



Abstract

The 2021 Florida Forever Five-Year Plan includes a description of each of the 125 land acquisition projects approved by the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC). In 2020, ARC approved the following changes to the 2021 list:

- added four new projects
- amended boundaries of 18 project boundaries
- removed four projects from the list

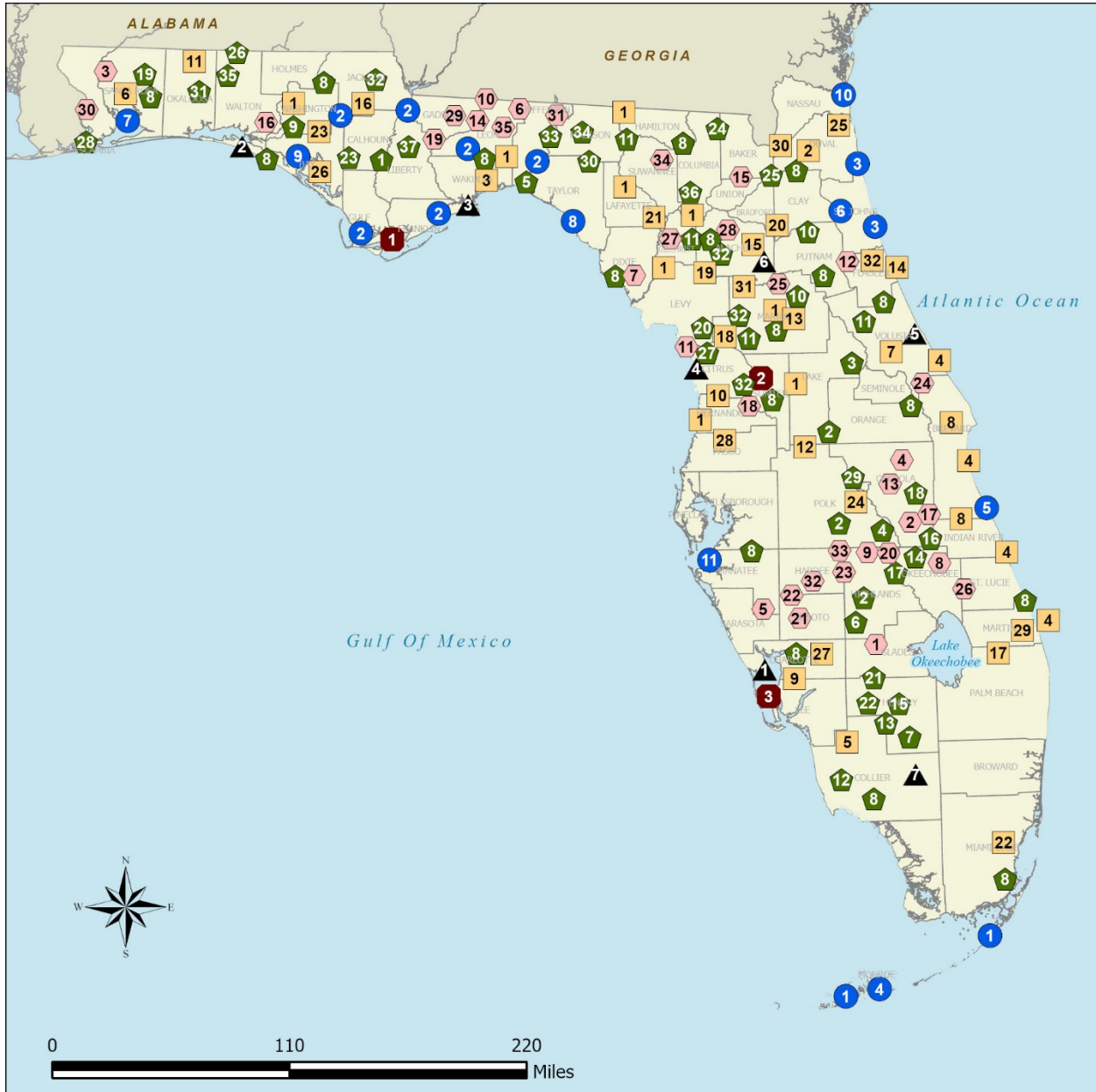
<u>New Projects Added to the List</u>	<u>Acres +/-</u>	<u>County</u>
Bluefield to Cow Creek	10,942	St. Lucie, Okeechobee
Crayfish Habitat Restoration	2,348	Bay
Welannee Watershed Forest	8,370	Okaloosa
Withlacoochee River Corridor	1,714	Citrus

<u>Projects with Boundary Amendments</u>	<u>Acres +/-</u>	<u>County</u>
Annutteliga Hammock	48.30	Hernando
Apalachicola River	347	Gulf
Bombing Range Ridge	-3.47	Polk
Fisheating Creek Ecosystem	6,560	Highlands
Florida Keys Ecosystem	-1.07	Monroe
Florida Springs Coastal Greenway	149	Citrus
Florida’s First Magnitude Springs	37.60	Hernando
Hardee Flatwoods	160	Hardee
Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector	3,656	Okeechobee
Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem	7,883.63	Highlands, Polk
Middle Chipola River	49.41	Jackson
Natural Bridge Creek	170	Walton
Pinhook Swamp	147.50	Hamilton
St. Johns River Blueway	112	Clay
Strategic Managed Area Lands List	290.50	Hernando, Lake, Palm Beach
Wekiva-Ocala Greenway	179	Seminole, Volusia
Withlacoochee River Corridor	1,645	Citrus, Hernando

The following four projects were removed from the list because they are considered 90% or more complete:

- Caber Coastal Connector (Levy),
- Estero Bay (Lee),
- Tippen Bay Ranch (DeSoto), and
- Upper St. Marks River Corridor (Jefferson, Leon, Wakulla).

Consistent with section 259.032(8), F.S. and rule 18-24.002(2)(b), F.A.C, removing projects from the list does not prevent Florida Forever funds from being used to purchase the remaining acres.



**STATEWIDE DISTRIBUTION OF FLORIDA FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS
JANUARY 2021**

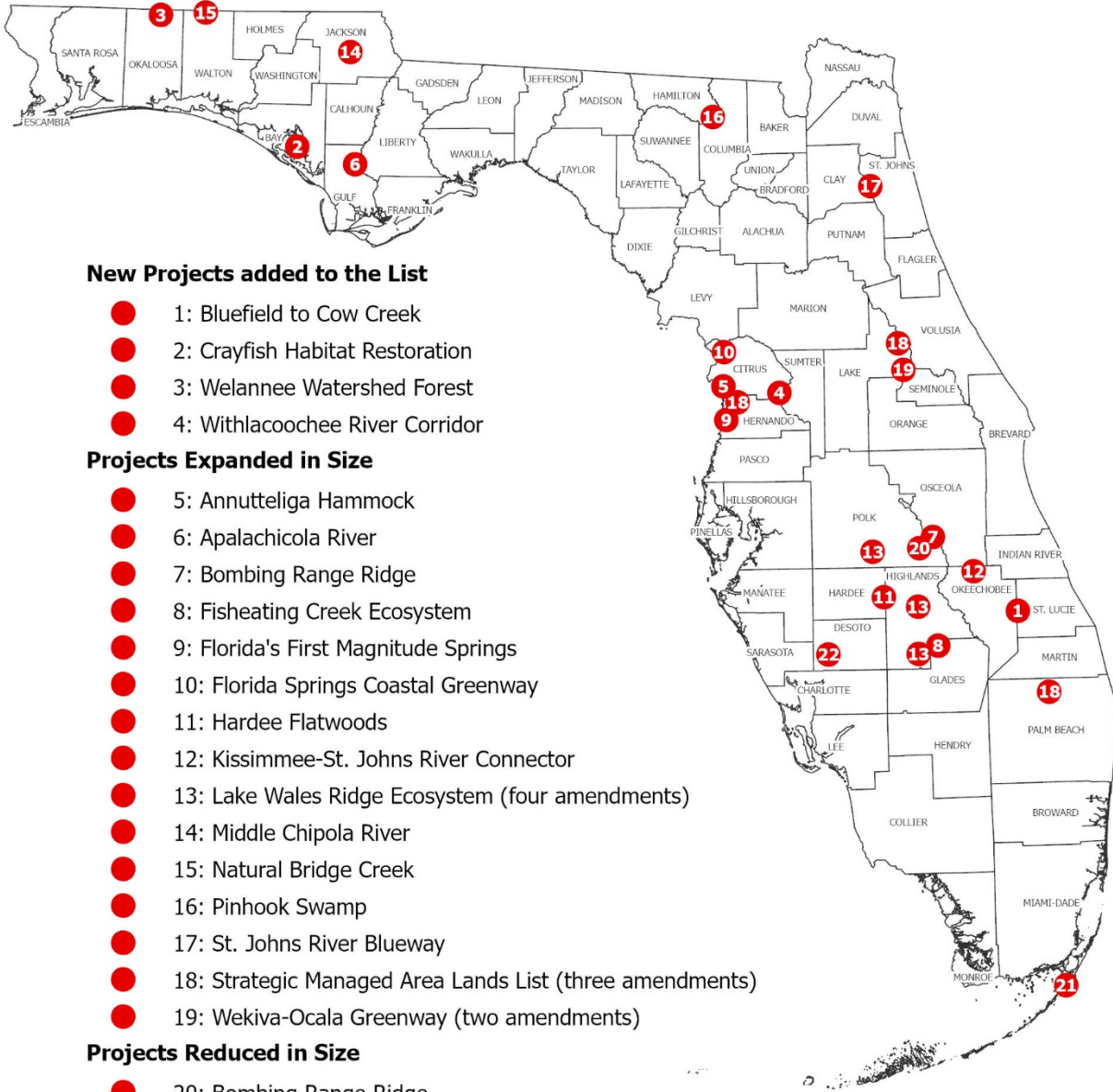
Florida Forever Project Categories

- Climate Change Lands Category
 - Critical Historical Resources Category
 - ◆ Critical Natural Lands Category
- ⬡ Less-Than-Fee Category
 - Partnerships and Regional Incentives Category
 - ▲ Substantially Complete Category

NOTE: Numerals within the symbols represent the project rank within each category. See priority list for project name and details.

Map 1 Statewide Distribution of Florida Forever Land Acquisition Projects January 2021

Florida Forever projects newly added to the priority list, expanded, or reduced during 2020.



New Projects added to the List

- 1: Bluefield to Cow Creek
- 2: Crayfish Habitat Restoration
- 3: Welannee Watershed Forest
- 4: Withlacoochee River Corridor

Projects Expanded in Size

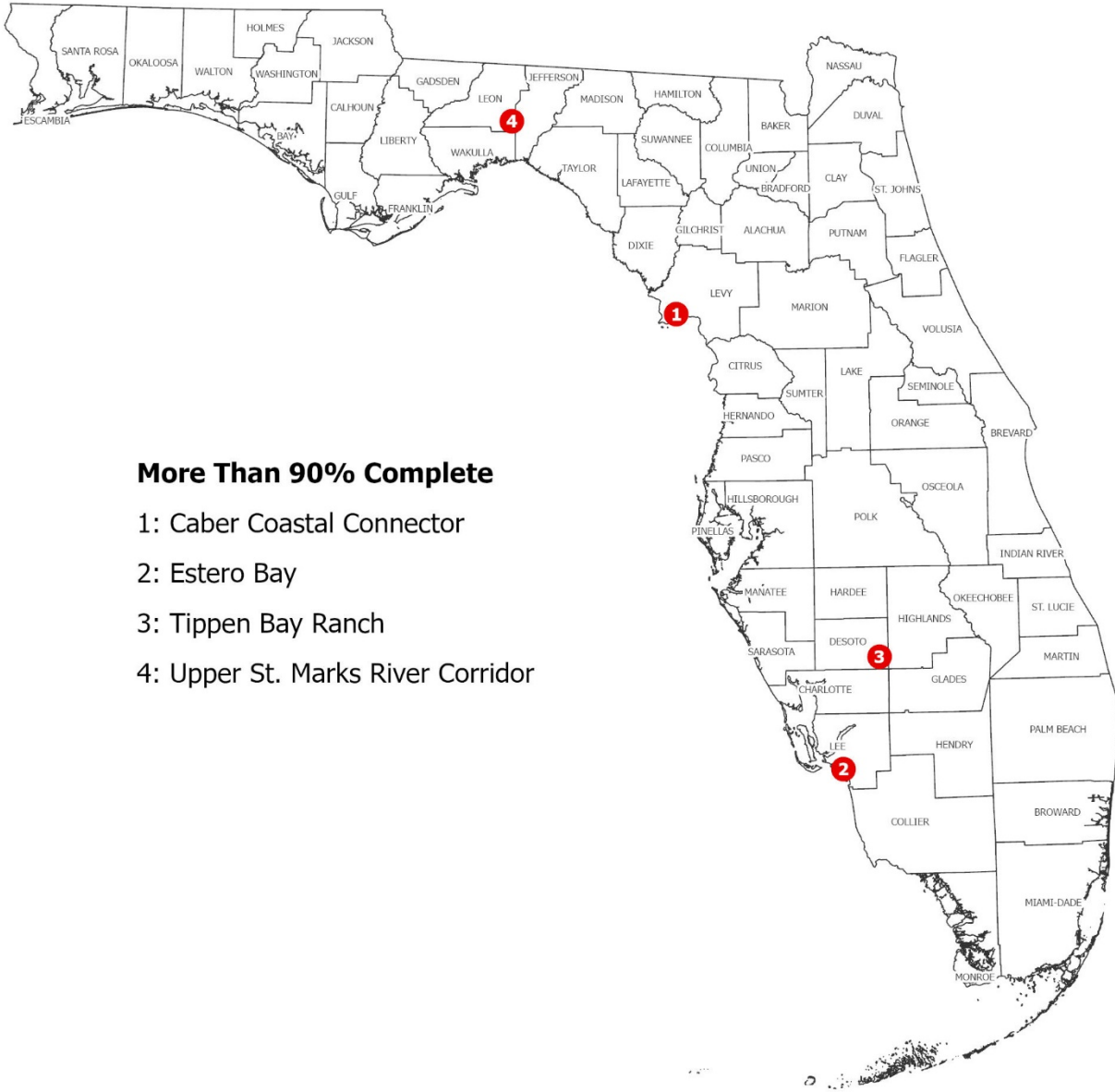
- 5: Annutteliga Hammock
- 6: Apalachicola River
- 7: Bombing Range Ridge
- 8: Fisheating Creek Ecosystem
- 9: Florida's First Magnitude Springs
- 10: Florida Springs Coastal Greenway
- 11: Hardee Flatwoods
- 12: Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector
- 13: Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem (four amendments)
- 14: Middle Chipola River
- 15: Natural Bridge Creek
- 16: Pinhook Swamp
- 17: St. Johns River Blueway
- 18: Strategic Managed Area Lands List (three amendments)
- 19: Wekiva-Ocala Greenway (two amendments)

Projects Reduced in Size

- 20: Bombing Range Ridge
- 21: Florida Keys Ecosystem
- 22: Strategic Managed Area Lands List (S.M.A.L.L.)

Map 2 Florida Forever projects newly added to priority list, expanded, or reduced during 2020

Florida Forever projects removed from the priority list during 2020.



More Than 90% Complete

- 1: Caber Coastal Connector
- 2: Estero Bay
- 3: Tippen Bay Ranch
- 4: Upper St. Marks River Corridor

Map 3 Florida Forever projects removed from priority list during 2020



ARC’s Recommended 2021 Florida Forever Priority List for Land Acquisition Projects

The 2021 Florida Forever Priority List was adopted by ARC on December 11, 2020 and includes 125 projects. Each project was ranked within one of following six categories: Critical Natural Lands, Partnerships & Regional Incentives, Less-Than-Fee, Climate Change Lands, Substantially Complete and Critical Historical Resources.

Pursuant to section 259.04(1)(c), F.S., “...the board shall approve, in whole or in part, the list of projects in the order of priority in which such projects are presented” [see also s. 259.105(14), F.S.]

Substantially Complete

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Charlotte Harbor Estuary	Charlotte, Lee, Sarasota	5,902	5,902	High
2	South Walton County Ecosystem	Walton	2,657	8,559	High/Medium
3	Dickerson Bay/Bald Point	Franklin, Wakulla	3,077	11,636	Medium
4	Florida Springs Coastal Greenway	Citrus	8,855	20,491	Medium/Low
5	Spruce Creek	Volusia	367	20,858	Low
6	Lochloosa Wildlife	Alachua	4,446	25,304	Low
7	Save Our Everglades	Collier	24	25,328	Low

Critical Historical Resources

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Pierce Mound Complex	Franklin	562	562	High/Medium
2	Battle of Wahoo Swamp	Sumter	853	1,415	Medium/Low
3	Pineland Site Complex	Lee	148	1,563	Low

Climate Change Lands

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Florida Keys Ecosystem	Monroe	5,849	5,849	High
2	St. Joe Timberland	Bay, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Taylor, Wakulla, Walton, Washington	56,276	62,126	High/Medium
3	Northeast Florida Blueway	Duval, Flagler, St. Johns	11,920	74,046	Medium/Low
4	Coupon Bight/Key Deer	Monroe	1,157	75,203	Low
5	Archie Carr Sea Turtle Refuge	Brevard, Indian River	179	75,382	Low
6	St. Johns River Blueway	Clay, St. Johns	17,182	92,565	Low
7	Garcon Ecosystem	Santa Rosa	3,393	95,846	Low
8	Taylor Sweetwater Creek	Taylor	3,742	99,587	Low
9	West Bay Preservation Area	Bay	4,511	104,098	Low
10	Tiger Island/Little Tiger Island	Nassau	1,142	105,240	Low
11	Terra Ceia	Manatee	2,292	107,532	Low



Less-than-Fee

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Fisheating Creek Ecosystem	Glades, Highlands	122,213	122,213	High
2	Adams Ranch	Osceola	5,598	127,811	High
3	Coastal Headwaters Longleaf Forest	Escambia, Santa Rosa	99,544	227,355	High
4	Conlin Lake X	Osceola	3,522	230,878	High
5	Myakka Ranchlands	DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota	30,573	261,451	High/Medium
6	Red Hills Conservation	Jefferson, Leon	16,951	278,401	Medium
7	Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed	Dixie	30,705	309,106	Medium
8	Kissimmee-St. Johns River Connector	Indian River, Okeechobee	37,930	347,036	Medium
9	Arbuckle Creek Watershed	Highlands	4,172	351,209	Medium
10	Ochlockonee River Conservation Area	Gadsden, Leon	3,881	355,089	Medium
11	Gulf Hammock	Levy	25,611	380,701	Medium
12	Matanzas to Ocala Conservation Corridor	Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns	99,032	479,733	Medium/Low
13	Big Bend Swamp/Holopaw Ranch	Osceola	41,892	521,625	Low
14	Ayavalla Plantation	Leon	6,018	527,643	Low
15	Raiford to Osceola Greenway	Baker, Union	67,702	595,345	Low
16	Seven Runs Creek Final Phase	Walton, Washington	2,826	598,171	Low
17	Ranch Reserve	Brevard, Indian River, Osceola	12,515	610,687	Low
18	Withlacoochee River Corridor	Citrus, Hernando	3,286	613,973	Low
19	Hosford Chapman's Rhododendron Protection Zone	Gadsden, Liberty	6,923	620,896	Low
20	Eastern Scarp Ranchlands	Highlands	2,214	623,111	Low
21	Peace River Refuge	DeSoto	3,804	626,915	Low
22	Horse Creek Ranch	DeSoto, Hardee	16,316	643,231	Low
23	Hardee Flatwoods	Hardee	1,836	645,067	Low
24	Maytown Flatwoods	Brevard	5,021	649,928	Low
25	Mill Creek	Marion	12,293	662,221	Low
26	Bluefield to Cow Creek	Okeechobee, St. Lucie	10,996	673,216	Low
27	North Waccasassa Flats	Gilchrist	14,153	687,369	Low
28	San Felasco Conservation Corridor	Alachua	376	687,745	Low
29	Little River Conservation Area	Gadsden	2,085	689,829	Low
30	Lower Perdido River Buffer	Escambia	2,338	692,168	Low
31	West Aucilla River Buffer	Jefferson	710	692,877	Low
32	Limestone Ranch	Hardee	6,382	699,260	Low
33	Old Town Creek Watershed	Hardee, Polk	1,264	700,524	Low
34	Suwannee County Preservation	Suwannee	1,254	701,778	Low
35	Millstone Plantation	Leon	83	701,861	Low



Partnerships & Regional Incentives

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Florida's First Magnitude Springs	Bay, Citrus, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Jackson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Madison, Marion, Suwannee, Wakulla, Walton, Washington	6,040	6,040	High
2	Northeast Florida Timberlands and Watershed Reserve	Clay, Duval, Nassau	76,427	82,468	High
3	Wakulla Springs Protection Zone	Leon, Wakulla	3,970	86,438	High
4	Indian River Lagoon Blueway	Brevard, Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie, Volusia	18,257	104,695	High
5	Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed	Collier, Lee	34,048	138,743	High
6	Clear Creek/Whiting Field	Santa Rosa	2,867	141,609	High
7	Volusia Conservation Corridor	Flagler, Volusia	17,832	159,441	High
8	Brevard Coastal Scrub Ecosystem	Brevard	21,104	180,545	High/Medium
9	Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods	Charlotte, Lee	6,990	187,535	Medium
10	Annutteliga Hammock	Citrus, Hernando	8,789	196,324	Medium
11	Welannee Watershed Forest	Okaloosa	8,321	204,597	Medium
12	Green Swamp	Lake, Pasco, Polk	160,797	365,394	Medium/Low
13	Heather Island/Ocklawaha River	Marion	13,663	379,057	Low
14	Flagler County Blueway	Flagler	3,912	382,969	Low
15	Lochloosa Forest	Alachua	4,693	387,662	Low
16	Middle Chipola River	Calhoun, Jackson	12,353	400,015	Low
17	Pal-Mar	Palm Beach, Martin	9,564	409,531	Low
18	Rainbow River Corridor	Citrus, Marion	1,129	410,660	Low
19	Watermelon Pond	Alachua, Levy	5,862	416,522	Low
20	Lake Santa Fe	Alachua, Bradford	9,619	426,141	Low
21	Lafayette Forest	Lafayette	10,253	436,394	Low
22	Dade County Archipelago	Miami-Dade	304	436,698	Low
23	Sand Mountain	Bay, Washington	14,534	451,232	Low
24	Catfish Creek	Polk	3,231	454,463	Low
25	Pumpkin Hill Creek	Duval	12,344	466,807	Low
26	Crayfish Habitat Restoration	Bay	2,348	469,155	Low
27	Hall Ranch	Charlotte	7,503	476,658	Low
28	Crossbar/Al Bar Ranch	Pasco	12,440	489,098	Low
29	Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem	Martin	8,193	497,291	Low
30	Baldwin Bay/St. Marys River	Duval, Nassau	8,394	505,685	Low
31	Carr Farm/Price's Scrub	Alachua, Marion	305	505,989	Low
32	Pringle Creek Forest	Flagler	8,446	514,435	Low

Critical Natural Lands

Rank	Project	County	Remaining Acres	Cumulative Acres	Work Plan Priority
1	Apalachicola River	Calhoun, Gadsden, Gulf, Jackson, Liberty	48,846	48,846	High
2	Lake Wales Ridge Ecosystem	Highlands, Lake, Osceola, Polk	29,567	78,413	High
3	Wekiva-Ocala Greenway	Lake, Orange, Seminole, Volusia	22,447	100,860	High
4	Bombing Range Ridge	Highlands, Osceola, Polk	29,263	129,944	High
5	Wacissa/Aucilla River Sinks	Jefferson, Taylor	14,908	144,852	High
6	Blue Head Ranch	Highlands	43,051	187,903	High
7	Panther Glades	Hendry	39,382	227,285	High
8	Strategic Managed Area Lands List	Alachua, Bay, Broward, Clay, Collier, Columbia, Dixie, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Manatee, Miami-Dade, Orange, Palm Beach, Putnam, Santa Rosa, St. Johns, St. Lucie, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Washington	11,099	238,384	High
9	Forest and Lakes Ecosystem	Bay, Washington	54,862	293,246	High/Medium
10	Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway	Citrus, Clay, Levy, Marion, Putnam	54,367	347,613	Medium
11	Longleaf Pine Ecosystem	Gilchrist, Hamilton, Marion, Volusia	9,687	357,299	Medium
12	Belle Meade	Collier	6,300	363,599	Medium
13	Half Circle L Ranch	Collier, Hendry	11,182	374,780	Medium
14	Triple Diamond	Okeechobee	5,336	380,116	Medium
15	Devil's Garden	Collier, Hendry	55,694	435,810	Medium
16	Pine Island Slough Ecosystem	Osceola	48,973	484,784	Medium
17	Corrigan Ranch	Okeechobee	6,211	490,994	Medium
18	Osceola Pine Savannas	Osceola	27,503	518,497	Medium
19	Wolfe Creek Forest	Santa Rosa	8,687	527,184	Medium
20	South Goethe	Levy, Marion	11,706	538,890	Medium
21	Caloosahatchee Ecoscape	Glades, Hendry	10,643	549,533	Medium
22	Twelvemile Slough	Hendry	8,128	559,873	Medium
23	Bear Creek Forest	Bay, Calhoun, Gulf	97,434	657,307	Medium/Low
24	Pinhook Swamp	Baker, Columbia	53,749	711,056	Low
25	Camp Blanding to Raiford Greenway	Baker, Bradford, Clay, Union	32,283	743,191	Low
26	Natural Bridge Creek	Walton	1,967	745,158	Low
27	Bear Hammock	Marion	4,689	749,847	Low
28	Perdido Pitcher Plant Prairie	Escambia	2,389	752,236	Low
29	Lake Hatchineha Watershed	Osceola, Polk	3,592	755,828	Low
30	San Pedro Bay	Madison, Taylor	44,999	800,827	Low
31	Shoal River Buffer	Okaloosa	2,188	803,015	Low
32	Southeastern Bat Maternity Caves	Alachua, Citrus, Jackson, Marion, Sumter	598	803,612	Low
33	Econfina Timberlands	Jefferson	1,665	805,278	Low
34	Hixtown Swamp	Madison	22,399	827,677	Low
35	Upper Shoal River	Walton	12,035	839,711	Low
36	Ichetucknee Trace	Columbia	1,717	841,428	Low
37	Telogia Creek	Liberty	12,428	853,856	Low

Introduction

Florida Forever is the state's current blueprint for conserving our natural resources. It replaced the highly successful Preservation 2000, the largest program of its kind in the United States. Preservation 2000 acquired more than 1.78 million acres of land for protection. The Florida Forever Act, implemented in 2000, reinforced Florida's commitment to conserve its natural and cultural heritage, provide urban open space, and better manage the land acquired by the state.

Florida Forever is more than an environmental land acquisition mechanism. It encompasses a wide range of goals including environmental restoration; water resource development and supply; increased public access; public lands management and maintenance; and increased protection of land by acquisition of conservation easements.

The \$3 billion investment over the past decade demonstrates Florida's continued commitment to protecting and restoring our vital natural resources. Florida has been at the forefront of the nation's land protection efforts and continues to be the model for other land acquisition programs.

Legislation and Policy

In 1998, Florida voters amended the state constitution by ratifying a constitutional amendment that re-authorized bonds for land acquisition. The 1999 legislature responded with the ten-year \$3 billion Florida Forever program to acquire and manage land for conservation. This was extended another 10 years in 2008 for a total of \$6 billion.

In 2014 Florida voters amended the state constitution again, ratifying a constitutional amendment that dedicated 33 percent of documentary stamp taxes to finance or refinance acquisition and improvement of land, water areas, and related property interests, including conservation easements, and resources for conservation lands including wetlands, forests, and fish and wildlife habitat; wildlife management areas; lands that protect water resources and drinking water sources, including lands protecting the water quality and quantity of rivers, lakes, streams, springsheds, and lands providing recharge for groundwater and aquifer systems; lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area and the Everglades Protection Area, as defined in Article II, Section 7(b); beaches and shores; outdoor recreation lands, including recreational trails, parks, and urban open space; rural landscapes; working farms and ranches; historic or geologic sites; together with management, restoration of natural systems, and the enhancement of public access or recreational enjoyment of conservation lands.

The ten-member [Acquisition and Restoration Council](#) makes recommendations about acquisition, management and disposal of state-owned lands. This important advisory group includes private citizen members with backgrounds in scientific disciplines of land, water, or environmental sciences as well as wildlife management, forestry management, and outdoor recreation, in addition to four state agency representatives.

The Governor and Cabinet, as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, are responsible for acting on ARC's recommendations. The Board also approves the acquisition of each parcel and has ultimate oversight on state lands leases and management plans.

The Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Lands (DSL) provides primary staff support for the Acquisition and Restoration Council. DSL coordinates Council meetings; prepares agendas and reports; prepares or obtains appraisal maps, title work, appraisals and closing documents for acquisitions; and negotiates land purchases on behalf of the Board of Trustees. The Division also provides staff support for managing all leases, reviewing and approving management plans, and coordinating management review team functions for state-owned lands titled to the Board.



Partnerships

The state's land acquisition programs have a long history of cooperative partnerships with local and national land trusts, water management districts, counties, cities and other local governments, as well as the federal government. The successful acquisition of many state projects is the direct result of these partnerships. Many of the projects on the Florida Forever list have partners.

Results

For decades, Florida has been one of the most successful states in acquiring and conserving critical natural resources and providing lands for public recreation. Since 1963, Florida has invested approximately \$8.3 billion to conserve more than 4 million acres of land for environmental, recreational and preservation purposes. This has been accomplished with a number of programs including Environmentally Endangered Lands, Outdoor Recreation, Save Our Coasts, Save Our Rivers, Conservation and Recreation Lands, Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever. Because of Florida Forever and its predecessor programs, residents and visitors have benefited from the protection of land and natural resources, including Florida's abundant flora and fauna.

Accomplishments of Florida Forever

Since its inception in July 2001, the state's Florida Forever land acquisition program provided protection for the following:

- 679,490 acres of strategic habitat conservation areas
- 670,880 acres of rare species habitat conservation areas, including 1,132 sites that are habitats for 507 different rare species, 215 of which are federal- or state-listed as endangered, and 108 federal- or state-listed threatened
- 838,500 acres of ecological greenways
- 164,910 acres of under-represented natural communities
- 619,450 acres landscape-size protection areas
- 486,840 acres of natural floodplains
- 849,550 acres important to significant water bodies
- 492,270 acres minimize damage from flooding
- 10,400 acres of fragile coastline
- 341,250 acres of functional wetlands
- 818,860 acres of significant groundwater recharge areas
- 480 miles of priority recreational trails
- 444,400 acres of sustainable forest land
- 1,170 archaeological/historic sites
- 12,270 acres in urban service areas

These acreages were derived from the updates of the Florida Forever data layers, which are continuously updated by Florida Natural Areas Inventory to reflect the most current scientific analyses of Florida's natural resources. The acreages include properties acquired under the Florida Forever program, as well as donations and acquisitions by other entities with funding from other sources that were within Florida Forever project boundaries. Additionally, the acreages recorded for each measure often overlap, and thus should not be added together. Collectively, under the Florida Forever program more than 869,477 acres of land with a little over \$3.2 billion in Florida Forever funds has been protected. Accounting for donations and lands acquired with non-



Florida Forever program funding, the total acreage protected within Florida Forever projects is more than 947,019 acres.

All property within the boundaries of the Florida Forever acquisition projects, unless specifically noted, is proposed to be purchased in fee simple or a lesser interest, for conservation purposes.

The 2021 Florida Forever Priority List of land acquisition projects is consistent with section 187.201(9), F.S., the Natural Systems and Recreational Lands section of the State Comprehensive Plan.

Explanation of Project Information

A comprehensive project evaluation report is approved by ARC for each project as part of the process and vote to be included on the Florida Forever Priority List. These evaluation reports contain extensive resource and planning information compiled from various partner agencies. Also included in the ARC-approved evaluation report is a management prospectus from the recommended land manager (for proposed fee simple projects) that includes a management cost summary. To summarize the pertinent information from the project evaluation reports and track acquisition progress/changes over time, each project description in this plan includes:

- a general overview of significant natural and cultural resources
- the recommended land manager
- the purpose for state acquisition
- whether the project would allow public use
- FNAI element occurrences
- project/parcel acres, acquisition history and boundary modifications
- a management policy statement and summary of anticipated management costs (fee simple) and
- a project map showing project boundaries and essential parcels.

The project acres, acres acquired and acres remaining included with each summary (in at-a-glance or referred to in the text), are based on the initial project proposal and are an approximation. Acres within a project may be refined over time as improved data (ArcGIS) are available and once parcels are acquired. Therefore, acres presented at the beginning of a project summary, may fluctuate slightly throughout the life of a project. Therefore, acreage from this report should be cited as an approximation until such time actual parcels are fully acquired and final acres are determined as part of the official closing process.



Acquisition and Restoration Council

Agency Council Members

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Chair)

Shawn Hamilton, Deputy Secretary for Land and Recreation
Designee for Secretary, Noah Valenstein

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Thomas Eason, Ph.D., Assistant Executive Director
Designee for Executive Director, Eric Sutton

Florida Forest Service

Erin Albury, Director

Florida Division of Historical Resources

Tim Parsons, Ph.D., RPA, Director
B. Calvin Jones Center for Archeology

Agency Appointee Council Members

Lynetta Usher Griner, ARC Vice Chair (Florida Forest Service)
Griner Usher Land and Timber, Inc., Chiefland, Florida

Bill Palmer, Ph. D., President (Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission)
Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy, Tallahassee, Florida

Gubernatorial Appointee Council Members

Elva Peppers, President
Florida Environmental and Land Services, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida

Gubernatorial Appointee - Vacant (2)
Scientific Disciplines related to Land, Water, Environmental Sciences

Gubernatorial Appointee - Vacant (1)
Experience in Managing Lands for Active and Passive Types of Recreation

ARC Staff Director

Shauna Allen