Apalachicola River

Jackson, Gadsden, Liberty, Calhoun and Gulf Counties

Critical Natural Lands

Purpose for State Acquisition

Acquiring the natural lands of the Apalachicola River would greatly increase protection of the waters of the Apalachicola River and the productive Apalachicola Bay, as well as providing the public with scenic outdoor-recreation areas from the Torreya State Park south to Wewahitchka and the Dead Lakes. The high plateaus, steep bluffs and deep ravines of the northern Apalachicola River valley are some of the most significant natural features of the southeastern Coastal Plain, with many northern, rare, and endemic plants and animals, such as the nearly extinct Florida Torreya tree.

Managers

Most of the project would be managed under a conservation easement by The Forestland Group. Past owners have harvested hardwood timber on the property, and this practice will continue. Parts of the project purchased outright by the State would be managed by the Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP), Florida Department of Environmental Protection, including an addition to the Torreya State Park. The Florida Forest Service/FFS will be a cooperating manager for the Sweetwater Creek tract in managing the forest resources, and timber issues related to planning and implementing forest management activities, and provide assistance in developing prescribed burn plans.

Apalachicola River FNAI Elements	
Florida Torreya	G1/S1
Florida Black Bear	G5T2/S2
Gulf Sturgeon	G3T2/S2
Eastern Indigo Snake	G3Q/S3
Gopher Tortoise	G3/S3
Gholson's blazing star	G1/S1
Southern Elktoe	G1/S1
Torreya Pygmy Grasshopper	G1/S1
Apalachicola rosemary	G1/S1
Brother Spike	G1G2/S1
Apalachicola wild indigo	G2/S1
fringed campion	G2/S1

85 rare species are associated with the project

General Description

This project includes much of Florida's upland glades natural community, currently not represented on conservation lands, and harbors several globally rare plant species as well as 16 endemic species occurring nowhere else in Florida. It consists of four tracts of land along the upper Apalachicola River: 1) a large tract on the east bank, running south from near Chattahoochee to Torreya State Park, including rich upland and floodplain forests and most of the upland glades in the state. It shelters several extremely rare plants such as the Florida Torreya. 2) The Land property, west of the former area, containing floodplain forest important for southeastern and gray bats. 3) The Sweetwater Creek tract, connecting Torreya State Park with a Nature Conservancy preserve, including some of the deepest steephead ravines in the state, with unique hardwood forests harboring many rare plants and animals. The uplands between the steepheads are a sand pine plantation. 4) 37,895 acres from The Forestland Group offered to the state for purchase as a conservation easement (including 715 acres of fee-simple purchase of the Skyland Ranch tract), The upper Apalachicola has a high potential for archaeological sites; several are already known. All of these areas are threatened by timbering and unrestricted vehicular access.

Public Use

Most of the acreage would be acquired as a less-than-fee conservation easement, limiting public use. But it will provide habitat for wildlife including the Florida black bear and provide buffers for other conservation lands such as the St. Joe Timberland Apalachicola River and the Southeastern Maternity Bat Cave in Sneads, Jackson County. Forestry uses could continue under a well-crafted forest stewardship management

Placed on List	**1991**
Project Area (GIS Acres)	**56,058**
Acres Acquired (GIS)	**8,128***
at a Cost of	**$10,120,682***
Acres Remaining (GIS)	**47,929**
Estimated (Tax Assessed) Value of	**$68,227,199**

*includes acreage acquired and funds spent by the NWFWMD plan. Portions of the project purchased in fee-simple would be managed as state parks or preserves, wildlife management areas, and state forests, and allow such uses as hiking, nature appreciation, limited hunting and fishing, and boat launching.

Acquisition Planning

On December 7, 1990, the Land Acquisition Advisory Council (LAAC) separated the Apalachicola River and Bay CARL project into two projects: Apalachicola Bay, and Apalachicola River, Phase I. The Apalachicola River, Phase I project included the Aspalaga Landing tract (800 acres/2 owners), Atkins tract (3,210 acres/7 owners), and Gadsden County Glades (1,912 acres/13 owners) and had an estimated tax value of $4,532,300.

On April 7, 1992, the LAAC approved a 4,570-acre addition to the project boundary. It consisted of 30 owners and a taxable value of $1,813,157.

On July 14, 1995, the LAAC approved a 374-acre addition (Land property) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owner, and had a taxable value of $282,712. The tract is across from the Gadsden Glades tract and nearly adjacent to the Sneads Cove site of the Southeastern Bat Maternity Caves project.

On December 5, 1996, the Land Acquisition Management Advisory Council (LAMAC) transferred the Atkins/Trammell tract (approximately 3,210 acres) and the Hatcher tract (approximately 544 acres within the 9,145-acre Sweetwater site) to the Less-Than-Fee category. A 613-acre conservation easement was acquired on the Hatcher tract in 2002.

On May 6, 1999, the LAMAC designated an additional 11,800 acres (Lake Wimico) as essential.

On April 6, 2001, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) removed the Atkins/Trammell tract site (approximately 3,210 acres) from the project because the resources had been compromised and negotiations had reached an impasse.

On April 25, 2002, the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 2,242-acre addition (Corbin/Tucker site) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the TNC, consisted of 2 owners, David Corbin & Ken Tucker, and had a taxable value of $1,106,820. On August 15, 2002 the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 1,514-acre addition of the Trammel tract (that was previously part of the 3,210-acre Atkins/Trammell tract that was removed on April 6, 2001) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Trammel, and had a taxable value of $430,000.

On February 7, 2003, the ARC approved a fee simple and less-than-fee 3,113-acre addition to the project boundary. Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy (TNC), it consisted of 4 landowners, 5 tracts, and had a 2002 taxable value of $764,996. The tracts break down as follows: Soterra Crooked Creek tract, 447 acres;

Soterra Connector tract, 117 acres; Thompson tract, 304 acres; Hatcher tract, 160 acres; and TNC Dupuis/Traveler's tract, 1,846 acres. On October 17, 2003, the ARC approved a less-than-fee, 1,244-acre addition (Glenn Summers tract) to the project boundary. It was sponsored by the owner, Glenn Summers, and had a taxable value of $91,645.

On December 23, 2007, the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD) purchased a 1,544 acre conservation easement from Robert D./Kay S. Trammell and Robert Douglas Trammell and Meredith Trammell Roop for $2,985,108. The CE is known as the Trammell tract.

On September 30, 2010 DRP purchased 553 acres known as Torreya State Park Addition for $1,418,000 from Plum Creek. DRP will manage this.

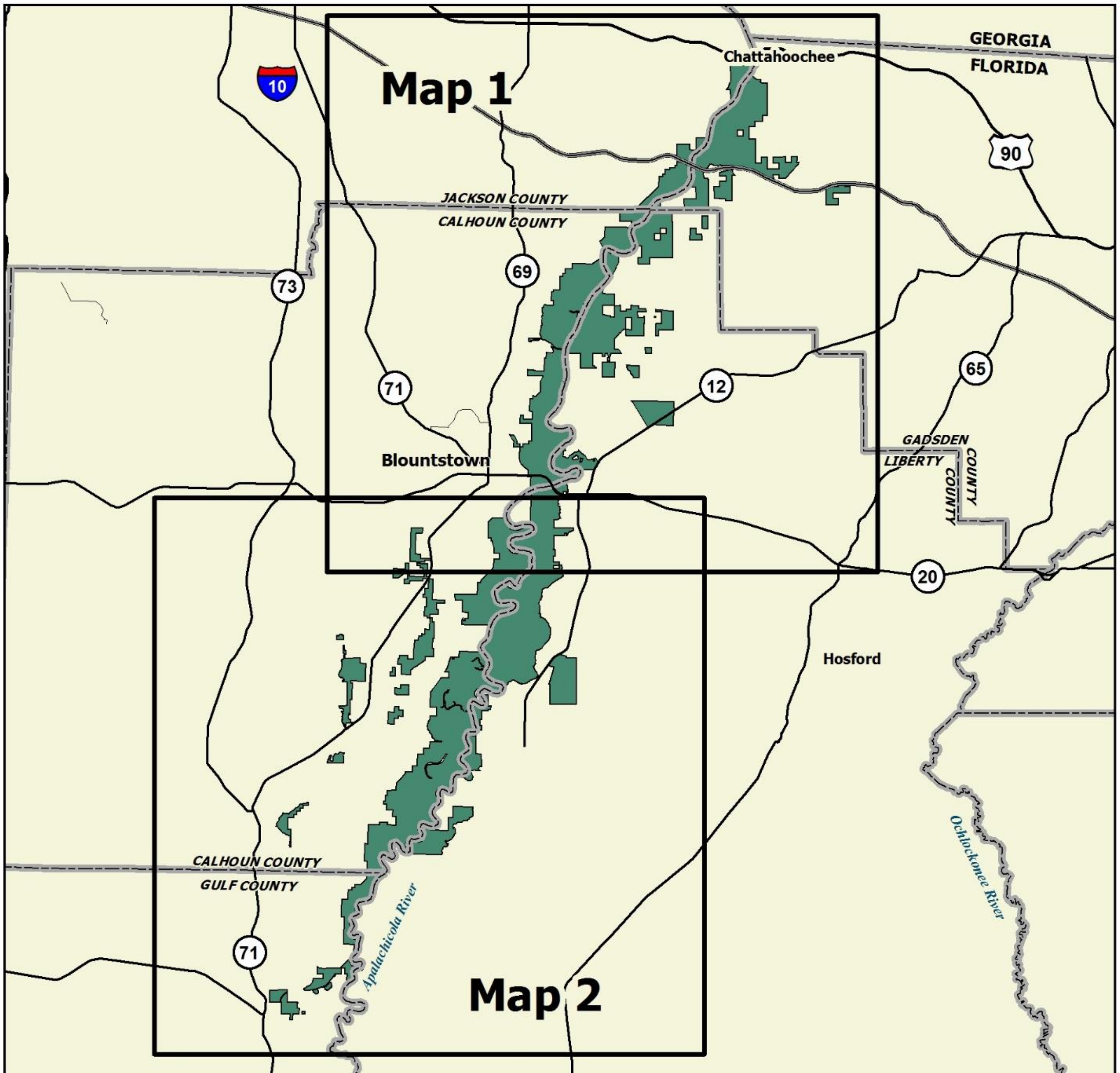
On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project into the Florida Forever category of Critical Natural Lands projects.

In 2017 The Forestland Group, owners of acreage along the Apalachicola River formerly owned by Neal Land and Timber, proposed a less-than-fee purchase of more than 37,000 acres for the planned Upper Apalachicola River Ecosystem Florida Forever project, and another 715 acres of the Skyland Ranch tract in full-fee. This project was accepted and approved by ARC, and then merged into the existing Apalachicola River project.

Coordination

The NWFWMD and TNC have provided information and assistance with this project. It is not in the Partnerships and Regional Initiatives category, however.

The 37,895 acres to be acquired mostly as less-than-fee conservation land complements Jackson County's goal of preserving environmentally sensitive lands and greenways for connectivity. The Gulf County plan's conservation elements have goals of keeping flood-

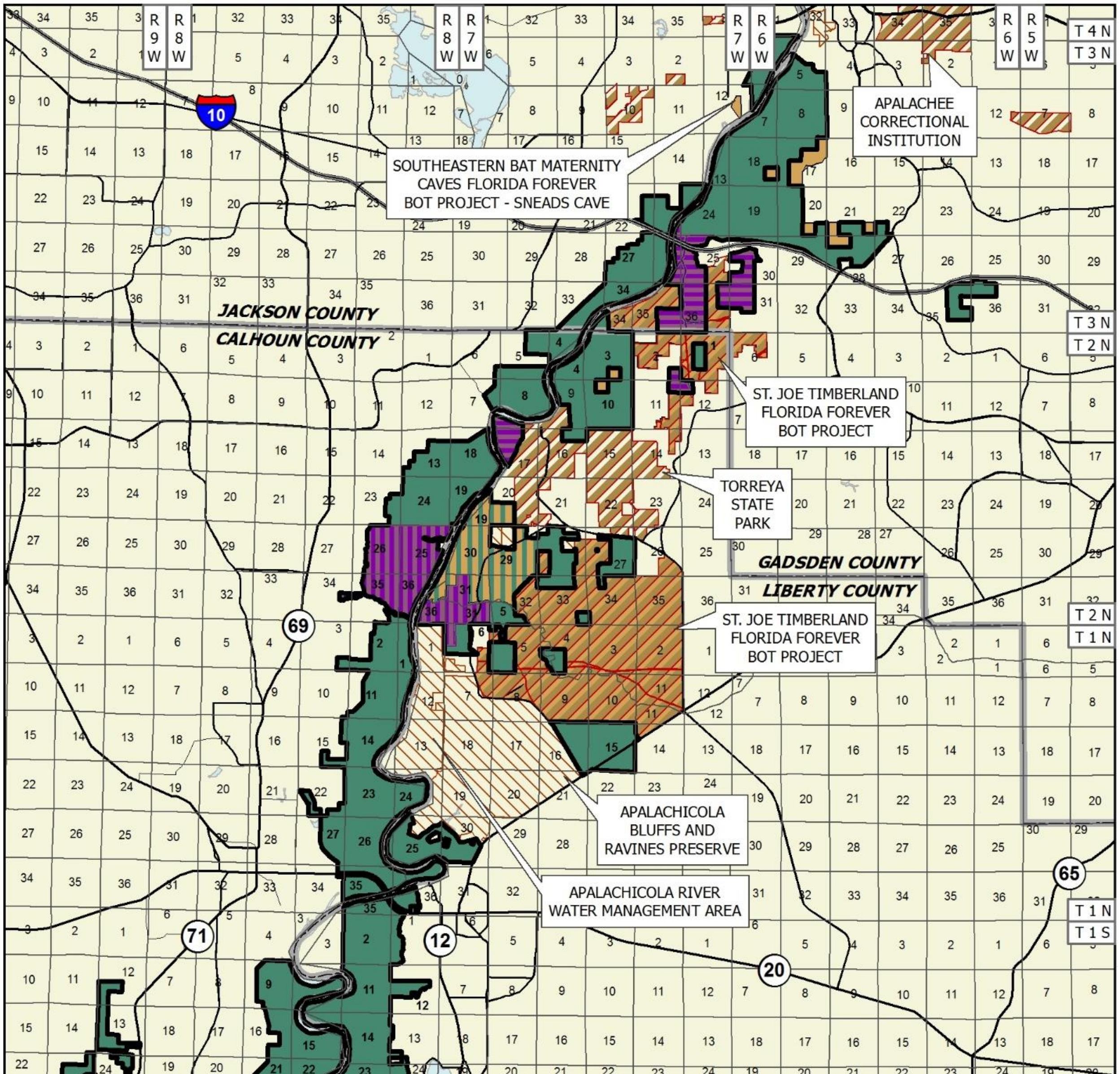


APALACHICOLA RIVER: OVERVIEW

JACKSON, GADSDEN, LIBERTY, CALHOUN, AND GULF COUNTIES

0 3.5 7 14 Miles

JANUARY 2018



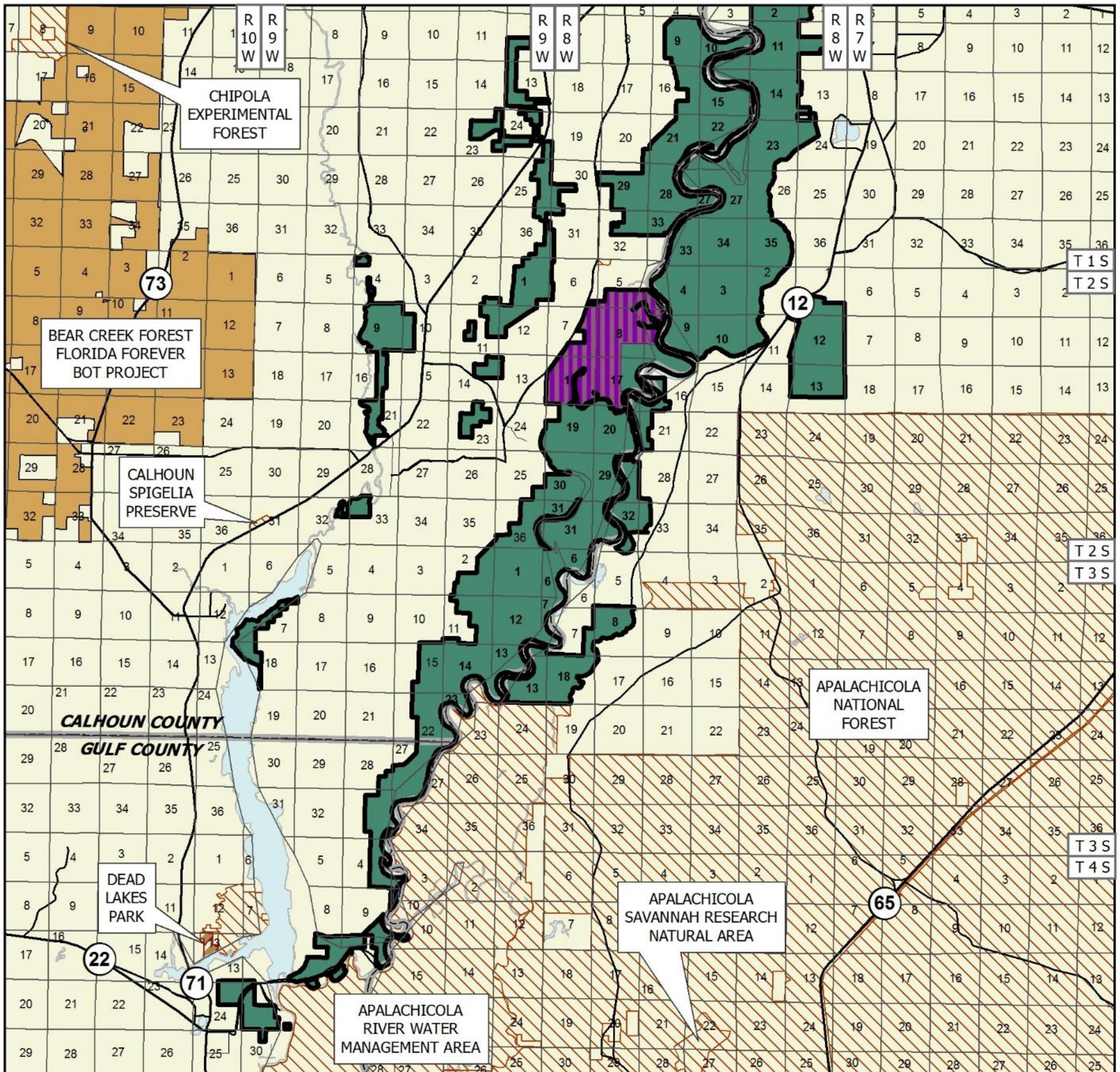
APALACHICOLA RIVER: MAP 1 OF 2

JACKSON, GADSDEN, CALHOUN, AND LIBERTY COUNTIES

- Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
- Acquired for Conservation (Fee Simple)
- Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
- TNC Owned Lands Within the Project
- Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
- Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

JANUARY 2018



APALACHICOLA RIVER: MAP 2 OF 2

CALHOUN, LIBERTY, AND GULF COUNTIES

- Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
- Acquired for Conservation (Less-Than-Fee)
- Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
- Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands

0 1.5 3 6 Miles

JANUARY 2018

prone areas undeveloped and designating habitat for important species as environmentally sensitive areas.

Management Policy Statement

The primary goals of management of the Apalachicola River project are: to conserve the rich bluffs and ravines along the upper Apalachicola River, unique in North America, that provide critical habitat for many rare plants and animals; to conserve and restore these important ecosystems and their plant and animal resources through purchase because regulation cannot adequately protect them; to provide areas for natural-resource-based recreation; and to preserve several significant archaeological sites. The project should be managed under the single-use concept, with management activities being directed toward the preservation of steephead streams, hardwood forests, glades, and archaeological sites, the removal of pine plantations, and restoration of natural pine forests. The project, when completed, will include most of the bluffs and ravines in private ownership and will link a Nature Conservancy preserve with Torreya State Park. It has the appropriate size and location to achieve the management goals.

Management Prospectus

Qualifications for state designation The unique and sensitive forests, glades, and streams on the east side of the Apalachicola River qualify these lands as state forests, parks, and preserves. The Atkins tract on the west side of the river has the size and wildlife resources to qualify as a wildlife management area.

Manager The DRP will manage the fee-simple lands east of the river between Sweetwater Creek and the old Gadsden Glades area. DRP will also manage the Skyland Ranch site as part of Torreya State park. The FFS, however, will manage the Sweetwater Creek tract for the first ten years after the state acquires it.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The portions of the project in the vicinity of the Torreya State Park and east of the river will be high-need management areas with emphasis on public recreational use and development compatible with resource protection and management. During an initial 10-year period in which the FFS will restore natural pine forests on the Sweetwater Creek tract, the site will be a low-need management area.

Timetable for implementing management Within the first year after acquisition, management activities will concentrate on site security, natural and cultural resource protection, and efforts toward the development of a plan for long-term public use and resource management.

Revenue-generating potential No significant revenue is expected to be generated in the first several years, nor any significant facilities developed initially after the lands are placed under management of the DRP. The degree of future revenue generated will depend on the nature and extent of public use and facilities.

Cooperators in management activities No local governments or others are recommended for management of this project area.

Management Cost Summary FFS/Sweetwater

Category	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	$105,910	$105,910
OPS	$0	$0
Expense	$30,000	$30,000
OCO	$168,000	$13,000
FCO	$0	$0
TOTAL	$303,910	$148,910

Management Cost Summary DRP/Sweetwater

Category	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	$83,306	$72,319
OPS	$24,960	$44,720
Expense	$16,800	$49,730
OCO	$101,252	$1,000
FCO	$0	$0
TOTAL	$226,318	$167,769

Management Cost Summary DRP/ North

Category	Startup	Recurring
Source of Funds	CARL	CARL
Salary	$72,319	$72,319
OPS	$44,720	$44,720
Expense	$49,730	$49,730
OCO	$81,527	$1,000
FCO	$0	$0
TOTAL	$248,296	$167,769

Updated January 29, 2018