

# Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor

Less-Than-Fee

Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns Counties

<i>Year Added to Priority List</i>	2016
<i>Project Acres</i>	94,518
<i>Acquired Acres</i>	6,357
<i>Cost of Acquired Acres</i>	\$0
<i>Remaining Project Acres</i>	88,161
<i>2023 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres</i>	\$155,410,728

## Purpose for State Acquisition

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor project will enhance the connections between multiple conservation lands, promote biodiversity, and protect water quality and quantity. As a wildlife corridor among other conservation lands, the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor would help the long-term survival of larger and wide-ranging wildlife such as the Florida black bear.

## General Description

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor is located in Flagler, Putnam and St. Johns counties in the Eastern Flatwoods physiographic district; this district is described as coastal lowlands with flatwoods and swamps on silty sand soils. There are several public conservation lands adjacent to the project, including Matanzas State Forest, Faver-Dykes State Park, Pellicer Creek Conservation Area and Haw Creek Preserve State Park. The Pringle Creek Forest Florida Forever project and Northeast Florida Blueway Florida Forever project also border the project on its eastern side.

Historically, the project was a mix of mesic and wet pine flatwoods. Currently, the trees on the land are mainly stands of slash pine (up to 40 years old) with understory that ranges from heavily wooded with shrubs to no understory in areas where the pines are bedded. Commercial pine plantations account for about half of the project area. Natural uplands are about five percent of the project, with small patches of wet and mesic flatwoods.

Wetland communities make up most (40 percent) of the natural communities on the property. Vegetation is generally dominated by bald cypress or swamp tupelo and isolated wetlands are abundant throughout the property. Dome swamps dominated by pond cypress and open depression marshes are common within the pine plantation and flatwoods uplands.

Several natural lakes occur on the property: Speckled Perch Lake, Black Lake and Tank Lake. They are located in a higher, more xeric portion of the property. Baygall vegetation dominated by loblolly bay and slash pine surrounding these lakes indicates the increased seepage originating from the xeric uplands.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<b><u>FNAI Elements</u></b>	<b><u>Score</u></b>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Swallow-tailed kite	G5/S2
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
<i>celestial lily</i>	G3/S3
<i>nodding pinweed</i>	G3/S3
<i>Florida mountain-mint</i>	G3/S3
Bachman's sparrow	G3/S3
Bald eagle	G5/S3

**Public Use**

The Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition and does not provide for public access. However, some parts of the property could be acquired in fee-simple, opening the opportunity for public use. Fee simple acquisitions would be managed by the adjacent conservation land manager(s).

**Acquisition Planning**

**2010**

On December 1, 2010, Fish Tail Swamp Mitigation Bank (1,061.28 acres) was approved, all of which would be inside the project boundary when the project was started.

**2015**

In 2015, the project was sponsored in a proposal by the Conservation Trust of Florida and was presented to the Acquisition and Restoration Council at their October 16, 2015, meeting.

**2016**

On April 29, 2016, the St. Johns River Water Management District established the Wilson Green – Dave Branch conservation easement (5,326.92 acres), of which approximately 3,396.92 acres are in the project boundary.

**2018**

On April 20, 2018, the Acquisition and Restoration Council removed 7,468 acres from the project boundary at the request of the landowner.

**2023**

In October 2023, the Acquisition and Restoration Council removed 8,991 acres from the project boundary.

In December 2023, the Acquisition and Restoration Council added 34 parcels totaling approximately 422.86 acres in Putnam County to the project boundary.

**Coordination**

No partners in the acquisition were identified for the project.

**Management Policy Statement**

As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor would be managed by the landowner as outlined in the conservation easement.





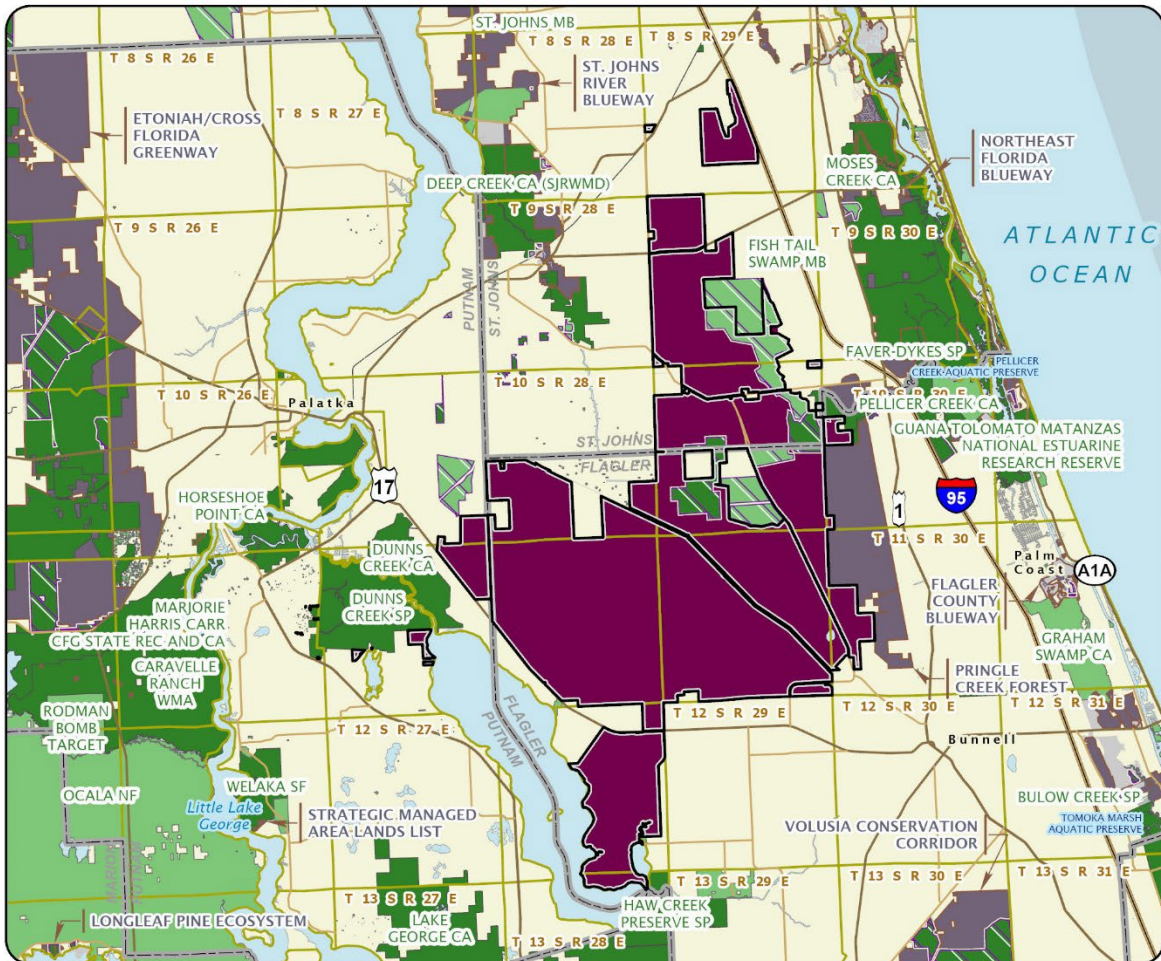
### Manager(s)

If acquired as less-than-fee, management responsibility of the Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor would remain with the landowner. Periodic monitoring of the site's management to confirm continued conservation easement compliance would be coordinated by the Division of State Lands. There is a possibility that some project parcels could be acquired in fee simple.

### Management Prospectus

The Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement, while the management will be conducted by the property owner.





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