

ITEM 13:

Vote on whether to amend the Florida's First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project Boundary to add 13 parcels totaling approximately 742 acres in Suwannee and Lafayette counties with a combined tax assessed market value of \$1,987,808.

LOCATION:

Suwannee and Lafayette counties

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The Suwannee Springs amendment, proposed by the Alachua Conservation Trust, adds 13 parcels to the Florida's First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever project. The parcels, owned by three landowners, total approximately 742 acres, and have a combined tax assessed market value of \$1,987,808. The landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The lands are to be acquired less-than-fee. The properties are located along the Suwannee River in southwestern Suwannee County and northeastern Lafayette County. The properties are primarily successional hardwood forest with some high-quality sandhill, floodplain swamp, and cleared pasture/cropland. The proposal is also noted to include numerous karst features including two second magnitude springs (Running Springs 1 and 2), one third magnitude spring (Hidden Spring) and overlies an extensive subterranean cave system associated with Cow Springs. The majority of the proposal is within Priority 2 of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN).

Boundary Amendment Criteria:

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The parcels total less than 1,000 acres, have a tax assessed value of less than \$2 million, and are less than 10% of the size of the overall project to which it is being added. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

Project History:

The Florida's First Magnitude Springs project, located in 15 counties, was added to the Florida Forever Priority List in 1991. The project aims to protect Florida's springs, karst windows, and Floridan aquifer from the impacts of runoff, clearcutting, mining and unsupervised recreation.

The Florida's First Magnitude Springs project includes approximately 15,965 acres and is ranked number one in the Partnerships & Regional Incentives category on the 2022 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2020) is \$31,928,340.

FNAI Review:

According to the FNAI Florida Forever Measures Evaluation, the proposed addition contributes significantly to Aquifer Recharge (100%), Surface Water Protection (99%), Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (89%), and Ecological Greenways (73%).

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

Project	DHR	FFS	Lynetta Griner	FWC	Bill Palmer	Elva Peppers	DEP	Selected
Florida's First Magnitude Springs: Suwannee Springs								



To: Sine Murray, DEP/OES
From: Dale Jackson, FNAI
Date: August 24, 2022
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Florida First Magnitude Springs (Suwannee Springs Amendment: Drew/Orcutt/Shitama properties)

The primary goal of the Florida First Magnitude Springs Florida Forever Project is to protect Florida's largest (first order) artesian springs and the Floridan Aquifer that supplies them with water. These springs provide not only clean fresh water but also abundant opportunities for recreation, as well as some protection for rare animals such as cave crayfish. Currently, the project includes 22 sites in 17 counties, mostly in the panhandle and northern peninsula.

The proposed 742-acre (per application; 748 GIS acres) addition along the Suwannee River, which forms the Suwannee/Lafayette County line, is intended to meet these goals. The property, which is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition, includes three tracts: the largest (Drew, ca. 632 ac.) on the east bordering the northern bank of the Suwannee River, a small tract (Shitama, ca. 8 ac.) just west of it also bordering the northern river bank, and a moderately sized western tract (Orcutt, ca. 102 ac.) bordering the southern bank of the river. The tracts lie just east of Peacock Springs Conservation Area, Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park, and Ace Ranch Conservation Easement (Suwannee River Water Management District).

All of the property is wooded except for the cleared (pasture/cropland) northern third of the large eastern (Drew) tract, as well as two smaller nearby cleared areas. Forested areas are successional hardwood forest, possibly including upland hardwood forest. The southern two-thirds of the Drew tract includes substantial acreage (152 acres per remote analysis) representing what appears to be high quality sandhill natural community. A band of floodplain swamp abuts the river, particularly along the northern bank. The western (Orcutt) tract supports a small house, a 1-acre blueberry grove, and a stand of pine plantation.

The application notes that the proposal includes two second magnitude springs (Running Springs #1 and #2) and one third magnitude spring (Hidden Spring), and that the Drew tract overlies an extensively mapped subterranean cave system (Cow Springs). That tract includes numerous karst features, including sinkholes.

The FNAI database contains an old record of gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, G3/S3, C, T) in an area of the Drew tract that is now cleared; the application notes that recent (April 2022) cursory surveys have recorded more than 400 burrows in the sandhills. This suggests that the site is likely to support other rare sandhill-associated species. Several rare aquatic species are known from the adjacent river; these include two mussels (Suwannee moccasin shell [*Medionidus walkeri*, G1/S1, T, T] and Florida mapleleaf [*Quadrula kleiniana*, G2G3/S2, N, N]) and two turtles (Suwannee alligator snapping turtle [*Macrochelys suwanniensis*, G2/S2, PT, T] and Suwannee Cooter [*Pseudemys concinna suwanniensis*,

G5T3, N, N]). Other rare species, including fishes, are likely. The aquatic cave system underlying the property is likely to support multiple species of rare crustaceans.

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) following this memo is based on the Florida Forever Conservation Needs Assessment developed by FNAI. The data used in that analysis represent a standardized, statewide perspective of natural community distributions based primarily on data from the Cooperative Land Cover Map. Most to all of the proposed addition contributes to Surface Water Protection and Aquifer Recharge, and the majority to Ecological Greenways. Significant acreage also contributes to Natural Floodplain Function, Under-represented Natural Communities (20% sandhill), and Sustainable Forestry.

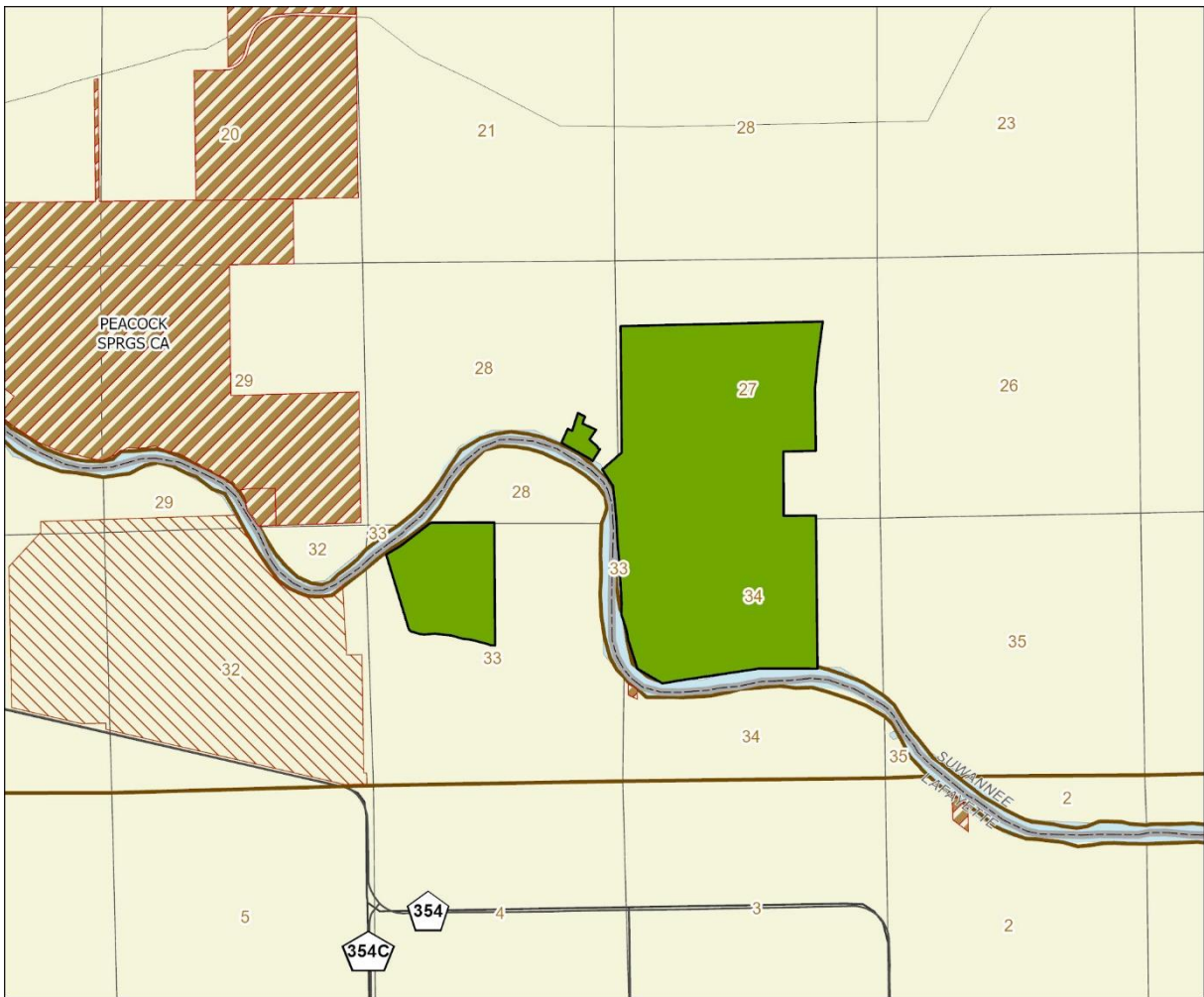
Florida's First Magnitude Springs (Drew/Orcutt): Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20220818

GIS ACRES = 748

MEASURES	Resource Acres ²	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	54	7%
Priority 3	401	54%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	205	28%
Total Acres	661	89%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	203	27%
Priority 2	5	< 1%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	15	2%
Priority 6	29	4%
Total Acres	253	34%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	542	73%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	542	73%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
Upland Glade (G1)	0	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0	0%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0	0%
Sandhill (G3)	152	20%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0	0%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	14	2%
Total Acres	167	22%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	1	
G4	0	
G5	0	
Total	1	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	207	28%
Priority 3	73	10%
Priority 4	61	8%
Priority 5	1	< 1%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	342	46%




MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres ²	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	233	31%
Priority 3	133	18%
Priority 4	371	50%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	737	99%
C7: Fragile Coastal Resources		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
C8: Functional Wetlands		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	32	4%
Priority 3	3	< 1%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	35	5%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	134	18%
Priority 3	612	82%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	746	100%
E2: Recreational Trails (miles)		
<small>(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)</small>		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number)		2 sites
G1: Sustainable Forestry		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	160	21%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	0	0%
Total Acres	160	21%
G3: Forestland for Recharge		160
		21%

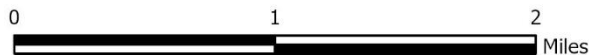
²Acres of each resource in the project and percentage of project represented by each resource are listed except where noted. This analysis converts site boundary into pixels, which causes slight differences from GIS acres; this effect is most noticeable on small sites.



FLORIDA'S FIRST MAGNITUDE SPRINGS PROPOSED ADDITION (DREW/ORCUTT)

SUWANNEE AND LAFAYETTE COUNTIES

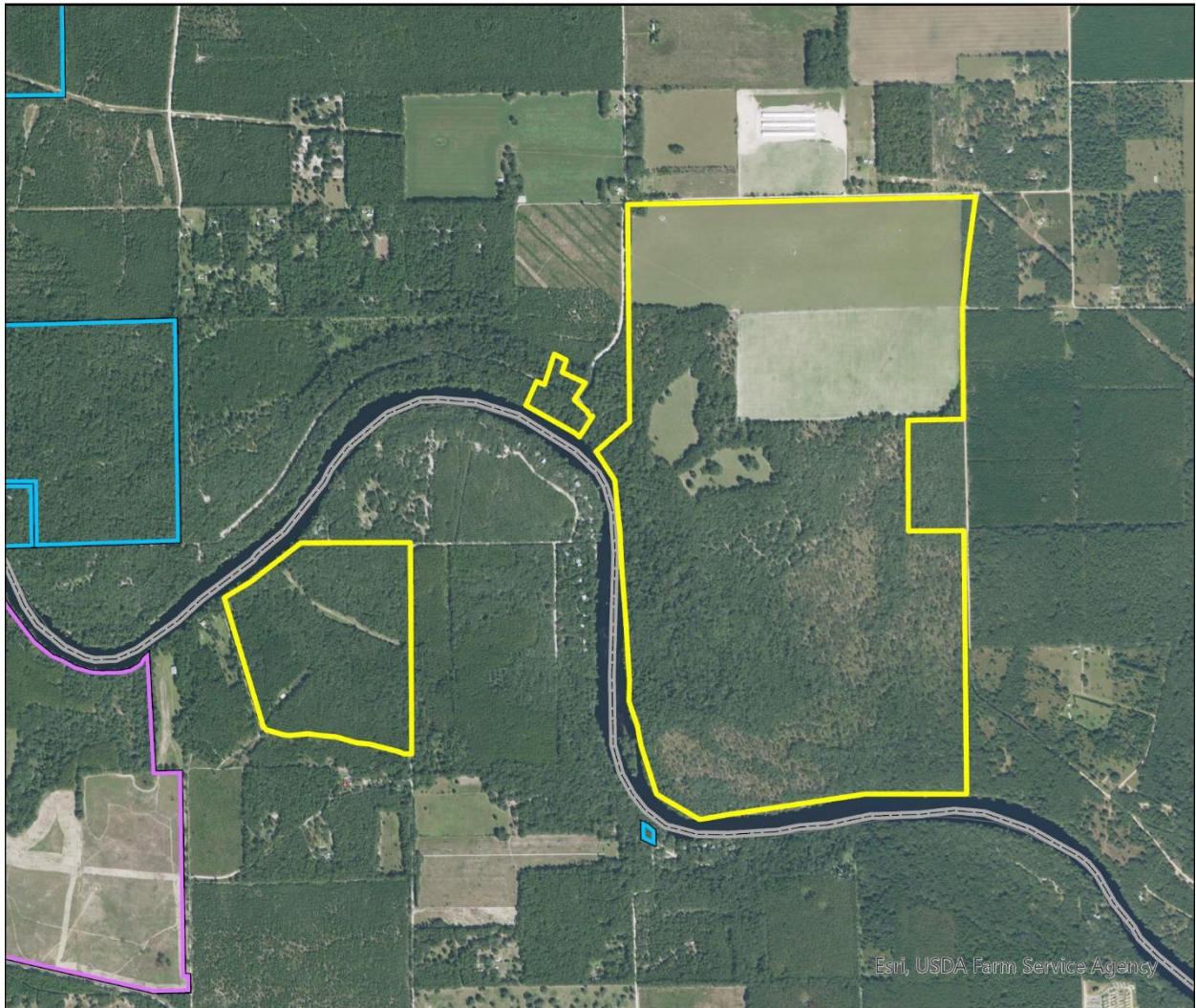
-  Proposed Addition
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands



AUGUST 2022

Florida's First Magnitude Springs Proposed Addition

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF AUGUST 2022



Map Produced by: N. Pasco, August 2022

Background: USA NAIP Imagery Resolution = 1.0 meter



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