

Flagler County Blueway

Flagler and Volusia Counties

Partnerships

Purpose for State Acquisition

Public acquisition of this project will contribute to the following Florida Forever goals: (1) Increase the protection of Florida’s biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels – will help close gaps and gain public ownership of some remaining hammock, marshes, flatwoods and swamps; (2) Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas – several parcels have future potential for serving as urban open space which will increase the amount of open space available in urban areas; and (3) Increase natural resource-based public recreation and educational opportunities - recreational opportunities may also increase if the land is managed carefully.

Manager

The Division of Forestry (DOF) and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will be cooperating managers for this project, while Flagler County will manage the Emerald Coast parcel.

General Description

The Flagler County Blueway project has changed significantly during the evaluation phase, growing from its original 122 acres to approximately 5,015 acres clustered from south of Pellicer Creek on the north to the Flagler County line on the south. The project essentially follows the Intracoastal Waterway and includes most undeveloped and available land east of I-95 in Flagler County.

Public Use

There are usable uplands within the project that will accommodate resource-based recreation activities, but the degree of ownership acquired will determine the degree of public access and use that can be assured.

Portions of the project include tidal marshes with numerous small creeks and hammock islands. Other

Flagler County Blueway FNAI Elements	
Gopher Tortoise	G3/S3
1 rare species is associated with the project	

areas have creeks associated with them. Boating, canoeing and kayaking can be accommodated on many of these creeks and there are opportunities to create a water borne trail system that might accommodate limited facilities, especially for canoes and kayaks.

Where road access or connectivity with existing public lands exists, there are opportunities for upland activities such as short nature hikes, primitive camping, picnicking and shoreline fishing. RV camping may not be well suited for this project, due to the general wet nature of the lands and the disbursement of uplands within the project. Still, it is possible that a site might be located, should a demand for that activity become apparent and compatible with the purpose of acquisition. Off-road bicycling might be accommodated on the more upland sites that have access.

Location and Proximity to Other Managed Areas

The Flagler County Blueway proposal has tracts of land adjacent to or very near the following managed areas (in alphabetical order): Bulow Creek State Park, Faver-Dykes State Park, Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area, Graham Swamp Conservation Area, Guana Tolomato Matanzas, North Peninsula State Park, Pellicer Creek Corridor Conservation Area, Princess Place Preserve, Pellicer Creek Aquatic Preserve, Washington Oaks Gardens State Park.

Acquisition Planning

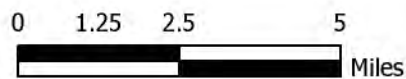
On December 5, 2003, the Acquisition & Restoration Council (ARC) added the Flagler County Blueway project to Group B of the Florida Forever (FF) 2004 priority list. While fee-simple acquisition is the pre-

Placed on List	2003
Projects Area (acres)	4,429
Acres Acquired	59
At a Cost Of	790,000*
Acres Remaining	4,370
With Estimated (tax assessed) Value of: \$17,791,331	
* Flagler County paid \$395,000	



FLAGLER COUNTY BLUEWAY: OVERVIEW

FLAGLER AND VOLUSIA COUNTIES



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ferred method for this project, there may well be parcels that are not available in fee-simple but lend themselves to conservation easements or other less-than-fee approaches. Sponsored by Flagler County, this project consisted of approximately 5,015 acres, multiple owners, and a 2002 taxable value of \$20,502,164.

On June 3, 2004, ARC moved this project to Group A of the FF 2004 Priority list.

On October 13, 2006, ARC approved a project redesign that removed 606 acres, reducing the total project size to 4,409 acres. All parcels removed were due to development that had occurred or isolation of the parcels since the original boundary was identified. In addition, the ARC approved a fee-simple, 20-acre addition to the project boundary. It was sponsored by Flagler County, consisted of one parcel & landowner, Kitteridge Investments, and had a 2002 taxable value of \$6,800. The addition is considered important, but not critical to the project as a whole, and, if acquired, will be managed by Flagler County as part of Princess Place Preserve.

In October of 2008, 59.19 acres of the Emerald Coast Development Partners, LLC ownership, were purchased for \$790,000 (\$395,000 from DSL Florida Forever funds, \$395,000 from Flagler County). Flagler County will manage this site.

Coordination

The St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and Flagler County are considered partners on this project.

Unified Management Prospectus

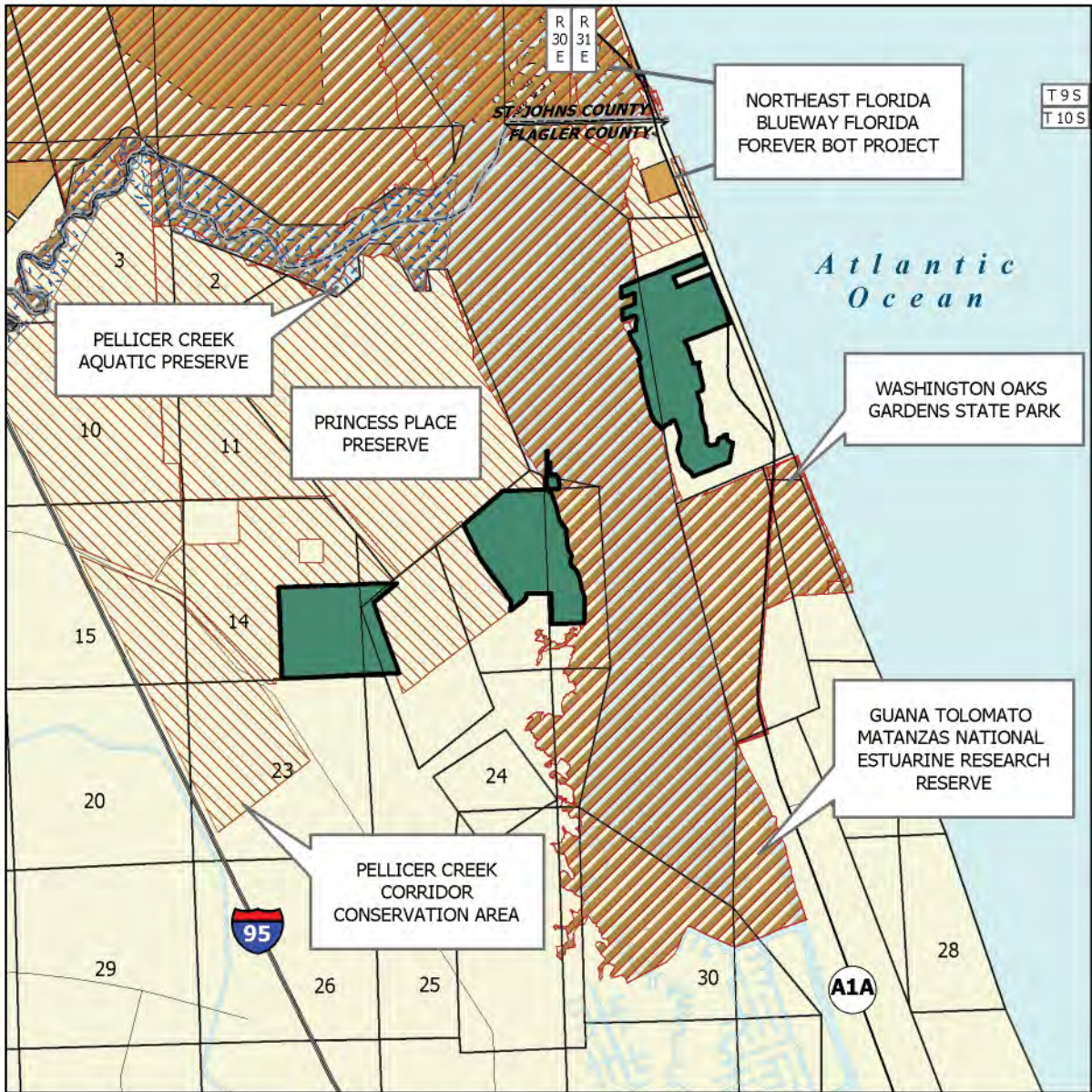
Qualifications for state designation The Flagler County Blueway Florida Forever project is 5,015 acres in eastern Flagler County. The project area consists of multiple parcels in the Matanzas River ecosystem watershed, which includes the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). The tracts of private lands that constitute this project vary greatly in size, ranging from 10 to 1,056 acres, and vary in type and quality of habitats. Some tracts in this project adjoin and provide connectivity among federal, state and local conservation lands. These tracts, if acquired, would be part of the Flagler County Blueway Project, which extends from the headwaters of Pellicer Creek and the Princess Place Preserve in the north, past the Graham Swamp Conservation Area

(CA), to Bulow Creek State Park (SP), just south of the Flagler County line.

Project lands are situated primarily west of the ICW, with a smaller acreage on the eastern shore of the ICW. The project extends for a north-south distance of approximately 17 miles. The northernmost tract in the project is located approximately 56 miles south of Jacksonville, and 17 miles south of St. Augustine. The southernmost tract is located approximately 14 miles north of Daytona Beach, and 28 miles northeast of Deland. Other nearby conservation lands in addition to those mentioned above include the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, the Bulow Plantation Ruins Historic SP, the Pellicer Creek Aquatic Preserve (AP), the Tomoka Marsh AP, Tomoka SP and Washington Oaks Gardens SP.

Overall, the Flagler County Blueway proposal comprises a landscape of three distinguishable groups of conservation lands. They are as follows: (1) northern perimeter conservation lands include the northernmost extent of the project adjacent to Washington Oaks Gardens SP, Pellicer Creek CA, and Princess Place Preserve; (2) southern perimeter conservation lands are at the southern end of the proposal boundary, including Bulow Creek SP, Gamble Rogers State Recreation Area and North Peninsula SP; and (3) the central, connecting part of the proposed blueway project that is proximal to northern and southern borders of the Graham Swamp CA. This project is significant as an ecological greenway, with 94 percent (7,791 acres) of the project area qualifying as a Priority 7 in potential importance, according to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Florida Forever Measures Evaluation.

Approximately 48 percent of the project is uplands. Scrub comprises 132 acres of the project area, with mesic flatwoods and scrubby flatwoods comprising a total of 883 acres. Coastal uplands include 1,063 acres of costal strand and maritime hammock. These uplands are important flyway resting and feeding areas for migratory birds, and occur primarily on islands, and along the edge of the estuarine tidal marsh. Pine plantation, agricultural use (mostly pasture), and otherwise disturbed and developed lands constitute 1,901 acres of the project. Freshwater wetlands are mostly forested, including basin swamp, baygall, hydric hammock, and perhaps a small area of dome swamp, for a total of 2,815 acres. Some hydric hammocks are of particularly good quality. One of the basin swamps is a southern extension of the Graham Swamp CA, and is the largest natural area in the project. About 51 acres



FLAGLER COUNTY BLUEWAY: MAP 1 OF 3

FLAGLER COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  Other Florida Forever BOT Projects
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands
-  State Aquatic Preserve



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are depression marsh. Functional wetlands comprise 45 percent (3,692 acres) of the project area, and help conserve areas for aquifer recharge (8 percent, or 672 acres of project area), and provide protection for fragile coastal resources (28 percent, or 2,300 acres of project area). The FNAI Florida Forever Measures Evaluation also indicates that 84 percent (6,963 acres) of the project would serve surface water protection. There are 1,222 acres of estuarine tidal marsh, mostly along the ICW, Matanzas River and Smith Creek. There are 218 acres classified as open water. The FNAI Florida Forever Measures Evaluation indicates that 25 percent (2,075 acres) of the project area is under-represented natural communities.

The FNAI provides information for imperiled or rare species in Florida, some of which may be listed by the federal government and/or the state. Imperiled or rare animal species documented to occur on the project include the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) and MacGillivray's seaside sparrow (*Ammodramus maritimus macgillivrayi*). The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) has been reported to nest near the project area. The West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) occurs nearby in the ICW. Other imperiled or rare animals which potentially occur in the project area include the Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), hairy woodpecker (*Picoides villosus*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), and the spotted turtle (*Clemmys guttata*). In addition, many other vertebrate species are expected to use the project area as habitat. According to the FWC approximately 42 percent (3,486 acres) of the project area is within Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCAs). Another 31 percent (2,583 acres) of the project is a habitat conservation priority for rare species with the greatest conservation need, according to the FNAI.

Manager The Division of Forestry (DOF) of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the FWC are recommended as unified managers of the fee simple portions of the project that are acquired.

Management Goals The DOF and FWC are prepared to share all management responsibilities for Flagler County Blueway under the unified management concept that both agencies are currently developing. Under unified management, both agencies will identify mutually acceptable goals that further the long-term protection of the site's plant and wildlife resources, promote sound stewardship of land, timber and water resources, and provide the public with access and quality recreational opportunities. The project has the capability to provide

needed protection for fish and wildlife habitat in a manner that is compatible with sound silvicultural practices. More importantly, the project could serve an important biogeographical function by providing physical linkages and connections to several other publicly owned lands in the Flagler County area.

Since the project goals include protection of biodiversity, and provision of natural resource-based public recreational and educational opportunities, programs would be developed to manage ecosystems for multiple use. Multiple use means the harmonious and coordinated management of timber, recreation, conservation of fish and wildlife, forage, archaeological and historic sites, habitat and other biological resources, or water resources so that they are utilized in the combination that will best serve the people of the state, making the most judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources and giving consideration to the relative values of the various resources. Conservation and protection of the unique coastal maritime community, xeric oak scrub community, and imperiled or rare species should be an important management goal for the project. Under the unified management approach, a broad-scale management program will be developed that will manage and/or restore important ecosystems, landscapes, wildlife populations, forests and water resources, and promote recreation and environmental education in the natural environment. Timber stands would be managed using even age and/or uneven aged methods to maintain a broad diversity of age classes ranging from young stands to areas with old growth characteristics. This would provide habitat for the full spectrum of species that would be found in the natural environment and enhance and maintain biodiversity. The project area is proximal to a large number of users that enjoy fishing, hiking, hunting, kayaking, and wildlife viewing. There is also potential for equestrian use, off-road biking, and multi-use trails through the proposed project. Additionally, the Department of Environmental Protection and University of Florida Statewide Greenways System Planning Project shows that 81 percent (6,717 acres) of the project area to be suitable for Priority 2 recreational trails.

This project contributes to the following goals in accordance with the Florida Forever Act (259.105(4), F.S.):

(c) Protect, restore, and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water, and wetland systems of the state

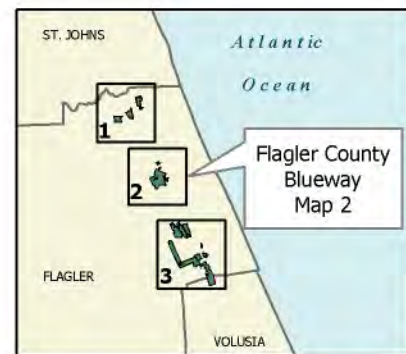
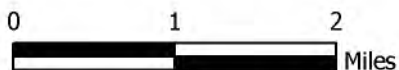
(d) Ensure that sufficient quantities of water are



FLAGLER COUNTY BLUEWAY: MAP 2 OF 3

FLAGLER COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands



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available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state

(e) Increase natural resource-based public recreational and educational opportunities

(h) Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas.

Conditions affecting intensity of management The disjunct nature of parcels comprising the Flagler County Blueway creates a special management consideration that will need to be addressed by the unified managers. DOF and FWC will need to devise a strategy to deploy manpower, equipment, and other management resources in a manner that is coordinated and efficient. Some portions of Flagler County Blueway are low-need areas that will require up-front implementation of resource management activities, including the frequent use of prescribed fire where appropriate. Approximately, 23 percent of the project area has been subjected to ground cover disturbance due to past silvicultural activity, consequently additional effort will be required to accomplish objectives for restoration to a desired future condition. The DOF and FWC propose to work cooperatively to assess site management needs and develop the conceptual management plan (CMP) for the site. Examples of situations that may require cooperative effort include restoration of mesic and wet flatwoods previously managed for timber production, removal or thinning of off-site timber species to promote the regeneration of native ground covers and appropriate tree species, and reforestation of recently harvested areas. As part of the unified management approach, the managing agencies will conduct an historic vegetation analysis to assist in determining appropriate desired future conditions, and identify appropriate restoration methods and tools. This effort will help facilitate conservation of habitats and populations of imperiled or rare species. Other unified management priorities will include protection of maritime hammock communities, restoration of sensitive wetlands, and the identification, control, and follow-up monitoring of exotic species. Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), listed as a Category I exotic (most adversely affecting Florida's ecology) by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, is an established shrub that has been observed in the project area and which deserves aggressive control.

The principal land management activities slated to occur on less disturbed natural communities will include the introduction of prescribed fire and control of human uses in certain management units. Restoration methods

will also include thinning of dense pine stands to decrease canopy cover and facilitate the restoration of native groundcovers.

Biotic surveys would be conducted as part of early unified management activities. Due to the presence of imperiled or rare species expected to occur within the proposed project, it is anticipated that resource inventories would be an initial priority under the unified management approach. Environmentally sensitive areas such as erosion-prone sites, listed species habitats, outstanding natural areas, and wetlands, are to be identified during the initial resource inventory to implement appropriate protective measures for each specific area. Such inventories are considered vital to unified management planning efforts directed at facility and infrastructure development, and design and implementation of recreational use programs.

Timetable for implementing management provisions It is anticipated that during the first year after acquisition, both agencies operating under the unified management approach will place emphasis on site security, posting boundaries, public access for low-intensity outdoor recreation, fire management, resource inventory, and removal of refuse. Both managing agencies will participate in the joint development of a CMP specifying area management goals and objectives. Both managing agencies will meet frequently to coordinate task assignments, and cooperate with, and seek the assistance of other state agencies, local governments, and other appropriate participants as it affects management of the project site.

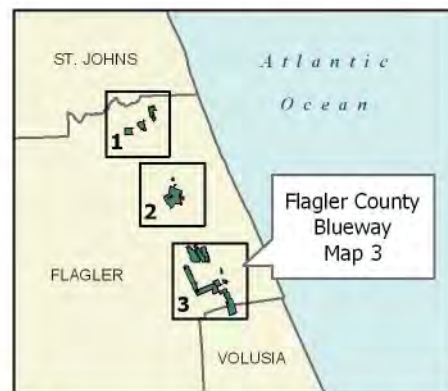
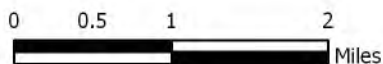
Goals intended for long-term implementation would emphasize multiple use management and the conservation of the site's natural resources including timber, fish and wildlife, and water. These goals would include restoration of habitat and hydrology, and conservation and protection of listed species of flora and fauna. Following completion of plant community inventory and historic vegetation analysis, quantified vegetation management objectives would be developed pursuant to an objective-based vegetation management process. Where practical, disturbed sites would be restored to conditions expected to occur in naturally functioning ecosystems, including re-establishment of species expected to occur naturally on specific sites. Management would emphasize enhancement of abundance, and spatial distribution of imperiled or rare species. Essential roads would be stabilized to provide all-weather public access and management operations. Programs providing multiple recreational uses would



FLAGLER COUNTY BLUEWAY: MAP 3 OF 3

VOLUSIA AND FLAGLER COUNTY

-  Florida Forever BOT Project Boundary
-  Acquired
-  Essential Parcel(s) Remaining
-  State Owned Lands
-  Other Conservation Lands



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also be implemented.

Both agencies will work towards the development of a fire management plan that will apply prescribed burning in a manner that maximizes natural resource protection and enhancement. Most of this project area has not been burned by prescribed fire in recent years. Whenever possible, existing roads, black lines, foam lines and natural breaks will be utilized to contain and control prescribed and natural fires. Growing-season prescribed burning would be used where appropriate to best achieve management objectives. Where appropriate, practical, and in pursuit of natural resource management objectives, timber resources will be managed using acceptable silvicultural practices. Thinning of timber, introduction of prescribed fire, and sustainable forestry management practices could provide silvicultural products, ecological, and recreational benefits. It is also possible that recreational trails on the parcels could function as back up firelines, provide access for prescribed burning equipment, and provide an opportunity for wildlife viewing. Archaeological and historic sites would be managed in coordination with the Department of State's Division of Historical Resources (DHR). The DHR lists 16 such sites as occurring in the project area.

Both agencies will work towards development of a road plan identifying roads to be used for vehicular access by the public, and roads that are required for administrative use. Unnecessary roads, fire lanes and hydrological disturbances would be abandoned or restored as practical. The road plan would insure that the public has appropriate access, and that sensitive resources are protected. Other existing infrastructure necessary for management would be protected to the extent possible. Infrastructure development would be the minimum required to serve needs of the public, including provision of facilities, and would include provisions for the facilities necessary for security and management of the project area. The Eemerald Coast parcel, already purchased, will be separately managed by Flagler County.

Estimate of revenue-generating potential Timber sales would be conducted as needed to improve or maintain desirable ecosystem conditions, under a multiple-use management concept. The FNAI indicates that 27 percent (2,260 acres) of the project area is available as priorities 2, 3, and 5 for sustainable forestry. The

FNAI estimates that 1.34 percent (111 acres) of forest provides aquifer recharge. Management would seek revenue-generating potential by improving wildlife diversity and resource-based recreation in such areas. Additional revenue would be generated from sales of fishing licenses, wildlife management area permits, and daily use permit fees. Some revenues might be realized in the future from other recreational user fees, and ecotourism activities, if such projects could be economically developed. Fifteen percent (15 percent) of all gross revenues will be returned to the county from which those funds were generated.

Cooperators in management activities The unified managers (DOF and FWC) should cooperate with other state and local governmental agencies, including the Saint Johns River Water Management District, to manage the project area. The project should be designated as a state forest and wildlife management area.

Revenue sources, management costs and employees needed* Both agencies have agreed to a unified management framework whereby all CARL management funds, site generated revenues, and management expenditures are to be evenly divided between the DOF and FWC.

(continued)



The Indian River seen from US Highway 1 in Melbourne, Brevard County, in 1946

Photo from the Florida Photographic Archives, Florida Department of State.

Category Source of Funds	Start-up CARL	Recurring CARL
Resource Management	\$143,188	\$145,854
Administration	\$75,494	\$25,133
Support	\$149,080	\$31,566
Capital Improvements	\$988,553	\$85,164
Visitor Services/Recreation	\$2,335	\$141
Law Enforcement	\$5,799	\$5,799
TOTAL	\$1,364,449	\$293,656

*includes employee salaries