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## MEETING NOTICE

### REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

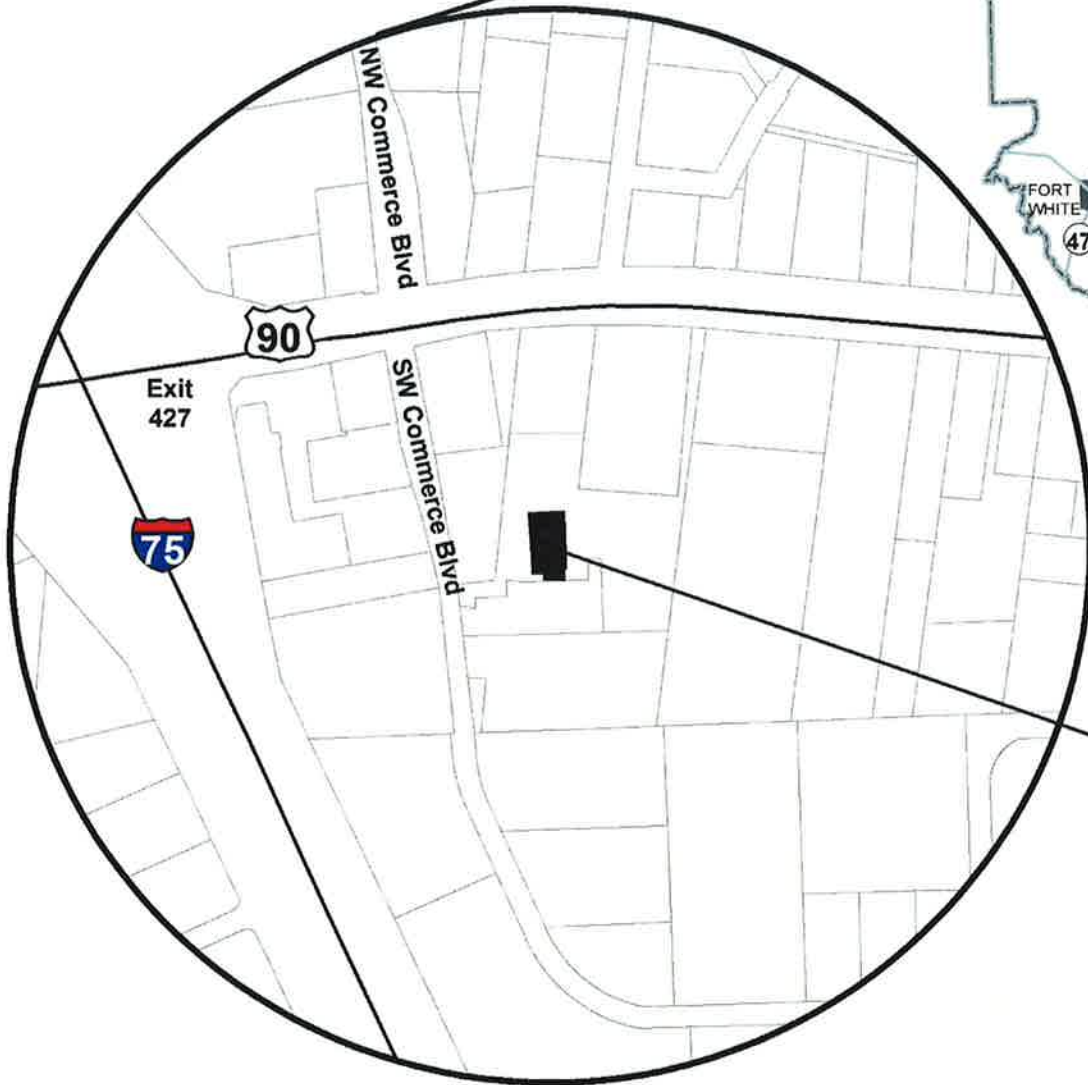
There will be a meeting of the Regional Planning Committee of the North Central Florida Regional Planning Council on **March 22, 2018**. The meeting will be held at the **Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, 213 SW Commerce Boulevard, Lake City**, beginning at **5:30 p.m.**

(Location Map on Back)

# Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites

213 SW Commerce Blvd  
Lake City, Florida 32025

Directions: From the intersection of Interstate 75 and U.S. Highway 90 (exit 427) in the City of Lake City turn, East onto U.S. Highway 90, travel approximately 450 feet to SW Commerce Blvd, turn right (South) onto SW Commerce Blvd, travel approximately 720 feet and the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites is on the left.



1 inch = 500 feet

Holiday Inn  
Hotel & Suites





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## AGENDA

### REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
Lake City, Florida

March 22, 2018  
5:30 p.m.

**PAGE NO.**

- |   |      |   |          |
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| * | I.   | APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 26, 2017 MEETING MINUTES  | <b>5</b> |
|   | II.  | MARCH 13, 2018 AND MARCH 15, 2018 RULE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS<br>- REPORT  |          |
| * | III. | CONSIDERATION OF ALACHUA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS<br>REQUEST FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE REGIONAL ECOLOGICAL GREENWAYS<br>NETWORK NATURAL RESOURCE OF REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE MAP | <b>7</b> |

*Please be advised that the Proposed Evaluation and Appraisal Reported-Based Amendments to the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan are posted on the Council website at [http://ncfrpc.org/Publications/SRPP/2017/Draft2017SRPP\\_10-26-17.pdf](http://ncfrpc.org/Publications/SRPP/2017/Draft2017SRPP_10-26-17.pdf)*

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NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites  
Lake City, Florida

October 26, 2017  
5:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Anthony Adams  
Charles Chestnut, IV  
Fletcher Hope  
Tim Murphy  
William Hunter  
Helen Warren, Vice-Chair

Beth Burnam, Chair  
Mike Deming  
James Montgomery

STAFF PRESENT

Steven Dopp  
Scott Koons

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Warren at 5:32 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 30, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Adams and seconded by Mr. Hunter to approve the March 30, 2017 Committee meeting minutes as circulated. The motion carried unanimously.

II. REVIEW OF PROPOSED EVALUATION AND APPRAISAL-REPORT AMENDMENTS TO THE NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA STRATEGIC REGIONAL POLICY PLAN

Mr. Dopp presented proposed revisions to the proposed amendments to the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan. He noted that the proposed revisions delete Marion County throughout the plan, delete Natural Resources of Regional Significance classified as Surface Water Improvement Management Plan Priority Water Bodies, update various tables in the Affordable Housing Element, update one table in the Regional Transportation Element and amend the Economic Development Element to incorporate the recently-adopted 2018-2022 North Central Florida Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

**ACTION:** It was moved by Commissioner Hope and seconded by Commissioner Murphy to amend the proposed amendments to the North Central Florida Strategic Regional Policy Plan as circulated and to recommend that the Council initiate formal rule making pursuant to Chapter 120, Florida Statutes, and adopt the proposed amendments to the regional plan. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Helen Warren, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date





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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 14, 2018  
**TO:** Scott R. Koons, AICP, Executive Director  
**FROM:** Steven Dopp, Senior Planner  
**RE:** Updated Florida Ecological Greenways Network

I spoke with Daniel Diaz, with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails today. Mr. Diaz stated that the Greenways and Trails Council has not yet approved a new Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan. The Council will consider adopting the updated Plan at its June 2018 meeting.

I also spoke with Samantha Brown, Chief, Office of Greenways and Trails. Ms. Brown stated that the Florida Ecological Greenways Network is not scheduled to be approved by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council as the Council is not mandated by Florida Statutes to approve the Florida Ecological Greenways Network map.

Ms. Brown further stated that the Florida Greenways and Trails Council formally adopted a series of trail maps at its January 2018 meeting. Ms. Brown noted that the 2016 Florida Ecological Greenways Network map was used as one of the criteria in developing the recently-approved trail maps.

The Florida Ecological Greenways Network is referenced in the draft 2018-2022 Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan. The draft plan notes that the Florida Ecological Greenways Network map assists, "...Florida Greenways and Trails Council in the identification of a comprehensive ecological greenways vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System." The draft plan further notes that the Greenways and Trails Council will further refine its Land Trail Opportunity map to identify Ready Land Trail Opportunities. To be recognized as a Ready Opportunity Corridor the trail must meet five criteria, one of which is to support the Florida Ecological Greenway Network.

In 2006, the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida called for an identification of those lands and waters in the state that are critical to the conservation of Florida's natural resources. In response, the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, University of Florida Center for Landscape Conservation Planning, and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission collaborated to produce the Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project. The project is a geographic information system database of statewide conservation priorities for a broad range of natural resources, including biodiversity, landscape function, surface water, groundwater, and marine resources. The project is now being used to inform decisions by the Peninsular Florida Landscape Conservation Cooperative, coordinated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Florida Ecological Greenways Network is part of the project.

The Florida Ecological Greenways Network identifies and prioritizes a functionally connected statewide ecological network of public and private conservation lands. The Network guides the Florida Office of Greenways and Trails ecological greenway conservation efforts, and promotes public awareness of the need for and benefits of a statewide ecological greenways network. It is also the primary data layer used to inform the Florida Forever and other state and regional land acquisition programs regarding the most important ecological corridors and intact landscapes across the state.

The Florida Ecological Greenways Network is updated approximately every five years. The most recent update to the Network was completed in 2016. The 2016 Network map identifies six priority levels. The Network is maintained by the Geoplan Center at the University of Florida.

Attached are excerpts from the currently adopted Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan 2013-17 as well as the Draft 2018-2022 Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan.

**Attachments**

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*SKSD*  
**Alachua County  
Board of County Commissioners**

Lee Pinkoson, *Chair*  
Charles S. Chestnut IV, *Vice Chair*  
Mike Byerly  
Ken Cornell  
Robert Hutchinson

**Administration**  
Michele L. Lieberman  
*Interim County Manager*

RECEIVED

DEC 27 2017

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA  
REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL

December 19, 2017

Scott Koons, Director  
North Central Florida Regional Planning Council  
2009 NW 67 Place  
Gainesville, Florida 33653-1603

Dear Mr. Koons:

**RE: Draft 2016 Strategic Regional Policy Plan**

The Alachua County Commission requests that you reconsider the inclusion of Priority Class 3 of the State Ecological Greenways Network, at least for Alachua County, to the Map of Natural Resources of Regional Significance in the 2016 Strategic Regional Policy Plan. I have attached a map depicting these areas in Alachua County.

Priority Class 3 lands in areas with high growth pressure are recognized as having the same high priority as Priority Class 1 and 2 areas in the Identification of Critical Linkages Within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network report (see page 7, [https://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/FGTS\\_Plan/PDF/Critical\\_Linkages\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/FGTS_Plan/PDF/Critical_Linkages_Report.pdf)) and therefore should be included in Table 4.1 of the Plan and added to the maps for Natural Systems of Regionally Significant Natural Resources.

If you have any questions related to this request, please contact Stephen Hofstetter, the Environmental Protection Department, Natural Resource Program Manager, at 352-264-6811 or [shofstetter@alachuacounty.us](mailto:shofstetter@alachuacounty.us).

Sincerely,

Lee Pinkoson, Chair  
Alachua County Commission  
Chr18.030

LP/sh

cc: Board of County Commissioners  
Michele L. Lieberman, Interim County Manager  
Sylvia Torres, Interim County Attorney  
Chris Bird, Environmental Protection Department





# Alachua County Environmental Protection Department

Chris Bird, Director

January 5, 2017

Stuart Pollins, Policy Chief  
Executive Office of the Governor, Policy and Budget  
1802 The Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Mr. Pollins,

Alachua County staff reviewed the Draft 2016 Strategic Regional Policy Plan and have the following comments related to the proposed Evaluation and Appraisal Report-based amendments and map of Natural Resources of Regional Significance.

The eastern portions of the Alachua County identified as Priority Class 3 in the State Ecological Greenways Network should be added to the Map of Natural Resources of Regional Significance and included in Table 4.1 as Natural Resources of Regional Significance based on the high vulnerability of the Priority Class 1 and 2 areas in this region to development or more intensive agriculture and this is based on Statewide growth pressure models and current development trends in the region. Priority Class 1 and 2 areas are currently included in Table 4.1. Priority Class 3 lands in areas with high growth pressure are recognized as having the same high priority as Priority Class 1 and 2 areas in the Identification of Critical Linkages Within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network report (see page 7, [https://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/FGTS\\_Plan/PDF/Critical\\_Linkages\\_Report.pdf](https://www.dep.state.fl.us/gwt/FGTS_Plan/PDF/Critical_Linkages_Report.pdf)) and therefore should be included in Table 4.1 and added to the maps for Natural Systems of Regionally Significant Natural Resources.

There are several properties that have been recently acquired by the Alachua County Parks and Conservation Lands that should be added to the local government-owned land that is included in Table 4.1 and mapped. Attached is a map of these recently acquired properties. Please contact Sandra Vardaman, at 352-264-6803 if you need additional information on these properties.

If you have any questions related to these comments please do not hesitate to contact me at 352-264-6801 or Stephen Hofstetter, Natural Resources Program Manager, at 352-264-6811.

Sincerely,

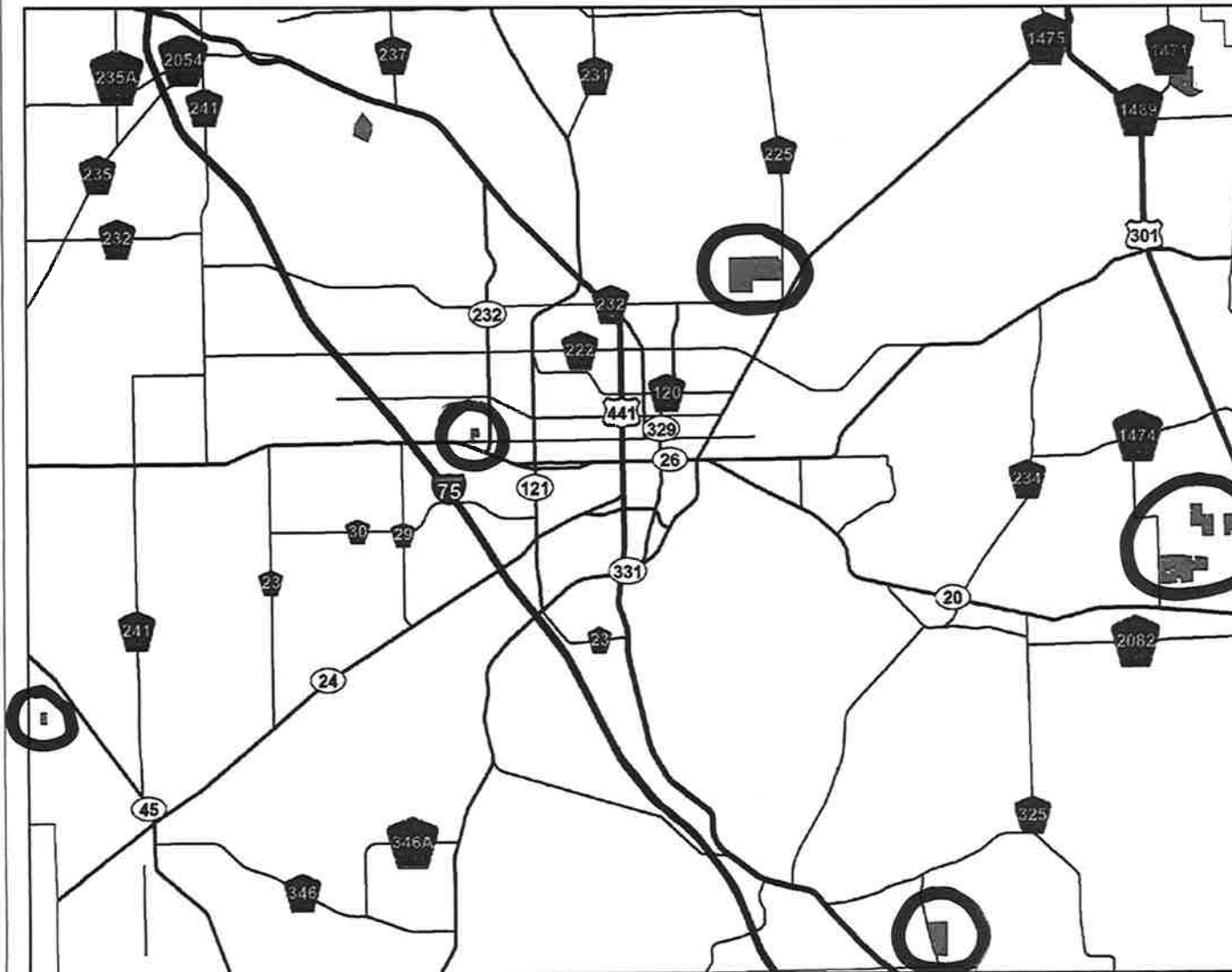


Chris Bird

CC: Dr. Lee Niblock, County Manager  
Scott Koons, NCFRPC

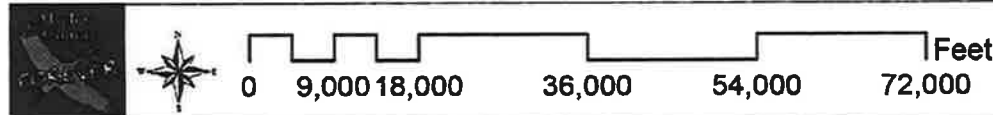


# NCFRPC Regionally Significant Natural Resources



## Legend

- NCFRPC\_parcels
- CountyBoundary



DISCLAIMER: This map and the spatial data it contains are made available as a public service, to be used for reference purposes only. The Alachua County Environmental Protection Department provides this information AS IS without warranty of any kind. The quality of the data is dependent on the various sources from which each data layer is obtained.



# Florida Greenways & Trails System Plan



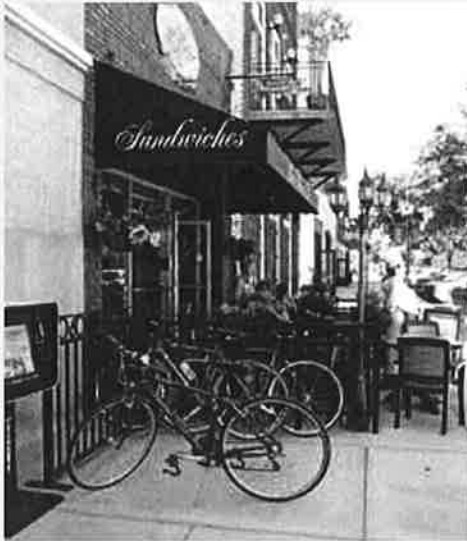
## 2013-2017



# Florida Greenways + Trails



## Why the Florida Greenways and Trails System?



While trails and greenways provide a wide range of benefits, some of their most compelling values are economic. The following statistics demonstrate some of the reasons to invest in trails and greenways:

- Three Central Florida trails were estimated to support \$42 million of economic impact and 516 jobs in 2010 (East Central Florida Regional Planning Council, 2010).
- Trails are the number one community amenity sought by prospective homeowners (National Association of Homebuilders, 2008).
- Homes adjacent to rail trails sell faster and closer to list price than other homes (Della Penna, 2005).
- Every \$1 million spent on the construction of multi-use trails yields 9.6 jobs (University of Massachusetts, 2011).
- The repeated annual economic impact of cyclists has been estimated to be nine times the one-time cost to build bicycle facilities (North Carolina DOT, 2004).
- Nearly 75 percent of all Florida visitors participate in nature-based activities during their visit (VISIT FLORIDA, 2012).

## Identification and Prioritization of the FGTS

The FGTS is made up of existing, planned and conceptual trails and ecological greenways that form a connected, integrated statewide network. The FGTS serves as a green infrastructure plan for Florida, tying together the greenways and trails plans and planning activities of communities, agencies and non-profit organizations throughout Florida.

### **GOAL 1: Identify and prioritize trails and greenways to facilitate completion of the FGTS.**

1. **The Vision** The Opportunity Maps contain the comprehensive vision for the FGTS.

- **Land Trails Opportunity Map** – Represents the existing, planned and conceptual non-motorized trails that form a land-based trail network of state and regional importance. This map is a synthesis of trail planning efforts being conducted by cities, counties, transportation planning organizations and other agencies and non-profits throughout Florida. This map does not include all existing, proposed and conceptual trails in Florida, but focuses on linear trails of state and regional significance to form a comprehensive connected system. The Land Trails Opportunity Map is the state companion to community greenways and trails and bicycle and pedestrian master plans, and encompasses a combination of multiple and single-use trails to accommodate uses such as: walking, hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, skating and wildlife viewing.
- **Paddling Trails Opportunity Map** – Represents the vision for a comprehensive water-based trails system. This map includes waterways that are designated as part of the FGTS or are appropriate for future designation. Because water trails are not consistently captured in local and regional planning efforts like land trails typically are, it is important to establish basic criteria for inclusion. Therefore, to be included in the Paddling Trails Opportunity Map, a waterway shall:



- o Represent an existing or potential destination trail that reaches beyond the local area due to its scenic qualities and diversity of experiences.
  - o Be at least three miles in length, preferably longer.
  - o Be navigable during the majority of months in an average year.
- **Ecological Greenways Opportunity Map** – Represents the areas necessary to protect a statewide network of conservation land and connecting wildlife corridors designed to maintain large landscape-scale ecological functions. The Ecological Greenways Opportunity Map consists of various data combined to identify the network of landscape linkages and corridors necessary to functionally connect large conservation land areas into a statewide ecological greenways system. A direct outcome of this map is the publicly promoted Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Strategy 1.1: Develop and maintain Opportunity Maps to identify and define an accurate, current and comprehensive statewide vision for the Florida Greenways and Trails System.

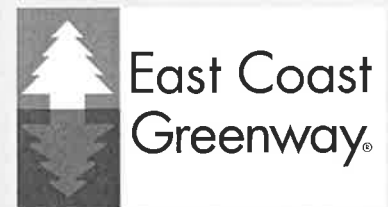
Objective 1.1.1: The Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) will maintain the Land Trails Opportunity Map as Florida’s non-motorized land-based trails [vision and conduct a review and update of this map] no less than every three years in coordination with partners.

Objective 1.1.2: OGT will maintain the Paddling Trails Opportunity Map as Florida’s water trails [vision and conduct a review and update of this map] no less than every three years in coordination with partners.

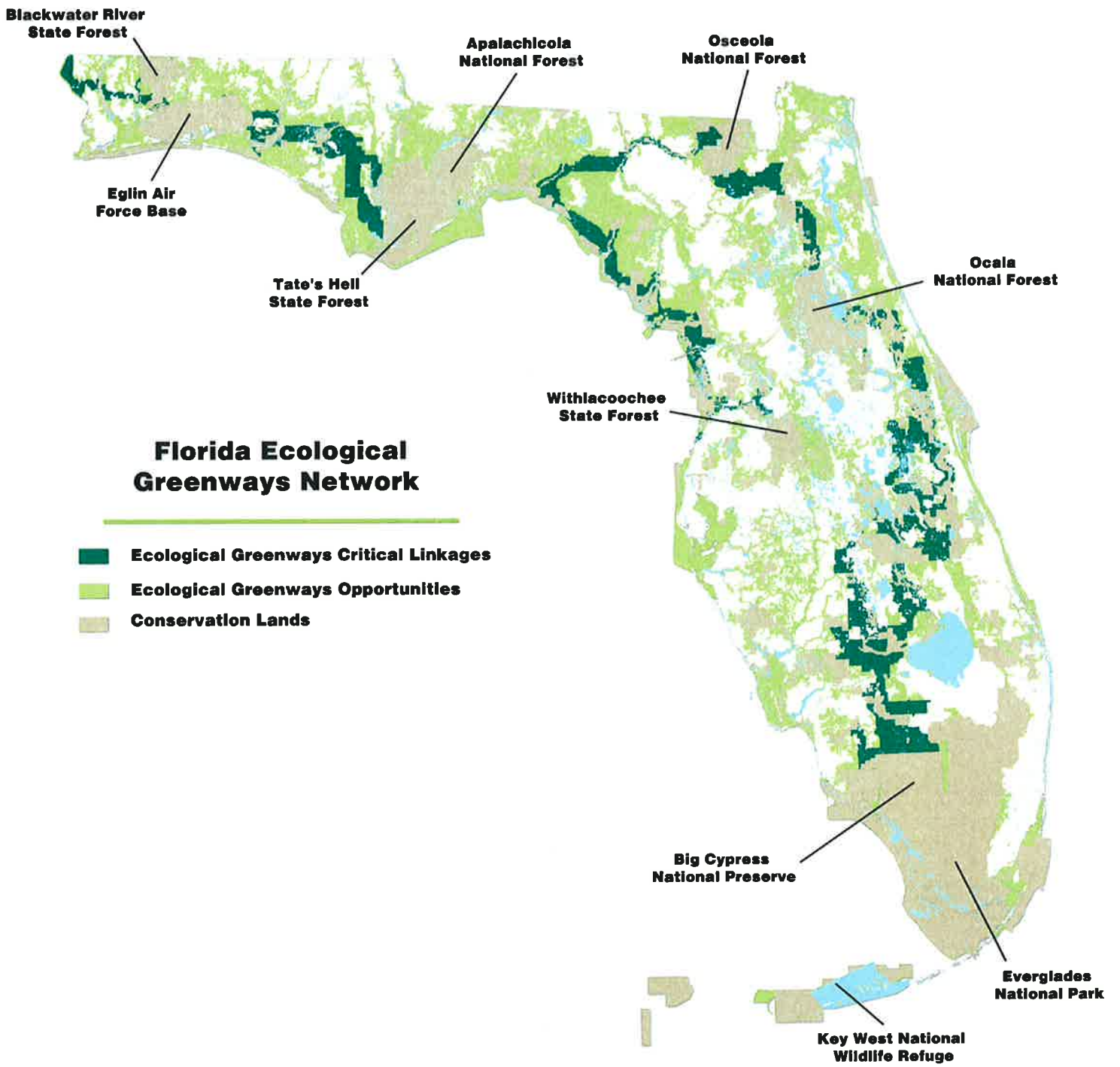
Objective 1.1.3: OGT will maintain the Ecological Greenways Opportunity Map as Florida’s comprehensive ecological greenways [vision and conduct a review and update of this map] no less than every five years in coordination with partners to include the University of Florida and the Florida Ecological Greenway Technical Advisory Group.

### East Coast Greenway

The East Coast Greenway (ECG) is a developing trail system, spanning nearly 3,000 miles as it winds its way from Canada to Key West, FL, linking all the major cities of America’s Eastern Seaboard. It is the nation’s most ambitious long-distance urban trail project. By connecting existing and planned shared-use trails, a continuous, traffic-free route is being formed to serve self-powered users of all abilities and ages.



Florida boasts the longest portion of the ECG with the most miles of completed trail. North to south, the ECG enters the state at Fernandina Beach then continues 584 miles to Key West, the United States’ southernmost mainland point. The ECG travels largely along the coast, through seaside villages, America’s earliest historic sites, through vast nature preserves and major cities that include Jacksonville and Miami. The project also includes the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail which hops from island to island for 106 miles. The Florida segment includes the most bridges of any ECG state, with much of the route on a wide side path that runs along Highway A1A. The entire ECG in Florida is within the FGTS Land Trails Opportunity Map and the FGTS Priority Trails Map. For more information about the Florida East Coast Greenway, visit [greenway.org/fl.aspx](http://greenway.org/fl.aspx).



to and coordinate connections between recreational opportunities. Since the FGTS plan plays an instrumental role in both of these regards, it serves as an integral state-level companion to SCORP.

Strategy 4.4: Coordinate the FGTS to enhance public access to and provide connections between Florida's diverse recreational opportunities.

Objective 4.4.1: Advance the SCORP by coordinating the FGTS plan to connect and increase access to public recreational opportunities.

Objective 4.4.2: Promote the FGTS plan and SCORP as companion efforts for state level outdoor recreation planning.

Objective 4.4.3: Coordinate with the Florida Outdoor Recreation Coalition, the Florida Recreation and Parks Association and other related non-profits regarding recreational efforts and initiatives that advance and are supported by the FGTS.

**5. Conservation** The Ecological Greenway's component of the FGTS is critical to protecting wildlife, conserving natural systems and establishing connectivity between natural areas. Just as trails require tremendous coordination because of their linear nature and the jurisdictions they cross, so too ecological greenways necessitate a collective effort to adequately plan and coordinate. A protected Ecological Greenways system is integral to providing for a comprehensive conservation network.



Leading the effort to define a statewide conservation network of wildlife and natural areas are Florida's Cooperative Conservation Blueprint (CCB) and State Wildlife Action Plan. A leading purpose of the CCB is to:

Create a compelling natural systems vision of what Florida could look like if steps are taken to conserve the critical environmental resources and working agricultural lands that the state's wildlife depend upon and that provide ecosystem services and quality of life for the benefit of all Floridians. (FWC 2010)

The FGTS is important to advancing and implementing the CCB's natural systems vision for Florida. The CCB builds on the Critical Lands and Waters Identification Project (CLIP) which incorporates the FGTS Ecological Greenways. The update of FGTS Ecological Greenways data is now funded through a State Wildlife Grant to help implement the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Strategy 4.5: Coordinate the FGTS to protect, connect and conserve Florida's wildlife and natural systems.

Objective 4.5.1: Advance Florida's Cooperative Conservation Blueprint by coordinating implementation of FGTS Ecological Greenways with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and other partners to protect wildlife and conserve natural systems.

Objective 4.5.2: Support implementation of the Florida State Wildlife Action Plan through coordination of data updates to and establishment of FGTS Ecological Greenways.

### The Florida Wildlife Corridor

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is a collaborative vision to connect natural lands, waters, working farms, forests and ranches from the Everglades to Georgia, protecting a functional ecological corridor for the health of people, wildlife and watersheds. The Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN) provides the scientific foundation for the Florida Wildlife Corridor, and encompasses several identified Critical Linkages. The FEGN, the conservation component of today's Florida Greenways and Trails System, was an outcome of early efforts to focus on the importance of protecting wildlife corridors and a network of conservation lands spearheaded by Larry Harris and Reed Noss at the University of Florida in the 1980s. The Florida Wildlife Corridor aims to build on this work to advance support for ecological greenways and wildlife corridors through an education and awareness campaign that demonstrates the dynamic and critical connection between landscapes and watersheds. Goals of the Florida Wildlife Corridor include:



- Protecting and restoring habitat and migration corridors essential for the survival of Florida's diverse wildlife, including wide-ranging panthers, black bears and other native species.
- Restoring water flow to the Everglades and sustaining water supply to both south and north Florida in the Everglades and St. Johns River watersheds.
- Sustaining the food production, economies and cultural legacies of working ranches, forests and farms within the corridor.
- Bolstering local economies through increased opportunities such as hunting, fishing, birdwatching and other forms of eco-tourism.

For more information about this important initiative, visit [floridawildlifecorridor.org](http://floridawildlifecorridor.org).

# DRAFT 2018-2022 FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

## Introduction

The Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS) Plan provides a comprehensive approach to identify, prioritize, connect, promote and coordinate the implementation of a statewide system of connected greenways and trails. This plan is the vision for the FGTS both on land and water, with the intent of improving the health and welfare of the public.

Creating a statewide system of greenways and trails for Florida is an important way to integrate aspects of the natural and human environments. Greenways and trails join communities together by linking features such as parks, open space, historic sites and residential areas. Non-motorized trails and waterways provide places for paddlers, bicyclists, hikers, horseback riders and others to recreate and experience the many natural and cultural wonders of our state. Greenways are natural landscape linkages that are vital to the maintenance of functional and healthy native ecosystems. Ecological greenways support our human environments and allow wildlife to thrive and travel from place to place.

### Authorization

In 1995, the Florida Legislature passed the Florida Greenways and Trails Act in Chapter 260, Florida Statute (F.S.). This legislation established the FGTS, the “Florida Greenways and Trails Program,” and the Florida Greenways and Trails Council (Council) as an advisory group to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The greenways and trails program within DEP, Division of Recreation and Parks, is known as the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT). OGT is tasked with fulfilling the legislation. To accomplish this, the role of the office includes:

- Lead the planning of an interconnected statewide greenways and trails system
- Cultivate development of the statewide greenways and trails system
- Increase education about, nurture support for, and promote the use of greenways and trails among the public
- Promote communication, cooperation and coordination among all government entities, landowners, user groups and other non-governmental organizations involved in greenways and trail planning, development, management and maintenance

The legislation established OGT and the Council, which resulted in the original 1998 FGTS Plan titled, “Connecting Florida’s Communities.” In 2012, the updated 2013-2017 FGTS Plan established a “new vision.” To view the original plan and other FGTS documents, visit [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com).

# DRAFT 2018-2022 FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

## The View Forward: Taking a Regional Approach

1. Evaluate and Prioritize
2. Establish and Connect
3. Communicate and Educate
4. Align Complementary Plans and Programs

### Evaluate and Prioritize

The FGTS acts to integrate natural and human environments. Greenways and trails tie communities together by linking features such as parks, open spaces, historic sites and residential areas. Non-motorized trails and waterways provide places for paddlers, bicyclists, hikers, walkers, horseback riders and others to experience the many natural and cultural wonders of our state. Ideally these routes will be separate from the street, except, perhaps, the walkable and bikeable downtown main streets.

Greenways, natural landscape linkages, are vital to maintaining functional and healthy natural ecosystems. Ecological greenways support our human environments and allow native wildlife to thrive and travel from place to place.

#### Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN)

This map, created, maintained and updated by the University of Florida's Center for Landscape Conservation Planning, identifies landscape linkages and wildlife corridors necessary to connect large natural areas into a statewide ecological greenways system. The map depicts six levels of priority corridors and linkages. The six FEGN priorities, along with the map, help to identify and define a comprehensive ecological greenways vision for the FGTS.

#### Opportunities

Land Trail Opportunities of the FGTS are corridors which represent existing, planned and conceptual non-motorized multi-use trails. These corridors form a land-based trail network of regional and state importance. The FGTS corridors on maps are represented as approximately one mile-wide to allow for flexibility in the proposed corridor locations.

The Land Trail Opportunity map is a synthesis of trail planning efforts conducted by cities, counties, transportation planning organizations, non-profits and other agencies throughout Florida. This map does not include all existing, proposed and conceptual trails in Florida, but focuses on trails of state and regional significance to form a comprehensive connected system.

#### Actions

- Identify the most "Ready" Land Opportunity Corridors
- Identify the state's most important long-distance regional trails from the FGTS Priority Corridors
- Support and assist counties of greatest need to identify potential trail corridors

# DRAFT 2018-2022 FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

Moving forward, OGT will further refine the Land Trail Opportunity map to identify Ready Land Trail Opportunities. To be recognized as a Ready Opportunity Corridor the trail must meet these criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Crosses or has the potential to cross county boundaries
- Documented evidence of local or regional government endorsement
- Leads to or connects to a destination which provides scenic qualities and diverse experiences
- Provides access to conservation lands, historic, recreational or cultural sites
- Supports the FEGN

Paddling Trail Opportunity corridors represent the vision for a comprehensive water-based trail system. To be recognized as a Paddling Trail Opportunity, the paddling corridor must meet these criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Be an existing or potential tourism destination due to the scenic qualities and diverse experiences
- Span at least three miles in length
- Be navigable during most months in an average year
- Benefit from increased visitation without harm to the natural environment

Moving forward, OGT will evaluate and identify paddling corridors with the potential to be a long-distance paddling trail like the [Suwannee River Wilderness State Trail](#). This trail provides an incredible journey. Launching above White Springs, you can paddle more than 200 miles to the Gulf of Mexico. There are numerous take-out points and overnight camp sites available with dedicated river camps make it possible to enjoy either a leisurely weekend on the water or a more ambitious trip for the more adventurous.

## Priorities

The FGTS Priority Corridors are the focused vision for trails in the state and rank higher for implementation than the Opportunity Trail Corridors. Priority Trail Corridors are selected from the Land Trail Opportunity map and Paddling Trail Opportunity map, and must also support conservation of the FEGN's six levels of priorities. To be recognized as a FGTS Priority Corridor, it must meet these criteria to the greatest extent possible:

- Support and further establish national, state or regional trail projects, plans and initiatives
- Build on past and programmed state and federal investments in trails, particularly when matched by funding from local and private sources
- Include long-distance trails or provide connects between long-distance trails and/or long loops to connect multiple counties and population centers



## DRAFT 2018-2022 FLORIDA GREENWAYS AND TRAILS SYSTEM PLAN

- Demonstrate broad regional and community support, especially those willing to commit to trail management and maintenance
- Enhance access to nature-based tourism and economic development by connecting natural, recreational, cultural and historic sites
- Enhance connections to state parks and trails and greenways
- Coincide with the FEGN priorities
- Provide public safety by offering non-motorized use that is separated from highways

Moving forward, OGT will work with stakeholders to identify and delineate regional trails within the Priority network. Regional trails are long distance or loop trail systems that cross multiple jurisdictions. They are comprised of shorter individual or local trail segments that are linked together to form a unique more expansive system. A regional trail provides a multi-day experience for the more ambitious trail users. Although some individuals may never travel an entire regional trail, many will enjoy the local sections and connecting trails.

As a leader in the trail movement, Florida is frequently asked by other states to share “lessons learned.” Participating in national summits and conferences with other states, OGT has had the opportunity to share and gain knowledge from others. The national trail movement is exciting and interest is growing. Georgia and Alabama have expressed interest in identifying opportunities and connecting into Florida’s trail system. Other opportunities include the East Coast Greenway which spans from Calais, Maine to Key West, Florida; the Bartram Trail, an eight-state National Recreation Trail; and the Old Spanish Trail linking St. Augustine, Florida to San Diego, California. OGT will pursue each of these interstate trail connections.

The Florida Greenways and Trails System maps are maintained online along with the data resources through [FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com](http://FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com).

### Establish and Connect

To implement the FGTS, OGT is taking a regional approach. Regional trails are identified from the FGTS Priority Corridors as multi-county, long-distance or loop trails. Because they span long-distances, sometimes more than 200 miles, these regional trails can provide users with diverse multiple day experiences.

Long distance trails provide an alternative means of transportation and help to preserve local character and Florida’s natural environment. By attracting visitors for multiple days, these trails promote tourism and encourage economic development. Another benefit is that they provide access to outdoor recreation, encouraging healthy lifestyle choices.

A local trail can require significant effort to complete. Successfully establishing and connecting several local trails into a regional trail system involves a network of stakeholders, including advocates and decision makers, who are truly committed to a project. Combining multiple trail projects to achieve a long distance regional trail system requires advanced coordination and a