ITEM 8:

Consider a 10-year update to the Goethe State Forest Management Plan (Lease No. 3976).

LOCATION:

Alachua and Levy County

APPLICANT:

Florida Forest Service (FFS)

STAFF REMARKS:

Background

Goethe State Forest (GSF) is a 54,158.80-acre state forest located in both Levy and Alachua Counties, Florida. The forest is named for Mr. J. T. Goethe, from whom the original tract was purchased in 1992. GSF was acquired under the Preservation 2000 and the Florida Forever programs. The major portion of GSF is located in southeastern Levy County near the Gulf of Mexico. A smaller area of GSF, called the Watermelon Pond Tract, is north of the main tract, and is located on both sides of the Levy/Alachua county line. There are six tracts on GSF: Apex, Black Prong, Cow Creek, Daniel's Island, Stein, and Watermelon Pond.

The primary recreation objective is to provide the public with passive outdoor recreational activities that are dependent on the natural environment, and to provide outdoor recreation opportunities to wounded veterans through Operation Outdoor Freedom (OOF). FFS will continue to promote and encourage public access and recreational use by the public while protecting resources and practicing multiple-use management. Recreation activities available on GSF include but are not limited to hiking, off-road bicycling, hunting, fishing, horseback riding, primitive camping, nature study, and canoeing/kayaking.

GSF contains one of the largest, high quality longleaf-pine flatwoods communities left in Florida, which supports a growing red-cockaded woodpecker (*Dryobates borealis*) (RCW) population and has many old cat-faced longleaf pine trees scattered throughout the forest. These trees are remnants from past naval stores operations that occurred in Levy County and hold some historical significance. They are also the primary source of natural cavity trees for the RCW population on GSF. The forest is home to the Goethe Giant, the sixth largest bald cypress in the State of Florida. Natural communities on GSF include mesic flatwoods, wet flatwoods, dome swamp, sandhill, and basin swamp. Rare animal species found on the forest include the Florida black bear, gopher tortoise, southern fox squirrel, and bald eagle. Rare plants include Florida hasteola and small ladies'-tresses.

The primary mission of the FFS is to "protect Florida and its people from the dangers of wildland fire and manage the forest resources through a stewardship ethic to assure they are available for future generations." Management strategies for LTSF center on the multiple-use concept, as defined in sections 589.04(3) and 253.034(2)(a), Florida Statutes (F.S.).

GSF is managed under a multiple-use concept by the FFS. Multiple-use management is the harmonious and coordinated management of timber, recreation, conservation of fish and wildlife, forage, archaeological and historic sites, habitat and other biological resources, and water resources so they are utilized in the combination that will best serve the people of the state, making the most judicious use of the land for some or all these resources and considering the

relative values of the various resources. Local demands, acquisition objectives, and other factors influence the array of uses that are compatible with and allowed on any specific area of the forest. This management approach is believed to provide for the greatest public benefit, by allowing compatible uses while protecting overall forest health, native ecosystems, and the functions and values associated with them.

Management Plan Overview

In 2022, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) completed an inventory and natural community mapping project on GSF and created current and historic natural community type maps. Eighteen natural community types are found on GSF. The predominant natural community types are mesic flatwoods and wet flatwoods. FNAI also identified eleven altered landcover types. There are 66 rare, endangered, or threatened plant and animal species documented on GSF.

A review of information contained in the Division of Historical Resources Florida Master Site File has determined there are 105 recorded archaeological sites, one historical cemetery, and five resource groups within the designated area for GSF. Currently, none of the known sites on GSF are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The GSF participates in a Firewise community program. Communities in wildfire prone areas must work together to be fully prepared for wildfire. A “Fire Adapted Community” incorporates people, buildings, businesses, infrastructure, cultural resources, and natural areas to prepare for the effects of wildfire. The Fire Adapted Community concept serves as an umbrella to the various programs that help communities become more fire adapted. The FFS has implemented the Fire Adapted Community concept for prevention statewide. Specifically, in the area adjacent to or nearby GSF, efforts will continue to identify communities at risk and to contact their representatives.

The Florida Legislature requires that all land management plans include long and short-term goals. These goals must be measurable objectives, and short-term goals must be achievable within a two-year planning period. Pursuant to section 253.034, F.S., the Division of State Lands began compiling the short-term goals from each land management plan approved since July 1, 2016. The management plan identified objectives under the following short-term goals: Public Access and Recreational Opportunities, Hydrological Preservation and Restoration, and Capital Facilities and Infrastructure.

Public Involvement

FFS responds to public involvement through liaison panels, management plan advisory groups, public hearings, and through ongoing direct contact with user groups. The plan was developed with input from the GSF Management Plan Advisory Group and was reviewed at a public hearing on May 29, 2024.

Surplus Lands

On conservation lands where FFS is the lead manager, FFS assesses and identifies areas for potential surplus land. This consists of an examination of resource and operational management needs, public access and recreational use, and GIS modeling and analysis. The evaluation of GSF by FFS has determined that all portions of the area are being managed and operated for the original purposes of acquisition, therefore, no portion of the GSF is recommended for potential surplus.

State Land Management Review Team

A Land Management Review (LMR) was conducted in August 2023. The review team found that the property is managed in accordance with the purposes for which it was acquired and the management practices, including public access, are in compliance with the management plan. There were no consensus recommendations offered. The 2023 LMR notes were reviewed as part of developing this plan and the agreed upon changes and recommendations were made to this management plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the management plan.

ARC RECOMMENDATION:

(X) APPROVE
( ) APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
( ) DEFER
( ) WITHDRAW
( ) NOT APPROVE
( ) OTHER: _____

LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LEAD AGENCY: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Forest Service
COMMON NAME: Goethe State Forest (GSF)
LOCATION: Alachua and Levy Counties
ACREAGE TOTAL: 54,158.80 acres

Historic Natural Communities	Approximate Acreage*
Mesic Flatwoods	17,576
Sandhill	9,227
Wet Flatwoods	8,733
Dome Swamp	6,533
Basin Swamp	5,775
Hydric Hammock	1,816
Scrubby Flatwoods	1,150
Basin Marsh	1,077
Sandhill Upland Lake	762

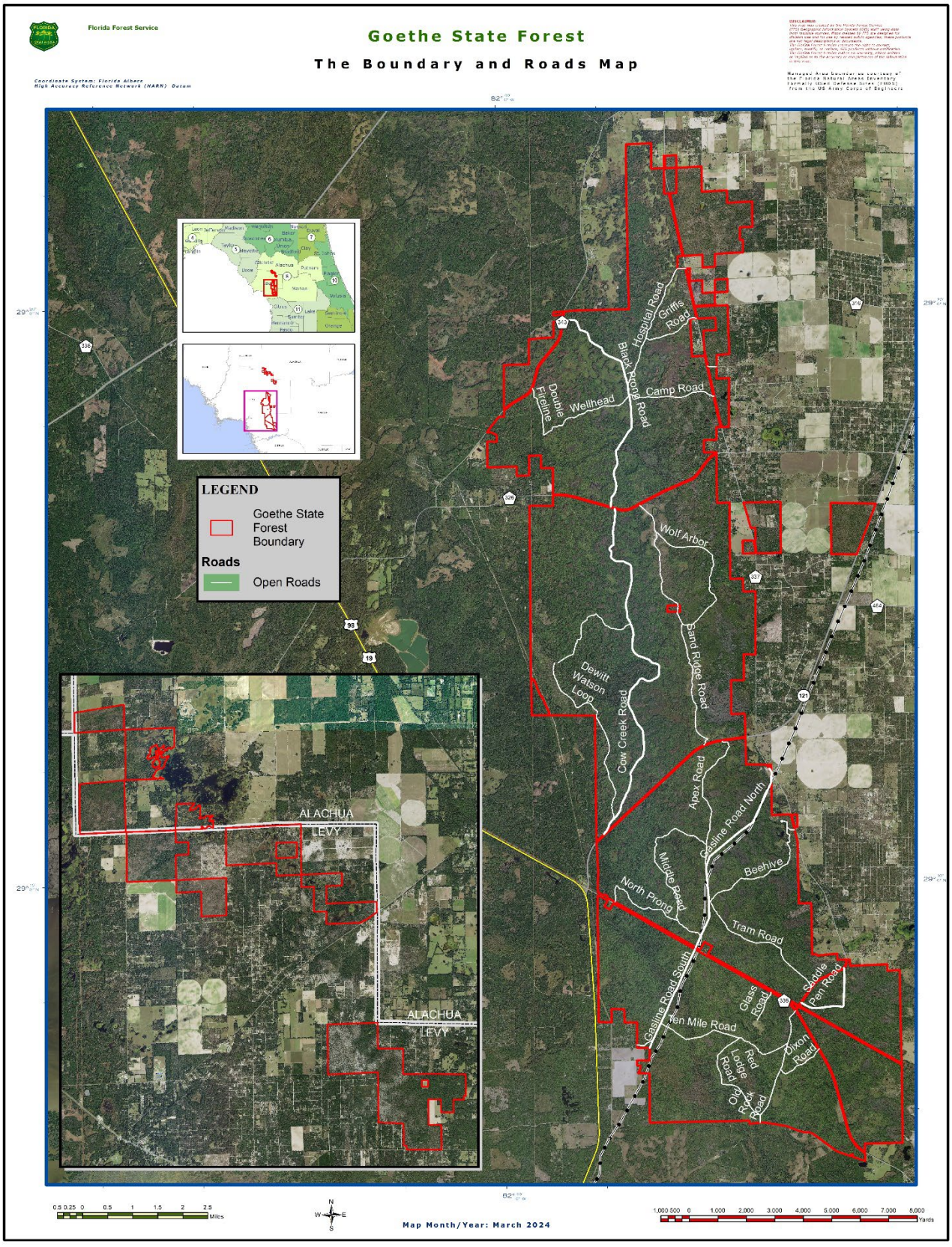
Historic Natural Communities	Approximate Acreage*
Depression Marsh	336
Xeric Hammock	248
Bottomland Forest	234
Floodplain Marsh	214
Floodplain Swamp	188
Upland Mixed Woodland	143
Wet Prairie	109
Upland Hardwood Forest	100
Sinkhole	33

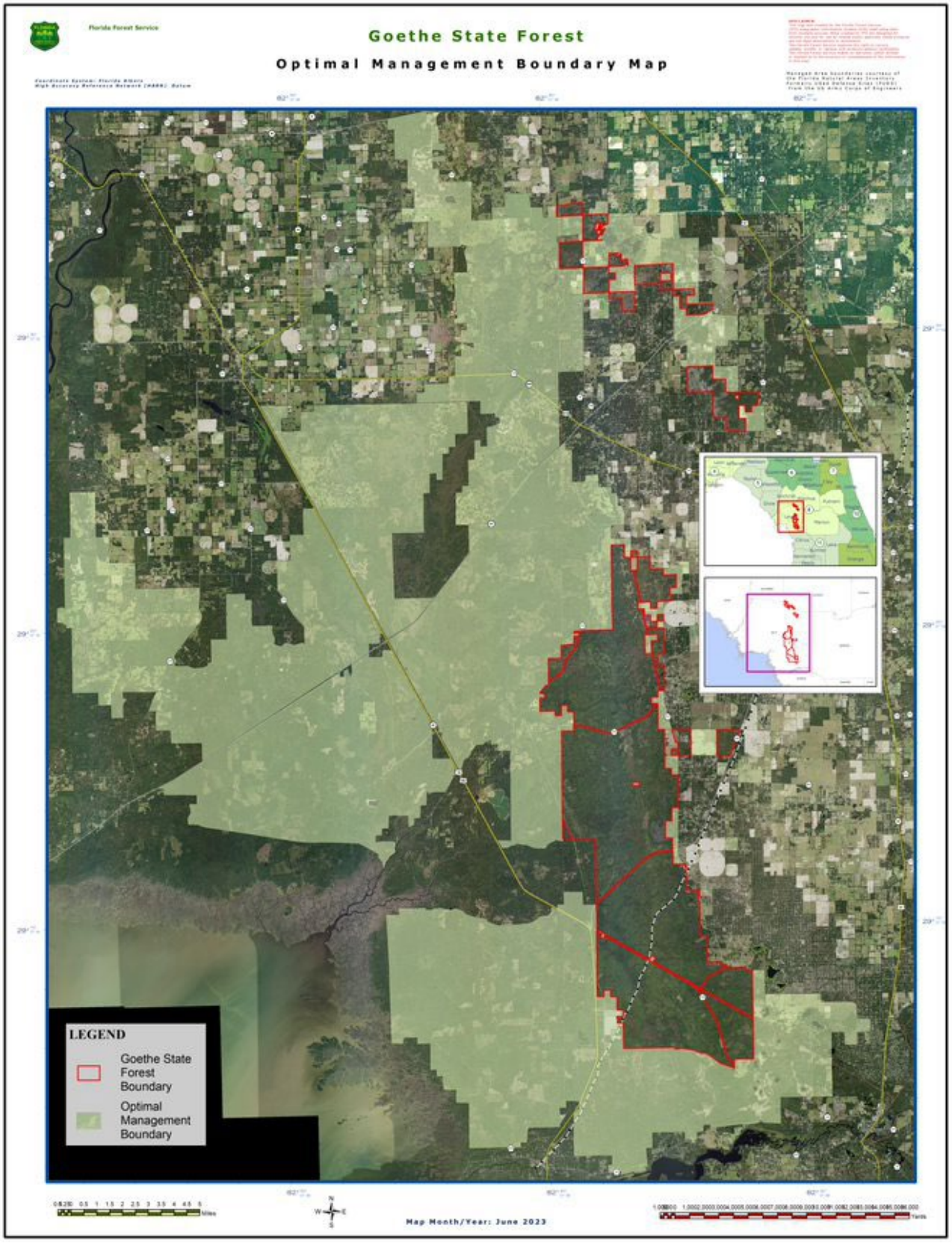
* Rounding errors exist

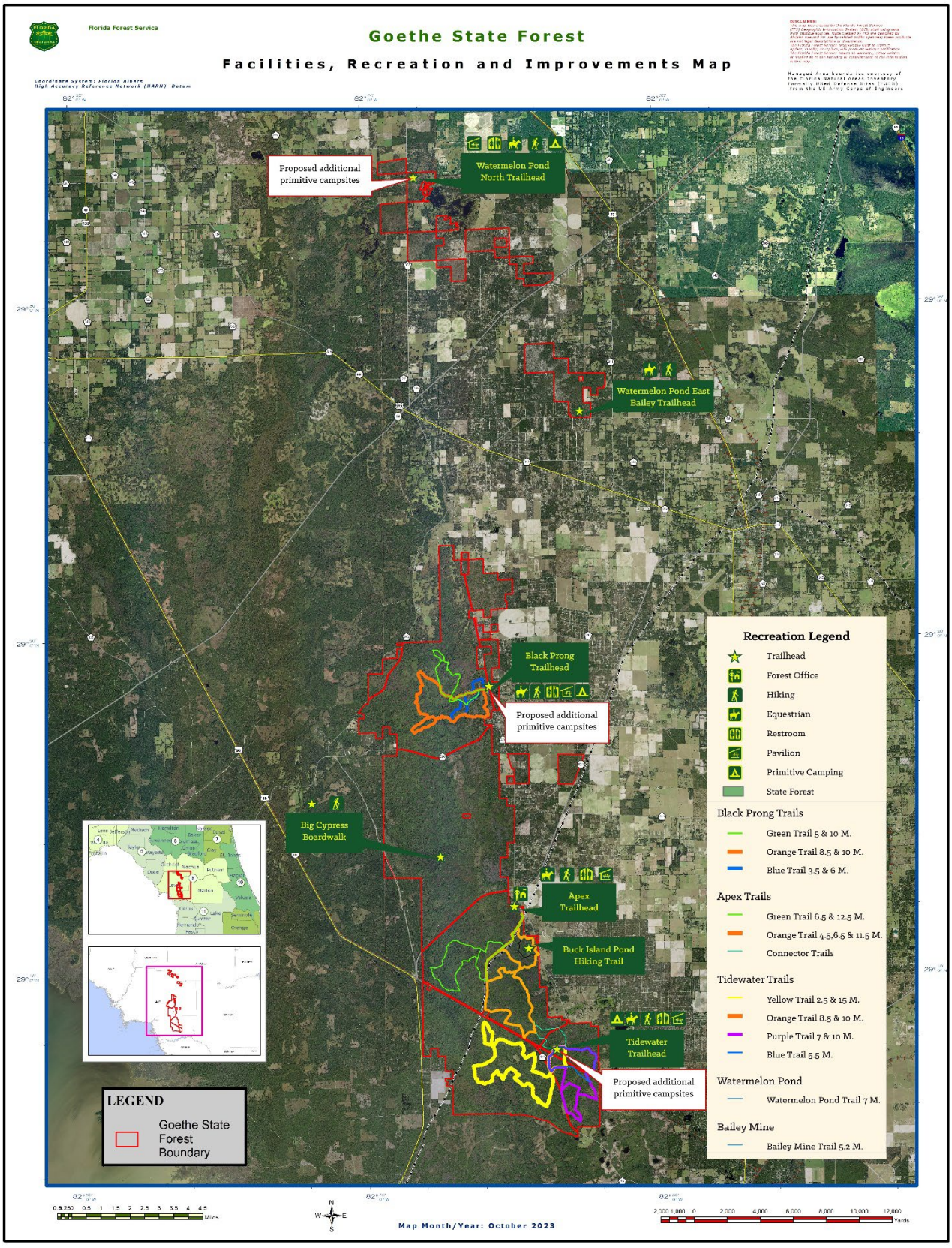
TIITF LEASE AGREEMENT NUMBER: 3976
USE: Single ___ Multiple __X

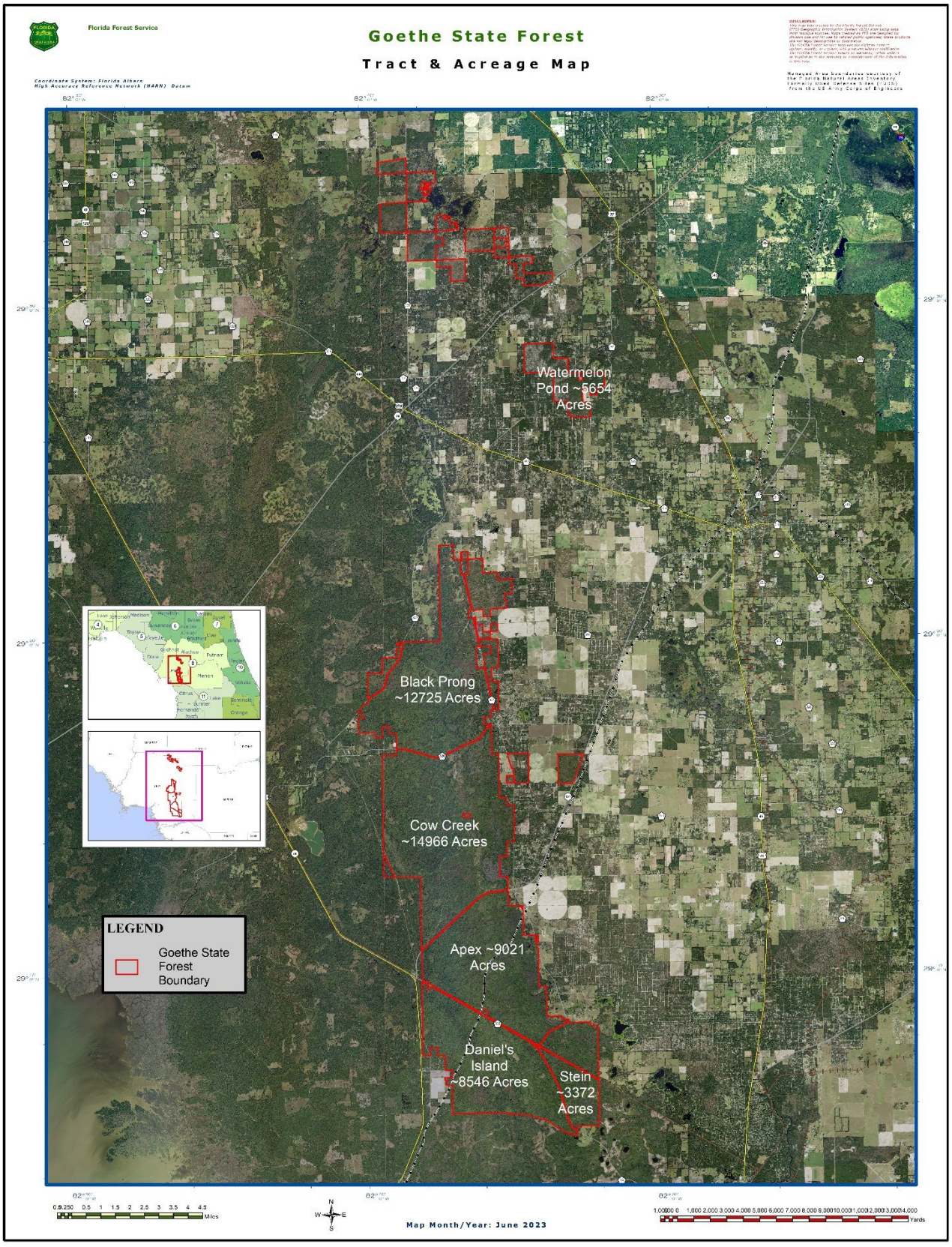
MANAGEMENT AGENCY	RESPONSIBILITY
Florida DACS, Florida Forest Service	General Forest Resource Management
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	Wildlife Resources and Laws
Southwest Florida Water Management District	Water Resource Protection and Restoration
Suwannee River Water Management District	Water Resource Protection and Restoration
Department of State, Division of Historical Resources	Historical and Archaeological Resource Management

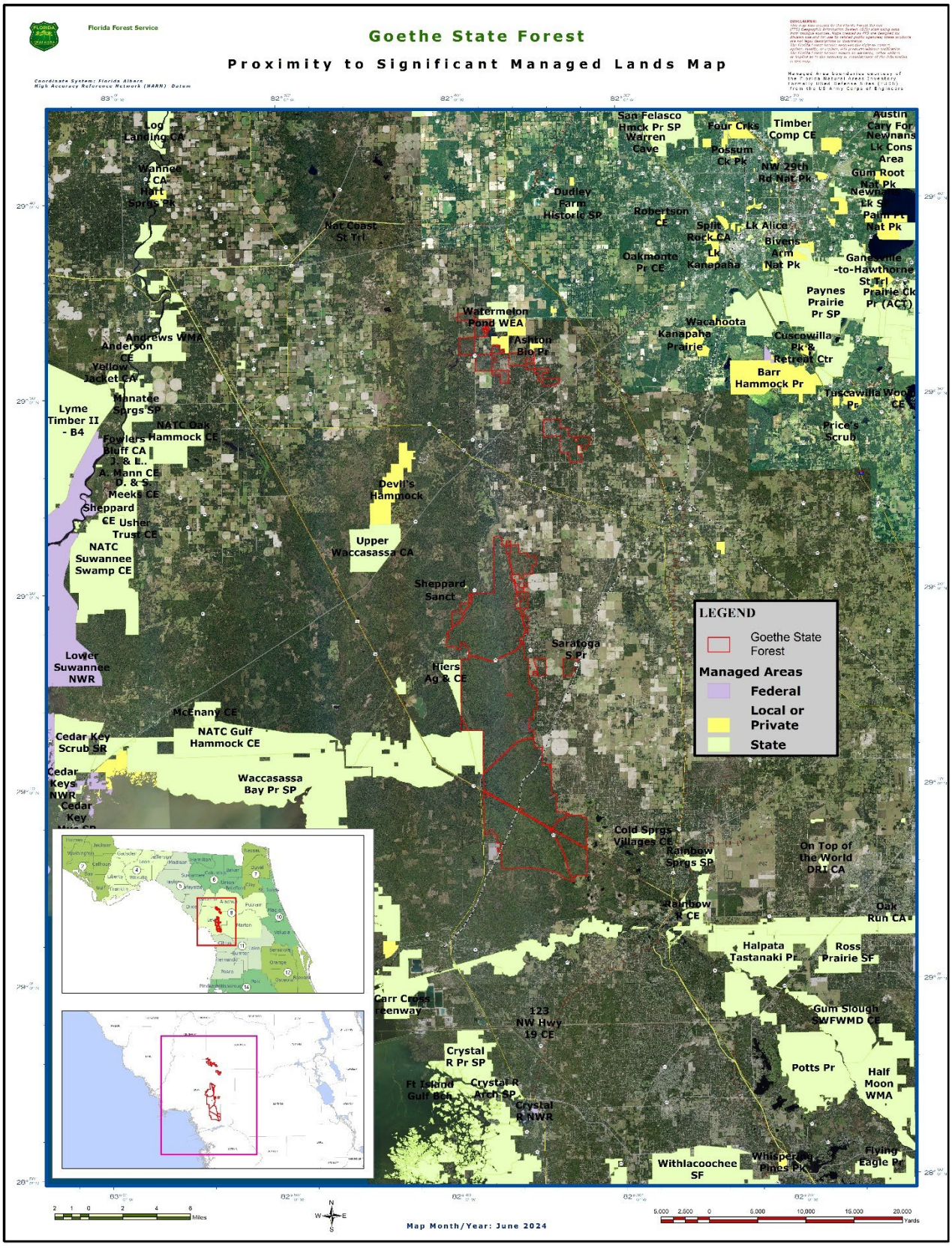
DESIGNATED LAND USE: Multiple-Use State Forest
SUBLEASES: None
ENCUMBRANCES: Three Power Lines, Three Gas Lines
TYPES OF ACQUISITION: Preservation-2000 and Florida Forever
UNIQUE FEATURES: Includes many scattered remnant cat-faced longleaf pine trees; older longleaf/slash pine flatwoods supporting a thriving red-cockaded woodpecker population; a nine-foot diameter bald-cypress tree which is listed as being the sixth largest in the State of Florida.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL: 111 known sites
MANAGEMENT NEEDS: Restoration and maintenance of native ecosystems
ACQUISITION NEEDS: 249,840 Acres of Optimal Management Boundary
SURPLUS ACREAGE: None
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: State Forest Liaison Committee, Management Plan Advisory Group and public hearing, Acquisition and Restoration Council public hearing - - -

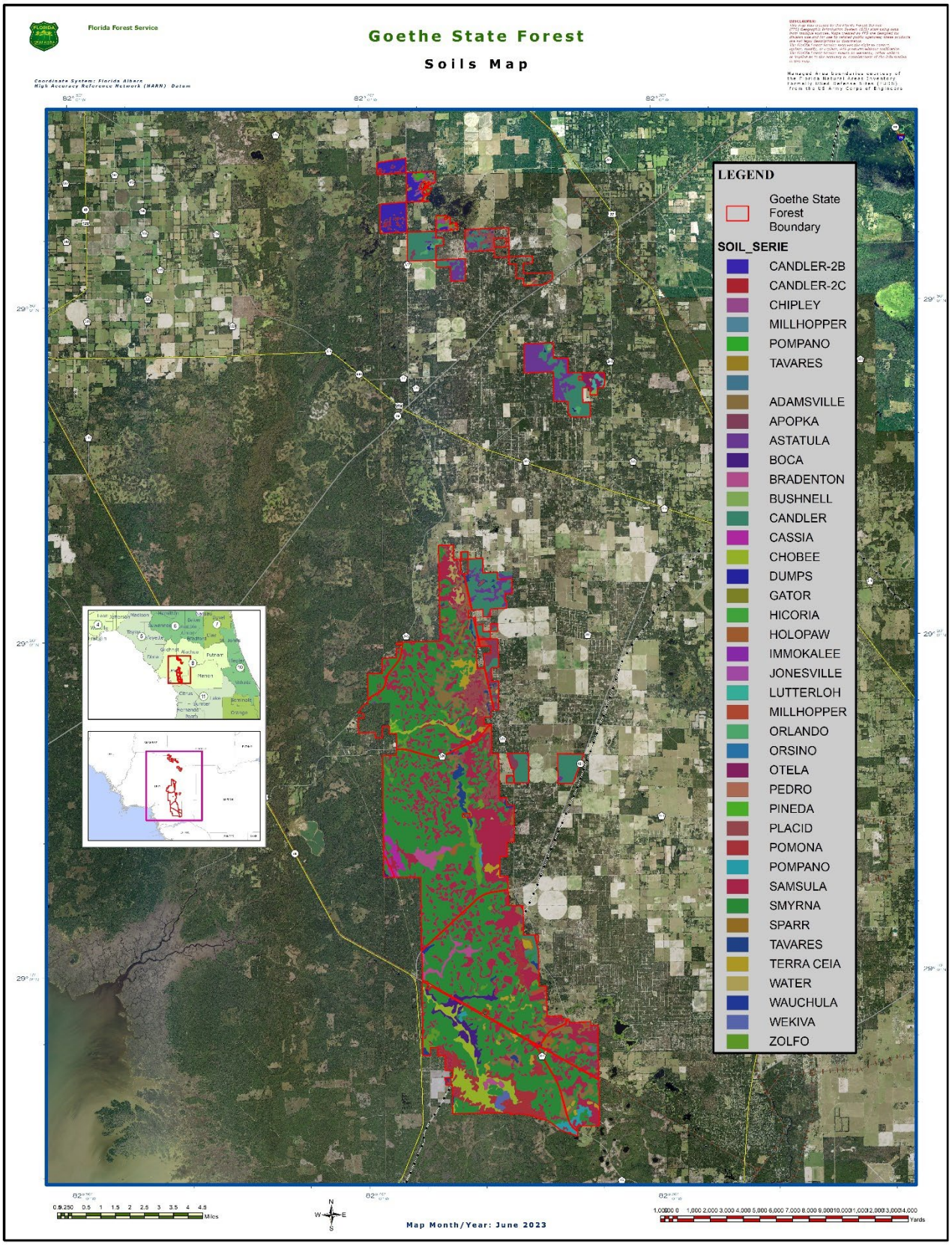

Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
The Boundary and Roads Map
Coordinate System: Florida Albers
High Accuracy Reference Network (HARN) Datum
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Roads
Open Roads
ALACHUA
LEVY
Hospital Road
Griffis Road
Black Prong Road
Camp Road
Double Fireline
Wellhead
Wolf Arbor
Sand Ridge Road
Dewitt Watson Loop
Cow Creek Road
Apex Road
Gasline Road North
Middle Road
Beehive
North Prong
Tram Road
Gasline Road South
Saddle Pen Road
Glass Road
Ten Mile Road
Dixon Road
Red Lodge Road
Old Rock Road
Map Month/Year: March 2024


Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Optimal Management Boundary Map
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Optimal Management Boundary
Map Month/Year: June 2023

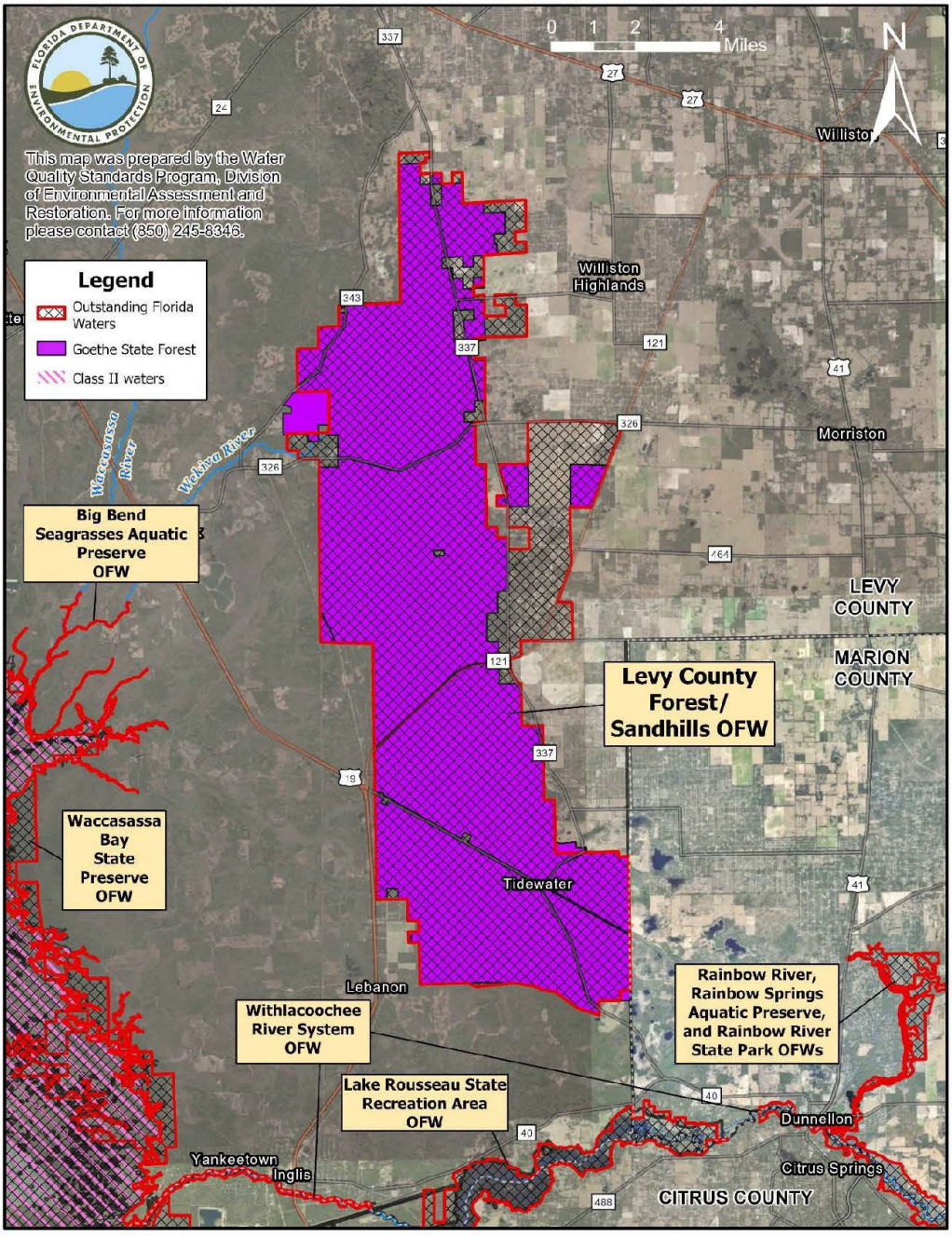

Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Facilities, Recreation and Improvements Map
Coordinate System: Florida Albers
High Accuracy Reference Network (HARN) Datum
Proposed additional primitive campsites
Watermelon Pond North Trailhead
Watermelon Pond East Bailey Trailhead
Black Prong Trailhead
Proposed additional primitive campsites
Big Cypress Boardwalk
Apex Trailhead
Buck Island Pond Hiking Trail
Tidewater Trailhead
Proposed additional primitive campsites
Recreation Legend
Trailhead
Forest Office
Hiking
Equestrian
Restroom
Pavilion
Primitive Camping
State Forest
Black Prong Trails
Green Trail 5 & 10 M.
Orange Trail 8.5 & 10 M.
Blue Trail 3.5 & 6 M.
Apex Trails
Green Trail 6.5 & 12.5 M.
Orange Trail 4.5,6.5 & 11.5 M.
Connector Trails
Tidewater Trails
Yellow Trail 2.5 & 15 M.
Orange Trail 8.5 & 10 M.
Purple Trail 7 & 10 M.
Blue Trail 5.5 M.
Watermelon Pond
Watermelon Pond Trail 7 M.
Bailey Mine
Bailey Mine Trail 5.2 M.
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: October 2023


Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Tract & Acreage Map
Watermelon Pond ~5654 Acres
Black Prong ~12725 Acres
Cow Creek ~14966 Acres
Apex ~9021 Acres
Daniel's Island ~8546 Acres
Stein ~3372 Acres
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Map Month/Year: June 2023

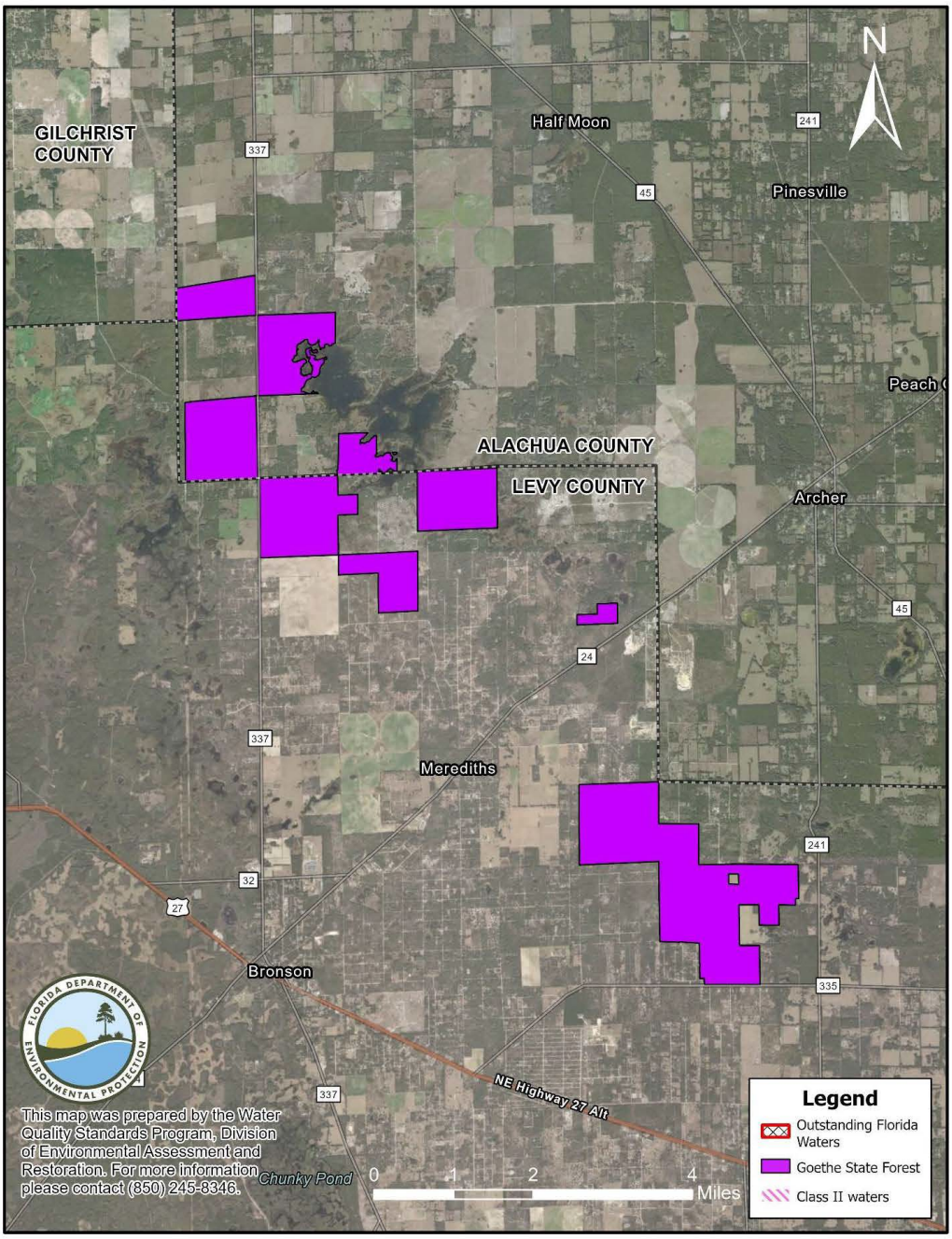

Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Proximity to Significant Managed Lands Map
Coordinate System: Florida Albers
High Accuracy Reference Network (HARN) Datum
Log Landing CA
Wannee CA
Holt Springs PK
Nat Coast St Trl
San Felasco Hmck Pr SP
Warren Cave
Four Crks
Timber Comp CE
Austin Cary For Newnans Lk Cons Area
Possum Ck Pk
NW 29th Rd Nat Pk
Gum Root Nat Pk
Dudley Farm Historic SP
Robertson CE
Split Rock CA
Lk Alice
Bivens Arm Nat Pk
Lk Kanapaha
Oakmonte Pr CE
Gainesville -to-Hawthorne St Trl
Paynes Prairie Pr SP
Prairie Ck Pr (ACT)
Watermelon Pond WEA
Ashton Bio Pr
Wacahoota Kanapaha Prairie
Cuscowilla Pk & Retreat Ctr
Barr Hammock Pr
Tuscawilla Wood CE
Price's Scrub
Andrews WMA
Anderson CE
Yellow Jacket CA
Manatee Sprgs SP
Lyme Timber II - B4
NATC Oak Hammock CE
Fowlers Bluff CA
J. & L. A. Mann CE
D. & S. Meeks CE
Sheppard CE
Usher Trust CE
NATC Suwannee Swamp CE
Devil's Hammock
Upper Waccasassa CA
Sheppard Sanct
Saratoga S Pr
Hiers Ag & CE
Lower Suwannee NWR
McEnany CE
NATC Gulf Hammock CE
Cedar Key Scrub SR
Cedar Keys NWR
Cedar Key
Waccasassa Bay Pr SP
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest
Managed Areas
Federal
Local or Private
State
Cold Sprgs Villages CE
Rainbow Sprgs SP
On Top of the World DRI CA
Rainbow K CE
Oak Run CA
Halpata Tastanaki Pr
Ross Prairie SF
Carr Cross reenway
123 NW Hwy 19 CE
Gum Slough SWFWMD CE
Crystal R Pr SP
Ft Island Gulf Beach
Crystal R Arch SP
Crystal R NWR
Potts Pr
Half Moon WMA
Withlacoochee SF
Whispering Pines Pk
Flying Eagle Pr
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: June 2024

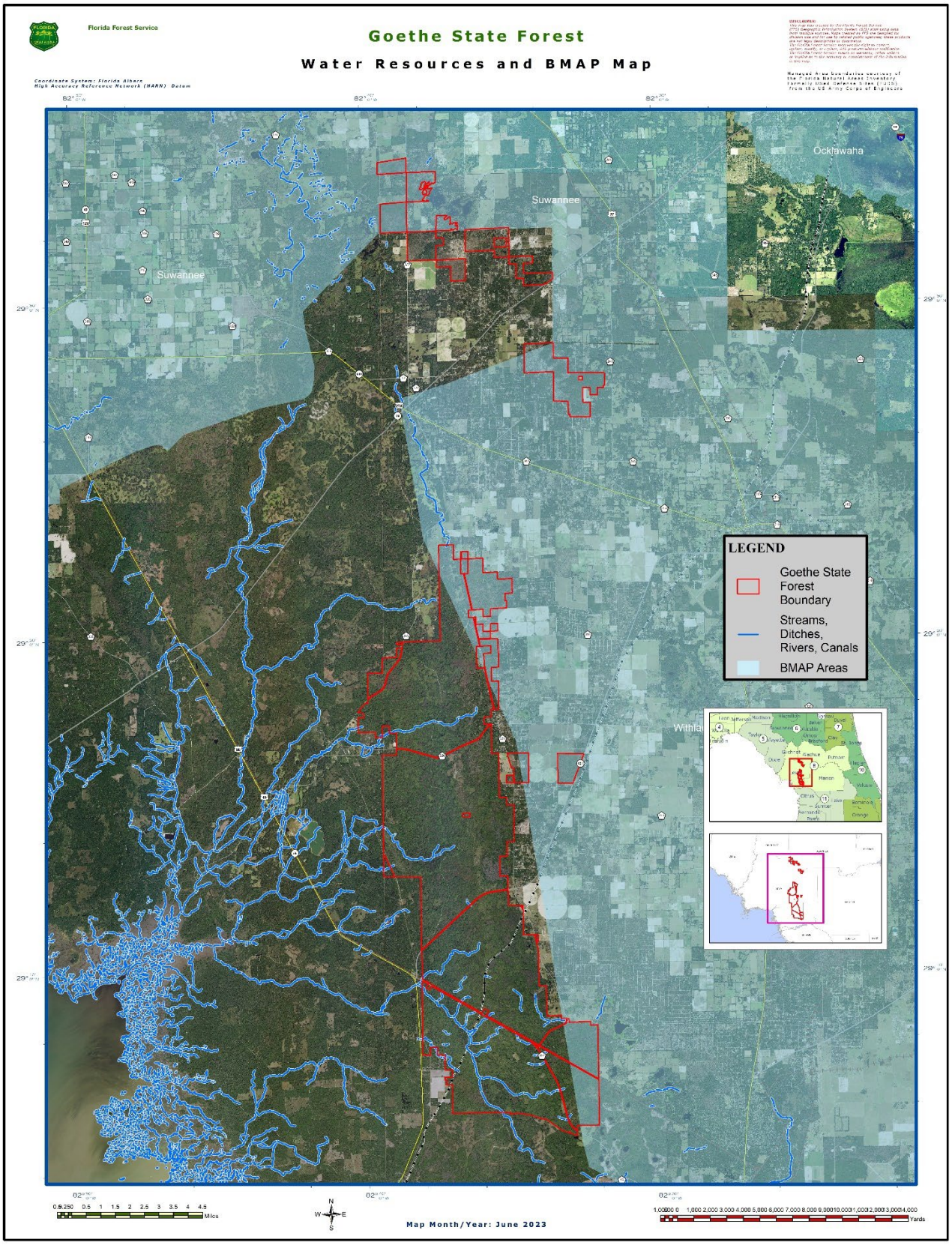

Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Soils Map
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
SOIL_SERIE
CANDLER-2B
CANDLER-2C
CHIPLEY
MILLHOPPER
POMPANO
TAVARES
ADAMSVILLE
APOPKA
ASTATULA
BOCA
BRADENTON
BUSHNELL
CANDLER
CASSIA
CHOBEE
DUMPS
GATOR
HICORIA
HOLOPAW
IMMOKALEE
JONESVILLE
LUTTERLOH
MILLHOPPER
ORLANDO
ORSINO
OTELA
PEDRO
PINEDA
PLACID
POMONA
POMPANO
SAMSULA
SMYRNA
SPARR
TAVARES
TERRA CEIA
WATER
WAUCHULA
WEKIVA
ZOLFO
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: June 2023

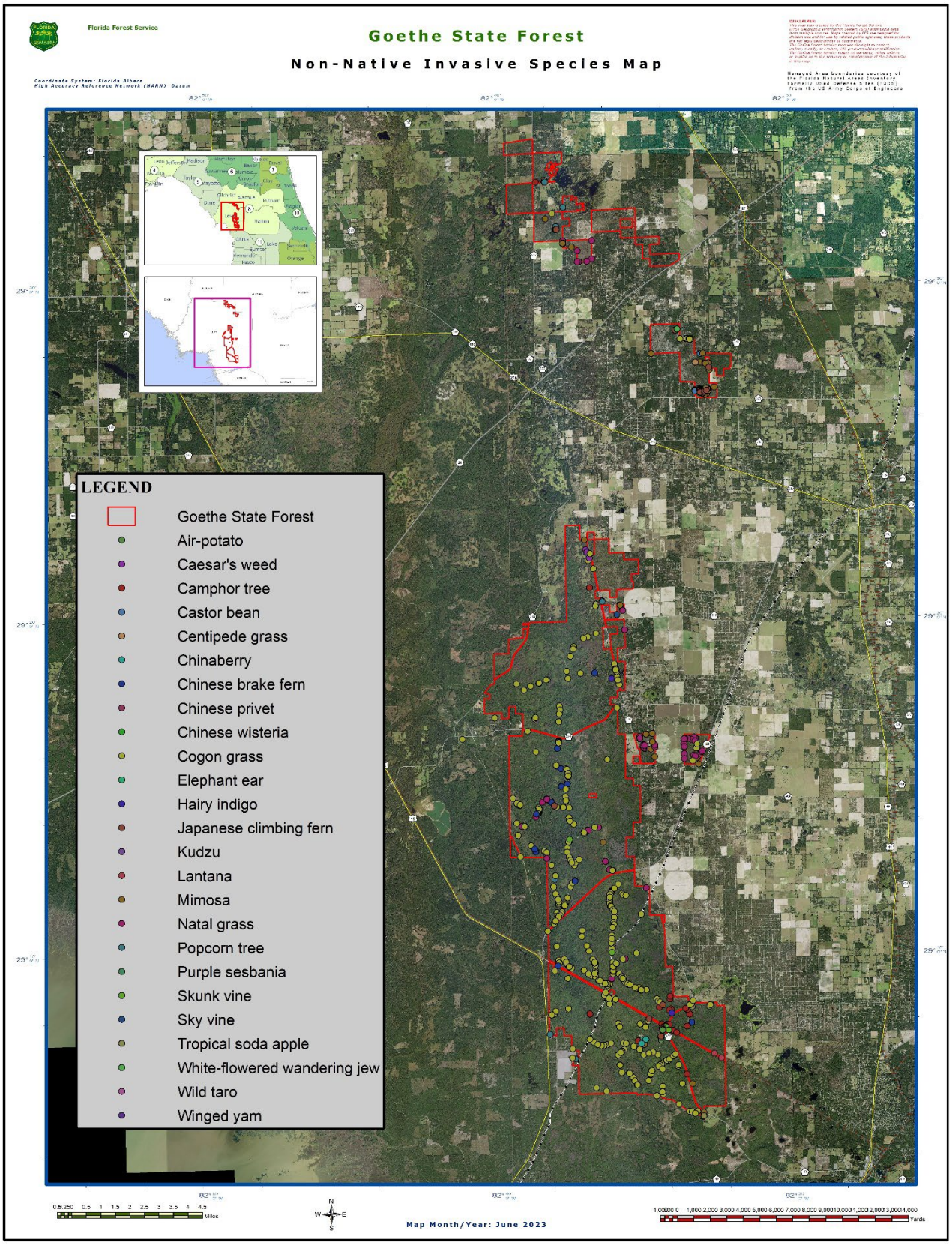
Goethe State Forest Maps:
Map 1: Southern parcels for Goethe State Forest

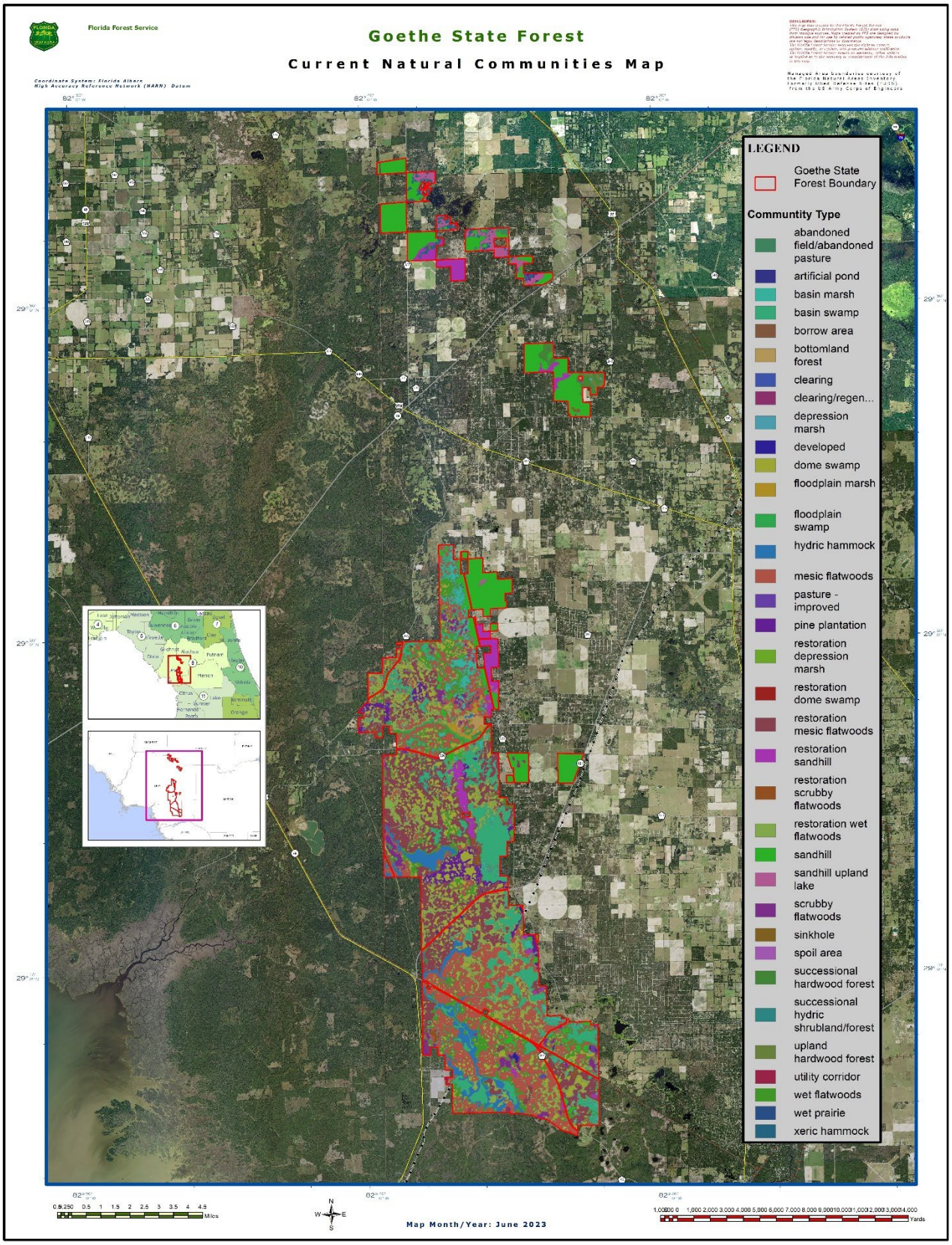


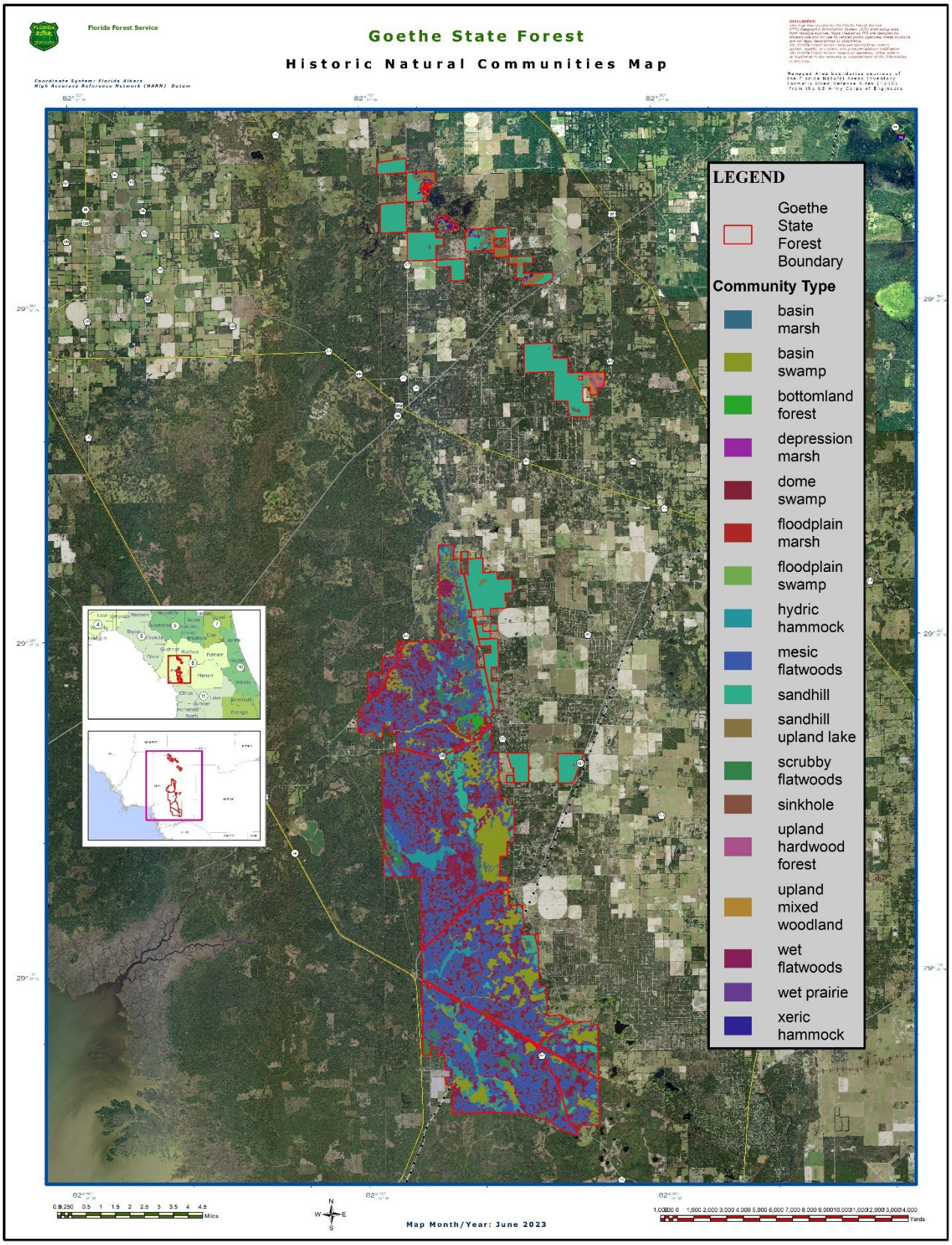
Map 2: Northern parcels for Goethe State Forest




Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Water Resources and BMAP Map
Coordinate System: Florida Albers
High Accuracy Reference Network (HARN) Datum
Suwannee
Suwannee
Ocklawaha
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Streams, Ditches, Rivers, Canals
BMAP Areas
Withla
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: June 2023


Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Non-Native Invasive Species Map
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest
Air-potato
Caesar's weed
Camphor tree
Castor bean
Centipede grass
Chinaberry
Chinese brake fern
Chinese privet
Chinese wisteria
Cogon grass
Elephant ear
Hairy indigo
Japanese climbing fern
Kudzu
Lantana
Mimosa
Natal grass
Popcorn tree
Purple sesbania
Skunk vine
Sky vine
Tropical soda apple
White-flowered wandering jew
Wild taro
Winged yam
Map Month/Year: June 2023


Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Current Natural Communities Map
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Communtity Type
abandoned field/abandoned pasture
artificial pond
basin marsh
basin swamp
borrow area
bottomland forest
clearing
clearing/regen...
depression marsh
developed
dome swamp
floodplain marsh
floodplain swamp
hydric hammock
mesic flatwoods
pasture - improved
pine plantation
restoration depression marsh
restoration dome swamp
restoration mesic flatwoods
restoration sandhill
restoration scrubby flatwoods
restoration wet flatwoods
sandhill
sandhill upland lake
scrubby flatwoods
sinkhole
spoil area
successional hardwood forest
successional hydric shrubland/forest
upland hardwood forest
utility corridor
wet flatwoods
wet prairie
xeric hammock
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: June 2023


Florida Forest Service
Goethe State Forest
Historic Natural Communities Map
LEGEND
Goethe State Forest Boundary
Community Type
basin marsh
basin swamp
bottomland forest
depression marsh
dome swamp
floodplain marsh
floodplain swamp
hydric hammock
mesic flatwoods
sandhill
sandhill upland lake
scrubby flatwoods
sinkhole
upland hardwood forest
upland mixed woodland
wet flatwoods
wet prairie
xeric hammock
Miles
Yards
Map Month/Year: June 2023