

ITEM 2:

Consider summaries for the August 14, 2026, Acquisition and Restoration Council meeting, and the August 26, 2026, and September 3, 2026, Florida Forever regional public hearings.

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF REMARKS:

None.

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Approve meeting summaries.

ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:

- ☐ APPROVE
- ☐ APPROVE WITH MODIFICATIONS: _____
- ☐ DEFER
- ☐ WITHDRAW
- ☐ NOT APPROVE
- ☐ OTHER: _____

Summary of the August 14, 2026, Acquisition and Restoration Council Meeting

Council Meeting: August 14, 2026

Location: Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
Conference Room 137
And via webinar

Acquisition and Restoration Council Members:

Mr. Bryan Bradner, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Chair
Ms. Lynetta Griner, Citizen Member, Vice Chair
Ms. Alissa Lotane, Division of Historical Resources (DHR)
Mr. Alan Davis, Florida Forest Service (FFS)
Mr. George Warthen, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
Dr. Bill Palmer, Citizen Member
Mr. Joshua Gamblin, Citizen Member
Mr. Will Watts, Citizen Member
Ms. Elva Peppers, Citizen Member

Item 1: Call to order/announcements.

Chair Bradner called the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed Mr. Alan Davis who was representing the FFS. Hank Vinson (DEP/Division of State Lands) briefly outlined both in-person and virtual public participation requirements. There were no further comments or discussion.

Item 2: Consider a summary of the June 12, 2026, Acquisition and Restoration Council regular meeting.

Discussion None.

ARC Action: Approved by unanimous consent.

Staff Reports

Item 3: Negative response report.

Discussion: Hank Vinson (DEP/Division of State Lands) stated that the Division of State Lands had posted the following item on the DEP website for two weeks under the ARC negative response process:

City of Winter Springs Amendment to Boad of Trustees Easement No. 30948: Cross Seminole Trail.

Three or more Council members had not requested the Division place the item on a future Council meeting agenda. The Division had issued the easement amendment without further ARC input.

Management Plans

Item 4: Consider the 10-year update to the Salt Lake Wildlife Management Area management plan (Lease Nos. 4316 and 4344).

Discussion: Cedar Spirk (FWC) presented the item. Salt Lake Wildlife Management Area was located in Brevard County and contained approximately 6,729 acres spread over four units: the Main Tract, the Grisson Parkway Unit, the Ten Mile Ridge Unit, and the Micco Expansion Unit. Ms. Spirk then discussed the management area's acquisition history, natural and cultural resources, recreational use, and current user facilities. Ms. Spirk concluded her presentation by discussing the management area's economic benefit and future resource management objectives. Chair Bradner then called for comment.

Ms. Griner noted that a land management review team had indicated several cattle dipping vats on the property and questioned FWC's water quality monitoring efforts. David Turner (FWC) responded virtually that the agency had hired an engineering firm to drill test wells to obtain water quality baseline samples. Mr. Turner stated that FWC was waiting on the report's results to determine how best to proceed. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Griner made the motion to approve the management plan with Dr. Palmer seconding. Approved unanimously.

Item 5: Consider the 10-year update to the Welaka State Forest management plan (Lease No. 3979).

Discussion: Mark Larson (FFS) presented the item. Welaka State Forest was located in Putnam County along the St. Johns River and contained approximately 2,287 acres. Mr. Larson discussed the state forest's diverse natural resources that included the third magnitude Mud Spring and fourth magnitude Sulphur Spring. Mr. Larson concluded his presentation with a brief overview of the state forest's future goals, including forest management, recreation opportunities, habitat restoration, listed species management, and cultural resource management. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Mr. Davis made the motion to approve the management plan with Dr. Palmer seconding. Approved unanimously.

Item 6: Consider the 10-year update to the City of Miami Beach Beachfront Park management plan (Lease No. 3595).

Discussion: Lindsey Precht (City of Miami Beach) presented the item virtually. The Beachfront Park was located within the heavily urbanized City of Miami Beach and contained approximately 7 miles of sandy beach. Ms. Precht then summarized the park's major accomplishments during the previous 10-year period, including updated access and infrastructure, special events, erosion management, wildlife protection, and natural community restoration. Ms. Precht concluded her presentation by discussing the park's future objectives, including erosion control, dune restoration, and public access. Chair Bradner then called for comments.

Ms. Lotane complimented the City for providing excellent beach access facilities to persons with disabilities. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Peppers made the motion to approve the management plan with Ms. Lotane seconding. Approved unanimously.

Land Administration

Item 7: Determine whether a public utility easement containing ±13.92 acres to Hillsborough County through a portion of Balm-Boyette Scrub Nature Preserve is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Linear Facilities Policy (Lease No. 4093).

Discussion: Jay Sircy (DEP/Division of State Lands) presented the item. Hillsborough County had requested an easement as part of a larger county-wide wastewater management improvement project. Mr. Sircy then discussed the easement's location, managing agency concurrence, and proposed net positive benefit. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Dr. Palmer made the motion to approve the easement request with Ms. Griner seconding. Approved unanimously.

Item 8: Determine whether a private utility easement containing ±1.13 acres to Glades Electric Cooperative, Inc., through a portion of Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Linear Facilities Policy (Lease No. 4417).

Discussion: Jay Sircy (DEP/Division of State Lands) presented the item. Glades Electric Cooperative, Inc., had requested an easement to provide utilities to private property located adjacent to Dinner Island Ranch Wildlife Management Area. The proposed easement was immediately adjacent to an existing access easement that had pre-dated to Board of Trustees ownership of the wildlife management area. Unfortunately, the existing easement did not include utilities, hence the need for the request. Mr. Sircy concluded his presentation by discussion managing agency concurrence and proposed net positive benefit. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Lotane made the motion to approve the easement request with Dr. Palmer seconding. Approved unanimously.

Item 9: Consider whether a private utility easement containing ±8.99-acres to CoxCom, LLC, through portions of Blackwater River State Forest, Blackwater River Heritage State Trail, and Point Washington State Forest is consistent with the Board of Trustees' Linear Facilities Policy (Lease Nos. 3686, 3972, and 4024).

Discussion: Jay Sircy (DEP/Division of State Lands) presented the item. Mr. Sircy stated that CoxCom, LLC, had received a grant from the Florida Department of Commerce to provide high speed internet access to area residents. CoxCom had requested the easement because the project impacted several areas within Blackwater River Heritage State Trail, Blackwater River State Forest, and Point Washington State Forest. Mr. Sircy stated that while land managers had reviewed the request and provided consent, DHR had requested a professional archaeological survey for any state-owned lands impacted by the easement. Mr. Sircy concluded his presentation by briefly discussing the net positive benefit requested by the managing agencies. Chair Bradner then called for Council comment.

Ms. Lotane stated the project impacted several archaeological sites and that it was standard practice to complete any cultural resource surveys prior to bringing an easement request to ARC. Ms. Lotane stated that completing any cultural resource surveys early allowed DHR to review and then make appropriate recommendations. Ms. Lotane stated there were many cultural resources within the proposed easement area and she would make a motion for ARC to approve

the request subject to the applicant completing the required cultural resource surveys. Chair Bradner then called for public comment.

Lilly Anderson-Messec (Florida Native Plant Society) stated that the proposed easement was located in areas that contained many imperiled plant and animal species. She stated that while she did not oppose the easement's purpose, she was concerned about impacts to natural communities, herbicide use, and the possibility of limiting prescribed fire programs within the easement area.

Chair Bradner stated that DHR had made a motion to approve the easement request subject to the applicant completing any required cultural resource surveys and the Ms. Griner had seconded the motion.

Dr. Palmer then questioned how many linear feet of the easement traversed sensitive areas. Jay Sirey (DEP/Division of State Lands) responded that the agenda item included information on the request's various routes and that the applicant had evaluated all route possibilities. CoxCom would locate construction within disturbed areas as much as possible and use a combination of both directional drill and trenching to install the fiber optic cables.

ARC Action: Ms. Lotane made the motion to approve the easement request subject to the applicant completing cultural resource surveys. Ms. Griner seconded the motion and ARC approved unanimously.

Senate Bill 290 Implementation

Revised Item 10: Consideration of an Acquisition and Restoration Council process to determine whether lands surplus by local governmental entities on or after January 1, 2024, are suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes pursuant to section 253.0341(1), Florida Statutes.

Discussion: Hank Vinson (DEP/Division of State Lands) presented the item. Mr. Vinson reminded ARC that the Council had received a revised agenda item that more clearly described the Division's intent with the process. Mr. Vinson then stated that the 2026 Florida Legislature had amended Chapter 253, Florida Statutes, to establish ARC's role in evaluating local government entities' surplus of agricultural lands. The new statute required ARC to determine whether any lands surplus by a local government entity on or after January 1, 2024, were suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes. Mr. Vinson provided statutory definitions of both "local government entity" and "bona fide agricultural purposes" and then outlined the recommended Division State Lands process to implement the new statute. The Division would place a Bona Fide Agricultural Use Questionnaire and submission process information on the DEP website. When a local government entity submitted the Questionnaire, the Division would place the request into one of two categories.

Category 1 included property the Questionnaire indicated as clearly not suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes. The Division would place a Category 1 request on the DEP website for two weeks. If three or more ARC members did not request Council review, the Division would notify the local governmental entity in writing that ARC had determined the property was not suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes. If three or more ARC members did make a request within the two week period, the Division would place the surplus request on the next available Council agenda.

Category 2 included property that the Questionnaire indicated may be suitable for bona fide agricultural purposes. The Division would place any Category 2 requests on the next available ARC agenda. Chair Bradner then called for comment.

Ms. Griner expressed concern that ARC did not have enough information to evaluate the item properly. She stated that the Questionnaire did not seem to provide enough information as to a property's future suitability for bona fide agricultural purposes and recommended that Council defer the item.

Ms. Peppers questioned the website posting process. She asked if DEP posted the Questionnaire to a website, how would local governments know to comply with the law? She further asked what would happen if a local governmental entity did not comply with the new law?

Mr. Gary Ballard (DEP/General Counsel's Office) responded that it was up to local governments to keep apprised of statutory changes and to comply with any new laws. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Ms. Griner made the motion to defer the item, with Mr. Davis seconding. ARC approved the motion unanimously.

Florida Forever

Item 11: Consider requests to remove ±8.30 acres from the boundary of the Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever project.

Discussion: Hank Vinson (DEP/Division of State Lands) briefly summarized the current request, the Florida Forever parcel removal process, and ARC recommendation options. Mr. Vinson then reminded ARC that Council had considered a similar request at the April and June 2026 meetings and that the current agenda item represented the third group of removal requests within the Bombing Range Ridge project. Chair Bradner then called for comment.

Ms. Peppers stated that these removal requests often included very small lots and expressed concern that landowners would sell the property to others. She also questioned if the Division had communicated with landowners about the importance of keeping their property in the Florida Forever Program.

Sine Murray (DEP/Division of State Lands) that when the Division received removal requests, Florida Forever program staff communicated with landowners about the particulars of the program. Ms. Murray stated that some property owners may not have been involved in the creation of the original project. Ms. Murray concluded by stating that there were landowners who had requested removal that then changed their minds based on Division education efforts. If property owners insisted that the Division remove their property from a Florida Forever project boundary then the Division had to respect those wishes. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously.

Item 12: Vote on whether to amend the Etoniah/Cross Florida Greenway Florida Forever project boundary to add five parcels totaling ±1,302.26 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed value of \$3,521,832.89.

Discussion: Jeremiah Thompson (Saunders Real Estate) presented the 1,302-acre less-than-fee project virtually. Mr. Saunders stated that the property was located in Putnam County between Palatka and Green Cove Springs and current property management included commercial

silviculture and hunting. He concluded his presentation by briefly discussing the property's natural communities, Florida Forever goal compliance, and location to other public conservation lands. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously.

Item 13: Vote on whether to amend the Pinhook Swamp Florida Forever project boundary to add one parcel totaling ±298.72 acres in Hamilton County with a tax assessed value of \$1,220,805.

Discussion: Keith Fountain (Keith Fountain Law) presented the 298-acre less-than-fee project virtually. Mr. Fountain stated the project was located in Hamilton County less than 1 mile from the Suwannee River. Mr. Fountain concluded his presentation by stating that 78 percent of the project was located in the Florida Wildlife Corridor and that the property provided important surface water and aquifer recharge protections. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Approved unanimously.

Presentations

Item 14: Presentation by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Rural and Family Lands Protection Program on the proposed 2026 Ranking List.

Discussion: John Fraites (Rural and Family Lands Protection Program) presented the item. Mr. Fraites briefly outlined the process used in developing the program's proposed 2026 Ranking List. He concluded his presentation by saying the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program intended to submit the list to the Board of Trustees for approval in September 2026. Chair Bradner called for comment.

Ms. Griner suggested that future program lists include the county of each project. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Not required.

Item 15: Presentation by the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation on consideration of development threats when prioritizing conservation land acquisitions within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Discussion: Jacob Lauritsen (Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation) presented item. Mr. Lauritsen stated that the Foundation was grateful for the land acquisition leadership of DEP and other agencies. Mr. Lauritsen stated that as development pressure increases in Florida, ARC's role will become increasingly important. As a result, the Foundation wanted to share a prioritization framework that was both consistent and complimentary with the existing Florida Forever ranking process. The Foundation was also preparing a white paper prioritizing urgency, vulnerability, and irreplaceability within Florida Forever and today's presentation was a preview of the assessment. More than 10 million acres within the Florida Wildlife Corridor represented a massive investment to preserve wild Florida. Consequently, maintaining adequate connection between each conservation area must be considered within the Florida Forever ranking process. Oftentimes, narrow undeveloped areas within the Corridor can be underwhelming regarding biodiversity but still be very critical in closing gaps. Loss of these connection areas can result in isolated islands of conservation areas. Mr. Lauritsen concluded his presentation by providing several examples of irreplaceable connections and pinch points within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Chair Bradner reminded ARC that development threats and critical connectivity were currently considered within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network model and were also components of Florida Natural Areas Inventory's evaluations of Florida Forever projects and boundary amendments. As a result, development threats and connectivity were incorporated into the final project ranking tool provided to ARC each year.

Ms. Peppers stated that the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation's presentation was very informative and that she factored development pressure into her annual Florida Forever project rankings.

Dr. Palmer asked if the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation could make the information available to ARC as any additional data was always helpful in the Florida Forever ranking process. Mr. Lauritsen responded that the Foundation would be happy to provide the information to ARC and also understood that ARC considered development pressure in the Florida Forever ranking.

Sine Murray (DEP/Division of State Lands) reminded ARC that Council members were free to use any available information to assist with ranking decisions. Ms. Murray stated that information provided by the Division of State Lands to ARC was a product of ongoing work with the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and other state agencies like FWC. The Division of State Lands would provide the Foundation's analysis to ARC. Ms. Murray concluded her comments by stating the Foundation wanted to highlight certain critical pinch points in Florida Forever projects located in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. She reminded ARC that Florida Forever is a much broader landscape scale acquisition effort and that the Florida Ecological Greenway Network had been built into the Florida Forever ranking process.

Dr. Palmer stated that he appreciated the clarifying comments and did not want to diminish the great work of DEP and other agencies. There were no further comments or discussion.

ARC Action: Not required.

Chair Bradner reminded those in attendance of upcoming ARC meetings and the Florida Forever Program new applicant webinar. ARC adjourned the meeting by unanimous consent at 10:15 a.m.

Summary of the August 26, 2026, Acquisition and Restoration Council Palatka Regional Public Hearing

Date/Time: August 26, 2026, 3 p.m. EDT
Location: Putnam County Commission Meeting Room
2509 Crill Avenue
Palatka, FL 32177

In Attendance:

Mr. Bradley Perry, FDEP/Division of State Lands Director
Mr. Hank Vinson, FDEP/Division of State Lands
Ms. Sine Murray, FDEP/Division of State Lands (virtual)
Mr. George Frisby, FDEP/Division of State Lands
Mr. Willy the Losen, Putnam Land Conservancy
Mr. Kai Sucsy, Putnam Land Conservancy
Mr. Michael Woodward, Citizen

Hank Vinson (FDEP/Division of State Lands) opened the regional public hearing at 3:00 p.m. Mr. Vinson thanked Putnam County for the use of the meeting space, outlined public comment requirements, and introduced Bradley Perry (FDEP/Division of State Lands Director) who would chair the hearing. Mr. Perry welcomed those in attendance.

Mr. Vinson then provided a brief overview of the Acquisition and Restoration Council's (ARC) role in the Florida Forever proposal selection process and the general purpose of the Florida Forever regional hearings. Mr. Perry then called for public comment.

Mr. Willy the Losen (Putnam Land Conservancy) spoke in support of the Ocklawaha Bufferlands proposal. The 3,600-acre less-than-fee project included two tracts under one owner in Marion County in very close proximity to the Ocklawaha River. The project was part of a larger conservation landscape that included the Ocala National Forest, lands managed by the St. Johns River Water Management District, and other state and private conservation lands. The proposal included many listed species, including the federally threatened Sand Skink. Mr. the Losen concluded his comments by stating the property was located in an area of high development pressure and urged ARC to add the proposal to the 2027 Florida Forever Priority List.

Mr. Kai Sucsy (Putnam Land Conservancy) spoke in favor of both the Levys Prairie and Putnam Clay Timberlands proposals. Levys Prairie was a 2,300-acre less-than-fee proposal located in Putnam County. The project would provide a critical connection between the University of Florida's Ordway Swisher Reserve and other public and private conservation lands to the south.

The Putnam Clay Timberlands project contained 7,000 acres in Clay and Putnam Counties and was proposed for both full fee and less-than-fee acquisition. The full-fee portion would be management by both the St. Johns River Water Management District as an addition to the Bayard Conservation Area, and then the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as a new wildlife management area. Mr. Sucsy concluded his comments by stating the proposal was located in a rapidly developing area along the St. Johns River.

Mr. Michael Woodward (Citizen) spoke briefly in support of the Ocklawaha Bufferlands, Levys Prairie, and Putnam Clay Timberlands proposals. He urged state acquisition of all three projects to combat increasing habitat loss and natural area fragmentation.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Perry adjourned the public hearing at 3:15 p.m.
October 2026 ARC Meeting

Summary of the September 2, 2026, Acquisition and Restoration Council Arcadia Regional Public Hearing

Date/Time: September 2, 2026, 3 p.m. EDT
Location: DeSoto County Commission Meeting Room
201 East Oak Street
Arcadia, FL 34266

In Attendance:

Mr. Bradley Perry, Director, FDEP/Division of State Lands
Mr. Hank Vinson, FDEP/Division of State Lands
Ms. Lisa Kramer, FDEP/Division of State Lands
Ms. Sine Murray, FDEP/Division of State Lands (virtual)
Mr. Justin Smith, Big Waters Land Trust
Ms. Tracey Goff, Citizen

Hank Vinson opened the regional public hearing. Mr. Vinson thanked DeSoto County for the use of the meeting space, outlined public comment requirements, and introduced Mr. Bradley Perry (FDEP/Division of State Lands Director) who would chair the hearing. Mr. Perry welcomed those in attendance.

Mr. Vinson provided a brief overview of the Acquisition and Restoration Council's role in the Florida Forever proposal selection process and the general purpose of the Florida Forever regional hearings. Mr. Perry then called for public comment.

Ms. Tracey Goff (Private Citizen) spoke briefly in support of state acquisition of conservation lands. She concluded her comments by expressing gratitude for having a public hearing in Arcadia.

Hearing no further comments, Mr. Perry adjourned the public hearing at 3:20 p.m.