ITEM 29:

Vote on whether to amend the Waccasassa Watershed Florida Forever project boundary to add five parcels totaling approximately 795.72 acres in Levy County with a tax assessed market value of $3,736,707.

LOCATION:

Levy County

DSL STAFF REMARKS:

The M3BLT LLC amendment proposed by the Florida Conservation Group adds five parcels in Levy County totaling approximately 796 acres to the Waccasassa Watershed Florida Forever project. The property consists of five parcels owned by the M3BLT LLC. The five parcels have a combined tax assessed value of $3,736,707.

The property is located less than two miles west of Otter Creek in between two disjunct parcels of the Waccasassa Watershed project. The Upper Waccasassa Conservation Area (SRWMD) lies three miles to the northeast. Positioned among key conservation lands, this property serves as a critical link between the Waccasassa and Suwannee Rivers. The primary land use on the property is silviculture, with approximately 75 percent of the site in some stage of pine plantation. The property is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition. All landowners have been contacted and are willing sellers. Acquisition of a conservation easement would help fill a gap in the conservation landscape of the region and enhance the water quality and quantity of the Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve and Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park.

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 Waccasassa Watershed in Levy County was approved by ARC in 2023. The Waccasassa Watershed project will help ensure the water quality and quantity of the Waccasassa watershed. The project will also help to increase connectivity amongst conservation lands, including two Outstanding Florida Waterways: Waccasassa Bay State Preserve and Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve.

The Waccasassa Watershed project includes over 20,455 acres with 20,422 acres remaining and is ranked number 23 in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives 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 $87,784,372.

FNAI Review:

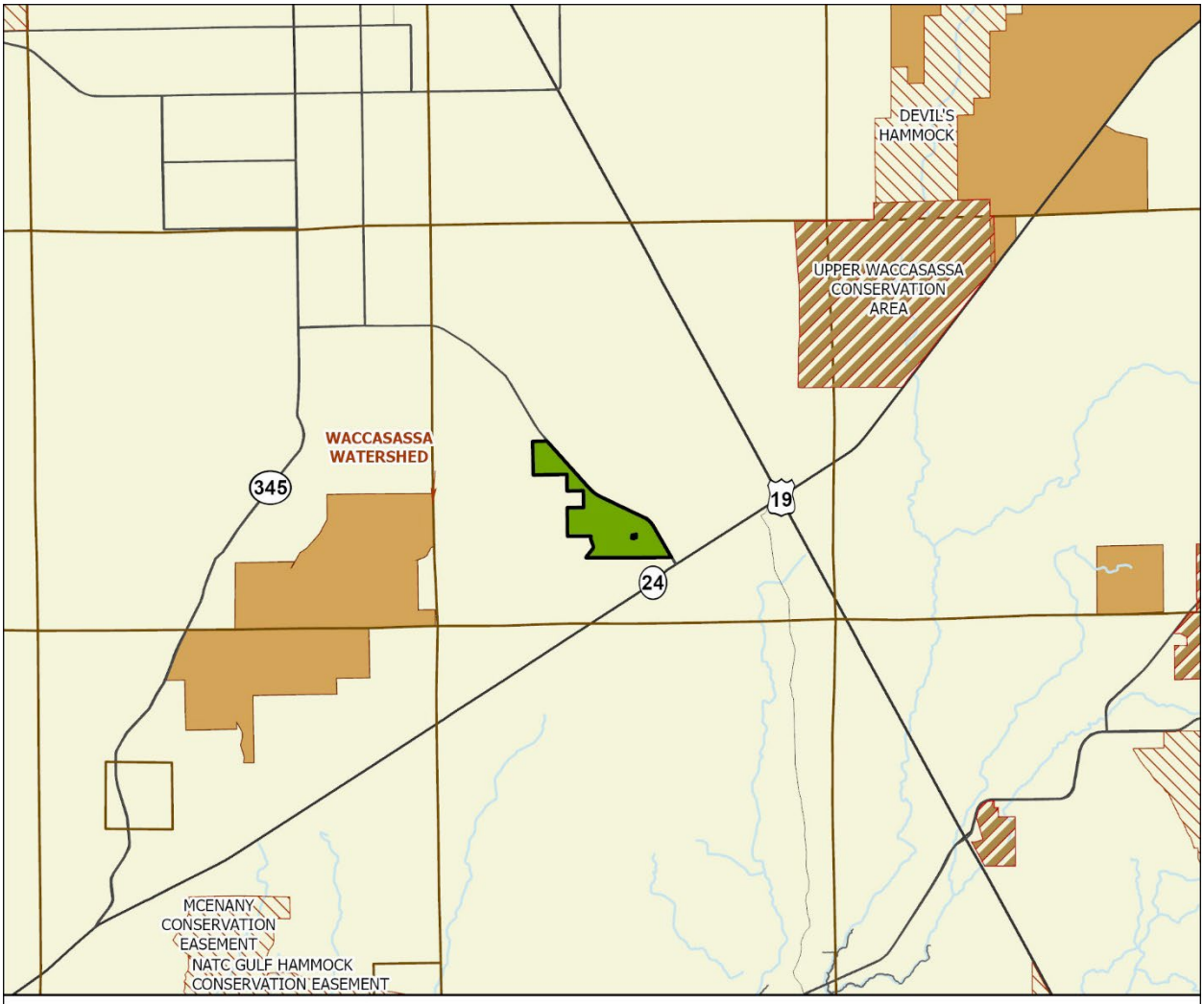
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI), 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways, Surface Water Protection and Aquifer Recharge. 95% contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas and 76% to Sustainable Forestry.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

Project	DHR	FFS	Lynetta Griner	DEP	FWC	Bill Palmer	Elva Peppers	Selected
Waccasassa Watershed: M3BLT LLC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y



WACCASASSA WATERSHED
PROPOSED ADDITION (M3BLT LLC)

LEVY COUNTY

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

N

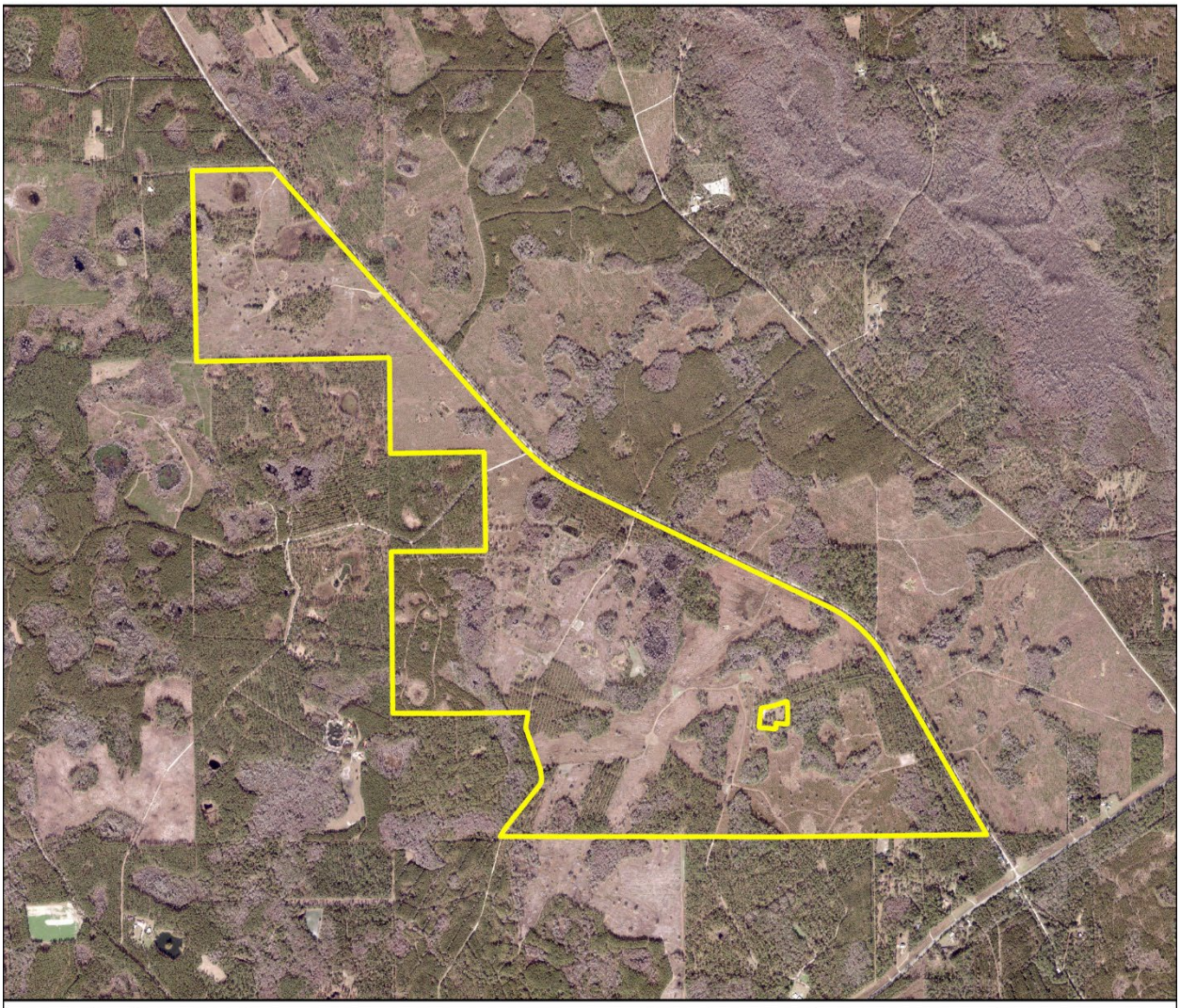
0 3.5 7 Miles



MAP BY FL NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY AUGUST 2024

Waccasassa Watershed Proposed Addition
(M3BLT LLC)

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

Florida Forever Proposed Addition

FNAI

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Waccasassa Watershed Addition (M3BLT LLC): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 20240821

GIS ACRES = 796

MEASURES	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	714	90%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	44	6%
Total Acres	759	95%
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	105	13%
Total Acres	105	13%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	796	100%
Total Acres	796	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	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	429	54%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	429	54%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres[a]	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	< 1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	796	100%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	796	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	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	194	24%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	194	24%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	99	12%
Priority 3	439	55%
Priority 4	259	32%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	796	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	551	69%
Priority 3	54	7%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5 - Potential Pinelands	1	< 1%
Total Acres	605	76%
G3: Forestland for Recharge	435	55%

[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: Dan Hipes, FNAI
Date: August 30, 2024
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Waccasassa Watershed – M3BLT (Levy County)

The major goals of the Waccasassa Watershed Florida Forever Project are to ensure the water quality and quantity of the Waccasassa River watershed as well as to increase connectivity amongst conservation lands, including two Outstanding Florida Waterways: Waccasassa Bay State Preserve and Big Bend Seagrasses Aquatic Preserve. The ca. 796.0-acre M3BLT property is proposed as an addition to the project. The property is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The M3BLT property is located less than 2 miles west of the town of Otter Creek just north of SR24, approximately 20 miles inland of Cedar Key. The closest tract of the Waccasassa Watershed Florida Forever BOT Project lies two miles to the west; part of the intervening land (Rocky Hammock Timber) is also proposed as an addition to the Project. The Upper Waccassa Conservation Area lies three miles to the northeast. Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park and the adjacent NATC Gulf Hammock Conservation Easement are within 7 miles to the south. Goethe State Forest is approximately 8 miles to the east.

The M3BLT property lies at the southern end of the Chiefland Karst Plain just above the Gulf Hammock Province. The area is topographically flat with a mosaic of flatwoods and swamps that generally drain to the south through the coastal hammock. The primary land use on the property is timber production, with approximately 75 percent of the site in some stage of pine plantation. Dome and basin swamps cover about 20 percent of the site. The remaining 5 percent is mostly roads, small clearings and small marshes.

There are no rare species documented in the FNAI Natural Heritage Database for the site; however, the site lies with the region of the state where Florida Black Bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*; G5T4, S4, N, N) is classified by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as common. The proposal lists several species that potentially occur; however, none are reported as specifically observed within in the proposed addition.

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. All or nearly all of the tract (95-100%) would contribute to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (mostly priority 3), Ecological Greenways (priority 5), Surface Water Protection (priority 6), and Aquifer Recharge (priority 2-4). Between half and three-quarters of the site would contribute to Natural Floodplain Function, Sustainable Forestry, and Forestland for Recharge. A small amount contributes to FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities and Functional Wetlands.