

ITEM 14:

Consider requests to remove ± 4.74 acres from the boundary of the Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever project.

LOCATION:

Polk County

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF REMARKS:

The Division of State Lands received certified letters from multiple owners requesting removal of their property from the project. The proposed removal includes four parcels within the Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever project. These small lots range from approximately 0.3 to 2.5 acres and are scattered throughout the project.

This project was sponsored by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission when the Land Acquisition and Management Advisory Council added Bombing Range Ridge to the Conservation and Recreation Lands priority list in 1998. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Florida Forest Service are the designated managers for the project except for 540 acres adjacent to Rosalie Creek that will be managed by the Division of Recreation and Parks. The South Florida Water Management District, The Nature Conservancy, United States Air Force, and Polk County have acquired and manage lands that are within or adjacent to the project boundary.

Endemic cutthroat grass (*Coleataenia abscissa*) wet prairies are unique to the project area and the Avon Park Air Force Range. Additionally, eastern indigo snake (*Drymarchon couperi*), crested caracara (*Caracara plancus audubonii*), Florida sandhill crane (*Antigone canadensis pratensis*), and bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) can be found within the Bombing Range Ridge area. Several underrepresented natural communities can be found within the project such as dry prairie, mesic flatwoods, wet flatwoods, scrub, and scrubby flatwoods.

The project currently includes 46,974 acres with 25,721 acres remaining and is ranked number one in the Critical Natural Lands category on the 2026 Florida Forever Priority List. As of 2025, the remaining project acres have an assessed value of \$86,955,414.

Pursuant to Rule 18-24.005(5)(a) and 18-24.007(2), F.A.C., the Acquisition and Restoration Council shall delete property from a Florida Forever project boundary if a landowner requests to do so by a certified letter. The Acquisition and Restoration Council may recommend that the Board of Trustees add such property back into the project boundary, if appropriate. Pursuant to section 259.105(7)(b)2, Florida Statutes, the Board of Trustees has the option of adding this property back into the project boundary if the Board of Trustees determines that the property is critical to achieve the purposes of the project.

Florida Natural Areas Inventory Review:

According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways (Priority 1), Surface Water Protection (mostly Priority 4), and Aquifer Recharge (mostly Priority 4). Additionally, 99% contributes to Habitat Conservation Priorities (mostly Priority 2) and 97% contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (mostly Priority 1).

Seventy-seven percent of the property contains under-represented natural communities, of which 53% (± 2.7 acres) is mesic/wet flatwoods, 13% (± 0.7 acres) is dry prairie, and 12% (± 0.6 acres) is scrub and scrubby flatwoods.

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

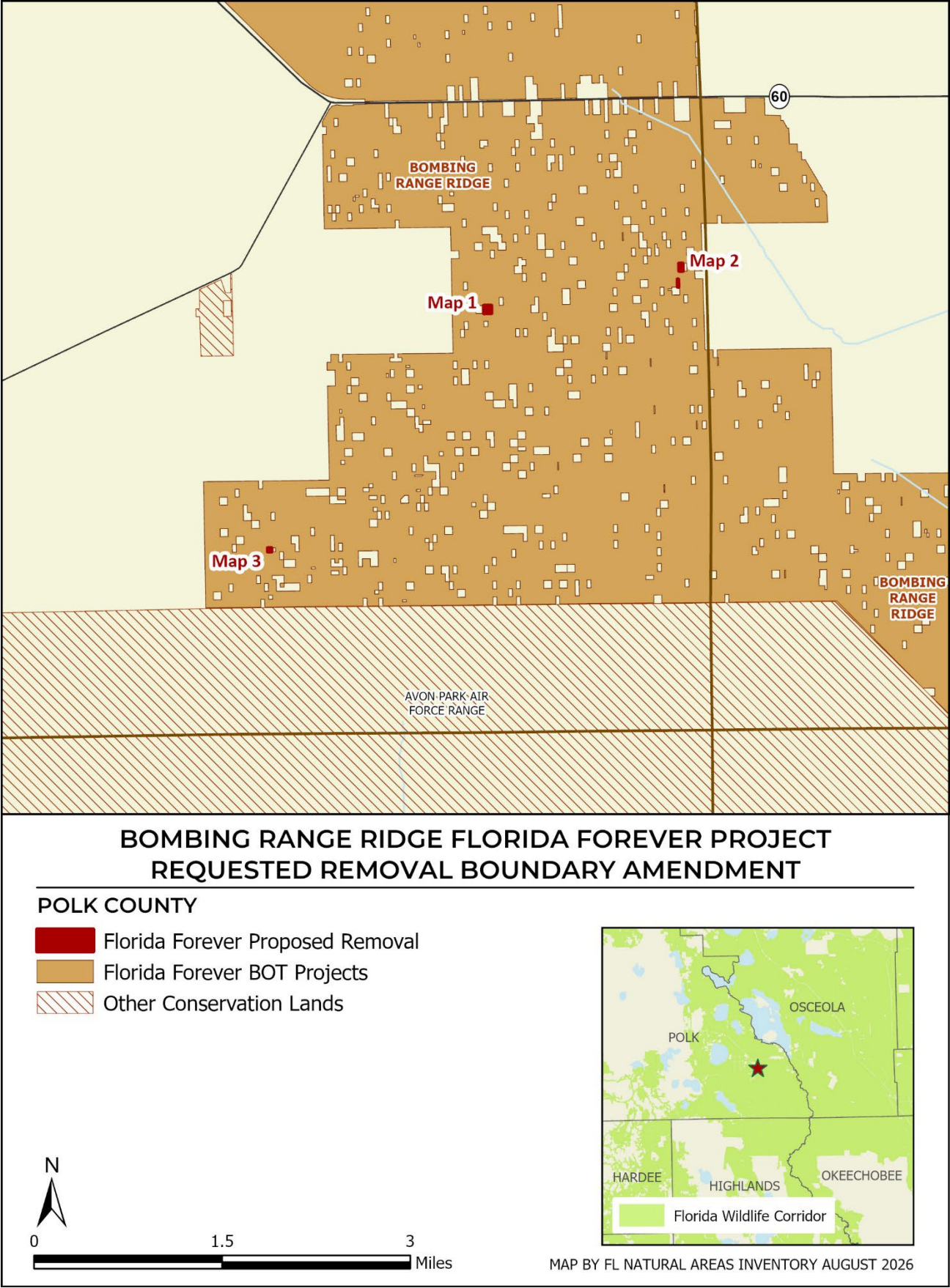
Vote to approve the owner-requested deletion, with no further recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:

() ACCEPT OWNER-REQUESTED DELETION

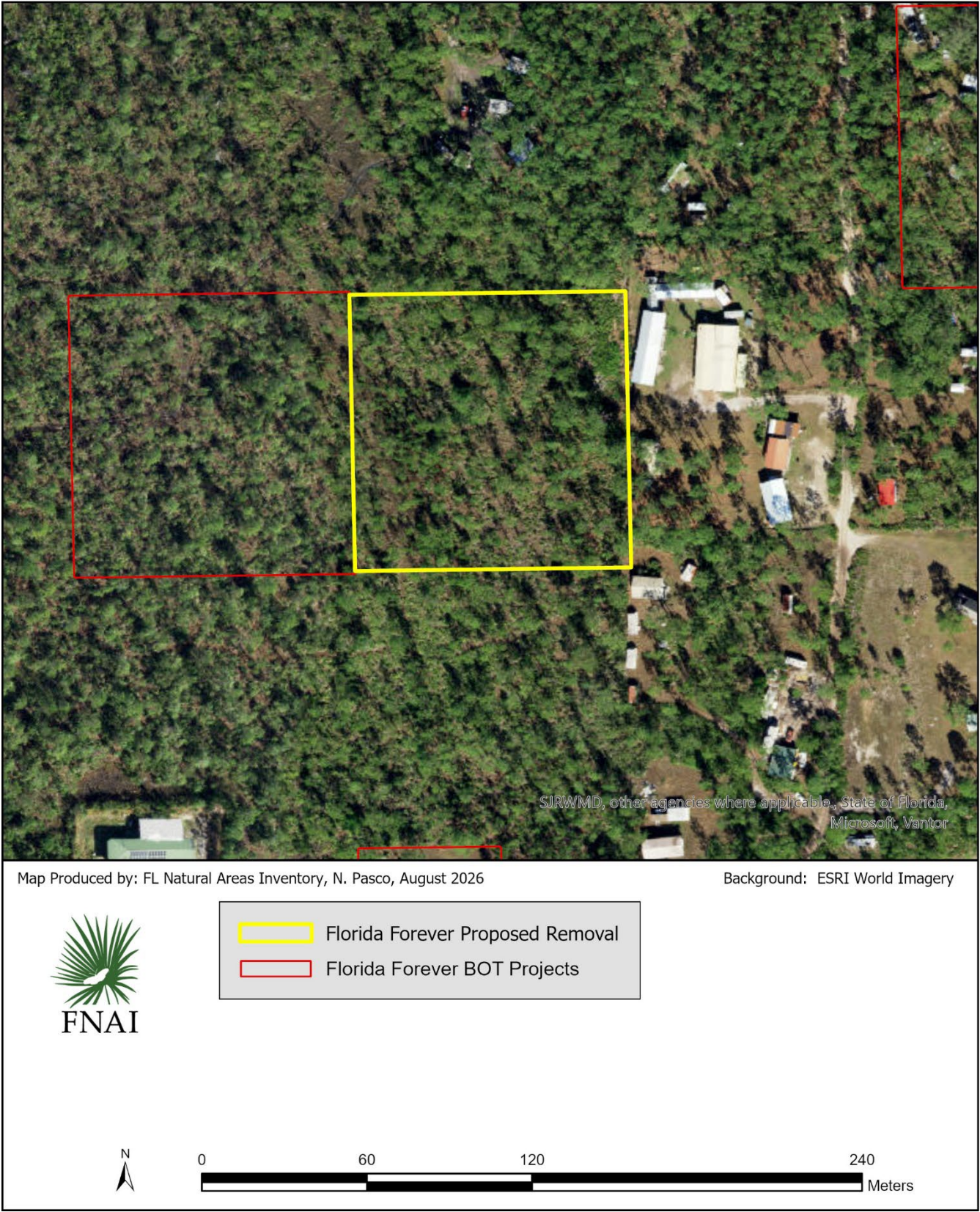
() ACCEPT OWNER-REQUESTED DELETION AND RECOMMEND THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ADD OWNER-REQUESTED DELETION BACK INTO THE PROJECT BOUNDARY

	Watts	DHR	FFS	Griner	DEP	FWC	Palmer	Peppers	Gamblin	Select
Project										
Bombing Range Ridge										



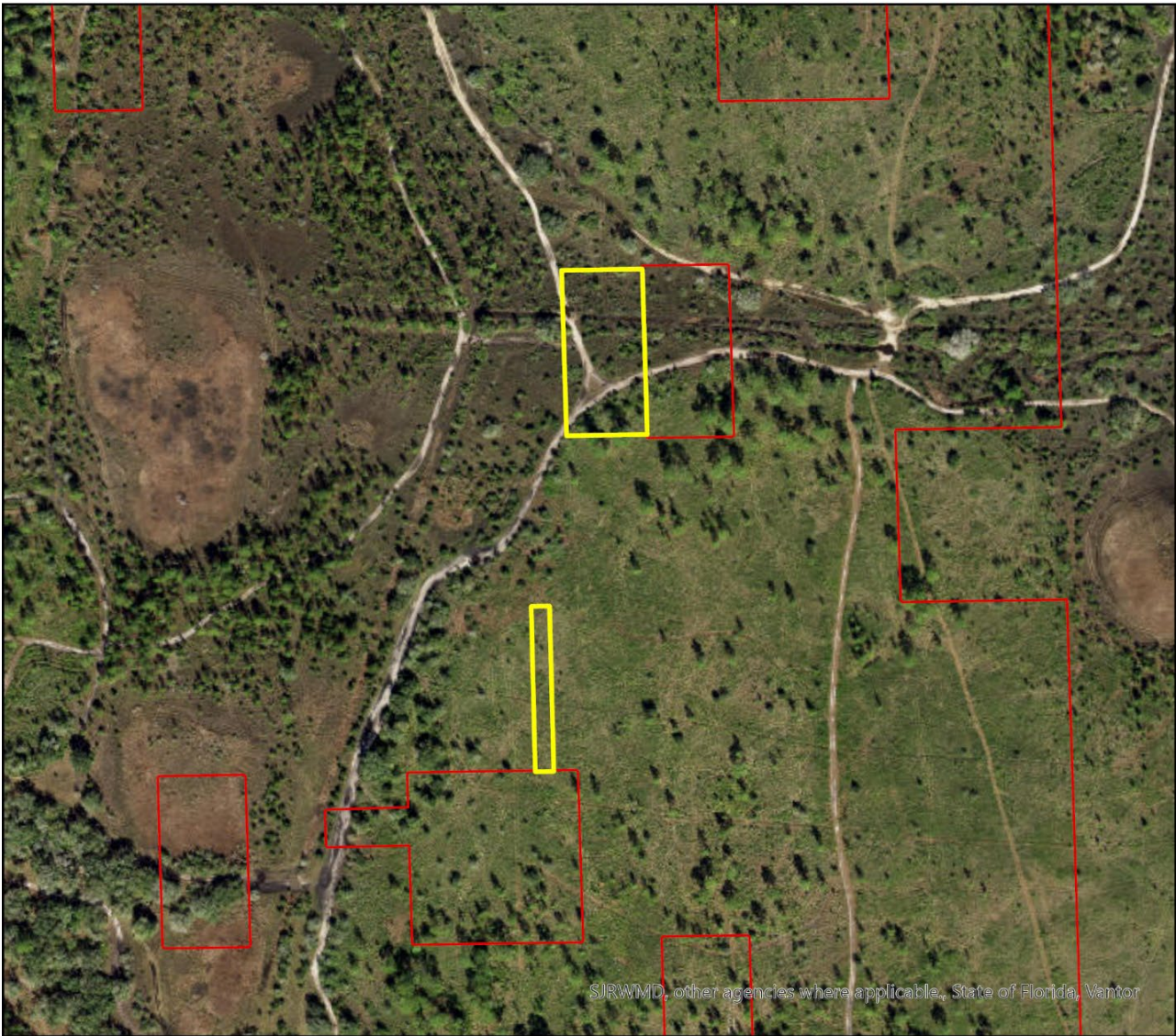
BOMBING RANGE RIDGE FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT REMOVALS: MAP 1

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF AUGUST 2026



BOMBING RANGE RIDGE FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT REMOVALS: MAP 2

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF AUGUST 2026

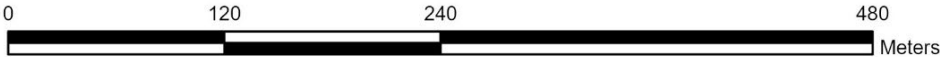


Map Produced by: FL Natural Areas Inventory, N. Pasco, August 2026

Background: ESRI World Imagery



	Florida Forever Proposed Removal
	Florida Forever BOT Projects



BOMBING RANGE RIDGE FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT REMOVALS: MAP 3

FLORIDA FOREVER BOARD OF TRUSTEES PROJECT PROPOSED ADDITION AS OF AUGUST 2026

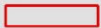


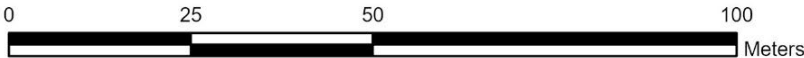
SIRWMD, other agencies where applicable, State of Florida,
Microsoft, Vantor

Map Produced by: FL Natural Areas Inventory, N. Pasco, August 2026

Background: ESRI World Imagery



-  Florida Forever Proposed Removal
-  Florida Forever BOT Projects



Bombing Range Ridge (Removals): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 20260817

GIS ACRES = 4.7

MEASURES	Resource Acres ^a	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	3.0	58%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	1.5	29%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0.5	10%
Total Acres	5.0	97%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	0.6	12%
Priority 2	3.8	74%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0.7	13%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	5.1	99%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	5.2	100%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	5.2	100%
B4: Under-represented Natural Communities		
Upland Glade (G1)	0	0%
Pine Rockland (G1)	0	0%
Scrub and Scrubby Flatwoods (G2)	0.6	12%
Rockland Hammock (G2)	0	0%
Dry Prairie (G2)	0.7	13%
Seepage Slope (G2)	0	0%
Sandhill (G3)	0	0%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	0	0%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	2.7	53%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0	0%
Total Acres	4.0	77%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	0	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	1	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	1.3	25%
Priority 2	1.3	26%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	2.6	51%

MEASURES (continued)	Resource Acres ^a	% of project
C5: Surface Water Protection		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	1.1	20%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	3.4	67%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0.7	13%
Priority 7	0	0%
Total Acres	5.2	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	1.1	22%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	1.1	22%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	2.7	53%
Priority 5	0.7	13%
Priority 6	1.8	34%
Total Acres	5.2	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	1.6	30%
Priority 3	1.8	34%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	3.3	65%
G3: Forestland for Recharge		
	0	0%

^aAcres 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.



To: Diana Pepe, DEP/OES
From: Geoffrey Parks, FNAI
Date: September 3, 2026
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Bombing Range Ridge– October Removals (Polk County)

The major goals of the Bombing Range Ridge Florida Forever Project are to conserve and protect significant and dwindling habitat for native species and endangered and threatened species. Representatives of the owners of 4 tracts totaling ca. 4.7 acres have requested that these properties be removed from the project. These parcels range from 0.3 acres to ca. 2.5 acres and are spread over an approximately 2-square-mile area. All of the parcels are located south of FL-60 in Polk County. In total, these removals represent less than 0.1% of the remaining unacquired acreage of the Bombing Range Ridge FFBOT project.

In addition to Lake Wales Ridge State Forest, which adjoins the BRR project to the north, other conservation areas to the north of BRR include Brahma Island Conservation Easement (CE) in Lake Kissimmee, Eagle Haven CE, Bombing Range Ridge/TNC CE, and Lake Kissimmee State Park. Kissimmee River lands (SFWMD; KICCO Wildlife Management Area) lie to the east, and Avon Park Air Force Range (AFR) to the south. Residential development (Indian Lake Estates) and undeveloped land south to Avon Park AFR are west of the project. Lake Wales is approximately 6 miles to the northwest on SR 60. None of the parcels proposed for removal are adjacent to existing conservation land. The parcels proposed for removal do not significantly affect the potential for connectivity between any existing conservation lands, although the additional fragmentation will complicate land management if any land is acquired in this project in the future.

Most of the parcels proposed for removal are in the Osceola Plain geomorphological province, although one is within the Bombing Range Ridge province. The Osceola Plain is characterized by a mosaic of mature to old-growth mesic flatwoods, wet flatwoods, cutthroatgrass-dominated wet prairie, and dry prairie, interspersed with depression marshes that extends east from the Bombing Range Ridge to the public lands along the Kissimmee River. None of the parcels in Osceola Plain are developed, although there are signs of off-road vehicle tracks on the two easternmost blocks, and one is crossed by unpaved roads.

The higher elevation Bombing Range Ridge geomorphological province is a prominent relict sand ridge in the western part of the current removal area that extends south through Avon Park AFR. Scrubby flatwoods and oak scrub occur on the ridge. The FFBOT project along the ridge is in a “campsite” area where many parcels are developed with at least temporary buildings. The parcel proposed for removal is mostly cleared and a structure is visible.

The properties are in an area where Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) is considered occasional to common, so this species is presumed present on at least some tracts. Otherwise, no rare

species are documented from these parcels, but numerous rare species are known to occur in the general area. The dry prairie and various flatwoods are Under-represented Natural Communities.

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 (97-100%) of the acreage proposed for removal contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (mostly priority 1), FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities (mostly priority 2), Ecological Greenways (priority 1), Surface Water Protection (mostly priority 4), and Aquifer Recharge (priorities 4-6). Slightly more than half contributes to Functional Wetlands (51%, priorities 1 and 2), and Sustainable Forestry (65%, priorities 2 and 3). Most (77%) of the acreage to be removed consists of Under-represented Natural Communities.