 acres in fee along the Middle Chipola River, including the “Look-N-Tremble” rapids. The District now owns a total of 9,094 acres in fee simple and holds a conservation easement on 810 acres in the Chipola River Basin.

Two additional areas have been identified for less-than-fee acquisition along the Chipola River. The first is comprised of approximately 6,000 acres in the Spring Lake/Spring Group area located in central Jackson County. Acquisition of the Spring Lake/Spring Group area and its numerous springs, which ultimately flow into Dry Creek, a significant tributary stream to the Chipola, will provide enhanced water resource protection to the area.

The second proposed less-than-fee acquisition contains a core tract of roughly 20,000 acres in the river basin in Calhoun and Gulf counties. The Chipola River is the largest tributary to the Apalachicola River and its mostly spring-fed waters make an important and consistent contribution of sediment-free water to the Apalachicola. The degree of biological diversity of the Chipola appears to be nearly as high as that of the Apalachicola. Priority purchases will be focused along the middle reaches of the Chipola River.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 1,025 acres has been identified for possible fee acquisition and 28,400 acres have been identified for possible less-than-fee acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Apalachicola Bay/St. Vincent Sound Buffer**

Apalachicola Bay has been recognized as a resource of state, federal, and international significance. The bay has extensive fish and shellfish resources, and it supports noteworthy commercial and recreational fisheries and other recreational and economic activities. It has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water, a State Aquatic Preserve, and an International Biosphere Reserve. It includes the Apalachicola Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and the St. Vincent National Wildlife Refuge. State and federal agencies, as well as the NFWFMD, have made extensive investments in acquiring and protecting lands throughout the basin. This project would provide an important addition to these efforts.

Like other northwest Florida estuaries, Apalachicola Bay is vulnerable to impacts associated with development. Such potential impacts include the long-term effects of non-point source pollution and habitat loss and fragmentation. The proposed acquisition would help prevent such degradation by preserving intact the integrated forest and wetland community bordering St. Vincent Sound and Apalachicola Bay. The acquisition would preclude new sources of pollution, prevent habitat loss and fragmentation, and protect the stability and integrity of littoral vegetation. The acquisition would also protect water quality by providing a substantial riparian buffer and precluding new impervious surfaces and channelization.

The land targeted through this project is immediately adjacent to some of the most productive oyster harvesting areas of the Apalachicola Bay system, including the Indian Lagoon, Scorpion and Paradise bars.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 5,200 acres have been identified for less-than-fee acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Upper Apalachicola River Basin**

The Apalachicola River begins below Lake Seminole at the confluence of Chattahoochee and Flint rivers. It has the largest floodplain in the state and is widely regarded as one of the state's most important natural resources. The Apalachicola River supports the highly productive fishery in Apalachicola Bay, and more endangered plant species can be found along the river's upper stretches than in any comparably-sized river in the state. The District owns 36,823 acres of river floodplain and holds a conservation easement on 1,544 acres.

Major habitat types along the Apalachicola River include coastal marshes, freshwater marshes, flatwoods and bottomland hardwood swamp. Water tupelo, Ogeechee tupelo, Bald cypress, Carolina ash and Swamp tupelo have been identified in the floodplain, as well as numerous species of rare fish. Substantial additional acreage of the Apalachicola system is owned by other public agencies and private conservation organizations. Priority purchases will be concentrated on parcels adjacent to existing District lands, other conservation lands and designated tributaries.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 50,132 acres have been identified for possible fee acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **Ochlockonee River Basin**

The Ochlockonee River originates in the coastal plain of Georgia and traverses parts of five Florida counties. Water quality in the river is lowest when it enters Florida and generally improves as it moves to the Gulf of Mexico. The Ochlockonee is primarily fed by rainwater runoff, hence highly susceptible to pollution of land use activities. Large parts of the watershed are publicly owned, including Joe Budd Wildlife Management Area, Lake Talquin State Forest and Apalachicola National Forest. The District's primary focus is to acquire less-than-fee rights on privately owned floodplain land separating existing federal/state properties. Public ownership of the erosion-prone lands bordering this usually fast flowing river will reduce the likelihood of water quality degradation. The District presently has 3,675 acres in less-than-fee (conservation easement) in the area.

## **Public Access**

All District conservation lands are available for public use. Such uses include fishing, hunting, camping, hiking, boating, swimming, and other recreational and educational activities. Access issues are addressed on a parcel-by-parcel basis prior to acceptance.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 11,767 acres have been identified for less-than-fee acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

# FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECT

## **St. Marks/Wakulla Rivers**

The Wakulla River originates at Wakulla Springs and flows south approximately 10 miles to join the St. Marks River at the town of St. Marks. The St. Marks River starts east of Tallahassee as a tiny stream, widens considerably below Horn Spring, and then disappears underground at Natural Bridge. Reemerging as a much stronger river at St. Marks Spring, it flows 11 miles to its confluence with the Wakulla River. While the lower reach of the river below the town of St. Marks is protected and preserved as part of the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, much of the remainder of the two river watersheds is threatened by active riverfront development and in the adjacent highlands. The St. Marks supports one of the most heavily used inshore saltwater fisheries in north Florida, the viability of which is largely dependent on the quality of freshwater flowing into the estuarine system. Both the Wakulla Springs State Park and the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge are major refuges for numerous biological species. Much of the remaining privately owned land is timberland that is under intense development pressure. The District presently has 1,376 acres under less-than-fee acquisition in the area.

## **BluePrint 2000**

In December 2003, the Northwest Florida Water Management District and the City of Tallahassee-Leon County BluePrint 2000 Intergovernmental Agency entered into a five-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to work cooperatively to acquire conservation easements to protect and preserve the water resources of the St. Marks River basin in Leon County. Although this MOA has now expired, the District and BluePrint 2000 successfully purchased conservation easements on a 132.62-acre tract and 194.5-acre tract, both located in Leon County.

## **Land Acquisition**

Approximately 45,456 acres have been identified for possible acquisition. Sufficient lands have been identified to allow for a flexible implementation strategy over at least the next five years. The timing of any given acquisition will be dependent on such considerations as: (1) Governing Board policy, (2) Threats to the resource, (3) Availability of willing sellers, (4) Tract size, (5) General market conditions, (6) Available staff resources and (7) Availability of funds.

## **Implementation of the 2010-2011 Work Plan**

During the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the District completed 1,380.16 acres of fee simple land acquisitions and 1,095.3 acres of less-than-fee acquisitions. A summary of the acquisition projects are listed below.

A purchase in 2011 will provide an additional three miles of protection along the east side of the Apalachicola River. The District purchased 1,316.7 acres on Apalachicola River in Liberty County. The parcel is adjacent to The Nature Conservancy's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines. This property was acquired with Florida Forever Funds and General Fund.

An addition containing 61.46 acres in the upper Econfina Creek basin was purchased by the District in July 2011. The tract is a slash pine plantation planted on xeric sandhill upland habitat. The southern one-quarter of the property consists of a seepage stream system associated with the upper basin of Econfina Creek while an old borrow pit occupies the northeast corner of the tract. The parcel is located west of County Road 167 and is adjacent to existing District land to the west. The purchase was made with District Land Acquisition funds.

The Governing Board approved the purchase of a conservation easement on 1,095.3 acres in Walton County in the Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek basin in August 2010. The District received the development and land use conversion rights through this easement. The majority of the property consists of former agricultural land interspersed with seepage streams associated with the watersheds of Magnolia and Lafayette Creeks. Purchase of this conservation easement enhanced the water resource protection/preservation efforts of Magnolia and Lafayette Creeks and enhanced base buffering for Eglin Air Force Base. The District utilized Department of Defense Readiness and Environment Initiative (REPI) funds to acquire this conservation easement.

### **Land Management**

The District also completed numerous land management activities during fiscal year 2010-2011. Management and restoration efforts, including prescribed burns, native species planting and timber harvesting, continue across the District's 212,372 managed acres. In addition, the District maintains and improves public access and recreational amenities, such as boat ramps, primitive campsites, and day use (swimming and picnic) areas. In the pages that follow, **Table 1** and **Table 2** provide additional information on specific land restoration activities completed during the year. The projected 2011-2012 staffing and management budget by water management area can be found in **Table 3**.

To date, the District has conserved and protected 224,775 acres primarily through fee simple acquisition. These lands protect natural systems, wetland and floodplain functions, groundwater recharge, surface and groundwater quality, and fish and wildlife habitat. District-owned lands are all accessible to the public and are managed to protect water resources while allowing public access and resource-based recreation. Management and restoration efforts, including prescribed burns, native species planting, and timber harvesting, continue across 212,372 managed acres. In

addition, the District maintains and improves public access and recreational amenities, such as boat ramps, primitive campsites, and day use (swimming and picnic) areas.

District lands include the majority of the Escambia and Choctawhatchee river floodplains, as well as extensive lands along the Yellow, Shoal, Blackwater, Chipola, Perdido, and Apalachicola rivers; Econfina, Holmes and Lafayette creeks; and on Garcon Point, Live Oak Point, and Perdido Bay. In addition, the District manages and conducts habitat restoration/maintenance on Live Oak Point, Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank (SHLMB) and Ward Creek West. The District has also acquired the majority of the recharge area for springs that discharge into Econfina Creek and form a crucial component of the water contribution to Deer Point Lake Reservoir. Also, the District helped Escambia County preserve Jones Swamp as a conservation and greenway area and has assisted in local government land acquisitions within Leon County.

### **Land Management Accomplishments (FY 2010-2011)**

- Public meetings were held to discuss public recreation on District lands along the Chipola and Apalachicola rivers. The District's management strategy is to protect and restore natural areas while providing public access and compatible recreation. Activities planned include hunting, fishing, boating, canoeing/kayaking, hiking, nature appreciation, primitive camping, and other activities that are compatible with water resource protection and restoration.
- The District, in cooperation with Liberty County, completed road repairs and improvements to the Florida River Island road system within the Apalachicola River Water Management Area. Additionally, the District completed trail development for the Old River Trail in cooperation with the City of Milton.

### **Restoration**

The NFWFMD accomplishes water resource restoration through several interrelated programs, primarily SWIM, Land Management, and Mitigation.

Approved NFWFMD plans with substantial restoration components include the following:

- *Apalachicola River and Bay Management Plan (1996)*
- *Pensacola Bay System SWIM Plan (1997)*
- *Lake Jackson Management Plan (1997)*
- *Choctawhatchee River and Bay SWIM Plan (2002)*
- *St. Andrew Bay Watershed SWIM Plan (2000)*
- *St. Marks River Watershed SWIM Plan (2009)*
- *Ochlockonee River and Bay SWIM Plan (draft)*
- *Perdido River and Bay SWIM Plan (draft)*
- *Tate's Hell State Forest Hydrologic Restoration Plan (2010)*
- *Florida Forever Capital Improvements Plan*

### **Restoration Accomplishments (FY 2010-2011)**

- In January 2011, the District completed its largest over story and groundcover habitat restoration project in a single year. In our ongoing reforestation and groundcover habitat restoration program, the District completed hand planting of 2,806 acres of disturbed longleaf

pine, mixed bottomland hardwood, wet pine flatwoods, and wiregrass habitat across northwest Florida. These habitat restoration activities enhance groundwater recharge and improve wetland functions and also offset wetland losses due to Department of Transportation projects.

- Over 1.6 million longleaf pine tubelings were planted on the Perdido River, Choctawhatchee River/Holmes Creek, and Econfina Creek water management areas (WMAs). More than 35,000 mixed bottomland hardwood and cypress trees were planted on 87 acres within the Perdido, Yellow, Choctawhatchee, and Econfina WMAs, and for the Womack Creek mitigation project in Tate's Hell State Forest.
- The District also reestablished groundcover habitat, planting over 950,000 plugs of upland/wetland wiregrass, toothache grass, and mixed wet pine flatwood species on disturbed habitat sites on the Perdido, Yellow, Choctawhatchee, and Econfina WMAs and in the Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank and the Ward Creek West mitigation tract.
- Seeds for most District groundcover projects were collected from District land on Garcon Point and the Econfina Creek WMA. The District continues to research, refine and establish new habitat restoration techniques that increase species diversity and ecosystem health.
- Construction of two oyster shell reefs was completed at Live Oak Point on Choctawhatchee Bay. The reefs are approximately 130 feet and 180 feet in length respectively, and they will help to abate erosion and restore marsh and shellfish habitat. Five hundred plants, including *Spartina patens*, *Spartina alterniflora*, and *Juncus roemerianus*, were planted between the reefs and mean high water.
- The District completed the Pine Log Creek basin restoration project of the Tate's Hell restoration plan, enhancing wetlands, restoring historic drainage, and improving water quality across a 15,300-acre basin. Three miles of dirt logging roads and adjacent ditches were removed; and 11 hardened low water crossings, 30 ditch plugs, and other structures were installed.
- SWIM plans have been drafted for the Ochlockonee River and Bay and Perdido River and Bay watersheds. Encompassed strategies are expected to include stormwater treatment and habitat restoration.
- Grant recipients have continued progress in completing Florida Forever capital improvement projects with watershed benefits. Three projects were completed in 2011 within Walton, Washington, and Franklin, counties. Together, these activities provided restoration and new water quality treatment for approximately 213 acres.
- With grant funding assistance from the District, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) researchers continued work in Jackson County toward development of farming techniques that protect water resources while enhancing economic productivity. Through this effort, sod based conservation farming systems have demonstrated reduced water usage and nitrogen applications while achieving improved production yields and reduced costs.
- The Econfina Creek Springs Complex restoration project was completed in 2011. At Pitt Spring, the spring bank was restored to natural habitat and function. The concrete retaining wall was removed and replaced with gently sloping natural vegetation and limestone rocks to

create a more natural setting. Debris, eroded sediment, and a rock that had blocked spring flow were removed. Other activities completed at Pitt and Sylvan springs include trails, overlooks, other access/recreation facilities, sediment removal, and erosion abatement.

- With funding assistance from the District and other partners, Blueprint 2000 and the City of Tallahassee have made substantial progress toward completion of the Cascades Park Watershed Restoration Project. Components under construction include major stormwater ponds, retaining walls, utility relocations, landscaping to support littoral vegetation, and stream reconstruction, all within the St. Marks River watershed.

**Table 1: Restoration, Enhancement and Maintenance (2011)**

Water Management Area	Acres Burned					Acres Planted					Acres Harvested				Acres Treated
	Total	Fuel Reduction	Site Preparation	Growing Season	Wiregrass Propagation	Total	Wiregrass	Longleaf Pine	Slash Pine	Replanted	Total	Restoration	Thinning	Habitat Restoration	For Invasive, Non-native or Off-site Species
Escambia River	132	132													
Garcon Point	202	202													89
Blackwater River															1
Yellow River	444	429		15											3
Perdido River	477	178	299							199			199		10
Choctawhatchee River	2,316	2,316				87	16	71			214	37	177		46
Econfina Creek	5,926	4,064	101	539	1,222	1,307		1,307			308	101	207		6
St. Andrews	125	103		22											
Carter Restoration	719	425		294		15	15								
Ward Creek West	189	189				17	17								
Devils Swamp Restoration	1,427	1,427													
Chipola River	369	292		77											
Apalachicola River															
Lake Jackson															
<b>Totals</b>	<b>12,326</b>	<b>9,757</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>947</b>	<b>1,222</b>	<b>1,426</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>1,378</b>			<b>721</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>155</b>

**Table 2: Access and Recreation Management (2011)**

Water Management Area	Primitive Campsites	Picnic Grounds	Public Parks	Parking Areas	Reserved Group Sites	Boat Landings	Portolet Stations	Horse Trail	Canoe Trail	Hiking Trail	Nature Trail	Bike Trail	Access Road	Group Use Permits	Birding	Nature Trail	General Purpose	Information Signs	Weather Pavilions
	Number Maintained							Miles Maintained						Issued	Maps/Brochures Printed			Installed	
Escambia River	13	9	8	9	1	8	11			1	2		27	26				20	2
Garcon Point				3						3			3			3,450		10	
Blackwater River		1				1					1							2	1
Yellow River	9	2	7	6		4	4		50				47					10	
Perdido River		3	3	4	1	3	4	3	9				32	12				80	1
Choctawhatchee River	8	9	12	12		10	8		15				43					80	4
Econfina Creek	10	14	8	18	5	4	14	56	22	18	2		24	201				279	8
Chipola River	3	1	3	3		3	2	5	14	4	1	2	6						1
Apalachicola River	2	1	1	3		3	1				4		5						2
Lake Jackson			1	2				9		5	1	9	4						1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>239</b>		<b>3,450</b>		<b>481</b>	<b>20</b>

**Table 3: Projected Funding, Staffing and Resource Management for FY 2011-2012**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Water Management Area</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Assigned Staff</b>	<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>Funding for Resource Management</b>
<b>Western</b>	Escambia	35,413		\$488,278	\$422,300
	Escambia Conservation Easements	19		\$1,396	\$500
	Garcon Point	3,245		\$205,506	\$149,400
	Yellow/Escribano	17,742		\$294,316	\$246,889
	Blackwater	382		\$81,382	\$58,750
	Perdido	6,261		\$408,131	\$339,100
	Perdido Conservation Easements	4		\$1,152	\$500
	<b>Western Region Total</b>	<b>63,066</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>\$1,480,161</b>	<b>\$1,217,439</b>
<b>Central</b>	Choctawhatchee	60,848		\$1,055,290	\$894,100
	Choctawhatchee/Holmes Conservation Easements	2,537		\$3,741	\$500
	Econfina	39,174		\$1,479,316	\$1,248,150
	St. Andrew/Econfina Conservation Easements	2,433		\$4,762	\$500
	Ward Creek West	719		\$20,686	\$13,500
	Carter Restoration	2,155		\$203,100	\$191,250
	<b>Central Region Total</b>	<b>107,866</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>\$2,766,895</b>	<b>\$2,348,000</b>
<b>Eastern</b>	Chipola	9,094		\$375,484	\$270,500
	Apalachicola	36,823		\$454,076	\$361,050
	Apalachicola/Chipola Conservation Easements	2,360		\$4,581	\$500
	Lake Jackson	516		\$52,173	\$2,295
	St. Marks Conservation Easements	1,376		\$4,783	\$750
	Ochlockonee Conservation Easements	3,675		\$5,848	\$750
	<b>Eastern Region Total</b>	<b>53,844</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$896,945</b>	<b>\$635,845</b>
<b>Regional Totals</b>	<b>224,776</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>\$5,144,001</b>	<b>\$4,201,284</b>	
Management Administration		4	\$896,053	\$433,600	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>224,776</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$6,040,054</b>	<b>\$4,634,884</b>	

# **APPENDIX**

## **DEP Florida Forever Priority List**

Rank	Substantially Complete Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres <sup>2</sup>	Work Plan Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Estero Bay	Lee	2,359	2,359	High
2	Charlotte Harbor Estuary	Charlotte/ Lee/ Sarasota	6,874	9,233	High/Med
3	Spruce Creek	Volusia	449	9,682	Medium
4	South Walton County Ecosystem	Walton	3,243	12,925	Med/Low
5	Save Our Everglades	Collier	371	13,296	Low
6	Lochloosa Wildlife	Alachua	4,828	18,124	Low
<b>Subtotal: 6 Projects</b>			<b>1% of acreage on list</b>	18,124	
Rank	Critical Historical Resources Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Rem. Acres	Cum. Acres <sup>2</sup>	WP Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Windover Archaeological Site	Brevard	8	8	High
2	Pierce Mound Complex	Franklin	561	569	High
3	Three Chimneys	Volusia	56	625	High/Med
4	Okeechobee Battlefield	Okeechobee	89	714	Medium
5	Battle of Wahoo Swamp	Sumter	853	1,568	Med/Low
6	Pineland Site Complex	Lee	148	1,716	Low
<b>Subtotal: 6 Projects</b>			<b>0.1% of acreage on list</b>	1,716	
Rank	Climate Change Lands Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Rem. Acres	Cum. Acres <sup>2</sup>	WP Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Florida Keys Ecosystem	Monroe	8,571	8,571	High
2	Caber Coastal Connector	Levy	7,804	16,375	High
3	North Key Largo Hammocks	Monroe	864	17,239	High
4	Northeast Florida Blueway	Duval/ St.Johns/ Flagler	13,118	30,356	High
5	St. Joe Timberland	Bay/ Franklin/ Gadsden/ Gulf/ Jefferson/ Leon/ Liberty/ Taylor/ Wakulla/ Walton/ Washington	89,976	120,333	High/Med
6	Coupon Bight / Key Deer	Monroe	1,641	121,973	Low
7	St. Johns River Blueway <sup>BA</sup>	St. Johns	26,212	148,186	Low
8	Florida Springs Coastal Greenway	Citrus	9,930	158,116	Low
9	Terra Ceia	Manatee	2,474	160,590	Low
10	Archie Carr Sea Turtle Refuge	Brevard/ Indian River	245	160,835	Low
11	Dickerson Bay / Bald Point	Wakulla/ Franklin	2,972	163,806	Low
12	West Bay Preservation Area <sup>NP</sup>	Bay	4,494	168,300	Low
13	Garcon Ecosystem	Santa Rosa	3,835	172,135	Low
14	Peaceful Horse Ranch	Desoto	4,177	176,312	Low
15	Tiger / Little Tiger Island	Nassau	1,141	177,453	Low
<b>Subtotal: 15 Projects</b>			<b>9% of acreage on list</b>	177,453	
Rank	Partnerships & Regional Incentives Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Rem. Acres	Cum. Acres <sup>2</sup>	WP Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Florida's First Magnitude Springs	Washington/ Bay/ Jackson/ Wakulla/ Leon/ Hamilton/ Madison/ Lafayette/ Levy/ Marion/ Hernando	5,771	5,771	High
2	Northeast Fla Timberlands & Watershed Reserve	Duval/ Nassua/ Clay	87,481	93,252	High
3	Brevard Coastal Scrub Ecosystem	Brevard	23,160	116,413	High
4	Indian River Lagoon Blueway	Volusia/ Brevard/ Indian River/ St. Lucie/ Martin	19,847	136,259	High
5	Escribano Point	Santa Rosa	1,798	138,058	High
6	Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed	Lee/ Collier	38,532	176,589	High/Med
7	Clear Creek / Whiting Field	Santa Rosa	3,416	180,005	Medium
8	Annutteliga Hammock <sup>BA</sup>	Citrus/ Hernando	12,540	192,545	Medium
9	Wakulla Springs Protection Zone	Wakulla/ Leon	3,969	196,514	Medium
10	Volusia Conservation Corridor	Volusia/ Flagler	22,418	218,932	Medium
11	Green Swamp - Hilochee Corridor <sup>RP</sup>	Lake/ Polk	55,894	274,826	Medium
12	Heather Island / Oklawaha River	Marion	19,549	294,375	Medium
13	Flagler County Blueway <sup>BA</sup>	Flagler/ Volusia	4,082	298,458	Medium
14	Dade County Archipelago	Miami-Dade	311	298,768	Medium
15	Watermelon Pond	Levy/ Alachua	5,933	304,701	Medium
16	Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods	Charlotte/ Lee	3,906	308,607	Medium
17	Middle Chipola River	Jackson/ Calhoun	11,877	320,484	Med/Low
18	Catfish Creek	Polk	9,162	329,646	Low
19	Green Swamp - Withlacoochee River Headwaters <sup>RP</sup>	Lake/ Pasco/ Polk	52,115	381,761	Low
20	Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem	Martin	8,043	389,804	Low
21	Lake Santa Fe	Alachua/ Bradford	9,785	399,589	Low
22	Pal - Mar	Palm Beach/ Martin	9,954	409,543	Low
23	Rainbow River Corridor	Marion/ Citrus	1,138	410,680	Low
24	Crossbar / Al Bar Ranch	Pasco	12,371	423,051	Low
25	Sand Mountain	Washington/ Bay	14,495	437,546	Low
26	Pumpkin Hill Creek	Duval	10,850	448,396	Low

27	Baldwin Bay / St. Marys River	Duval/ Nassau	9,129	457,525	Low
28	Lafayette Forest	Lafayette	10,261	467,787	Low
29	Carr Farm / Price's Scrub	Marion/ Alachua	305	468,091	Low
30	Hall Ranch	Charlotte	8,519	476,610	Low
31	Florida National Scenic Trail	Columbia	7	476,617	Low
<b>Subtotal: 31 Projects</b>			<b>24% of acreage on list</b>	<b>476,617</b>	

Rank	Less-Than-Fee Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Rem. Acres	Cum. Acres <sup>2</sup>	WP Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Adams Ranch	Osceola	10,340	10,340	High
2	Fisheating Creek Ecosystem	Glades/ Highlands	108,904	119,244	High
3	Seven Runs Creek	Walton	23,869	143,114	High
4	Ochlockonee River Conservation Area	Gadsden/ Leon	3,269	146,383	High
5	Ayavalla Plantation	Leon	6,081	152,464	High
6	Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed	Dixie	46,461	198,926	High/Med
7	Myakka Ranchlands	Sarasota	11,239	210,165	Medium
8	Big Bend Swamp / Holopaw Ranch	Osceola	50,480	260,645	Medium
9	Tiger Cattle Company Ranch	Okeechobee	2,229	262,874	Medium
10	Clay Ranch	Putnam	2,460	265,333	Medium
11	Ranch Reserve	Osceola	12,592	277,925	Medium
12	Gulf Hammock	Levy	25,611	303,536	Medium
13	Green Swamp - Pine Island Recharge Area <sup>RP</sup>	Lake	30,485	334,021	Med/Low
14	Raiford - Osceola Greenway	Baker/ Union	67,673	401,693	Low
15	Green Swamp - Peace River Headwaters <sup>RP</sup>	Polk	23,719	425,412	Low
16	Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone	Gadsden/ Liberty	6,921	432,334	Low
17	Mill Creek	Marion	12,293	444,626	Low
18	Lower Perdido River Buffer	Escambia	2,356	446,982	Low
19	Peace River Refuge	Desoto	3,846	450,828	Low
20	Maytown Flatwoods	Brevard	7,187	458,014	Low
21	Old Town Creek Watershed	Hardee/ Polk	7,303	465,317	Low
22	Little River Conservation Area	Gadsden	2,057	467,375	Low
23	San Felasco Conservation Corridor	Alachua	376	467,750	Low
24	Horse Creek Ranch	DeSoto/ Hardee	16,316	484,066	Low
25	Suwannee County Preservation	Suwannee	1,254	485,320	Low
26	West Aucilla River Buffer	Jefferson	721	486,041	Low
27	Millstone Plantation	Leon	56	486,097	Low
<b>Subtotal: 27 Projects</b>			<b>25% of acreage on list</b>	<b>486,097</b>	

Rank	Critical Natural Lands Projects	County <sup>1</sup>	Rem. Acres	Cum. Acres <sup>2</sup>	WP Priority <sup>3</sup>
1	Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem <sup>BA</sup>	Lake/ Osceola/ Highlands/ Polk	24,237	24,237	High
2	Bombing Range Ridge	Polk/ Highlands/ Osceola	32,717	56,953	High
3	Wekiva - Ocala Greenway	Lake/ Orange/ Seminole/ Volusia	25,488	82,441	High
4	Apalachicola River	Jackson/ Gadsden/ Liberty/ Calhoun	11,214	93,655	High
5	Panther Glades	Hendry	40,634	134,289	High
6	Wacissa / Aucilla River Sinks	Jefferson/ Taylor	9,897	144,186	High
7	Triple Diamond	Okeechobee	7,997	152,184	High
8	Upper St. Marks River Corridor	Leon/ Jefferson/ Wakulla	11,025	163,208	High
9	Belle Meade	Collier	7,336	170,545	High
10	Etoniah / Cross Florida Greenway <sup>BA</sup>	Clay/ Putnam/ Marion	66,302	236,847	High
11	Longleaf Pine Ecosystem	Gilchrist/ Volusia/ Marion	9,693	246,540	High
12	Caloosahatchee Ecoscape	Hendry/ Glades	13,515	260,055	High
13	Pine Island Slough Ecosystem	Osceola/ Indian River	48,902	308,957	High/Med
14	Osceola Pine Savannas	Osceola	27,572	336,529	Medium
15	Devil's Garden	Hendry/ Collier	82,994	419,523	Medium
16	Twelvemile Slough <sup>BA</sup>	Hendry	8,170	427,694	Medium
17	Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie	Escambia	2,412	430,105	Medium
18	Camp Blanding - Raiford Greenway	Baker/ Bradford/ Clay/ Union	33,973	464,078	Medium
19	Half Circle L Ranch	Hendry/ Collier	11,176	475,254	Medium
20	Kissimmee - St. Johns River Connector	Okeechobee/ Indian River	34,589	509,843	Medium
21	Bear Creek Forest	Bay/ Calhoun/ Gulf	100,424	610,267	Med/Low
22	Bear Hammock	Marion	4,680	614,947	Low
23	South Goethe	Marion/ Levy	11,651	626,598	Low
24	Lake Hatchineha Watershed	Osceola/ Polk	5,416	632,015	Low
25	Wolfe Creek Forest	Santa Rosa	10,068	642,083	Low
26	Pinhook Swamp	Baker/ Columbia	60,420	702,502	Low

27	San Pedro Bay	Madison/ Taylor	44,998	747,501	Low
28	Southeastern Bat Maternity Caves	Jackson/ Alachua/ Marion/ Citrus/ Sumter	591	748,091	Low
29	Shoal River Buffer	Okaloosa	2,095	750,186	Low
30	Upper Shoal River	Walton	12,027	762,213	Low
31	Hixtown Swamp	Madison	22,429	784,642	Low
32	Ichetucknee Trace	Columbia	1,887	786,529	Low
<b>Subtotal: 32 Projects</b>			<b>40% of acreage on list</b>	786,529	
<b>TOTAL ACRES OF ALL PROJECTS</b>				1,946,536	

<sup>1</sup> Counties with no remaining acreage to acquire in a project not listed here – see project summaries for counties in where acquisitions completed.

NP = New Project added to list.

<sup>2</sup> Cumulative acres used to calculate in which Priority Group of the Acquisition Work Plan each project will qualify.

BA = Boundary Amended. RP = Redesigned Project.

<sup>3</sup> Work Plan Priority Groups pursuant to Rule 18-24.006(6):

High Priority Group = top 1/3 acreage within each Category

High/Med = Portion of project in High Priority Group & portion in Medium Priority Group

Medium Priority Group = middle 1/3 acreage within each Category

Med/Low = Portion of project in Medium Priority Group & portion in Low Priority Group

Low Priority Group = bottom 1/3 acreage within each Category