

12130 Dixon Center Road
Andalusia, Alabama 36420



Office: 334.427.1029
Fax: 334.427.1419
www.longleafalliance.org

June 5, 2025

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

Dear Chair Bradner and Council Members,

On behalf of the Gulf Coastal Plain Ecosystem Partnership (GCPEP) I am pleased to support the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) Florida Forever Project Application, Creeks to Choctawhatchee River. The proposed fee simple acquisition in Walton County, Florida would protect approximately 2,222 acres of forests in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Ultimately the acquisition of Creeks to Choctawhatchee River would support the state's continued commitment to stewardship of our state's natural resources while safeguarding the water quality of the Choctawhatchee River, an Outstanding Florida Water.

This project protects numerous creeks that serve as tributaries to the Choctawhatchee River while providing base buffering benefits to Eglin Air Force Base. The proposed project also benefits the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Partnership's goals by conserving and restoring habitat and water resources while protecting military mission readiness as well as 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 longleaf pine. The project itself is listed for sale and comprised of 23-unique parcels presenting a unique opportunity to protect an intact landscape and create an anchor for protected lands in this portion of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The project supports a variety of species including the gopher tortoise, the Florida black bear, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and many other species.

I thank you and the ARC Board for your strong leadership to protect significant conservation lands that will be invaluable to the future of our state's land, water, agricultural, and recreational resources. Please accept this letter as formal support for this proposed new Florida Forever project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vernon Compton

Vernon Compton
GCPEP Director