

ITEM 18:

Vote on whether to amend the Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever project boundary to add three parcels totaling ±994.44 acres in Putnam County with a tax assessed value of \$2,753,120.

LOCATION:

Putnam County

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF REMARKS:

The Redwater Tract amendment, proposed by the Putnam Land Conservancy, adds three parcels in Putnam County totaling ±994.44 acres to the Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever project. The property is owned by Ocala Meadows International LP. The landowner has been contacted and is a willing seller. The property has a combined tax assessed value of \$2,753,120 and is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The proposed addition is southeast of the city of Hawthorne and is adjacent to the BJ Bar Ranch Conservation Easement held by the St. Johns River Water Management District. The Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever project, which includes the Little Orange Creek Conservation Easement and the Star Lake Connector Florida Forever project are half a mile away from the site. Redwater Lake and Bream Lake are less than a mile from the property. Additionally, the proposal is within the Ocala to Osceola section of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The property is currently used for silviculture. According to the application, there are over 700 acres of pine plantation, of which 485 acres are clearcut with intact sandhill groundcover. The site lies within a region in which the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission classifies the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) as frequent. There are records of striped newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*) on the property and a nearby record for pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*). There are no improvements located on site. If acquired, the property would contribute to the surface water protection of Redwater Lake, protected imperiled species habitat, and enhance connectivity between public and private conservation lands in the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

The proposal meets the criteria to be submitted as a boundary amendment. The property has a tax assessed value of less than \$5 million. The proposal area should be designated as essential.

Project History:

The Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever project in Alachua and Putnam counties was added to the priority list in 2024. The project fills a gap between existing conservation lands in Alachua and Putnam counties. The project will help facilitate wildlife movement between existing protected areas and protect flatwoods and sandhill habitat critical to a variety of rare and imperiled species including the Florida black bear. Acquisition of the Little Orange Creek Corridor project will also help protect the water resources of Little Orange Creek and expand resource-based recreational opportunities in the region.

The Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever project includes 4,518 acres with 4,518 acres remaining and is ranked number three in the Partnerships and Regional Incentives category on the 2026 Florida Forever Priority List. The tax assessed value for the remaining acres to be acquired in this project per property appraiser information (2025) is \$12,695,679.

Florida Natural Areas Inventory Review:

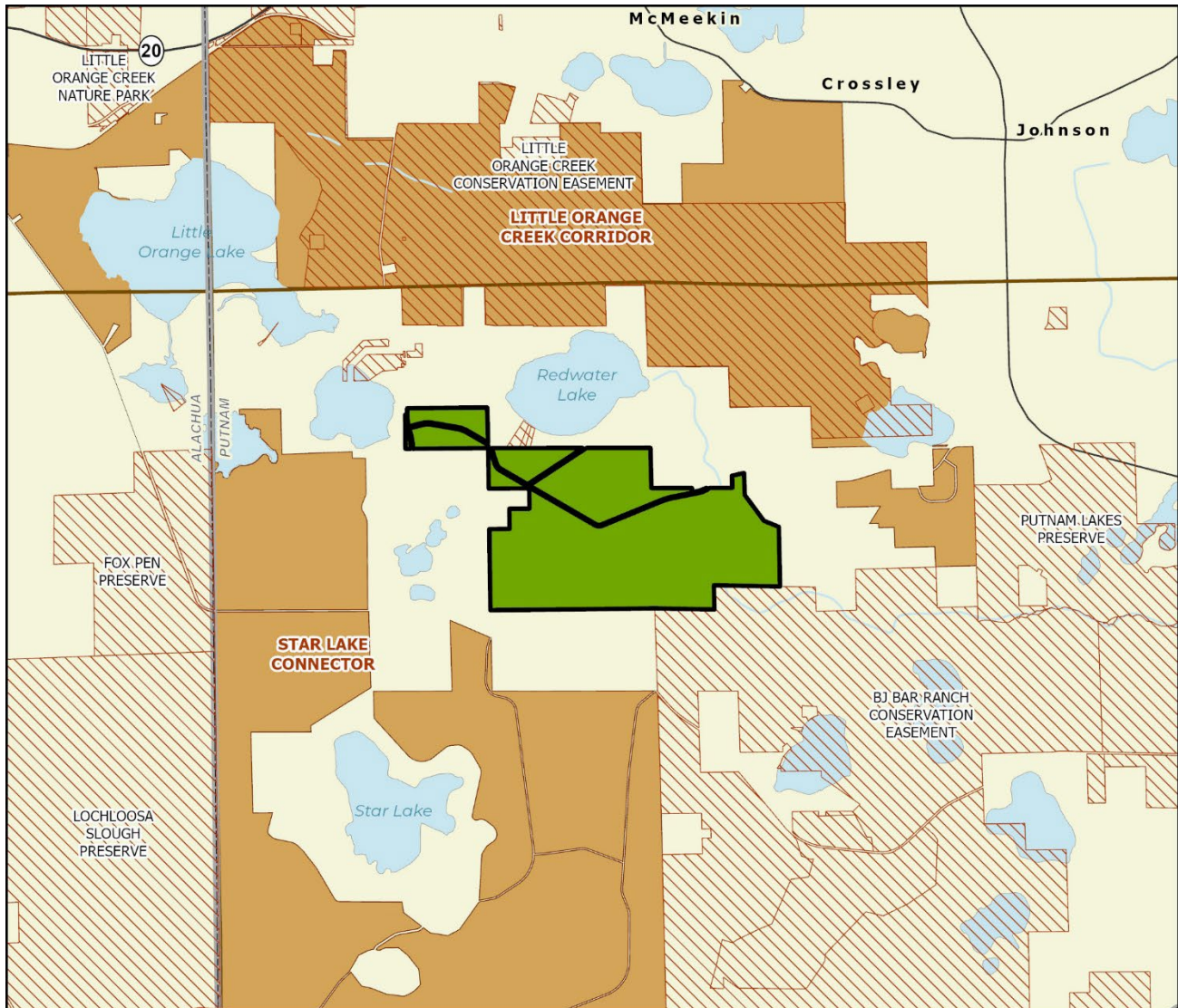
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, 100% of the site contributes to Ecological Greenways (Priority 3), Surface Water Protection (mostly Priority 5), and Aquifer Recharge (mostly Priority 2). Additionally, 95% contributes to Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (mostly Priority 3) and 78% contributes to Sustainable Forestry (mostly Priority 3). Three percent of the property (±30 acres) contains under-represented mesic/wet flatwoods, and less than one percent contains sandhill (±3 acres) and sandhill upland lake (±7 acres).

DIVISION OF STATE LANDS STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Vote on the proposed boundary amendment.

ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION:

	Watts	DHR	FFS	Griner	DEP	FWC	Palmer	Peppers	Gamblin	Select
Project										
Little Orange Creek Corridor: Redwater Tract										



LITTLE ORANGE CREEK CORRIDOR FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT REDWATER TRACT BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

PUTNAM COUNTY

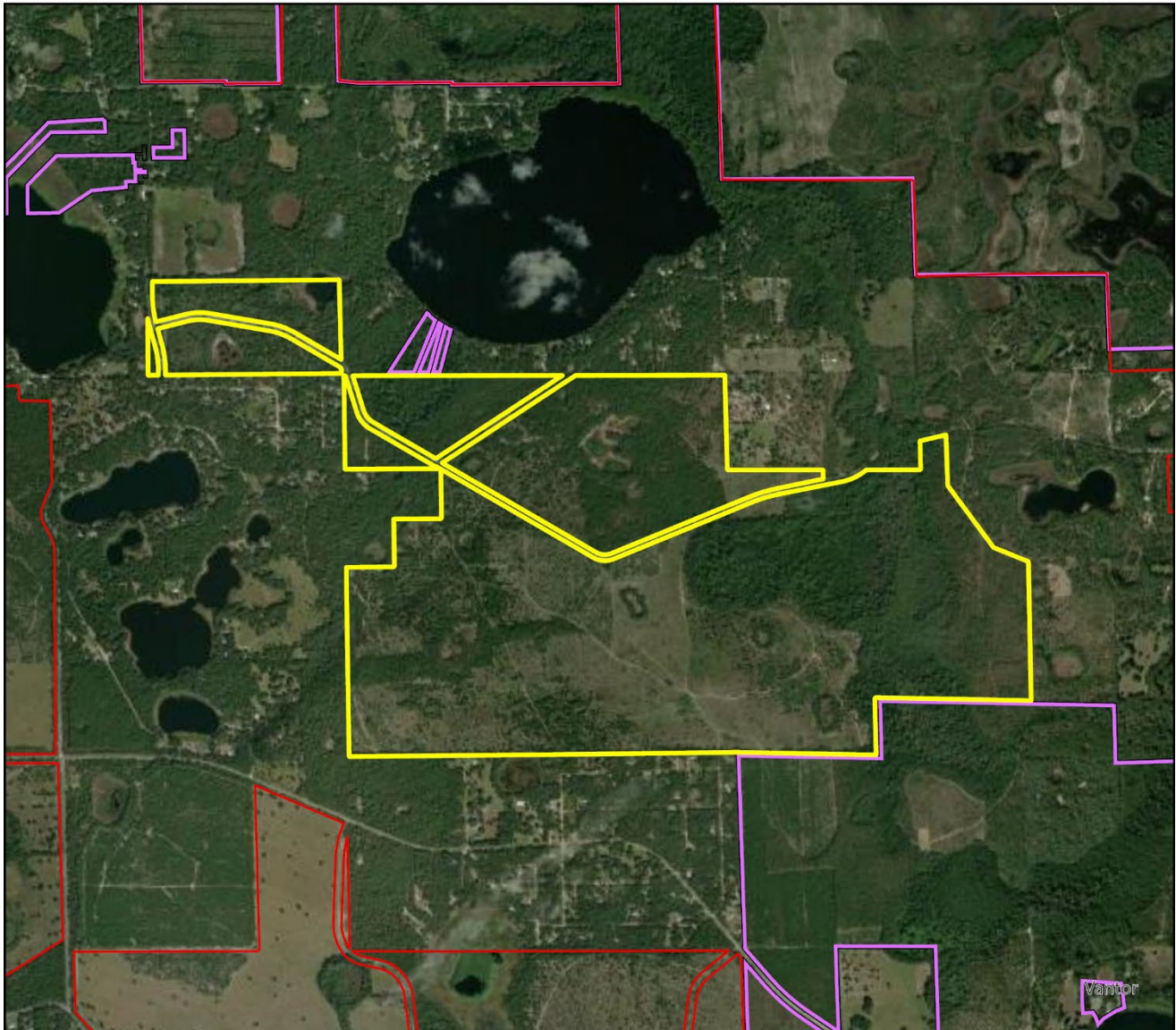
- Florida Forever Proposed Addition
- Florida Forever BOT Projects
- Other Conservation Lands



MAP BY FL NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY AUGUST 2026

LITTLE ORANGE CREEK CORRIDOR FLORIDA FOREVER PROJECT REDWATER TRACT BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

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 Addition
-  Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  Existing Private Conservation Lands



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Item 18: Little Orange Creek Corridor Boundary Amendment: Redwater

Little Orange Creek Corridor (Redwater Tract): Florida Forever Measures Evaluation 20260817

GIS ACRES = 994

MEASURES	Resource Acres ^a	% of project
B1: Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	32	3%
Priority 3	700	70%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	211	21%
Total Acres	943	95%
B2: FNAI Habitat Conservation Priorities		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	0	0%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	12	1%
Priority 6	162	16%
Total Acres	174	17%
B3: Ecological Greenways		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	0	0%
Priority 3	991	100%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Total Acres	991	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)	3	< 1%
Sandhill Upland Lake (G3)	7	< 1%
Upland Pine (G3)	0	0%
Mesic/Wet Flatwoods (G4)	30	3%
Upland Hardwood Forest (G5)	0	0%
Total Acres	40	4%
B6: Occurrences of FNAI Tracked Species		
G1	0	
G2	3	
G3	0	
G4	1	
G5	0	
Total	4	
C4: Natural Floodplain Function		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	16	2%
Priority 3	141	14%
Priority 4	10	1%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	167	17%

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	277	28%
Priority 5	487	49%
Priority 6	227	23%
Priority 7	3	< 1%
Total Acres	994	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	16	2%
Priority 3	150	15%
Priority 4	16	2%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	182	18%
D3: Aquifer Recharge		
Priority 1	0	0%
Priority 2	715	72%
Priority 3	279	28%
Priority 4	0	0%
Priority 5	0	0%
Priority 6	0	0%
Total Acres	994	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	1	< 1%
Priority 2	19	2%
Priority 3	719	72%
Priority 4	63	6%
Priority 5	4	< 1%
Total Acres	806	81%
G3: Forestland for Recharge		
	780	78%

^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: Dale R. Jackson, FNAI
Date: September 3, 2026
Subject: Proposed Boundary Modification to Florida Forever BOT Project: Little Orange Creek Corridor– Redwater Tract (Putnam County)

The major goals of the Little Orange Creek Corridor Florida Forever Project (LOCC) are to fill a gap between existing conservation lands in Alachua and Putnam counties, facilitate wildlife movement between existing protected areas, protect flatwoods and sandhill habitat critical to a variety of rare and imperiled species including the Florida black bear, help protect the water resources of Little Orange Creek, and expand resource-based recreational opportunities in the region. The ca. 994.4-acre Redwater Tract in southwestern Putnam County is proposed as an addition to the project. The property is proposed for less-than-fee acquisition.

The proposal lies ca. 3.5 to 6 miles southeast of Hawthorne and < 0.1 mile (400 ft) south of Redwater Lake. Its southeastern corner is contiguous with the 4,300-acre BJ Bar Ranch Conservation Easement (BBR). Nearby (but not contiguous) conservation lands include Little Orange Creek Corridor, Fox Pen Preserve, Lochloosa Slough Preserve (LSP), and Putnam Lakes Preserve. The Star Lake Connector FFBOT project lies just to the south and west and borders both LSP and BBR. Unacquired parcels within LOCC are disjunct to the east, north, and northwest.

The Redwater Tract is undeveloped and consists of two tracts that share a point of contact. The applicant notes that the property includes ca. 3,600 feet of Little Orange Creek (eastern end of larger tract), 200 acres of wetlands (mostly along the creek), two small sandhill upland lakes (7 acres), multiple small (< 3 acres) marshes, about 20 acres of mixed hardwood-coniferous swamp, a 485-acre clearcut with intact sandhill groundcover, 146 acres of pine plantation with intact (but suppressed) sandhill groundcover, 97 acres of pine plantation with poor groundcover, about 15 acres of hardwood-coniferous uplands, and 30 acres of pine flatwoods. The former sandhill sites (clearcut and plantation) were used for timber production but not bedded; proposed management includes restoration with prescribed fire and planting of longleaf pine.

The entire site is within a region in which the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission considers the Florida black bear (*Ursus americanus floridanus*; G5T4/S4, N, N) to be frequent. In addition to bear, the applicant notes that the tract also supports gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*, G3/S3, N, ST). FNAI has on-site records for striped newt (*Notophthalmus perstriatus*, G2/S2, N, ST; 1998, 3 ponds), and a nearby record for pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*, G4/S3, N, ST; 1983). The potential to support other rare species characteristic of sandhill is relatively high.

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 95% of the proposal contributes to Aquifer Recharge (priorities 2 and 3), Surface Water Protection (priorities 4-6), Ecological Greenways (priority

3), and Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (chiefly priorities 3 and 5). Roughly 80% contributes to Sustainable Forestry (mostly priority 3) and Forestland for Recharge. Contributions to all other measures are below 20%.