ITEM 24:

Vote on whether to amend the Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed Florida Forever project boundary to add six parcels totaling approximately 744.26 GIS acres in Dixie County with a tax assessed market value of $1,191,848.

LOCATION:

Dixie County

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The Bass Family Conservation Area amendment proposed by SVN Saunders Ralston Dantzler Real Estate adds six parcels in Dixie County totaling approximately 744.26 GIS acres to the Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed Florida Forever project. The property consists of six parcels owned by Andrew Bass. The six parcels have a combined tax assessed value of $1,191,848.

The property is surrounded by existing conservation lands, sharing a southern border with Big Bend Wildlife Management Area. Additionally, it is both northern and eastern adjacent to the Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed project. The parcels are proposed for less-than-fee acquisition. All landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. The property is within a forested, undeveloped landscape currently used for timber and recreation within Priority 1 of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN). If acquired as a conservation easement, the property would enhance connections between adjacent conservation lands benefitting long-ranging species including the Florida black bear. The property would also provide additional protection to the water resources of the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve.

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 Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed project will preserve the natural resources of the Suwannee River and the Gulf of Mexico and provide habitat and natural corridors for rare plants and animals over a wide swath of undeveloped public lands, including the Big Bend Wildlife Management Area, the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge, Suwannee River Water Management District conservation areas and the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve.

The project includes over 58,638 acres with 12,090 acres remaining to be acquired. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired is $18,975,618. The project is ranked number 12 in the Less-Than-Fee category on the 2024 Florida Forever Priority List.

FNAI Review:

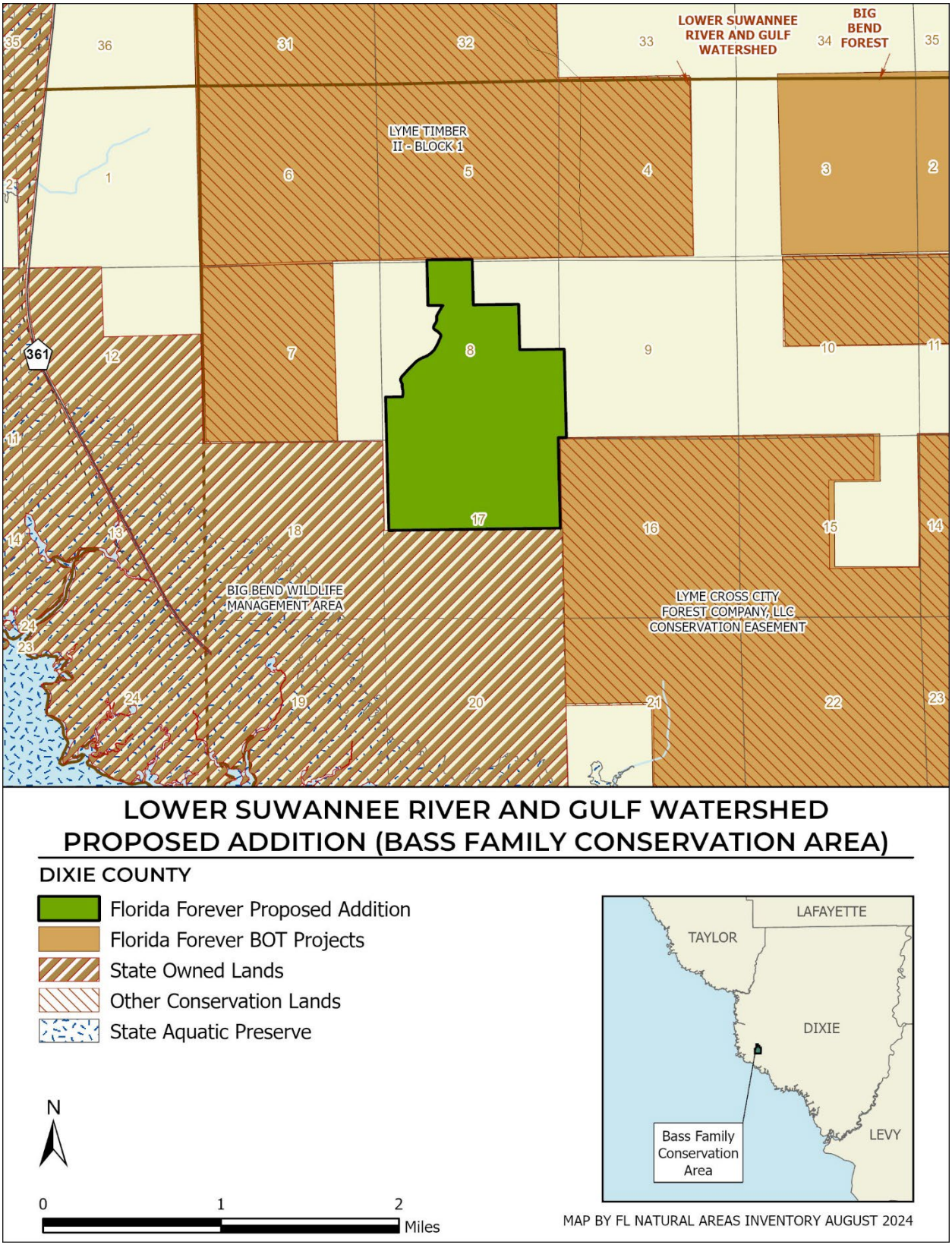
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways and Surface Water Protection. 97% contributes to Natural Floodplain Function and 86% to Functional Wetlands.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

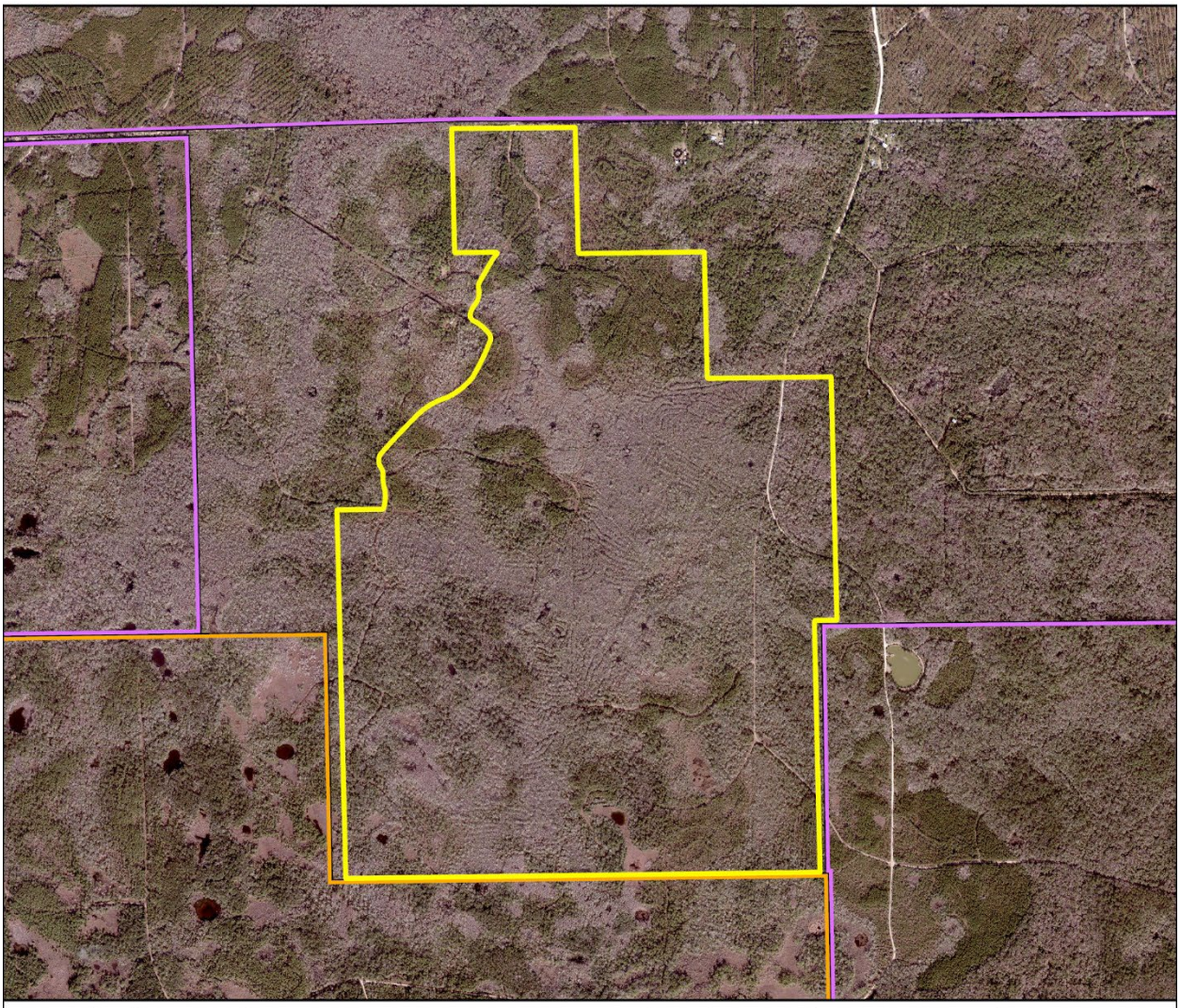
ARC RECOMMENDATION:

Project	DHR	FFS	Lynetta Griner	DEP	FWC	Bill Palmer	Elva Peppers	Selected
Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed: Bass Family Conservation Area								Y


LOWER SUWANNEE RIVER AND GULF WATERSHED
BIG BEND FOREST
LYME TIMBER II - BLOCK 1
BIG BEND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA
LYME CROSS CITY FOREST COMPANY, LLC CONSERVATION EASEMENT
361
LOWER SUWANNEE RIVER AND GULF WATERSHED
PROPOSED ADDITION (BASS FAMILY CONSERVATION AREA)
DIXIE COUNTY
Florida Forever Proposed Addition
Florida Forever BOT Projects
State Owned Lands
Other Conservation Lands
State Aquatic Preserve
N
0
1
2
Miles
LAFAYETTE
TAYLOR
DIXIE
LEVY
Bass Family Conservation Area
MAP BY FL NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY AUGUST 2024

Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed Proposed Addition (Bass Family Conservation Area)

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 2022 Resolution = 0.15 meter

FNAI

Florida Forever Proposed Addition
Existing State Conservation Lands
Existing Private Conservation Lands

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed Addition (Bass Family CA): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 2024082

GIS ACRES = 729

MEASURES	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	598	82%
Total Acres	598	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	227	31%
Total Acres	227	31%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	729	100%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	729	100%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
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)	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	0	0%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	0	
G5	0	
Total	0	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	258	35%
Priority 2	408	56%
Priority 3	40	5%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	706	97%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	50	7%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	559	77%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	120	16%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	729	100%
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	258	35%
Priority 2	349	48%
Priority 3	18	2%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	625	86%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	0	0%
E2: Recreational Trails (miles)		
(prioritized trail opportunities from Office of Greenways and Trails & Univ. Florida)		
Land Trail Priorities	0.0	
Land Trail Opportunities	0.8	
Total Miles	0.8	
F2: Arch. & Historical Sites (number)	0	sites
G1: Sustainable Forestry		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	75	10%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	12	2%
Total Acres	88	12%
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: Dale R. Jackson, Ph.D., FNAI
Date: August 30, 2024
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed – Bass Timberland & Conservation Area (Dixie County)

The major goals of the Lower Suwannee River and Gulf Watershed (LSRGW) Florida Forever Project are to protect and enhance water quality, wetland communities, plant and wildlife habitats and natural corridors, and archaeological sites found along the Suwannee River and adjacent Gulf of Mexico. The ca. 745.0-acre Bass Timberland & Conservation Area (aka Bass Family Conservation Area) property in coastal west-central Dixie County is proposed as an addition to the project. The property is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The Bass property lies ca. 2 miles inland of the Gulf coast, northeast of Big Grassy Island and Pepperfish Keys. The site is ca. 14 miles southwest of Cross City and 6.5 miles northwest of Horseshoe Beach. The tract is largely surrounded by conservation lands: Lyme Timber II – Block 1 to the north and west (with a small, shared border on the north), Big Bend Wildlife Management Area to the southwest and south (mostly contiguous), and Lyme Cross City Forest Company, LLC Conservation Easement to the southeast (also contiguous). The private lands under state easements are or were within the LSRGW project.

The property is within a forested, undeveloped landscape where forestry is a predominant land use. The site is very low relief at about 5 ft above sea level, and hence mostly supports swampy, hydric forest types (largely cypress), with pine stands on very slightly higher elevations (about 25% of the site). Aerial photography shows most of these to have been cut over, with pines having been replanted and wetland trees regenerating. Damage from recent hurricanes is also possible. Approximately a half dozen small marshes occupy low elevations in the southern portion of the site, with only a little open water. A few graded roads are present to facilitate forestry operations.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory Natural Heritage database contains no records of rare species onsite. This may reflect a lack of biological surveys as well as the extent of past timbering.

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. At least 80% of the site contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (priority 5), Ecological Greenways (priority 1), Natural Floodplain Function (priorities 1-3), Surface Water Protection (mostly priority 4), and Functional Wetlands (priorities 1 and 2). About one-third contributes to FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities (priority 6).