



May 30, 2025

Bryan Bradner
Acquisition and Restoration Council
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
3800 Commonwealth Blvd., MS 110
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: Support for the New Creeks to Choctawhatchee River Florida Forever Project

Dear Chair Bradner and Council Members,

I am writing to express Live Wildly Foundation's support for the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) new Florida Forever Project Application, Creeks to Choctawhatchee River. The proposed fee-simple acquisition in Walton County, Florida would protect more than 2,200 acres of timberland and forest in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. This acquisition would support the State's continued commitment to stewardship of our natural resources while safeguarding the water quality of the Choctawhatchee River, an Outstanding Florida Water.

This project would protect many creeks that serve as tributaries to the Choctawhatchee River and would provide operational buffering benefits to Eglin Air Force Base. The proposed project also would contribute to the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Partnership's goals by conserving and restoring habitat and water resources while protecting military mission readiness. Additionally, it would further the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership's goals of restoring and protecting the longleaf pine ecosystem. The Florida Forest Service has agreed to manage the property, which will create opportunities for sustainable timber management and potential restoration of long leaf pine. The project itself provides a unique opportunity to protect an intact landscape and create an anchor for protected lands in this portion of the Wildlife Corridor. The project area supports a variety of species like the gopher tortoise, Florida black bear, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and many other species.

Thank you and the ARC Board for your continuing strong leadership in protecting significant conservation lands that will be invaluable to the future of our state's land, water, agricultural, and recreational resources. We offer our support for this proposed new Florida Forever Project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas H. Eason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Thomas H. Eason, Ph.D.
Sr. Director of Conservation