

**ITEM 17:**

Vote on whether to amend the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever Project Boundary to add four parcels totaling approximately 906 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed market value of \$1,994,086.

**LOCATION:**

Putnam County

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

The Interlachen Timberlands amendment, proposed by SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzer Real Estate, adds four parcels in Putnam County totaling approximately 906 acres to the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever project. The properties are owned by DPS Putnam LLC, Green Ox, LLC and Sapwood, LLC. The four parcels have a combined tax assessed value of \$1,994,086. The landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The project is proposed as a less-than-fee acquisition and land management responsibilities would remain with the landowners.

The property is considered by the landowners as a “working forest” and is mostly a pine plantation with stands of various ages. Aerial imagery indicates the potential presence of sandhill, mesic flatwoods, and upland hardwood forest. Forested wetlands including floodplain swamp, baygall and hydric hammock are present. The property is likely habitat for the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) and is identified as Priority 2 within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network.

These parcels are largely bordered by partially developed residential areas heavily gridded with roads. The proposal potentially represents the last opportunity to expand the boundary of this project in this area.

*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 they are being added. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

*Project History:*

The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project, located in Citrus, Clay, Levy, Marion, and Putnam counties, was approved in 1995. Extending from the Withlacoochee River to the St. Johns River, the project will protect large expanses of flatwoods, sandhills and scrub. The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project was designed to fill in gaps between conservation lands in the region, providing a pathway across Florida for species such as the Florida black bear.

The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project currently identifies 92,640 acres for acquisition with 52,558 acres remaining to be acquired. The project is ranked number nine in the Critical Natural Lands category of the 2022 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value of the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2020) is \$132,744,322.

*FNAI Review:*

According to the FNAI Florida Forever Measures Evaluation, the parcels contribute substantially to Ecological Greenways (100%), Aquifer Recharge (100%), Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (97%), Surface Water Protection (94%), and Sustainable Forestry (72%).

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>DHR</b>	<b>FFS</b>	<b>Lynetta Griner</b>	<b>DEP</b>	<b>FWC</b>	<b>Bill Palmer</b>	<b>Elva Peppers</b>	<b>Selected</b>
Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway: Interlachen Timberlands								



To: Sine Murray, DEP/OES  
From: Dale Jackson, FNAI  
Date: October 20, 2022  
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway – Interlachen Timberlands

The primary goal of the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever Project (ECFG) is to protect a corridor of forested land and water to provide recreational opportunities and natural resource protection in northern peninsular Florida. The Interlachen Timberlands includes two tracts totaling 906 (912 GIS) acres in central Putnam County that have been proposed as additions to the project.

The two tracts are separated from each other by approximately 1 mile and are contiguous with yet-to-be acquired portions of ECFG. Several conservation lands are present within the vicinity of Interlachen Timberlands, including Wetlands Preserve Conservation Easement, Rice Creek Conservation Area, and Nine Mile Swamp Park, which connect with Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenways State Recreation and Conservation Area. The property is proposed for less-than-fee-simple protection.

Both tracts are undeveloped but are bordered by lands that are at least partially developed (residential) and heavily gridded with roads; hence, the proposal represents nearly the last opportunity to expand ECFG locally (there is one final undeveloped tract immediately east of the smaller tract). Both tracts support a series of unpaved logging roads. In the larger tract, elevations rise gradually from wetlands below 100 ft in the south to uplands exceeding 160 ft along the northern boundary. Elevations in the smaller tract range only from ca. 80 ft to 100 ft.

Because of the elevational gradients, original forest covers on the proposal ranged from forested wetlands (floodplain swamp, baygall, hydric hammock) to mesic/wet flatwoods to sandhill. However, as a result of the site's use as a "working forest," most of the uplands in both tracts have been converted to pine plantation with stands of various ages. There appears to be some sandhill succeeding to xeric hammock and remnant flatwoods (see below). Forested wetlands that appear to be baygall occupy the lowest sites, particularly in the southern part of the larger tract. These wetlands feed a small drain that supports a floodplain swamp that extends onto the ECFG. A larger area of floodplain swamp in the western part of the smaller tract similarly extends onto the ECFG to the north. The streams associated with these swamps eventually feed into Rice Creek and the St. Johns River. Remote analysis indicates the presence of three under-represented natural communities: 136 acres of sandhill (15% of the site), 104 acres of mesic/wet flatwoods (11%), and 6 acres of upland hardwood forest (< 1%).

The FNAI database shows that the proposed tracts lie within a region in which the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission considers the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*, G4T4/S4, N, N) to be abundant. No other rare species occurrences are documented in the FNAI database. However, the applicant notes the presence of several rare animals, including gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker, and eastern indigo snake; while tortoises are likely, the others are less so and require verification.

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. The proposed addition lies within a landscape that contributes substantially (> 70% of area) to Surface Water Protection, Aquifer Recharge, Ecological Greenways, and Sustainable Forestry, with lesser contributions (< 35% of area) to Functional Wetlands, Under-represented Natural Communities (principally sandhill and mesic/wet flatwoods), and Natural Floodplain Function.

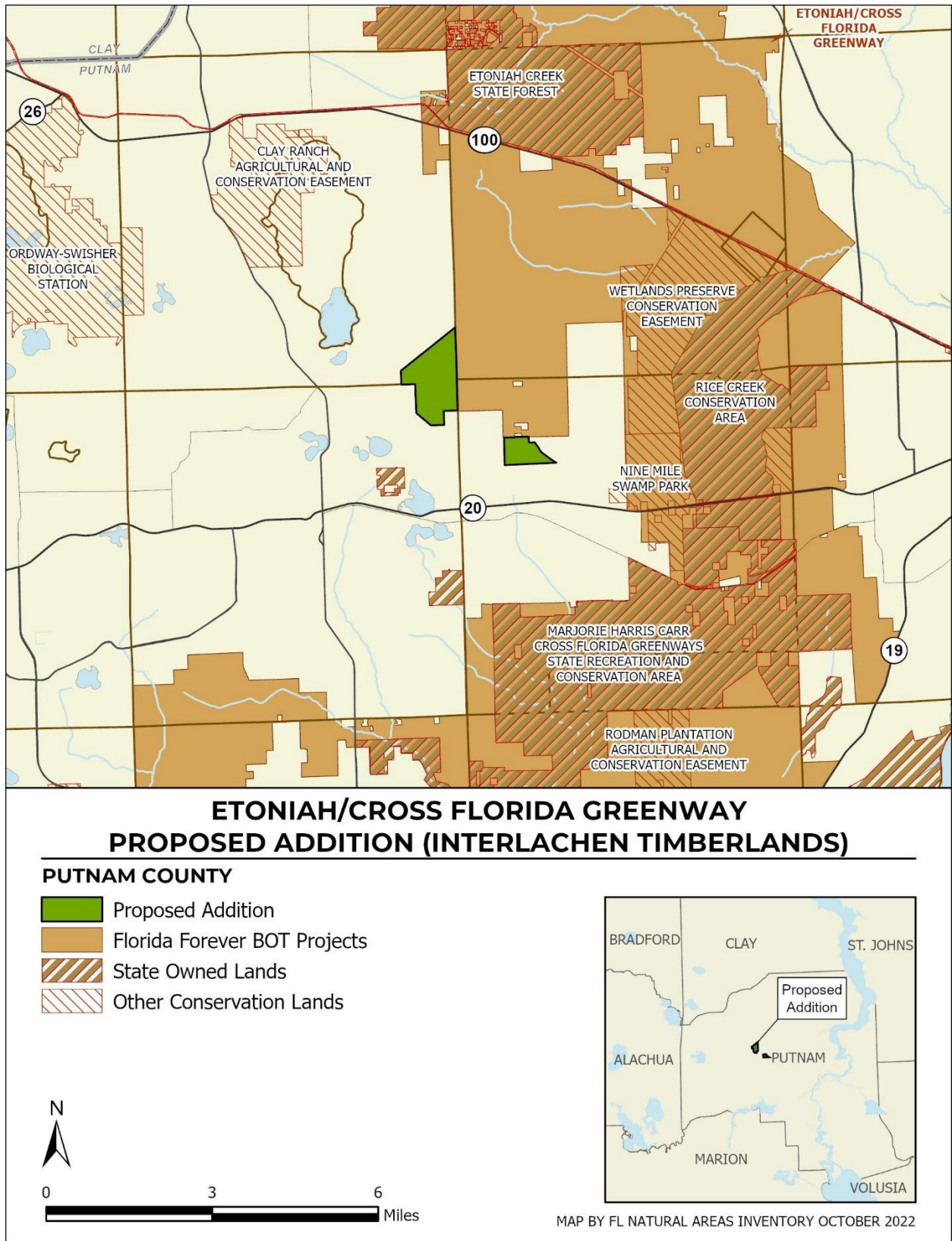
**Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway (Interlachen Timberlands): Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20221014**

GIS ACRES = 912

MEASURES	Resource Acres <sup>2</sup>	% of project
<b>B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	89	10%
Priority 3	517	57%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	278	30%
Total Acres	884	97%
<b>B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	83	9%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	84	9%
Priority 6	300	33%
Total Acres	468	51%
<b>B3: Ecological Greenways</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	910	100%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	910	100%
<b>B4: Under-represented Natural Communities</b>		
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)	136	15%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	104	11%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	6	< 1%
Total Acres	246	27%
<b>B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species</b>		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	1	
<b>C4: Natural Floodplain Function</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	18	2%
Priority 4	249	27%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	268	29%

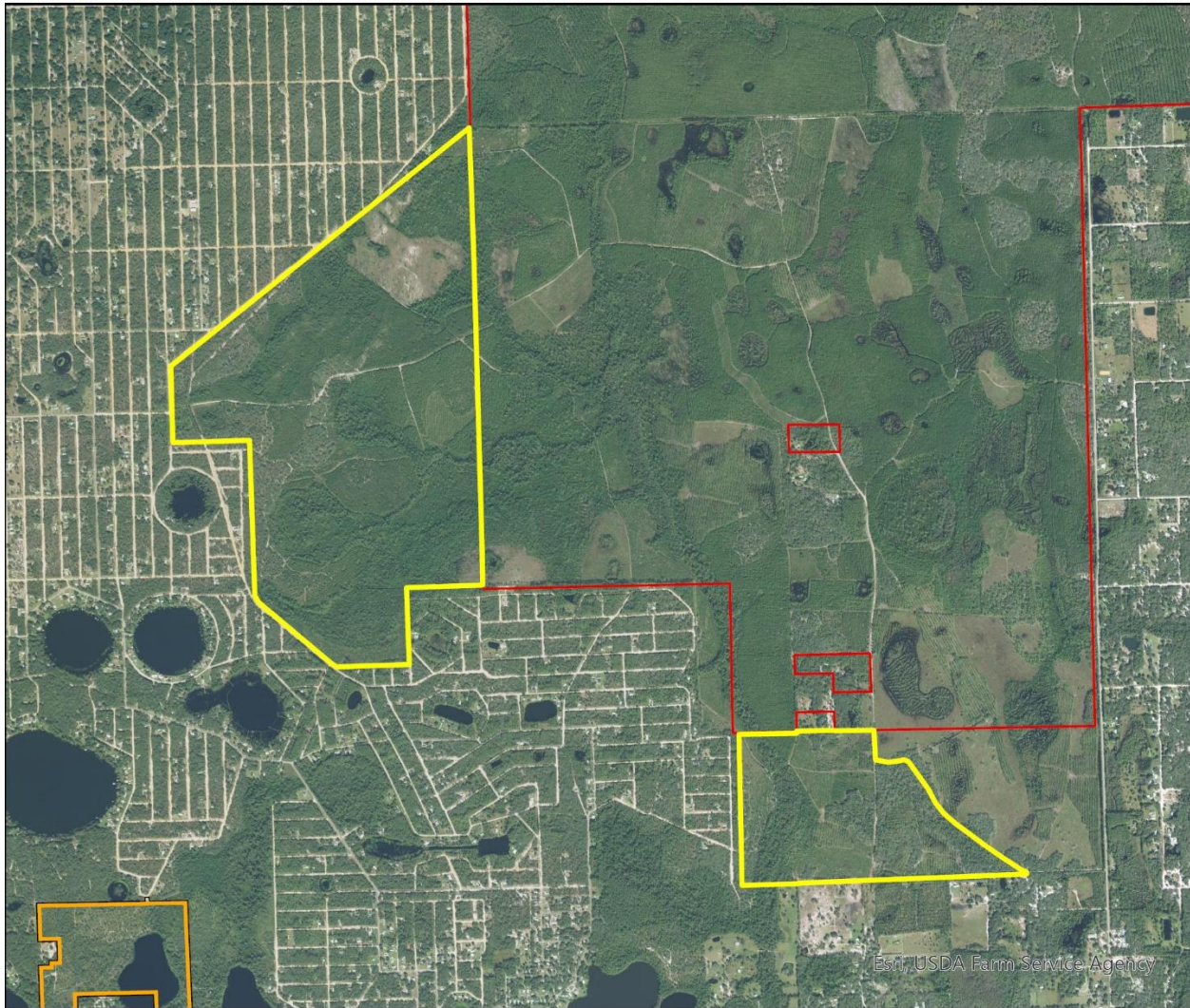
MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres <sup>2</sup>	% of project
<b>C5: Surface Water Protection</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	169	19%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	686	75%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	855	94%
<b>C7: Fragile Coastal Resources</b>		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
<b>C8: Functional Wetlands</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	21	2%
Priority 4	249	27%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	270	30%
<b>D3: Aquifer Recharge</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	108	12%
Priority 3	236	26%
Priority 4	303	33%
Priority 5	143	16%
Priority 6	122	13%
Total Acres	912	100%
<b>E2: Recreational Trails (miles)</b> <small>(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails &amp; Univ. Florida)</small>		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
<b>F2: Arch. &amp; Historical Sites (number)</b> 0 sites		
<b>G1: Sustainable Forestry</b>		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	556	61%
Priority 3	94	10%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	7	< 1%
Total Acres	657	72%
<b>G3: Forestland for Recharge</b> 193 21%		

<sup>a</sup>Acres 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.



## Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Proposed Addition (Interlachen Timberland)

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



Map Produced by: FL Natural Areas Inventory, N. Pasco, October 2022

Background: USA NAIP Imagery Resolution = 1.0 meter



-  Florida Forever Proposed Addition
-  Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  Existing State Conservation Lands

