



Ayavalla Plantation

Less-Than-Fee Project

Leon

Project-at-a-Glance

Year Added to Priority List	2008
Project Acres	6,098
Acquired Acres	79
Cost of Acquired Acres	\$0
Remaining Project Acres	6,019
2019 Assessed Value of Remaining Acres	\$17,929,376

Purpose for State Acquisition

Acquiring a less-than-fee conservation easement over the Ayavalla Plantation property in northern Leon County meets state goals of enhancing coordination of land acquisition policies efforts by making a conservation link among properties. This project will connect the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area to properties near Lake Jackson. Using a conservation easement for this project also meets state conservation goals of finding alternatives to fee-simple purchases. The property also meets Florida Forever goals of increasing protection of Florida’s biodiversity of species, landscapes, and natural communities by preserving a large area of natural habitat. Another major state conservation goal of the state conservation policies is to ensure that Florida has enough quantities of fresh water, and as such the Ayavalla Plantation conservation easement will protect a large array of ponds, lakes, and wetlands.

Manager(s)

The Office of Environmental Services within the Division of State Lands will periodically monitor the conservation easement over the property while the primary management will be by the private property owner.



General Description

Ayavalla Plantation is 6,081 acres in northern Leon County, bordering the Ochlockonee River and stretching from Old Bainbridge Road eastward to the northern edge of Lake Jackson. It has many parcels, all under the ownership of the Phipps family. As part of the planned less-than-fee acquisition, the Phipps family will retain 15 small-acreage tracts spaced throughout the project area that may be used as home sites.

The project includes more than five and one-half miles of river frontage. The eastern-southeastern boundary is partly defined by Meridian Road (County Road 155) and part of the western boundary fronts on Old Bainbridge Road (County Road 157). The project is also adjacent to land managed by Leon County as a local park.

The Ayavalla Plantation landscape is part of the Red Hills Physiographic Province, characterized by rolling terrain clay soils that rest upon limestone. The wetlands on the property include a variety of freshwater lake and riparian systems. Elevations range from approximately 90 to 200 feet above mean sea level, being generally lower near the river. The principal native landcover was once upland pine forest but has been heavily disturbed by centuries-long agriculture and timber production, food plots, and clearing, with substantial disturbance to native groundcover (now mostly weedy species). However, a pine component is once again prominent, albeit one that is more characteristic of successional old fields, including shortleaf, loblolly, and slash pines rather than the original longleaf pine. Roughly one-third of these pinelands are now in intensive silviculture. The remainder more closely resembles upland pine forest at a structural level although its floral components have been altered to such an extent that it is not considered by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) as a native upland pine forest community. These pine-dominated uplands are selectively timbered pine plantation on former agricultural fields. Approximately fifteen percent of the property is classified as a "Strategic Habitat Conservation Area"; primarily for wading birds. The river corridor segment of the property may provide habitat for larger, more far roaming listed species such as the Florida black bear. Other rare and imperiled species that are likely to occur on the upland habitat within this project includes the Sherman's fox squirrel, gopher frog, pine barrens treefrog, and the Florida pine snake, which are all Species of Special Concern, as well as the gopher tortoise and gopher frog that are listed as Threatened. Since gopher tortoise burrows are on the site, there is some potential for restoration and establishment of gopher tortoise habitat.



FNAI Element Occurrence Summary

<u>FNAI Elements</u>	<u>Score</u>
Gopher tortoise	G3/S3
Florida black bear	G5T4/S4
Round-tailed muskrat	G2/S2
<i>narrowleaf naiad</i>	G3/S2
Southeastern weasel	G5T4/S3?
Bald eagle	G5/S3
Southeastern fox squirrel	G5T5/S3

7 rare species are associated with the project

Public Use

Because the property would remain in private hands but under a conservation easement, opportunities for public recreation would be limited to what the landowner would allow. As a less-than-fee property, this could not be a state park or state forest or other state use, however there are possibilities of a walking or biking trail along the edges of the property. The site could possibly be used for scientific studies and educational tours, and special opportunity hunts for disabled individuals or military veterans. These uses are conditional on whatever the conservation easement would allow.

Acquisition Planning

2008

On June 13, 2008, the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) added the Ayavalla Plantation to the Florida Forever project list as a less-than-fee project. In 2008, the project had an estimated tax assessed value of \$23,675,453.

2011

On December 9, 2011, ARC placed this project into the Florida Forever category of Less-than-Fee projects.

Coordination

Leon County is supportive of the goals of the acquisition but is not currently a partner in the acquisition.

Management Policy Statement

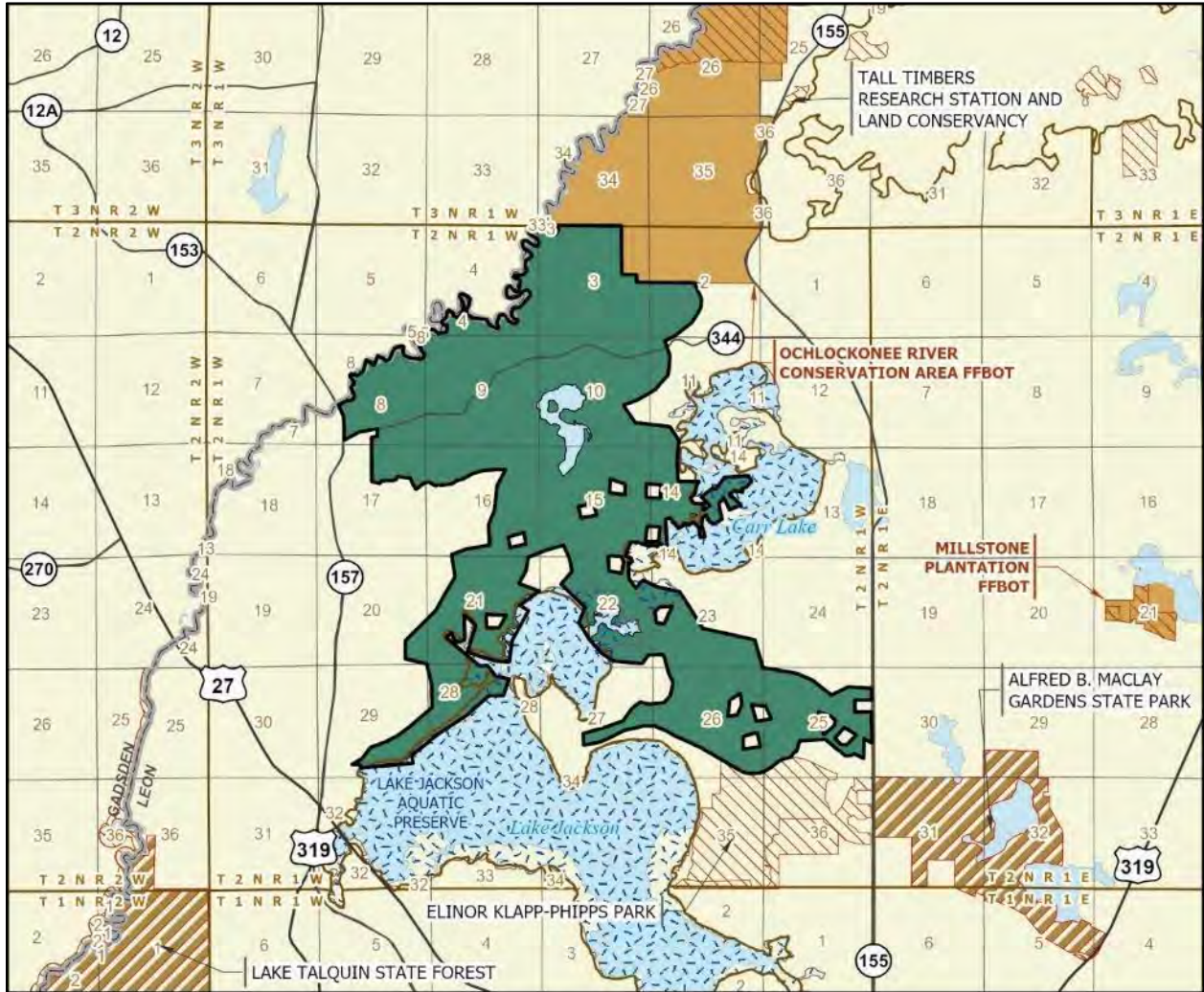
As a less-than-fee acquisition, the Ayavalla Plantation will continue to be managed by the private landowner, but in accordance with the conservation easement terms. The purchase of



the development rights, prohibition of converting more natural areas to intensive uses and the management of the property for habitat will likely be the primary focus of the elements of the conservation easement.

Management Prospectus

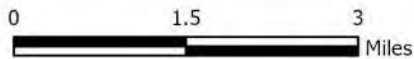
The Office of Environmental Services of the Division of State Lands is designated to ensure oversight of the conservation easement on this project.



AYAVALLA PLANTATION

LEON COUNTY

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



JANUARY 2020

Map 14 : FNAI, January 2021