

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Forest Service

Land Management Plan Amendment
to the
Lake Wales Ridge State Forest Ten-Year Land Management Plan

February 2022

The Florida Forest Service (FFS) is requesting ARC approval of a Land Management Plan Amendment to the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest (LWRSF) Ten-Year Land Management Plan. The FFS plans to construct two (2) parking areas along State Road 64 within the Arbuckle Tract. The parking areas contemplated in this amendment were discussed at the LWRSF liaison committee meeting on September 9, 2021 and supported by public input. The FFS-managed LWRSF is an approximately 26,700-acre, multiple-use state forest, located in Polk County. The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida (BOT) hold title to the affected portion of the state forest.

The two (2) parking areas are planned to be constructed along State Road 64 within the southern portion of the Arbuckle Tract and will be used by recreational visitors and FFS staff. Planned dimensions for each parking area is 30 feet by 60 feet, totaling 1,800 square feet. Materials for construction include broken/crushed tile for parking lot surface stabilization and 15-20 wood posts for the perimeter of the parking area. Both parking lot areas will be established by FFS staff.

FFS staff and a certified archaeological resource monitor (ARM) surveyed the proposed site areas for threatened or endangered species and possible historical and/or archaeological evidence. They concluded no known archeological sites occur in the project areas, as well as no evidence of threatened or endangered species were observed at the project site vicinities.

FFS additionally consulted with the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), the Division of Historic Resources (DHR), and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) regarding the proposed activities; there are no known resource conflicts and the SWFWMD does not require any permits. FNAI noted the parking lots have the potential presence of listed species; however, the sites are not likely ideal habitat, and a survey of the location should be conducted prior to continuing with the projects. Consulting agency (FNAI, DHR, SWFWMD) response letters are included with this request, as are other applicable supporting documents.



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Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-224-8207
fax 850-681-9364
www.fnai.org

To: Todd Knapp
From: Dan, Hipes, Director, FNAI
Date: December 13, 2021
RE: Proposed Parking Construction LWR State Forest

We have reviewed the materials for the proposed construction of two small parking areas at Lake Wales Ridge State Forest. The proposed location for parking area 1 is on the edge of a small scrubby flatwoods. Although the site is within a large area mapped as habitat for Florida scrub-jay (G2S2, T, FT), it is peripheral and appears to be more mesic than typical scrub jay habitat. Parking area 1 is also within a 500 acre polygon mapped for Florida jointweed (*Polygonella basiramia*; G3S3) which is listed by both state and federal agencies as Endangered. Again, the site is not likely ideal habitat, but a survey of the location should be conducted to avoid “take”.

The proposed area for parking area 2 is situated in a mesic transition from scrub to a nearby depression. The site is within the same large area mapped for Florida scrub-jay and Florida jointweed mentioned above but does not appear to be suitable for either species. Parking area 2 is also with a 300-acre polygon mapped for nodding pinweed (*Lechea cernua*; G3S3), listed by FDACS as Threatened. The mesic conditions at the site are not ideal for this species, but a search of the proposed footprint of the parking area should be conducted prior to continuing with the project.

Despite the potential presences of the listed species described above, the proposed sites avoid the heart of the scrub and scrubby flatwoods in the vicinity and the many rare species associated with these natural communities.

Thank you for the review request.



Florida Resources
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Analysis Center

Institute of Science
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Tracking Florida's Biodiversity



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Mr. Todd Knapp
Florida Forest Service
Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
3125 Conner Boulevard
Suite I-266, Mail Stop C-25
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1650

December 20, 2021

Re: DHR No.: 2021-7467
Project: Lake Wales Ridge State Forest Planned Parking Areas
County: Polk

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Our office reviewed the referenced project in accordance with Chapter 267, *Florida Statutes*, and implementing state regulations, for possible effects on historic properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the *National Register of Historic Places*, or otherwise of historical, architectural or archaeological value.

Based on the nature of the undertaking and previous development within the project area, it is the opinion of this office that the proposed undertaking is unlikely to adversely affect historic properties.

However, unexpected finds may occur during ground disturbing activities, and we request that if prehistoric or historic artifacts, such as pottery or ceramics, projectile points, dugout canoes, metal implements, historic building materials, or any other physical remains that could be associated with Native American, early European, or American settlement are encountered at any time within the project site area, the permitted project shall cease all activities involving subsurface disturbance in the vicinity of the discovery. The applicant shall contact the Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources, Compliance and Review Section at (850)-245-6333. Project activities shall not resume without verbal and/or written authorization. In the event that unmarked human remains are encountered during permitted activities, all work shall stop immediately and the proper authorities notified in accordance with Section 872.05, *Florida Statutes*.

For any questions concerning our comments, please contact Robin Jackson, Historic Preservationist, Compliance and Review, by electronic mail at robin.jackson@dos.myflorida.com, or at 850.245.6496, or 800.847.7278.

Sincerely,

Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D.
Director, Division of Historical Resources and
State Historic Preservation Officer

Division of Historical Resources
R.A. Gray Building • 500 South Bronough Street • Tallahassee, Florida 32399
850.245.6300 • 850.245.6436 (Fax) • FLHeritage.com





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Southwest Florida Water Management District



2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899

(352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only)

WaterMatters.org

Bartow Office

170 Century Boulevard
Bartow, Florida 33830-7700
(863) 534-1448 or
1-800-492-7862 (FL only)

Sarasota Office

78 Sarasota Center Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34240-9770
(941) 377-3722 or
1-800-320-3503 (FL only)

Tampa Office

7601 U.S. 301 North (Fort King Highway)
Tampa, Florida 33637-6759
(813) 985-7481 or
1-800-836-0797 (FL only)

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Executive Director

December 1, 2021

Todd Knapp
State Lands Supervisor
Florida Forest Service
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
3125 Conner Boulevard
Suite I-266, Mail Stop C-25
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1650

Subject: Lake Wales Ridge State Forest Planned Parking Areas – Ground Disturbance Review

Dear Mr. Knapp:

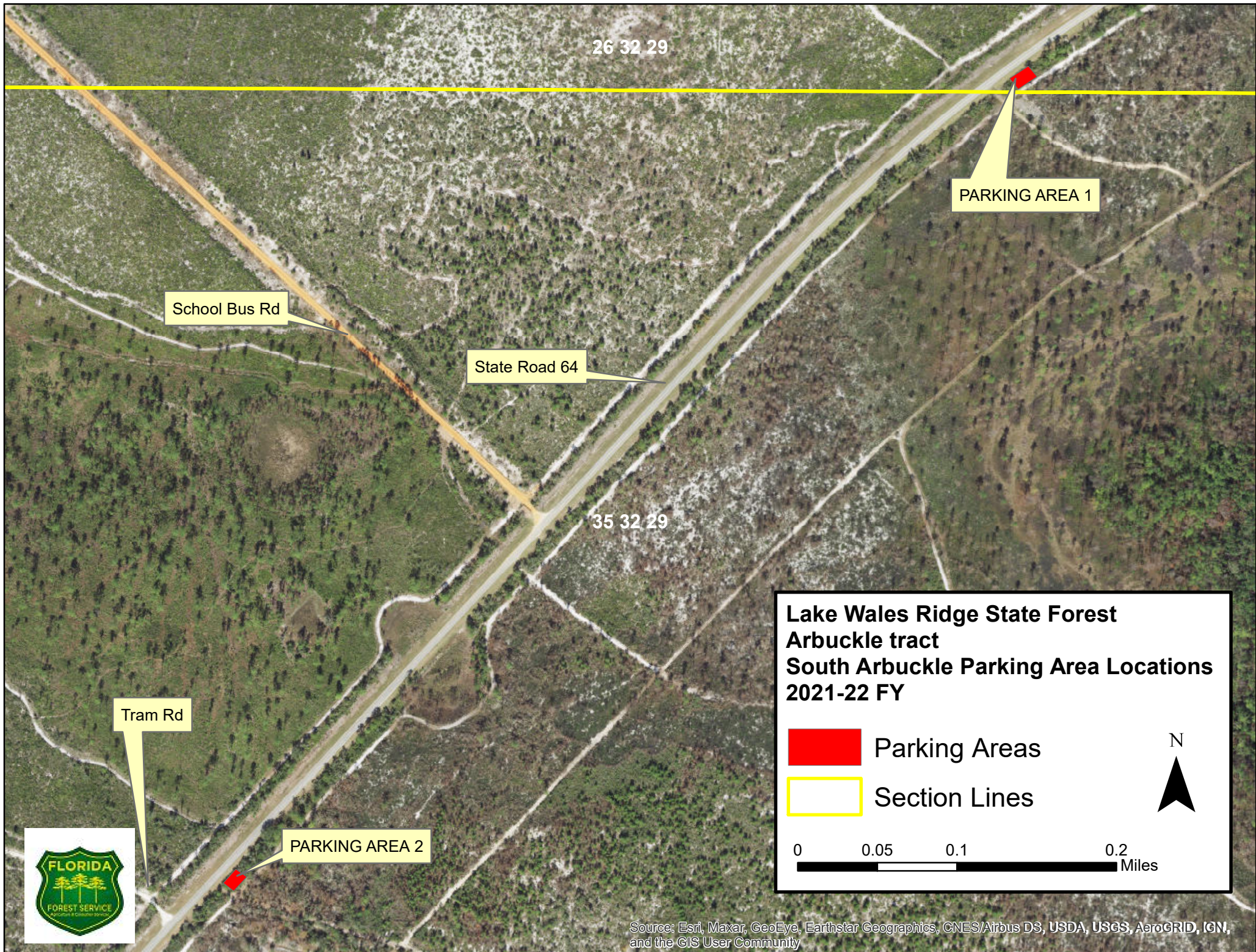
The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) has reviewed your request for a variance in the Forest Management plan on the Lake Wales Ridge State Forest. The District has no objection to this activity and a permit will not be required by the District as long as the parking areas remain sized as indicated in your original request.

Let me know if you require anything further to satisfy your ARC request.

Sincerely,

Chris Reed
Land Management Section Manager
Land Resources Bureau

CR:mp



26 32 29

PARKING AREA 1

School Bus Rd

State Road 64

35 32 29

Tram Rd

PARKING AREA 2

**Lake Wales Ridge State Forest
Arbuckle tract
South Arbuckle Parking Area Locations
2021-22 FY**

 Parking Areas

 Section Lines

N



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 Miles



Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

PROPOSED PARKING AREAS:

PARKING AREA 1:



Facing southwest



Facing southeast



Facing northeast

PARKING AREA 2:



Facing northeast



Facing southeast



Facing southwest