

**ITEM 14:**

Vote on whether to amend the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever Project Boundary to add four parcels totaling approximately 147.5 acres in Hamilton County with a tax assessed market value of \$254,070.

**LOCATION:**

Hamilton County

**DSL STAFF REMARKS:**

The Chasteen Property amendment proposed by the North Florida Land Trust on behalf of the Chasteen Family, adds four parcels in Hamilton County totaling approximately 147.5 acres to the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever project. The four parcels have a combined tax assessed value of \$254,070. The parcels are located within 0.75 miles west of the Deep Creek Drainage Tract within the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever Project.

The four parcels are adjacent to the Big Shoal State Forest (BSSF), between County Road 315 and the Suwanee River and are proposed for fee simple acquisition. All landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The Florida Forest Service has confirmed the parcels would be managed as part of the BSSF. The parcels contain mixed pine/oak forest historically logged and used as farmland and timberland along Long Branch Creek. The property would increase the forest's ecological value, provide public access and will benefit from multiple-use management activities consistent with BSSF.

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.

*Project History:*

The Pinhook Swamp project in Baker and Columbia Counties was approved on the CARL list in 1992. It was established to protect and restore a natural area linking the Osceola National Forest and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge and the Suwannee River, providing a huge unpopulated tract of land for such wildlife as the Florida black bear and sandhill crane; maintaining the water flows from this area to the Okefenokee Swamp, Suwannee River, and St. Mary's River; and giving the public a large, near-wilderness tract in which to enjoy various recreational activities, from simple nature appreciation to active hunting and fishing. The congressionally designated Florida National Scenic Trail crosses this project.

The Pinhook Swamp project includes over 183,724 acres with 53,601 acres remaining and is ranked number 25 in the Critical Natural Lands category on the 2020 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2018) is \$63,793,946.

*FNAI Review:*

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 100% of the site contributes to Surface Water Protection and Aquifer Recharge and 84% to Ecological Greenways.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

**ARC RECOMMENDATION:**

<b>Project</b>	<b>DHR</b>	<b>FFS</b>	<b>Lynetta Griner</b>	<b>FWC</b>	<b>Bill Palmer</b>	<b>Elva Peppers</b>	<b>DEP</b>	<b>Selected</b>
Pinhook Swamp: Chasteen Property								



To: Deborah Burr, DEP/OES  
From: Dale R. Jackson, FNAI  
Date: November 10, 2020  
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Pinhook Swamp – Chasteen Property, Hamilton County

The Pinhook Swamp FFBOT project is designed to protect and restore a natural linkage connecting the Osceola National Forest, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and Suwannee River in northeast Florida. The combined conservation lands will provide an extensive unpopulated tract for wildlife such as Florida black bear and sandhill crane while preserving opportunities for recreational activities such as fishing, nature appreciation, hiking, and hunting. The project may also offer opportunity for ecologically compatible sustainable forestry.

The proposed Chasteen Property addition includes approximately 147.5 acres (143.12 GIS acres) in southeastern Hamilton County ca. 1 mile west of the Suwannee River (Columbia County line). Approximately 60% of the property's western boundary is contiguous with a tract of Big Shoals State Forest. Big Shoals Conservation Area on the western bank of the Suwannee River lies 0.6 mile to the east, and the Pinhook Swamp project is immediately across the river. The owners offer the property for fee simple acquisition.

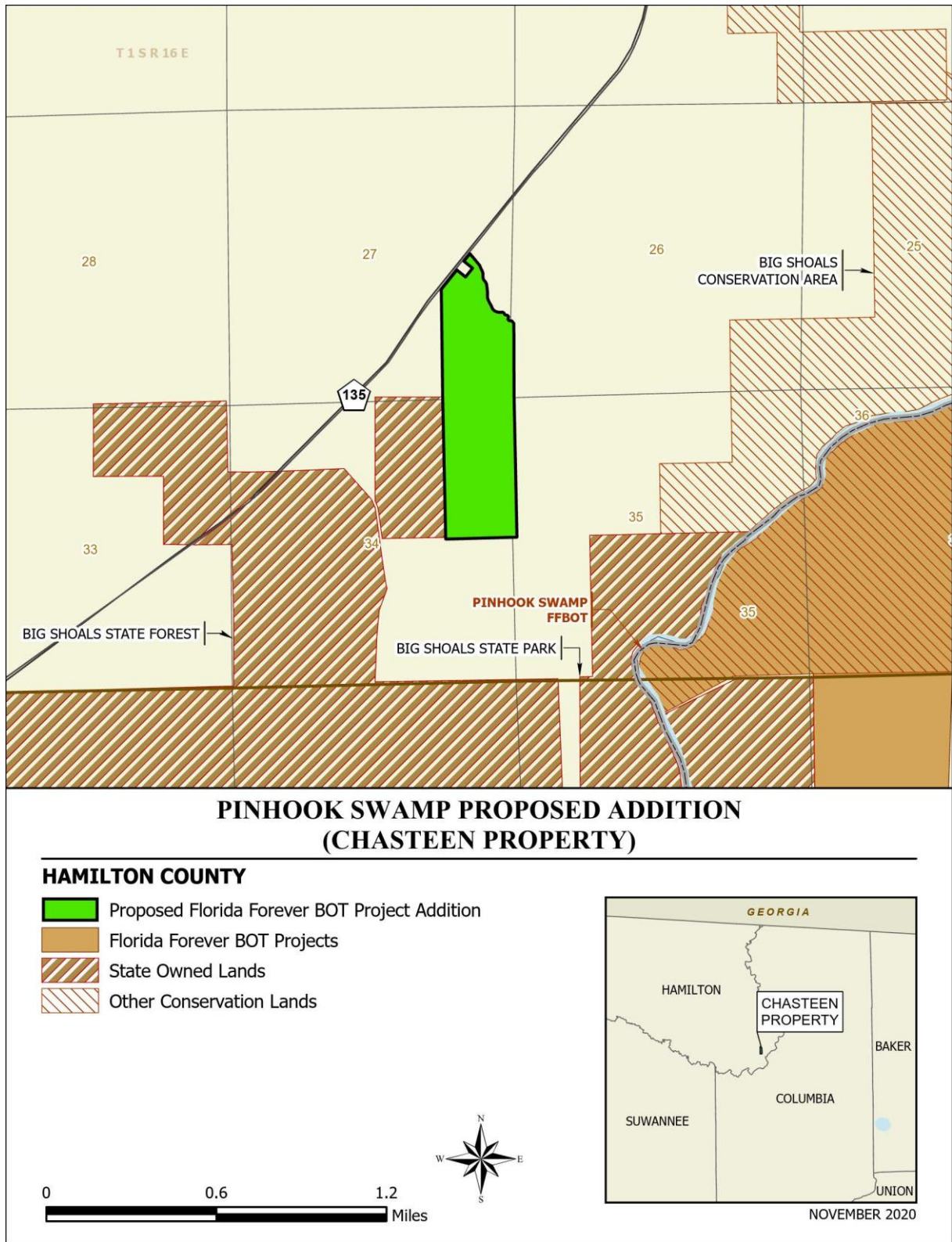
The site is mostly forested, with three small clearings (former improved pasture but lying fallow for 15 years; total ca. 50 acres) in the northern half. There are no permanent structures present. The site is bordered on the northwest, northeast, and southeast by cleared agricultural lands, with planted pine adjacent to the south.

The adjacent State Forest tract supports mostly forested wetland with some pineland that is continuous with the proposed addition. The forested wetland (basin swamp) in the State Forest tract is drained by the headwaters of a small (and probably intermittent) tributary that flows across the proposed addition and directly to the Suwannee River. Headwaters of a second river tributary, Long Branch, flow eastward across the northern end of the property. Although remote analysis did not identify substantial flatwoods, it is likely that some of the forest on site contains characteristics of mesic/wet flatwoods intermingled with wetter forest types such as baygall and dome/basin swamp. The application describes the dominant cover as mixed pine/oak forest (successional hardwood forest) growing on lands historically used for farming and timber production, with an additional 38 acres of natural wetlands (the above mentioned swamps).

The FNAI database contains no specific records of rare species on site. The Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*, G5T4/S4, N, N) is considered abundant regionally by the FWC and is likely to use or traverse the site occasionally. Given upland and wetland habitats on site,

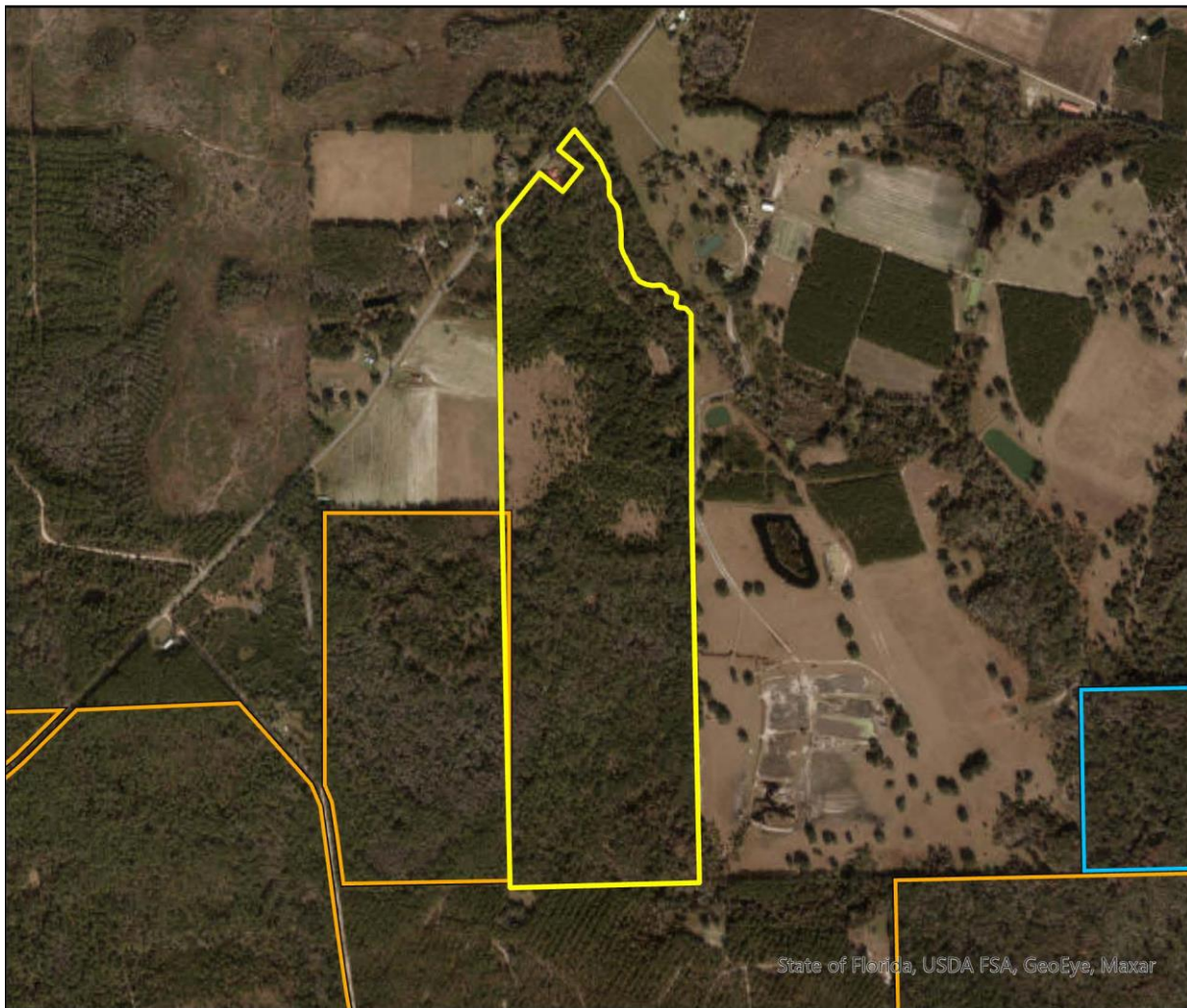
field surveys have the potential to identify a number of unrecorded rare plants and animals (which if found should be reported to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory).

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) at the end of 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 or all of the proposed addition contributes to Surface Water Protection, Aquifer Recharge, and Ecological Greenways, with minor contributions to Sustainable Forestry and Natural Floodplain Function.



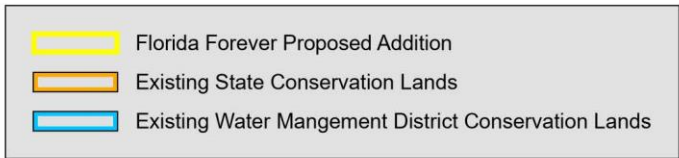
## Pinhook Swamp Proposed Addition (Chasteen Property)

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSAL BOUNDARY AS OF NOVEMBER 2020



Map Produced by: N. Pasco, November 2020

Background: World Imagery Resolution = 0.3 meter



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Pinhook Swamp Addition: Florida Forever Measure Evaluation 20201104

GIS ACRES = 143.12

MEASURES	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	6.17	4%
Priority 3	77.34	53%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	4.00	3%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>87.51</b>	<b>61%</b>
<b>B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	55.21	38%
Priority 5	49.70	34%
Priority 6	39.70	27%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>144.61</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>B3: Ecological Greenways</b>		
Priority 1	70.89	49%
Priority 2	50.82	35%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>121.70</b>	<b>84%</b>
<b>B4: Under-represented Natural Communities</b>		
Upland Glade (G1)	0.00	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0.00	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0.00	0%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0.00	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0.00	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0.00	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0.00	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0.00	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0.00	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0.95	< 1%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>&lt; 1%</b>
<b>B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species</b>		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>C4: Natural Floodplain Function</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	3.17	2%
Priority 3	16.85	12%
Priority 4	21.02	15%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>41.03</b>	<b>28%</b>

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres <sup>a</sup>	% of project
<b>C5: Surface Water Protection</b>		
Priority 1	53.04	37%
Priority 2	54.88	38%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	36.64	25%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
Priority 7	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>144.56</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>C7: Fragile Coastal Resources</b>		
Fragile Coastal Uplands	0.00	0%
Imperiled Coastal Lakes	0.00	0%
Coastal Wetlands	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>C8: Functional Wetlands</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	2.67	2%
Priority 3	5.28	4%
Priority 4	10.17	7%
Priority 5	0.00	0%
Priority 6	0.00	0%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>18.12</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>D3: Aquifer Recharge</b>		
Priority 1	0.00	0%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	0.00	0%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5	114.64	79%
Priority 6	29.97	21%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>144.61</b>	<b>100%</b>
<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	
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>0.0</b>	
<b>F2: Arch. &amp; Historical Sites (number)</b>		
	0 sites	
<b>G1: Sustainable Forestry</b>		
Priority 1	0.67	< 1%
Priority 2	0.00	0%
Priority 3	0.61	< 1%
Priority 4	0.00	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	51.54	36%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>52.82</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>G3: Forestland for Recharge</b>		
	0.00	0%

<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.

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November 22, 2020

Sine Murray  
Program Manager  
Office of Environmental Services  
Division of State Lands  
Department of Environmental Protection  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., M.S. 140  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Re: Application to Add Chasteen Property to Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever Project

Dear Ms. Murray:

As the owners of the above-referenced property, we are writing in support of the application to add it to the Pinhook Swamp Project. It is very important to us that the property be preserved in perpetuity as an area where native wildlife and plants can thrive, and can imagine no better stewardship than that offered by Florida Forever.

We've named the tract Ruth's Refuge in honor of our late mother, who owned the back part of the tract, and who insisted that her part be kept as a wildlife sanctuary. Over the years, she was pressured by relatives to harvest the timber, and always, she steadfastly refused. Mom is our inspiration as we pursue this conservation effort.

We wish that we could donate the property outright for the purpose outlined above. Unfortunately, financial considerations are forcing us to sell instead. We've had several serious offers to buy over the years, but knowing that conservation would fall by the wayside, have always refused them. Selling the land to the State of Florida, at fair market value, is clearly our preferred option.

It is our ardent hope that our application to have the property added to the Pinhook Swamp preservation area will be met with approval at the forthcoming meeting of the Acquisition and Restoration Council, and look forward to working with your staff to ensure a mutually acceptable transaction.

Sincerely,



Terri J Chasteen



Joni A Chasteen