

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Land Conservation and Planning
Watermelon Pond Florida Forever Project Analysis
December 2025**



This document contains the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's (FWC) Geographic Information System (GIS) data analysis of the area yet to be acquired within the **Watermelon Pond** Florida Forever project. This analysis was performed to provide FWC and others with important fish and wildlife resource information to be used in evaluating and ranking Florida Forever projects. The data selected for analysis are those considered by FWC to spatially reflect important fish and wildlife habitat and life history requirements.

In addition, FWC has completed a field review and associated assessment report for this project/proposal that is incorporated within the Acquisition and Restoration Council Florida Forever Project Evaluation Report. This report is available upon request.

GIS Data

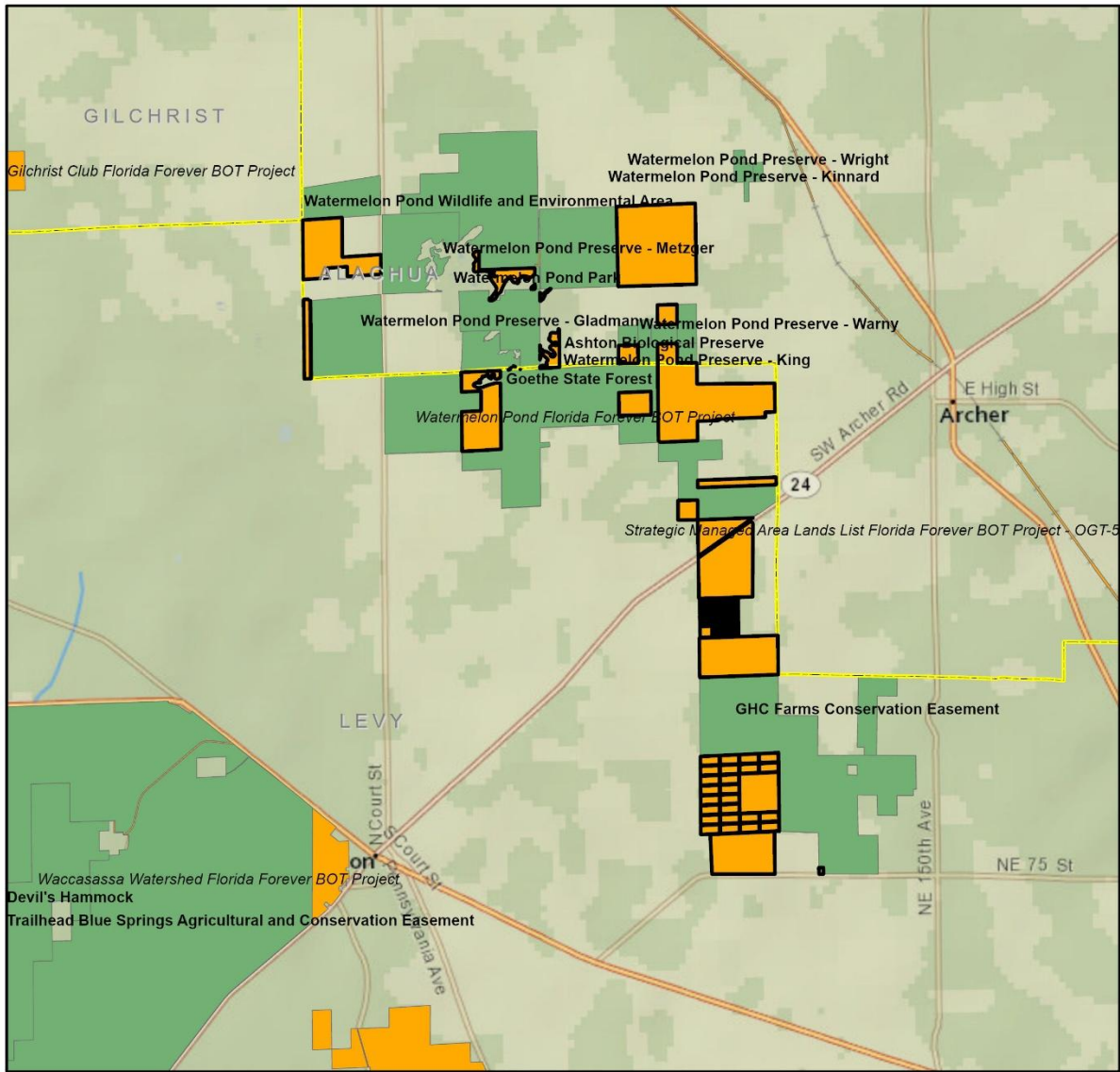
The FWC utilizes the Florida Cooperative Land Cover (CLC) GIS data layer for identification and mapping of land cover. The CLC is a cooperative effort between the FWC and the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) to develop ecologically-based statewide land cover from existing sources and expert review of aerial photography. Land cover acreage estimates found in this document are based on GIS analysis of these data.

The FWC Florida Landscape Assessment Model (FLAM) is a GIS-based assessment tool that incorporates a wide variety of land cover and wildlife species data. These wildlife species include imperiled species and locally important species. Application of this model assists in the identification and conservation of important wildlife habitats. The FLAM ranks the Florida landscape based upon important natural resources and habitat needs of wildlife to identify ecologically significant lands in the state, and to assess the potential impacts of land development projects on wildlife populations. The FLAM is provided as part of the FWC's continuing technical assistance to various local, regional, state, and federal agencies, and entities interested in wildlife needs and conservation in order to: (1) determine ways to avoid or minimize project impacts by evaluating alternative placements, alignments, and transportation corridors during early planning stages, (2) assess direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts to habitat and wildlife resources, and (3) help identify appropriate parcels for land conservation, and for wetland and upland habitat mitigation. The FLAM ranks habitat from 0-10; a rank of 10 being of greatest value. **The FLAM score for this project is 7.**

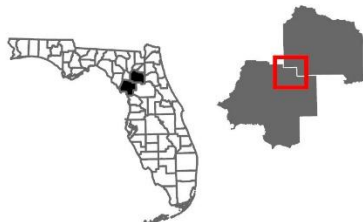
Important fish and wildlife resource GIS data were queried using Environmental Resource Analysis GIS computer software. These data include the following GIS layers:

- FWC-FNAI Florida Cooperative Land Cover
- FWC Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas – Priority and Species

- Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) – Priority 1 and 2 – Terrestrial and Water
- CLIP – Landscape, Biodiversity, and Floodplain Resources
- Panther Location
- Panther Mortality
- Florida Panther Priority Habitat (Primary, Secondary, and Dispersal)
- Black Bear Range
- Rare Fish Locations/ Imperiled Waters
- Southern Bald Eagle Nest
- FWC Imperiled Species Richness
- FNAI Element Occurrences
- FNAI Suitable Habitat that Supports Species Known to Occur in the Vicinity
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection Surface Water Classification
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) - National Wetlands Inventory
- USFWS Critical Habitat
- Florida Geological Survey Springs
- Outstanding Florida Waters
- Areas of Critical State Concern



**Watermelon Pond
Florida Forever Project**
Alachua and Levy Counties
4,020 Acres

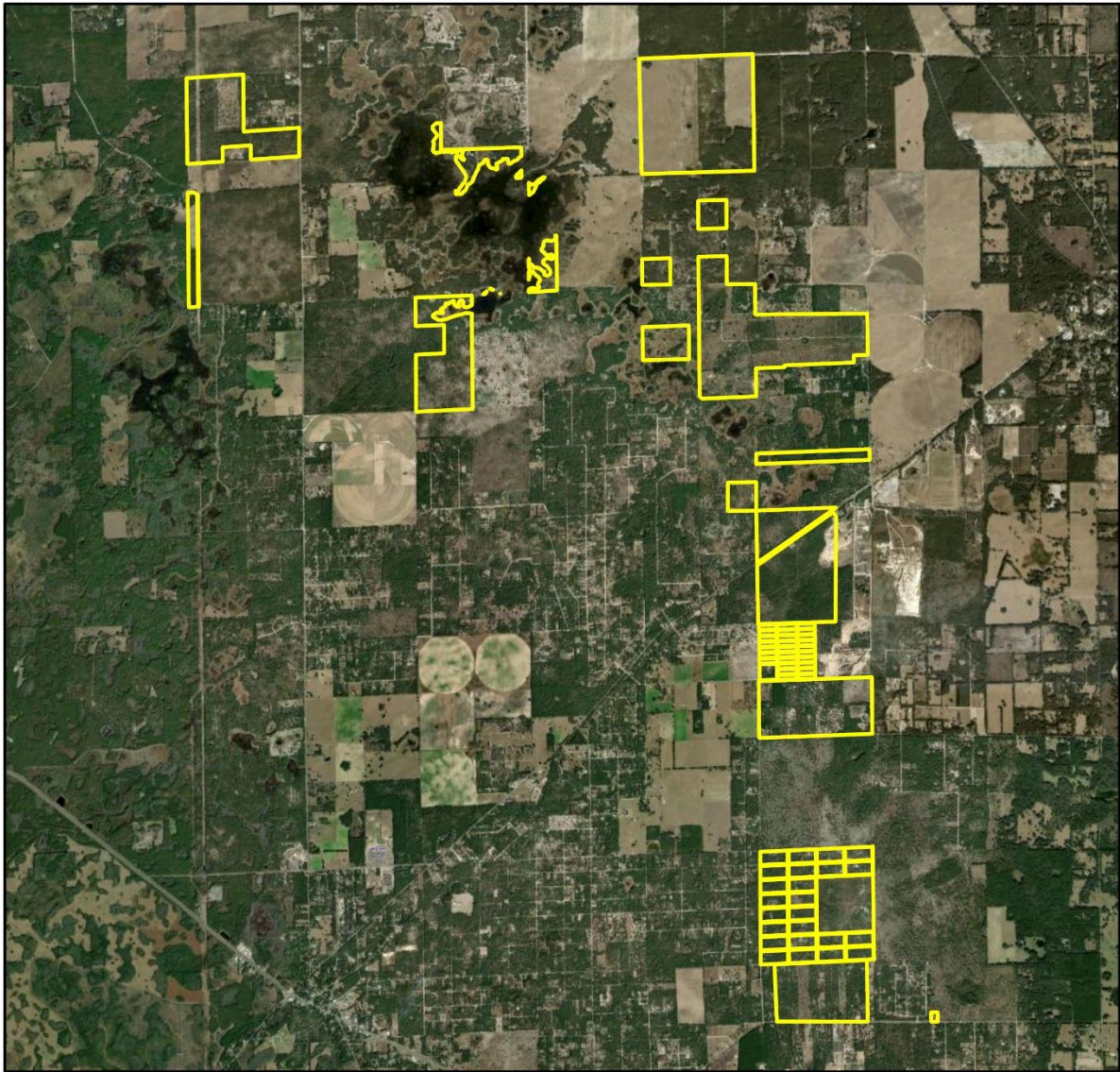


0 1 2 3 4 Miles

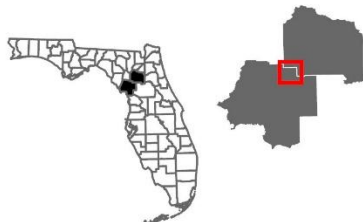
Created in ArcGIS 10.8 by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission December 2025

Vicinity Map

-  Watermelon Pond Boundary
-  County Boundaries
-  Conservation Lands
-  Florida Forever Projects



**Watermelon Pond
Florida Forever Project**
Alachua and Levy Counties
4,020 Acres



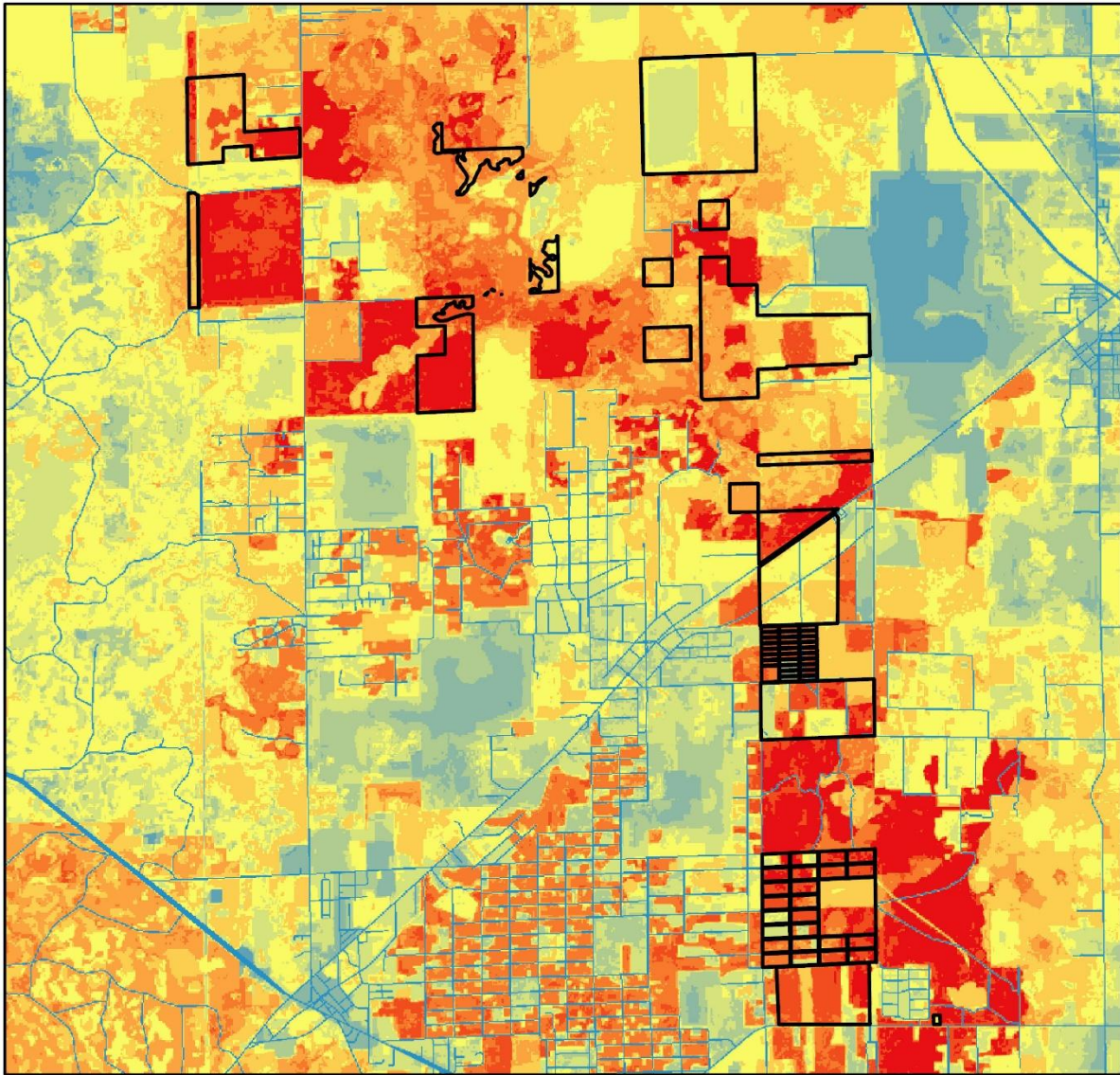
0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Created in ArcGIS 10.8 by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission December 2025

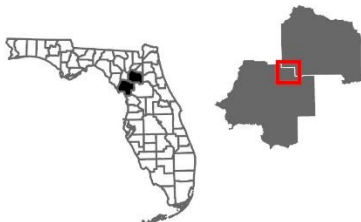


Aerial Imagery

 Watermelon Pond Boundary



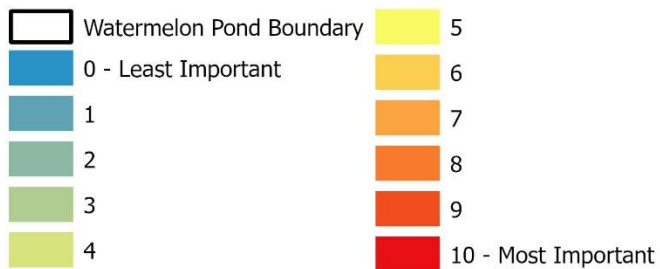
**Watermelon Pond
Florida Forever Project**
Alachua and Levy Counties
4,020 Acres



0 1 2 3 4 Miles

Created in ArcGIS 10.8 by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission December 2025

Florida Landscape Assessment Model



Environmental Resource Analysis

FWC Land Conservation and Planning

Analysis Shape Type: Polygon

Analysis Timestamp: 10312025 12:05:42

Shape Name: Unnamed polygon centered at -82.601909 °, 29.505625 °

Boundary Area: 4019.77 acres

Buffer Area: 0 acres

Total Area: 4019.77 acres

FWC Wildlife Data and Models

Cooperative Land Cover v3.8

Name - State	Code - State	Name - Site	Code - Site	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
High Intensity Urban	1822	Commercial and Services	18223	1.02	0.03 %
Rural	1830	Rural Open Forested	18311	7.67	0.19 %
Isolated Freshwater Marsh	2121	Depression Marsh	21211	0.02	0 %
Natural Lakes and Ponds	3100	Sandhill Lake	3117	0.02	0 %
Wet Flatwoods	2221	Wet Flatwoods	2221	1.42	0.04 %
Freshwater Forested Wetlands	2200	Mixed Wetland Hardwoods	2233	2.05	0.05 %
Freshwater Forested Wetlands	2200	Mixed Hardwood-Coniferous Swamps	2240	0.98	0.02 %
Cropland/Pasture	18331	Irrigated Row Crops	1833111	0.00	0 %
Cropland/Pasture	18331	Fallow Cropland	1833151	309.62	7.7 %
Transportation	1840	Transportation	1840	100.39	2.5 %
Rural	1830	Unimproved/Woodland Pasture	183314	6.22	0.15 %
Isolated Freshwater Marsh	2121	Basin Marsh	21212	0.00	0 %
Cropland/Pasture	18331	Field Crops	183312	0.21	0.01 %
Improved Pasture	183313	Improved Pasture	183313	184.09	4.58 %
Low Intensity Urban	1821	Residential, Low Density	18212	102.01	2.54 %
Tree Plantations	18333	Coniferous Plantations	183332	1,126.07	28.01 %
Upland Hardwood Forest	1110	Upland Hardwood Forest	1110	13.39	0.33 %
Low Intensity Urban	1821	Urban Open Land	18211	46.55	1.16 %
Scrub	1210	Scrub	1210	52.99	1.32 %
Sandhill	1240	Sandhill	1240	1,437.41	35.76 %
Rural	1830	Rural Open	1831	112.71	2.8 %
Utilities	1860	Utilities	1860	10.66	0.27 %
Prairies and Bogs	2110	Wet Prairie	2111	124.99	3.11 %
Marshes	2120	Marshes	2120	44.59	1.11 %
Mixed Hardwood-Coniferous	1400	Successional Hardwood Forest	1410	211.11	5.25 %
Xeric Hammock	1150	Xeric Hammock	1150	51.53	1.28 %
High Pine and Scrub	1200	Upland Coniferous	1230	0.18	0 %
Mixed Hardwood-Coniferous	1400	Mixed Hardwood-Coniferous	1400	71.88	1.79 %
TOTAL:				4,019.77	100 %

Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) Priority 1 and 2 - Terrestrial and Waters

CLIP Priority	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
All other cells	562.99	14.01 %
CLIP P1 in submerged lands/state waters	0.00	0 %
CLIP P1 in terrestrial	3,450.46	85.84 %
CLIP P2 in terrestrial	6.32	0.16 %
TOTAL:	4,019.77	100 %

CLIP- Landscape Category

Priority	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
0	4.13	0.1 %
2	3,952.08	98.32 %
3	63.55	1.58 %
TOTAL:	4,019.77	100 %

CLIP- Biodiversity Category

Priority	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
0	55.82	1.39 %
1	4.77	0.12 %
2	866.08	21.55 %
3	1,052.53	26.18 %
4	559.05	13.91 %
5	1,481.52	36.86 %
TOTAL:	4,019.77	100 %

Priority FWC Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas 2020

Priority	Total Area (acres)					Percent of Area				
0	578.60					14.39 %				
2	930.78					23.16 %				
3	2,332.59					58.03 %				
4	0.13					0 %				
5	177.66					4.42 %				
TOTAL:	4,019.77					100 %				
FWC Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas 2024										
Species 1	Species 2	Species 3	Species 4	Species 5	Species 6	Species 7	Species 8	Species 9	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
Cooper's hawk									85.43	2.13 %
Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear								20.34	0.51 %
Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear	Florida mouse							122.90	3.06 %
Cooper's hawk	Florida mouse								20.53	0.51 %
Cooper's hawk	Striped newt								2.33	0.06 %
Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida black bear							6.67	0.17 %
Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse						57.26	1.42 %
Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida mouse							2.88	0.07 %
Florida black bear									73.39	1.83 %
Florida black bear	Florida mouse								208.98	5.2 %
Florida burrowing owl									120.49	3 %
Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk								44.22	1.1 %
Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear							0.39	0.01 %
Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Florida mouse							0.83	0.02 %
Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt							0.67	0.02 %
Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida mouse						0.28	0.01 %
Florida burrowing owl	Florida black bear								4.37	0.11 %
Florida burrowing owl	Florida mouse								2.72	0.07 %
Florida burrowing owl	Striped newt								2.30	0.06 %
Florida burrowing owl	Striped newt	Florida black bear							1.44	0.04 %
Florida burrowing owl	Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse						0.63	0.02 %
Florida burrowing owl	Striped newt	Florida mouse							0.11	0 %
Florida mouse									441.18	10.98 %
Striped newt									40.40	1.01 %
Striped newt	Florida black bear								114.32	2.84 %
Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse							189.61	4.72 %
Striped newt	Florida mouse								434.89	10.82 %
Swallow-tailed kite									454.65	11.31 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk								16.93	0.42 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear							498.86	12.41 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear	Florida mouse						14.70	0.37 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Florida mouse							0.67	0.02 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt							1.84	0.05 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida black bear						45.70	1.14 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse					3.01	0.07 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida mouse						0.17	0 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida black bear								393.84	9.8 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida black bear	Florida mouse							8.11	0.2 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl								0.38	0.01 %

Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk						0.91	0.02 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Florida black bear					1.17	0.03 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt					0.05	0 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl	Cooper's hawk	Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse			0.00	0 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida burrowing owl	Florida black bear						3.11	0.08 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Florida mouse							10.15	0.25 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Striped newt							9.65	0.24 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Striped newt	Florida black bear						10.71	0.27 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Striped newt	Florida black bear	Florida mouse					2.28	0.06 %
Swallow-tailed kite	Striped newt	Florida mouse						1.47	0.04 %
								TOTAL: 3,477.90	86.52 %
Panther Location									
No Records Found									
Panther Mortality									
No Records Found									
Panther Priority Habitat									
No Records Found									
Bear Range									
Bear Range		Total Area (acres)				Percent of Area			
Common		131.00				3.26 %			
Occasional		3,888.77				96.74 %			
TOTAL:		4,019.77				100 %			
Rare Fish									
No Records Found									
Rare Fish Imperiled Waters									
No Records Found									
Southern bald eagle nest									
Nest Count	Earliest Survey Year	Latest Survey Year		Total Area (acres)		Percent of Area			
3	1999	2007		2.41		0.06 %			
			TOTAL:		2.41		0.06 %		
Imperiled Species Richness									
Number of Species		Total Area (acres)				Percent of Area			
0		724.33				18.02 %			
1		11.92				0.3 %			
2		5.28				0.13 %			
3		147.91				3.68 %			
4		567.00				14.11 %			
5		160.53				3.99 %			
6		409.62				10.19 %			
7		1,993.17				49.58 %			
TOTAL:		4,019.77				100 %			

Florida Natural Areas Inventory Data										
Element Occurrences										
COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	FWC STATUS	FEDERAL STATUS	EO Rank	Last Observation	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area	
Broad-Sided Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle	Cryptoscatomaseter platypleurus	G2G3	S2	N	N	E	1990-12-15 -- 1990-12-22	1.97	0.05 %	
Eastern Indigo Snake	Drymarchon couperi	G3	S2?	FT	T	BC	2016-01-05	638.28	15.88 %	
Florida Sandhill Crane	Antigone canadensis pratensis	G5T2	S2	ST	N	E	1985	357.15	8.88 %	
Florida Scrub-Jay	Aphelocoma coerulescens	G2	S2	FT	T	E	1980-06	230.56	5.74 %	
Florida Scrub-Jay	Aphelocoma coerulescens	G2	S2	FT	T	E	1981-04-07	81.66	2.03 %	
Gopher Frog	Lithobates capito	G2G3	S3	N	UR	B?	2020-04-25	1.50	0.04 %	
Gopher Tortoise Copris Beetle	Copris gopheri	G2	S2	N	N	E	1989-06-09	116.69	2.9 %	
Gopher Tortoise Copris Beetle	Copris gopheri	G2	S2	N	N	E	2015-07-17	0.00	0 %	

Large Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle	Dellacasiellus laevigatus	G3G4	S3?	N	N	E	1990-12-15 -- 1992-01-25	3.86	0.1 %
Piedmont jointgrass	Mnesithea tuberculosa	G3	S3	T	N	E	1977-06-17	2,239.61	55.71 %
Pine Snake	Pituophis melanoleucus	G4	S3	ST	PS	BC	2016-04-05	1.01	0.03 %
Pine Snake	Pituophis melanoleucus	G4	S3	ST	PS	E	1969-08-04	4.90	0.12 %
Punctate Gopher Tortoise Onthophagus Beetle	Onthophagus polyphemi polyphemi	G3T3	S2	N	N	E	1960-03-28	2,419.93	60.2 %
Sand Pine Scrub Ataenius Beetle	Haroldiataenius saramari	G3G4	S3S4	N	N	E	2002-02-16	235.85	5.87 %
Short-tailed Snake	Lampropeltis extenuata	G3	S3	ST	PT	BC	2008	1.01	0.03 %
Skelley's June Beetle	Phyllophaga skelleyi	G2	S2	N	N	E	1989-03-30	3.79	0.09 %
Small Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle	Alloblackburneus aegrotus	G3G4	S3?	N	N	E	1990-12-22 -- 1990-12-29	1.97	0.05 %
Southeastern Fox Squirrel	Sciurus niger niger	G5T5	S3	N	N	AC	2022-05-30	305.76	7.61 %
Southeastern Fox Squirrel	Sciurus niger niger	G5T5	S3	N	N	BC	2023-05-24	0.48	0.01 %
Southern Hognose Snake	Heterodon simus	G2	S2S3	N	N	B?	2017-10-21	87.38	2.17 %
Striped Newt	Notophthalmus perstriatus	G2G3	S2	ST	N	AB	2006-03-24	0.05	0 %
Surprising Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle	Scabrostomus dyspistus	G3G4	S3?	N	N	E	1992-01-25	1.97	0.05 %
Workman's Jumping Spider	Phidippus workmani	G4	S4	N	N	E	1994-06-04	214.82	5.34 %
ZZ	Sandhill	G3	S2	N	N	C	2006	101.72	2.53 %
ZZ	Sandhill	G3	S2	N	N	E	2004	2.81	0.07 %
TOTAL:								7,054.73	175.5 %
Suitable Habitat that Supports Species Known to Occur in the Vicinity									
COMMON NAME			SCIENTIFIC NAME			Total Area (acres)		Percent of Area	
Broad-Sided Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle			Cryptoscatomaseter platypleurus			376.63		9.37 %	
Eastern Indigo Snake			Drymarchon couperi			2,681.55		66.71 %	
Florida Deepdigger Scarab Beetle			Peltotrupes profundus			447.69		11.14 %	
Florida Mouse			Podomys floridanus			1,287.00		32.02 %	
Florida Sandhill Crane			Antigone canadensis pratensis			343.85		8.55 %	
giant orchid			Pteroglossaspis ecristata			32.09		0.8 %	
Gopher Frog			Lithobates capito			2,207.45		54.91 %	
incised groove-bur			Agrimonia incisa			85.55		2.13 %	
Long-Clawed Pocket Gopher Aphodius Beetle			Scabrostomus tanytarsus			109.70		2.73 %	
North Peninsular Mycotrupes Beetle			Mycotrupes gaigei			2,014.76		50.12 %	
Short-tailed Snake			Lampropeltis extenuata			69.35		1.73 %	
Skelley's June Beetle			Phyllophaga skelleyi			376.63		9.37 %	
Southern Hognose Snake			Heterodon simus			2,857.16		71.08 %	
Southwest Florida Stelis Bee			Stelis ater			393.96		9.8 %	
Striped Newt			Notophthalmus perstriatus			388.09		9.65 %	
Wood Stork			Mycteria americana			47.77		1.19 %	
Workman's Jumping Spider			Phidippus workmani			442.58		11.01 %	
TOTAL:						14,161.82		352.3 %	
USFWS									
Critical Habitat									
No Records Found									
Area of Critical State Concern									
Apalachicola									
No Records Found									
Big Cypress									
No Records Found									
Green Swamp									
No Records Found									
Key West									
No Records Found									
Lower Keys									
No Records Found									
Upper Keys									
No Records Found									

Florida Ecological Greenways Network

Wildlife Corridor Classification

Priority Level	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
4	3,946.59	98.18 %
TOTAL:	3,946.59	98.18 %

Water Resources

FDEP Surface Water Classification

Waterbody Name	Water Type	Water Basin	Classification	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
NONCONTRIBUTING AREA	STREAM	2692	3F	121.72	3.03 %
PRIEST PRAIRIE DRAIN	STREAM	2750	3F	397.03	9.88 %
WATERMELON POND	LAKE	3703A	3F	26.40	0.66 %
UNNAMED SLOUGH	STREAM	3712	3F	1,062.38	26.43 %
LITTLE WACCASASSA RIVER	STREAM	3747	3F	2,412.23	60.01 %
		TOTAL:		4,019.77	100 %

Outstanding Florida Waters

No Records Found

Florida Geological Survey Springs

No Records Found

National Wetlands Inventory

Wetland Type	Wetland Code	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
Lake	L1UBH	9.68	0.24 %
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	PEM1A	33.71	0.84 %
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	PEM1C	11.20	0.28 %
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	PEM1F	2.06	0.05 %
Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland	PSS1F	0.42	0.01 %
Freshwater Pond	PUBH	19.19	0.48 %
	TOTAL:	76.26	1.9 %

Priority Floodplain Resources

Priority	Total Area (acres)	Percent of Area
1	44.90	1.12 %
2	180.20	4.48 %
0	3,688.33	91.75 %
4	27.20	0.68 %
3	79.14	1.97 %
TOTAL:	4,019.77	100 %