ITEM 19:

Vote on whether to amend the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever Project Boundary to add six parcels totaling approximately 71.0 GIS acres in Putnam and Marion Counties with a tax assessed market value of $1,202,481.

LOCATION:

Putnam and Marion Counties

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The Orange Spring amendment proposed by the Putnam Land Conservancy adds six parcels in Putnam and Marion Counties totaling approximately 71.0 GIS acres to the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever project. The property consists of six parcels owned by the LTD Unlimited LLC. The six parcels have a combined tax assessed value of $1,202,481.

The six parcels are within the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenways State Recreation and Conservation Area (Park) boundary and are proposed for fee simple acquisition. All landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The Division of Recreation and Parks has confirmed the parcels would be managed as part of the Park. The parcels contain Orange Spring, a third magnitude spring, and other small springs including Sanchez Spring. The property would provide additional protection to the conservation area and allow expanded recreational opportunities including swimming, hiking, and wildlife viewing.

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The parcels have a tax assessed value of less than $5 million. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

Project History:

The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway in Citrus, Clay, Levy, Marion and Putnam Counties was approved on the CARL list in 1995. The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project will protect large expanses of flatwoods, sandhills and scrub in central Putnam County, extending to the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway along the Ocklawaha River. The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project will fill gaps in the greenway and guarantee habitat for imperiled species like Florida black bear, Florida scrub-jay and Etoniah rosemary. The project will support the expansion of outdoor resource-based recreation along the greenway, which is a unique piece of public conservation land that crosses the entire Florida peninsula from the Withlacoochee River to the St. Johns River and provides opportunities for long-distance hiking, fishing, camping and hunting.

The Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway project includes over 94,104 acres with 49,924 acres remaining and is ranked number 8 in the Critical Natural Lands category on the 2024 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2023) is $204,249,562.

FNAI Review:

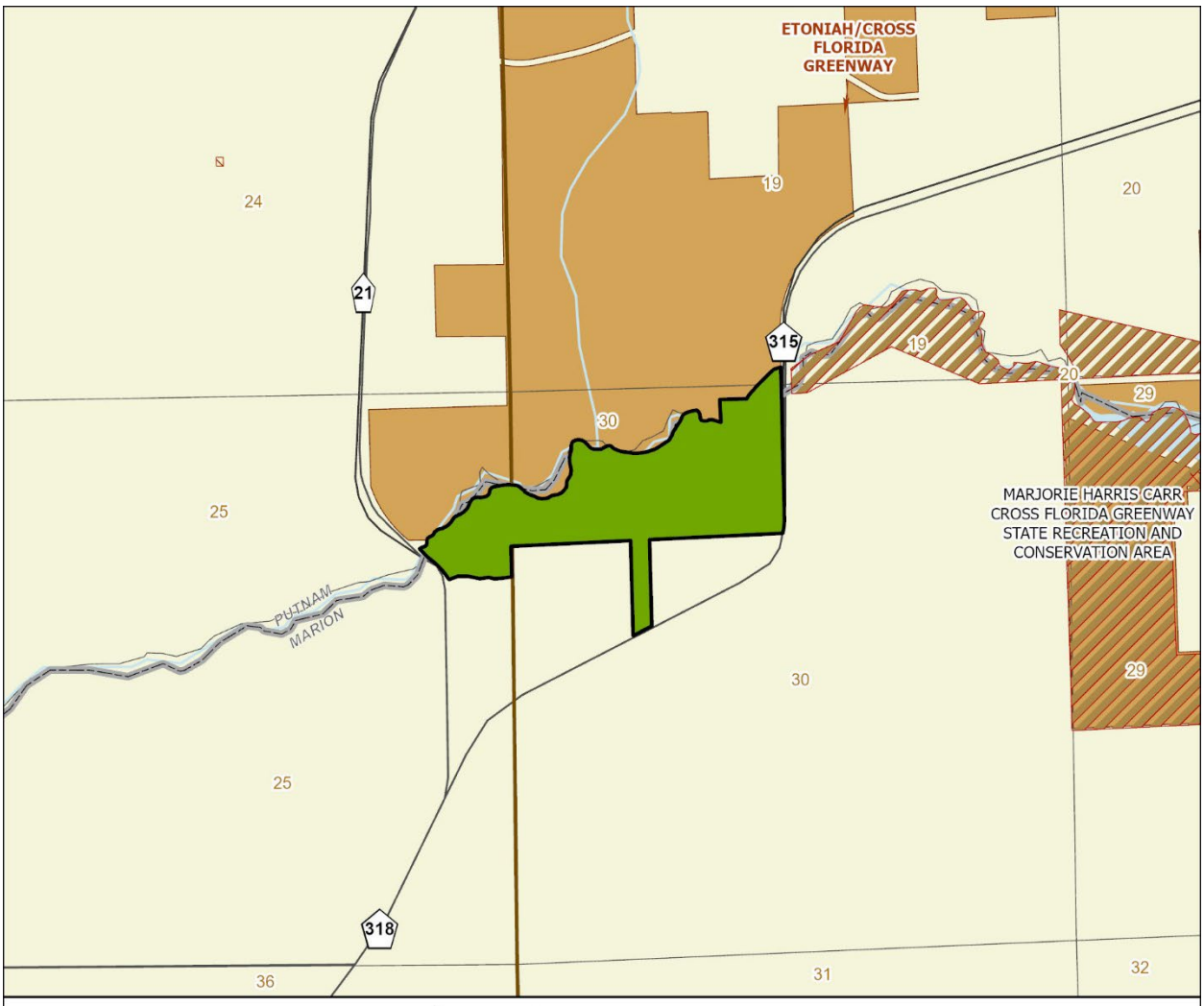
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 60-100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways, Natural Floodplain Function, Surface Water Protection, Functional Wetlands, and Aquifer Recharge. Based on habitat for Florida panther, the site also scores 82% for Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas and FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

Project	DHR	FFS	Lynetta Griner	DEP	FWC	Bill Palmer	Elva Peppers	Selected
Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway: Orange Spring	Y							



ETONIAH/CROSS FLORIDA GREENWAY PROPOSED ADDITION (ORANGE SPRING)

MARION COUNTY

- Florida Forever Proposed Addition
- Florida Forever BOT Projects
- State Owned Lands
- Other Conservation Lands

N

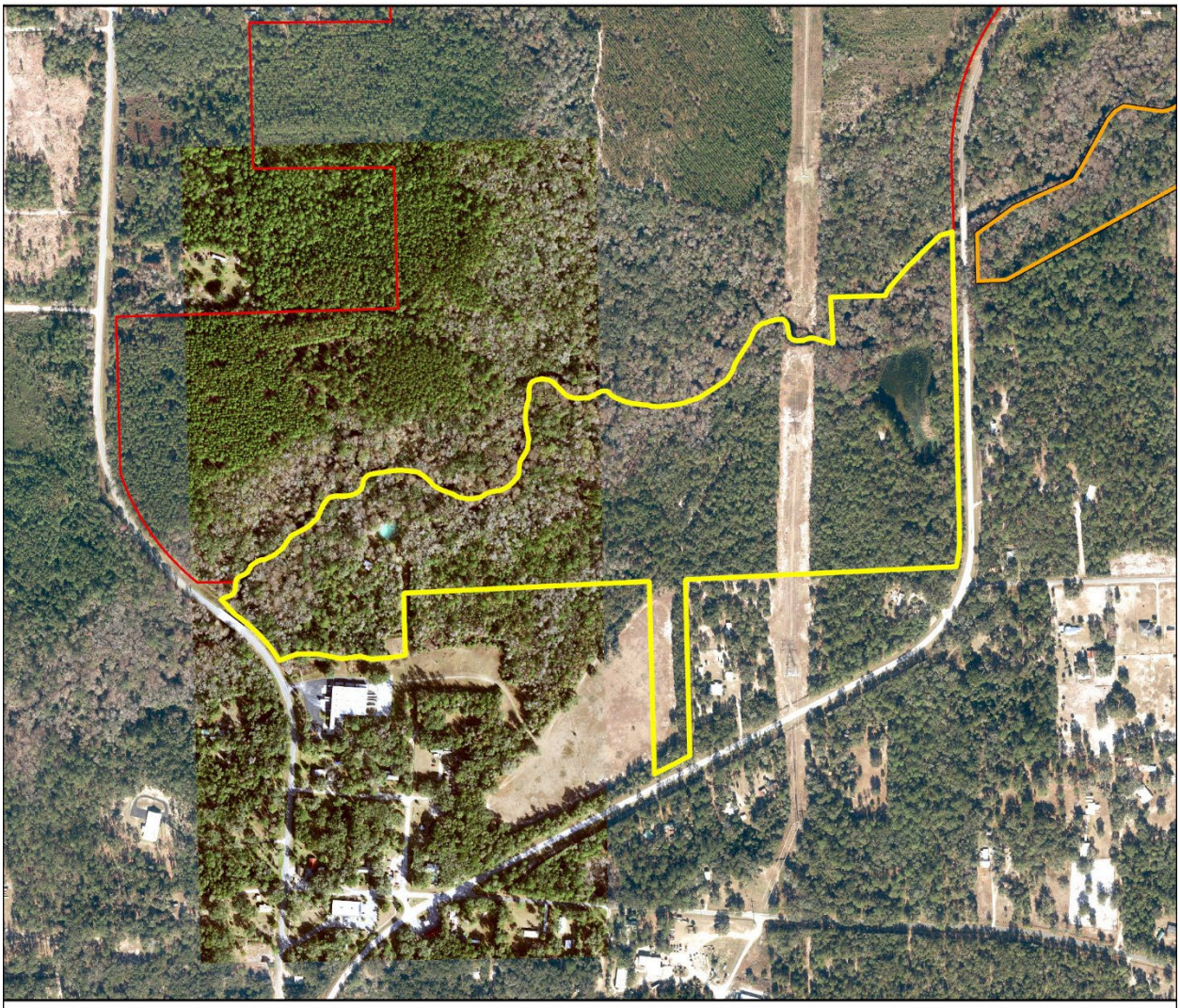
0 0.5 0.9 Miles



MAP BY FL NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY AUGUST 2024

Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Proposed Addition (Orange Spring)

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF AUGUST 2024



Map Produced by: FL Natural Areas Inventory, N. Pasco, August 2024 Background: County Ortho Imagery 2023 Resolution = 0.15 meter

FNAI

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

N

0 0.1 0.2 0.4
Miles

Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Addition (Orange Spring): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 20240821

GIS ACRES = 71.4

MEASURES	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	43.0	60%
Priority 3	10.3	14%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	5.9	8%
Total Acres	59.2	82%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	43.3	60%
Total Acres	43.3	60%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	60.4	84%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	60.4	84%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
Upland Glade (G1)	0	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	7.3	10%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0	0%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	0	0%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0	0%
Total Acres	7.3	10%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	1	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	2	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	31.9	44%
Priority 4	2.6	4%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	34.5	48%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	62.9	88%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	3.3	5%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	66.3	92%
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	0	0%
Priority 3	29.2	41%
Priority 4	2.3	3%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	31.6	44%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	29.5	41%
Priority 2	12.5	17%
Priority 3	29.7	41%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	71.7	100%
E2: Recreational Trails (miles)		
(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.0	
Total Miles	0.0	
F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number)	0 sites	
G1: Sustainable Forestry		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
G3: Forestland for Recharge	0	0%

[a]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.

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

To: Meghan Lauer, DEP/OES
From: Katy NeSmith, FNAI
Date: August 30, 2024
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway – Orange Spring Conservation Project (Marion County)

The major goals of the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever Project are to protect a corridor of forested land and water to provide recreational opportunities and natural resource protection in north peninsular Florida. The ca. 71.4-acre Orange Spring Conservation Project property is proposed as an addition to the project. The property is proposed for fee simple acquisition to be managed as part of Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway State Recreation and Conservation Area (MHCCFG).

The Orange Spring Conservation property is situated in northern Marion County northeast of the town of Orange Springs along the southern bank of Orange Creek, which forms the Marion/Putnam County line. An arm of MHCCFG lies just across CR-315, which forms the eastern boundary of the proposed addition. A narrow strip extends south from the tract, providing access to CR-315. S. County Road 21 abuts the western boundary of the property. Within 1 mile to the west of the proposal is a series of connected conservation lands that includes BJ Bar Ranch Conservation Easement, Twin Creek Ranch Gopher Tortoise Longterm Recipient Site, Morrison Conservation Easement, and Putnam Lakes Preserve. Horseshoe Lake (Marion County) lies approximately 2 miles to the southwest of the proposal.

Almost all of the tract is forested; a transmission line and non-forested areas along the access parcel and a small corner of the westernmost parcel are cleared. Approximately half of the forested area is bottomland forest/floodplain swamp along Orange Creek. The other half is successional hardwood forest after merchantable pines were removed around 2001. Orange Spring itself lies in the creek floodplain in the northwestern section of the tract. The third magnitude spring has been modified by a retaining wall and surrounding mown lawn, and by use as a commercial water bottling facility (under permit through 2031 with option to renew). A small spring run exits through a gap in the retaining wall. A bathroom structure and metal shed remain from when the property was open to the public. Sanchez Spring, a smaller spring, occurs in the eastern part of the property. Other notable features are a cleared transmission corridor running north-south in the eastern third of the site and a rectangular pond/borrow pit near the eastern edge of the property.

The FNAI database shows that the proposed tract lies 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. Chapman's sedge (*Carex chapmanii*, G3, S3, N, T) has also been documented on site. The tessellated darter (*Etheostoma olmstedi*, G5, S1, N, ST) is known from Orange Creek near the west boundary of the property. Older records of a mayfly (*Stenacron floridense*, G3G4, S3S4, N, N) and fever tree (*Pinckneya bracteata*, G4, S2, N, T) are known from nearby, to the east of the proposal.

The Florida Forever Measures Evaluation (FFME) below 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 resources. The majority of the proposed addition (60-100% of the tract) contributes to priority 2 and 4 Surface Water Protection, priority 1 through 3 Aquifer Recharge, priority 3 Ecological Greenways, priority 2, 3, and 5 Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas, and priority 6 Habitat Conservation Priorities, with lesser contributions (< 50% of the area) to Functional Wetlands and Natural Floodplain Function. Remote analysis used to generate the FFME also suggested the presence of Under-represented Natural Communities, specifically 7 acres of scrub and scrubby flatwoods (10% of the site); however, this identification appears to be an erroneous characterization of an area of successional hardwood forest.