#### CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY

## AGENDA ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING August 22, 2024 10:00 a.m.

Meeting location: Central Florida Expressway Authority
4974 ORL Tower Road
Orlando, FL 32807
Pelican Conference Room

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

#### **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Pursuant to Section 286.0114, Florida Statutes and CFX Rule 1-1.011, the Environmental Stewardship Committee provides for an opportunity for public comment at the beginning of each regular meeting. The Public may address the Committee on any matter of public interest under the Committee's authority and jurisdiction, regardless of whether the matter is on the Committee's agenda but excluding pending procurement issues. Public Comment speakers that are present and have submitted their completed Public Comment form to the Recording Secretary at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the meeting will be called to speak. Each speaker shall be limited to 3 minutes. Any member of the public may also submit written comments which, if received during regular business hours at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting, will be included as part of the record and distributed to the Committee members in advance of the meeting.

C. APPROVAL OF MAY 30, 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES (action item)

#### D. AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. **STAFF REPORT ON UPCOMING PLANNING PROJECTS MEETINGS -** *Glenn Pressimone, Chief of Infrastructure* (info item)
- 2. FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR AND WILDLIFE CROSSINGS PRESENTATION Jason Lauritsen, Chief Conservation Officer, Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation and Daniel J. Smith, Research Scientist and Graduate Faculty Scholar, University of Central Florida (info item)
- 3. **ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING -** *Nicole Gough, Manger Environmental Sciences, Dewberry Engineers, Inc.* (info item)

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

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#### **E. OTHER BUSINESS**

#### F. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting is open to the public.

Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes states that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by a board, agency, or commission with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Persons who require translation services, which are provided at no cost, should contact CFX at (407) 690-5000 x5316 or by email at <a href="Malaya.Bryan@CFXWay.com">Malaya.Bryan@CFXWay.com</a> at least three (3) business days prior to the event.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), if any person with a disability as defined by the ADA needs special accommodations to participate in this proceeding, then they should contact the Central Florida Expressway Authority at (407) 690-5000 no later than two (2) business days prior to the proceeding.

## C. Approval of Minutes

#### CENTRAL FLORIDA EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY

## MINUTES ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING May 30, 2024

Location: Central Florida Expressway Authority 4974 ORL Tower Road, Orlando, FL 32807 Pelican Conference Room

#### Committee Members Present:

Richard Durr, Seminole County Representative, Committee Chairman Beth Jackson, Orange County Representative Maurice "Mo" Pearson, Citizen Representative Brittany Sellers, City of Orlando Representative

#### <u>Committee Members Participating by Phone:</u>

Charles Lee, Citizen Representative Timothee Sallin, Lake County Representative

#### Staff Present:

Glenn Pressimone, Chief of Infrastructure
Michelle Maikisch Executive Director
Mimi Lamaute Recording Secretary/Manager of Executive and Board Services
Angela J. Wallace, General Counsel
Cristina Berrios, Deputy General Counsel
Will Hawthrone, Director of Transportation Planning & Policy

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:03 am by Chairman Durr.

Chairman Durr announced that Item C. Approval of February 22, 2024 Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes will be heard later in the meeting.

#### **B. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Mimi Lamaute, Recording Secretary, announced there were no public comments or written public comments received by the deadline.

The following items were taken out of order due to a lack of quorum.

#### D. AGENDA ITEMS

#### 1. <u>SR 515 NORTHEAST CONNECTOR EXPRESSWAY PHASE 2 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY</u>

Mr. Will Hawthorne, Director of Transportation Planning and Policy, alluded to a handout containing the project development process, attached as **Exhibit "A."** He explained that it contains the life cycle of the project.

Ms. Sunserea Gates, Senior PD&E Project Manager with VHB, provided a project status update on the SR 515 Northeast Connector Expressway Phase 2 Project Development and Environment Study. An expressway connection from Florida's Turnpike northeast to US 192 and continuing north to provide regional transportation connectivity in eastern Osceola County has been an identified need in various local long-range transportation plans and master plans.

Ms. Gates described the planning background, project history, the study area, purpose area, purpose and need, and sociocultural constraints. She detailed the potential corridors, planned developments, natural constraints. She detailed the initial Northeast Connector CF&M corridors (A, B, C, D and E) and new corridors (F and G). She also discussed the public involvement and stakeholder coordination and finally provided the PD&E schedule timeline. The study is anticipated to be complete in Fall 2026 after public input at the Public Hearing.

The Committee Members commented and asked questions which were answered by Ms. Gates, Mr. Pressimone and Mr. Hawthorne.

Mr. Lee alluded to two slides he provided for discussion, which were included in the presentation and attached hereto as **Exhibit "B."** 

Ms. Brittany Sellers arrived during discussion of this item, at 10:08 a.m.

(This item was presented for information only. No committee action was taken.)

#### 2. <u>SR 417 SANFORD AIRPORT CONNECTOR PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY</u>

Mr. Will Hawthorne, Director of Transportation Planning and Policy, provided background information on the SR 417 Sanford Airport Connector Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. A new direct expressway connection from SR 417 north of Lake Jesup to the Orlando Sanford International Airport. He stated that in August of 2023, the CFX Board approved the CF&M Study and authorized staff to proceed to a more detailed PD&E Study. The PD&E Study will conduct a more detailed evaluation of the four alternatives found to be feasible during the CF&M Study.

Mr. Hawthorne detailed the project history, study area, purpose and need, sociocultural constraints, natural constraints, initial alternatives from the CF&M Study, additional alternatives, agency and stakeholder input and finally provided the PD&E study schedule. The study is anticipated to be complete in early summer of 2025 after public input at the Public Hearing.

The Committee Members commented and asked questions which were answered by Mr. Hawthorne and Mr. Pressimone.

(This item was presented for information only. No committee action was taken.)

#### C. <u>APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 22, 2024 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES</u>

Mr. Durr's last name was misspelled as Mr. Dunn, under the motion for Item D.2., which will be corrected to Mr. "Durr."

Mr. Lee thanked staff for including the slides/maps he provided during discussion for the February 22, 2024 Item "D.1. PD&E Project Update." He stated that two of the slides are self-explanatory. However, one slide, which depicts the area of the Northern Everglades National Wildlife Refuge and Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge, needs additional explanation. This slide appears cross-hatched but lacks a label indicating what the cross-hatching designates. He requested a label be added for clarity.

A motion was made by Mr. Lee and seconded by Ms. Jackson to approve the February 22, 2024 minutes with the correction of Mr. Durr's name and the map labeled with Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge for clarity. The motion carried unanimously with four (4) committee members in attendance voting AYE by voice vote. Two (2) committee members, Mr. Lee and Mr. Sallin voting AYE by phone.

#### E. OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Michelle Maikisch, Executive Director, introduced CFX's new legal team: Angela Wallace, General Counsel and Cristina Berrios, Deputy General Counsel.

Mr. Pressimone confirmed by Committee Member consensus, that at a future meeting a presentation on wildlife crossings will be provided.

The 2025 Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting Schedule was distributed and a calendar invitation will be sent to each of the Committee members.

Chairman Durr announced that the next Environmental Stewardship Committee meeting is scheduled for

August 22, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

#### F. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Durr adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.

Minutes approved on \_\_\_\_\_\_, 2024.

Pursuant to the Florida Public Records Law and CFX Records Management Policy, audio tapes of all Board and applicable Committee meetings are maintained and available upon request to the Records Management Liaison Officer at <a href="mailto:publicrecords@CFXway.com">publicrecords@CFXway.com</a> or 4974 ORL Tower Road, Orlando, FL 32807.

#### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

New Alignment Expansion Projects

Right-of-Way

Does CFX Board accept the Right-of-Way Committee's requested approve start of right-of-way purchasing?

Permitting

Does CFX

**Board accept** 

the proposed

mitigation/

conservation

easement

settlements and

approve permit

agreements?

acquisitions and

**Advertise Bids** 

Does CFX **Board approve** CFX's request to advertise bids for construction?

**Award Contract** 

Does CFX approve award of contract to construct roadway?

Construction

commences.

Construction

Exhibit "A"

Newly constructed roadway is opened to traffic.

**Open to Traffic** 

accept bid and

Project is placed on hold to be revisited in the future.

No

CFX may re-advertise project to accept new bids OR project design is revised and/or repackaged for bids.

No

**Identify Project** 

Project identified in CFX Board approved Visioning +2040 Master Plan (Long-Range Transportation Plan).

Work Plan

Is project identified in the approved Five-Year Work Plan?

Project is placed on

hold to be revisited in

the future.

Feasibility Study

**CFX Board** 

approves

findings of

feasibility study

on the project?

Project is placed on hold to be revisited in the future.

No Project is placed on hold to be revisited in the future.

WE

ARE

**HERE** 

PD&E Study

Does CFX

**Board approve** 

PD&E Study?

Project is placed on hold to be revisited in the future.

Recommended

Preferred/Final Design

Does CFX

**Board approve** 

project for the

Final Design

Phase?

Utilities

Does CFX **Board accept** the proposed utilities relocation settlements and approve utility agreements?

Project is placed on hold to be revisited in the future.

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#### **PD&E Evaluation Criteria**

#### **Social Environment**

- Residential
- Business/Agricultural
- Schools
- Churches
- Fire Stations
- Law Enforcement Facilities
- Medical Facilities
- Community Facilities
- Cemeteries
- Approved and Planned Developments

## Physical Environment

- Noise Sensitive Areas
- Major Utilities
- Contamination Sites
- Hazardous Material Sites
- Industrial Sites
- Underground Fuel Tanks

#### Natural Environment

- Wetlands
- Water Resources
- Mitigation Banks
- Floodplains
- Protected Species
- Wildlife Habitat

## **Cultural Environment**

- Parks & Recreation
- Public Lands
- Conservation Areas
- Trails & Greenways
- Potential Archaeological Sites
- Potential Historic Resources



#### **PD&E Process**

#### **NTP**

- Data Collection
- Public Engagement
   Plan

#### **ENGINEERING**

- Interchange Justification (as needed)
- Corridor Evaluation (as needed)
- Preliminary Engineering Report
- Location Hydraulics Report
- Pond Siting Report
- Conceptual Design Plan
   Set
- Geotechnical Report
- Typical Section Package
- Utilities Assessment Package

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL**

- Noise Study Report
- Air Quality Tech Memo
- Contamination Screening Evaluation Report
- Cultural Resource
   Assessment Survey
- Natural Resource Evaluation
- Water Quality Impact Evaluation

#### **PEIR**

- Project Environmental Impact Report
- Public Notice
- CFX Board Approval



## **Advisory Group Roles**

#### **Environmental (EAG)**

- Comprises members representing environmental/government agencies and community/advocacy groups
- Members are invited by CFX to join
- Natural environment analysis
- Special advisory resource
- Input on potential environmental impact of project alternatives
- Local knowledge, issues and concerns regarding environmental impacts

#### **Project (PAG)**

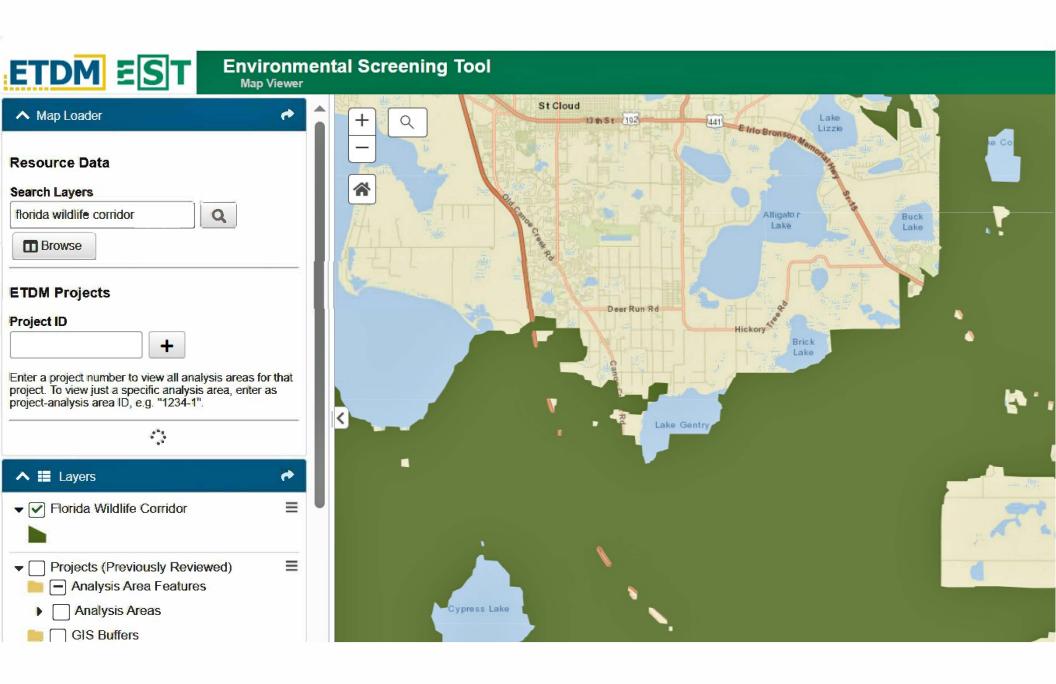
- Comprises members representing government/transportation planning agencies and other key stakeholders
- Members are invited by CFX to join
- Mobility analysis
- Special advisory resource
- Input on project alternatives
- Local knowledge, issues and concerns

## Community Engagement Group (CEG)

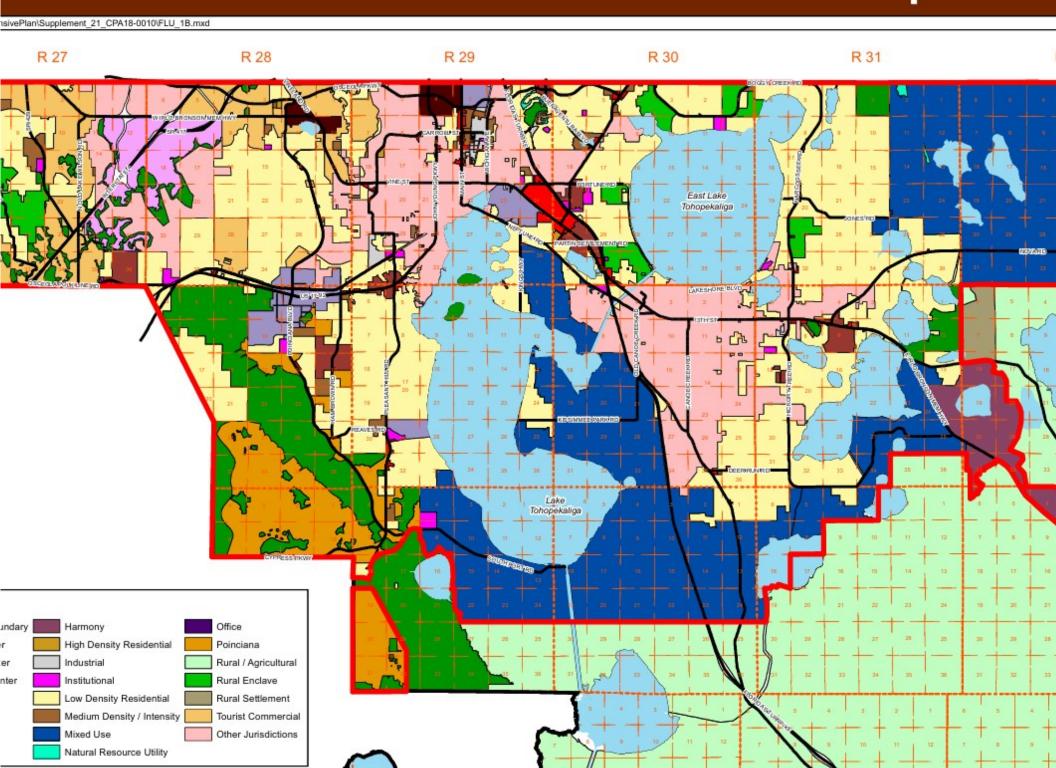
- Comprises members representing large-scale communities, planned developments, school officials, emergency services, and civic organizations
- Members are invited by CFX to join
- Community effects analysis
- Special advisory resource
- Input on project alternatives
- Local knowledge, issues and concerns



#### Exhibit "B"



## FLU 1B: Future Land Use Map UGB



## D.1.

# THERE ARE NO BACKUP MATERIALS FOR THIS ITEM

## D.2.



# WILDLIFE CROSSINGS & THE FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

Daniel J. Smith, Ph.D., AICP
Center for Landscape Conservation Planning
University of Florida

Jason Lauritsen – Chief Conservation Officer Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation Jason@floridawildlifecorridor.org

#### WILDLIFE CROSSINGS & THE FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

- Overview of the Corridor; make-up, urgency and priority
- Impacts of roads on wildlife
- Wildlife Crossings; opportunities and missed opportunities
- Identifying and prioritizing locations and need
- Species specific considerations
- Structure and site design parameters
- Questions

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is an 18 million acre footprint of connected land and water..

..representing our best opportunity to safeguard a biodiverse and sustainable wild Florida for future generations.

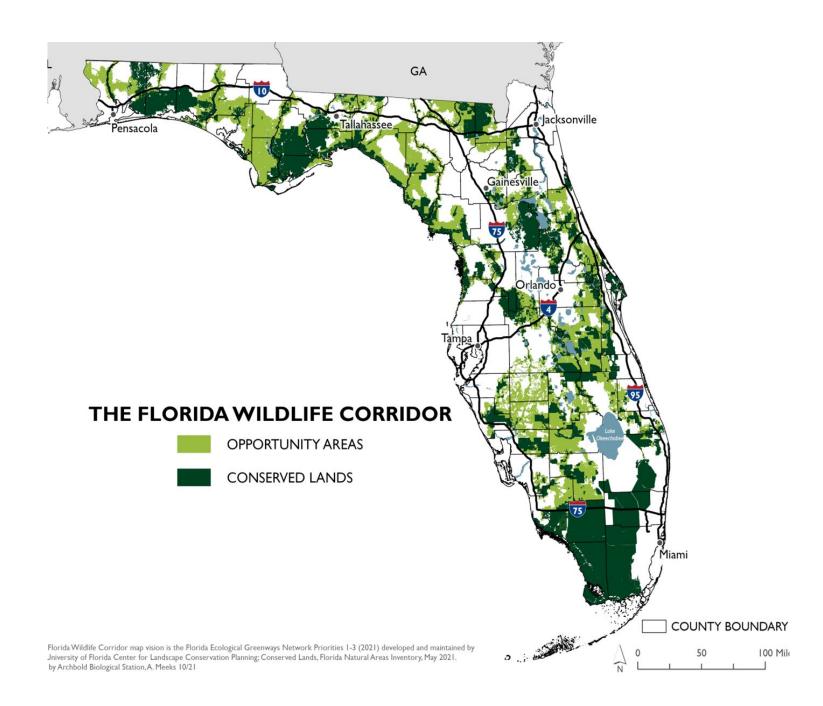


#### STEWARDSHIP LEGACY

75 State Parks171 Major\* Springs32 State Forests

#### 18 million acres

**Unprotected: 8 million acres Protected: 10 million acres** 



#### DESCRIBING THE CORRIDOR?

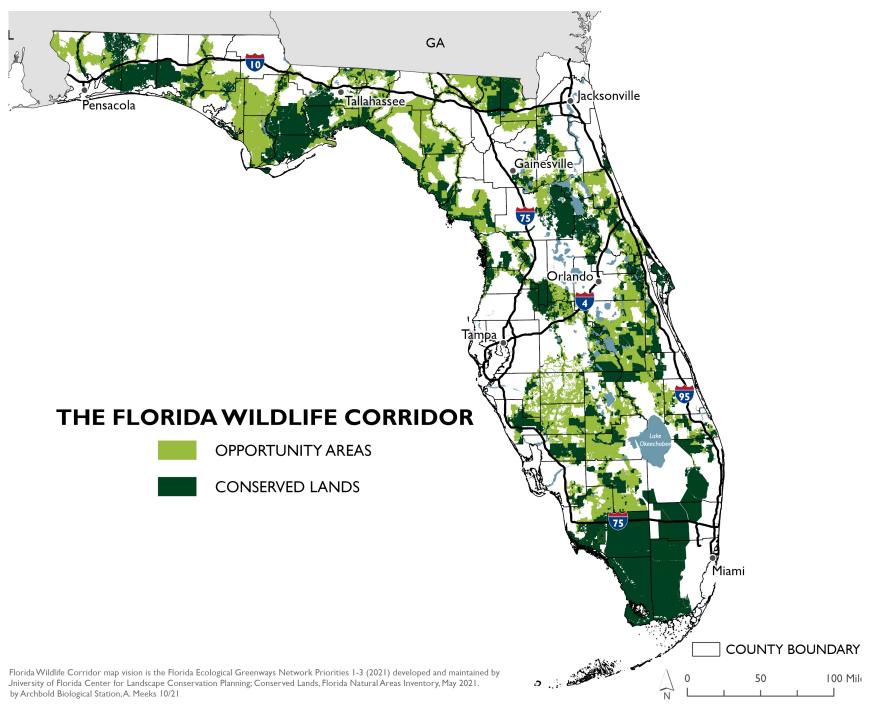
18 million acres

10 million acres protected

8 million acres unprotected

>100 Bottlenecks

**HUBS & CONNECTIONS** 

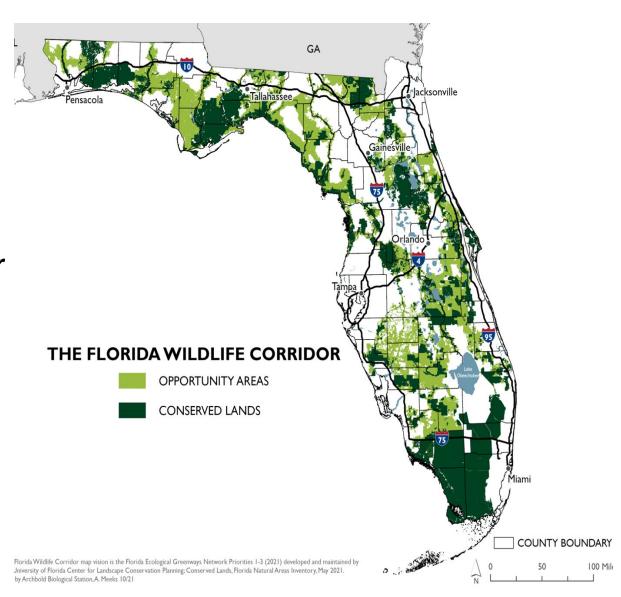


## Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN) model was created using...

- 26 Priority Ecological Area data layers
- 7 connectivity models

These data were used to identify a series of hubs, or core areas, of large, landscape-scale ecological significance, and a network of corridors connecting the hubs into a statewide ecological greenways system.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is composed of the top 3 priority layers from the FEGN model.

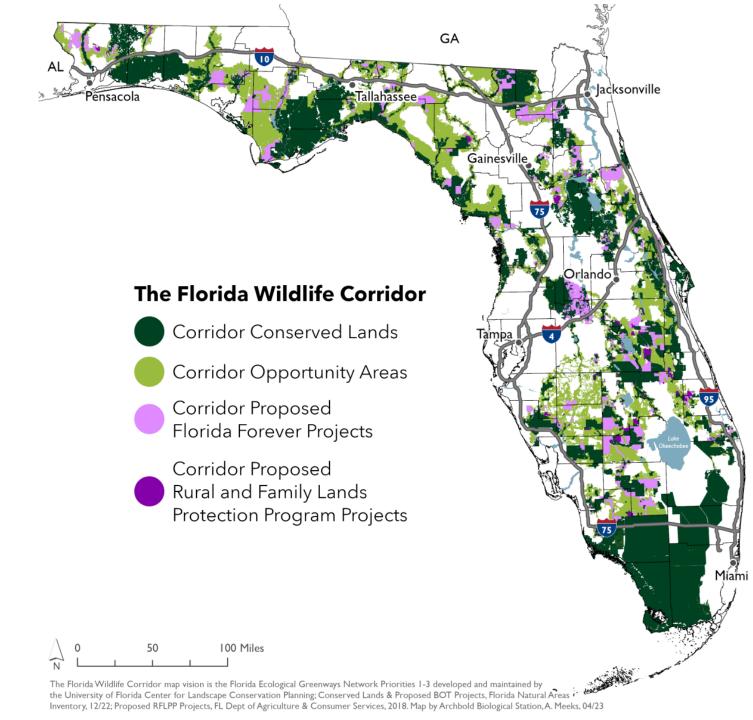


## **ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES**

Project Acres (2022)

Florida Forever - 1.8 million

**RFLPP - 163,000** 





Networks of connected and protected areas are inherently more resilient than individual, isolated patches.

## Patch size – Large? Well connected? Or both?

Ecosystems are more resilient when conserved in large, unfragmented areas.\* Generally...

- Isolated habitat patches need to be larger than patches that are connected in order to sustain biotic communities.\*\*
- The ability to recover from a catastrophic episode (hurricane, severe fire, flood, drought) is a resiliency goal. Patch size and connectivity factor into resilience.
- If your habitat patch size decreases, connectivity to the remaining patches becomes more important.

# 2010 Baseline Statewide 2010 Baseline

#### 33 million people by 2070



### Connecting, protecting and restoring the Corridor

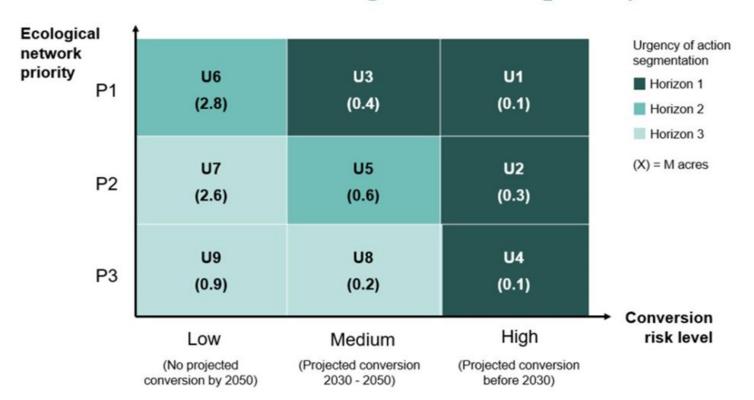
How we grow makes all the difference. Protecting the Corridor can be done even as our population grows. However, it will require careful and intentional planning around the vital ecological connections illustrated by the Florida Wildlife Corridor.



#### **Urgency of Loss**

We are projected to lose 500,000 acres within the Corridor by 2030 (U1, U2, U4). And by 2050, another 400,000 acres of loss is anticipated in the FEGN Priority 1 layer (U).

## Tiering of the Corridor area by urgency levels considering conversion risk and ecological network priority



<sup>\*</sup> Connecting the Florida Wildlife Corridor – Economic Study 2021

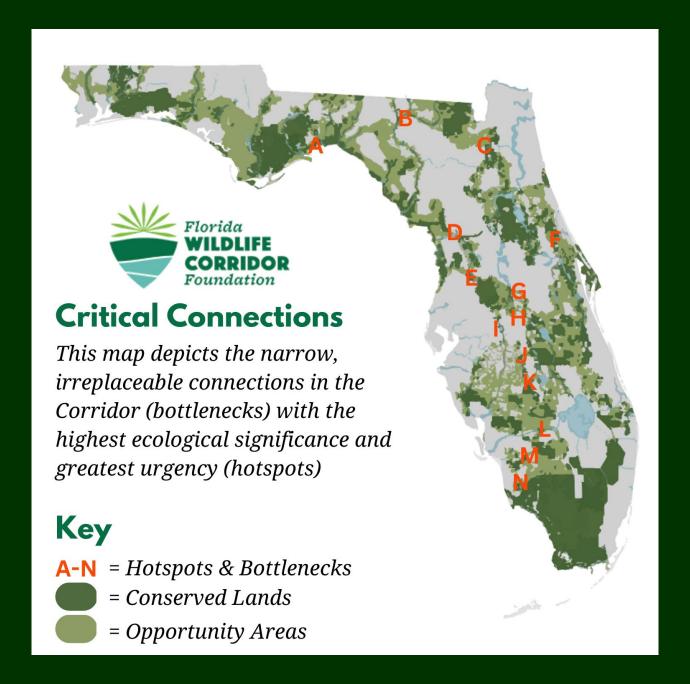
## Conversion hotspots and bottlenecks

Prioritizing conservation actions within the 8-millionacre opportunity area is critical to effectively deploying limited resources over a compressed time horizon.

The Corridor map contains more than 100 segments that have stretches of narrow areas less than a mile wide. These bottlenecks are especially vulnerable to fragmentation.

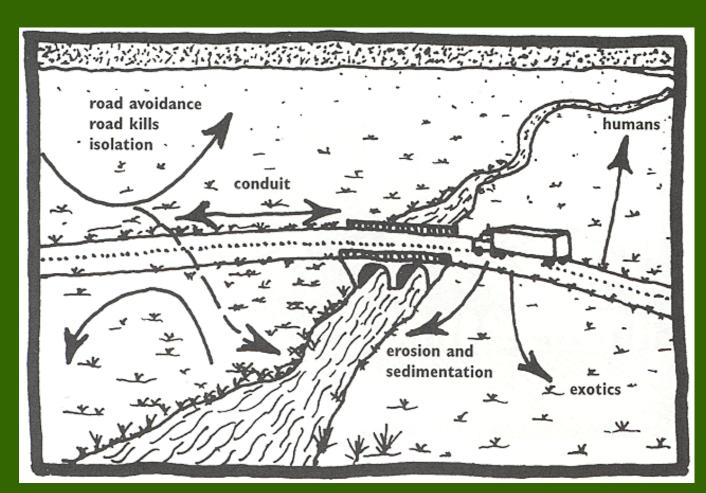
Approximately 900,000 acres have been identified as the most urgent areas of the state in need of protection. 500,000 of these risk conversion by 2030.

While some of these lands are dispersed widely throughout the state. There are concentrations in certain sections of the Corridor worthy of our attention.



#### **IMPACTS OF ROADS ON WILDLIFE**

- Habitat fragmentation and loss
- Barriers/impediments to wildlife movement
- Population level and genetic isolation effects
- Wildlife-vehicle collisions
- Spread of invasive species
- Increased habitat disturbance and management challenges

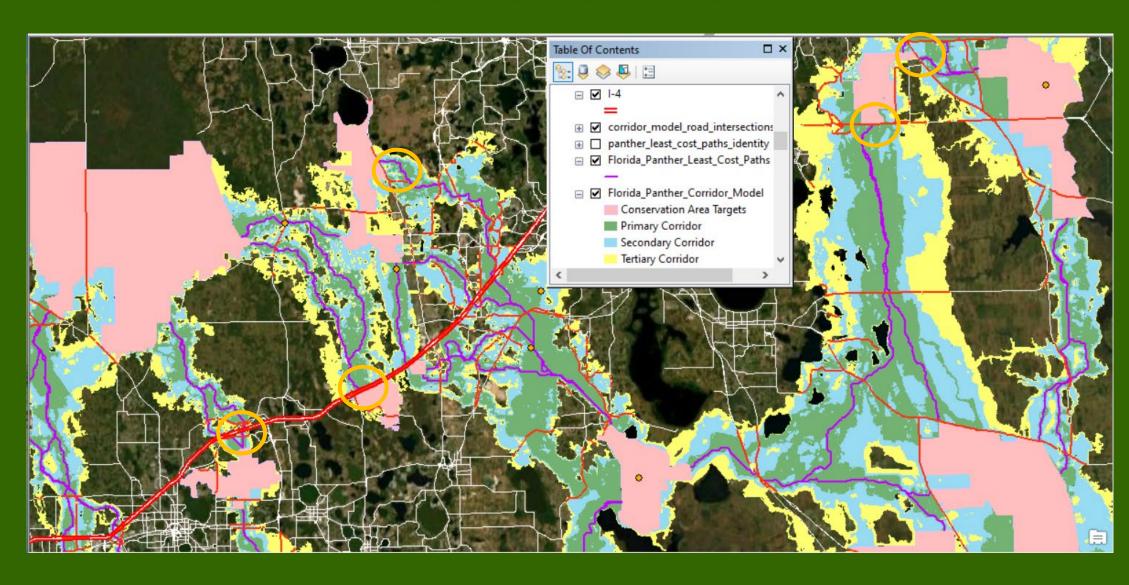






## CENTRAL FLORIDA ROAD CROSSING OPPORTUNITIES

- SR 520
- SR 528
- I-4
- US 27
- CFX



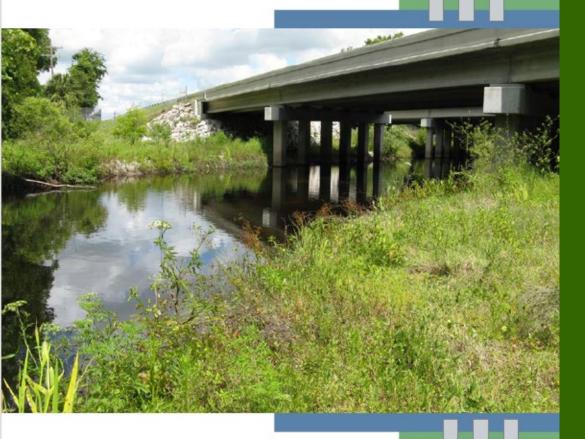


# **EXISTING BRIDGES ASSOCIATED WITH AVC HOTSPOTS**

- Identified approximately 185
   Bridges to conduct surveys
- FWC and UCF jointly conducted evaluations for wildlife passage suitability



Sponsor Organizations ......



A Practitioners Guide to Wildlife Crossing Design and Planning in Florida

2024

- Resource for planners, engineers, wildlife professionals and others
- Organized to follow steps in a typical road project planning process (e.g., PD&E, design, construction, maintenance)
- Key Elements
  - Identifying target species
  - Identifying and prioritizing locations and need
  - Structure and site design parameters
  - Long-term management to maintain function/effectiveness

## Table of Contents

Section Categories	Chapter Elements
Background and focus	exec summary/overview
	introduction/background info
	clearly stated purpose/objectives
	target spp/taxonomic or functional groups
Pre-construction/planning	field data/monitoring
	location criteria/modeling
	environmental impact assessment
Site and structural design	roadway/ROW parameters
	site design and drainage considerations
	structural type options and preferences
	structural specifications
	fencing and other barriers
	landscape parameters
Post-construction	monitoring and evaluation
	maintenance/best management practices
Appendix	case studies and/or hot sheets

### WILDLIFE CROSSINGS IN FLORIDA

- Over 100 wildlife crossing structures built in Florida since 1990
- Many types, bridges and culverts
- Targeting different faunal groups
- Typically includes wildlife fencing





















# Types of Wildlife Crossing Structures

### **Overpasses**

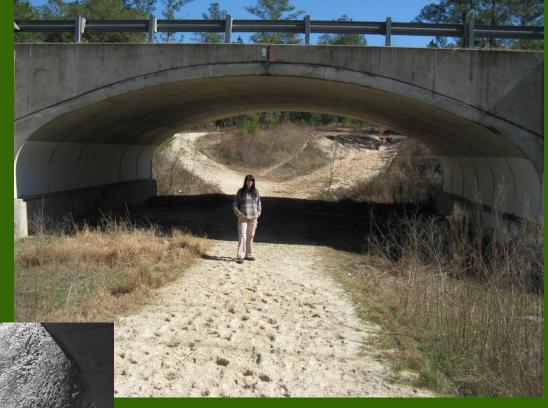
**Underpasses** (Bridges and Culverts)

- Flowway/drainage passages with shelves/ledges
- Upland crossings

### Multi-purpose

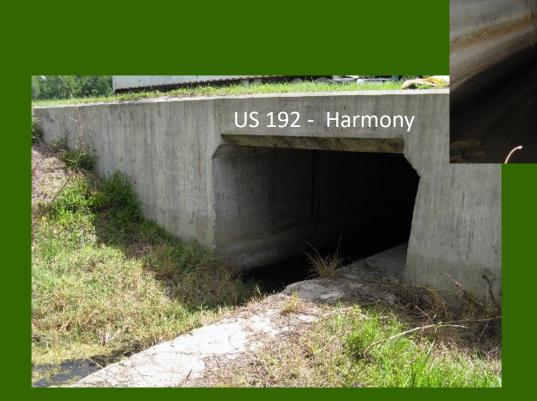
- Accommodate people and/or vehicles and wildlife
- Examples include nature trail and wildlife, limited access forest, farm or rural unpaved road and wildlife

Marjorie Harris Carr Cross-FL Greenway





Local Marion Co. roads Culvert designs that incorporate flow channels and terrestrial wildlife pathways







# Stream crossings - shelf retrofits

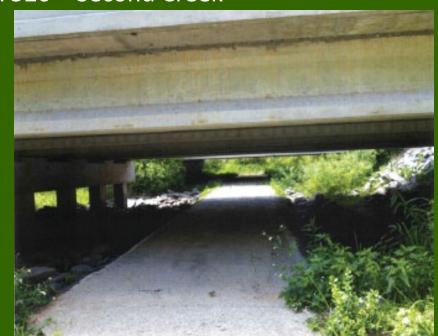


SR 520 – St. Johns R. overflow



Before

SR 520 – Second Creek



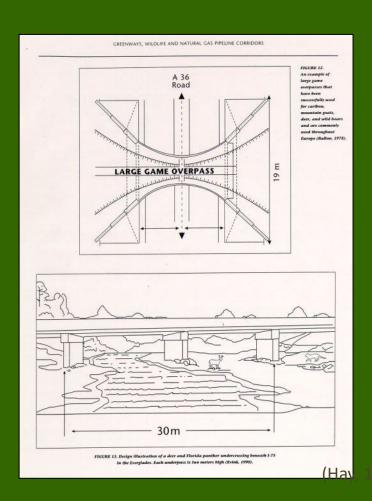
After

Combined
Equestrian/Wildlife
Crossing





## **Considerations for Site Design to Enhance Use By Wildlife**



- **A. Context Sensitive** vegetation consistent with surrounding habitat
- **B. Substrate** consistent with adjacent area; depth sufficient to enhance use by fossorial species
- C. Environmental variability provide for terrestrial passage at semi-aquatic sites during periods of high-water levels
- D. Vegetative screening block headlights, diminish traffic noise and provide cover
- E. Berming reduce effects of traffic noise and lights
- F. Fencing funnel wildlife through passage and away from road surface
- **G.** Topography natural designs, e.g., minimize slope of underpass/overpass approaches; improve wildlife/motorist visibility
- H. Lighting reduce tunnel effects by increasing openness value (height\*width/length) and providing light penetration in medians of divided highways
- Human presence reduce human access that may deter use by sensitive wildlife

# Landscaping: Approaches and Interior

#### Terrain

- Use native soils
- Gradual, sloping away from structure to prevent flooding, major pooling and erosion

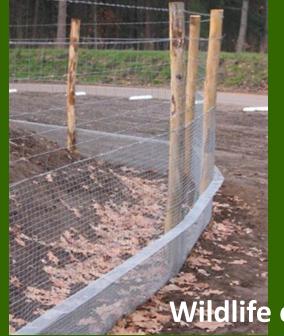
### Vegetation

- Use native tree, shrub and ground-cover species
- Provide cover, shelter, mimic adjacent plant communities (densities)
- Incorporate clear sight-line paths
- Crossing structure furniture
  - If too dark to establish vegetation in the interior, use rock ledges, brush piles or other elements to provide cover for small prey species

Native tree, shrub and ground cover plantings in Approach Zones

# Examples of Wildlife Barriers/Fencing



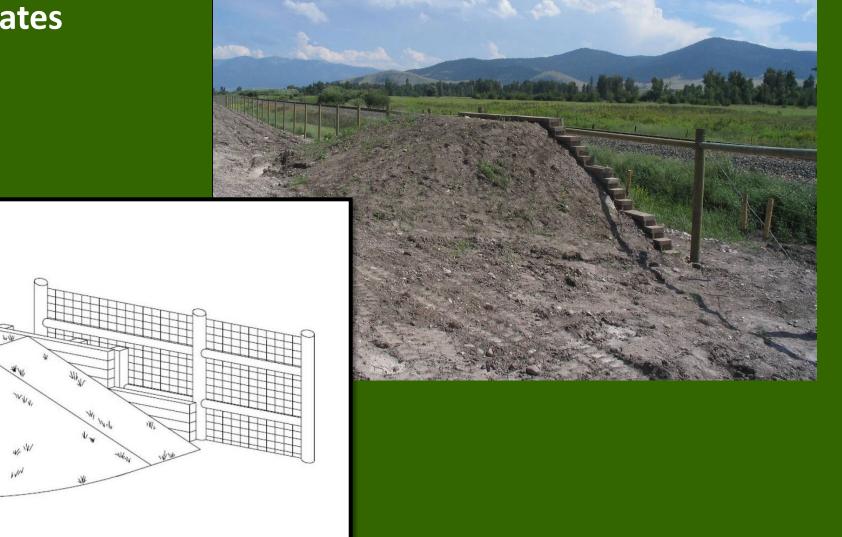






### **Jumpouts – Escape Gates**

TOPSOIL (4" DEEP)-BROADCAST SEED WOOD FIBER MULCH



# LEARN FROM MONITORING USAGE & AVOIDANCE OF CURRENT STRUCTURES TO IMPROVE DESIGNS AND REDUCE COSTS

308

Bushnell

2012-04-05 17:21:33



# D.3.



# **Permitting Process**

Regulatory Agency jurisdiction is defined by authorizing legislation and interagency delegation agreements.

#### **State**

Section 373 Florida Statutes (Permitting Responsibility)

Chapter 62-113 F.A.C (Delegations)

Chapter 62-330 F.A.C. (Statewide ERP) process for ERP

#### **Federal**

Section 404(g) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. § 1344(g)

Dredge or Fill in Waters of The US (WOTUS)

Joint EPA administration

NMFS and USFWS Advisory Roles

Section 10 Rivers and Harbors Act & Tribal Lands

#### Regulatory Updates

- Federal Agencies, FDEP and WMD undergo frequent Rulemaking
- Updates to process and forms
- WMD Regulatory Plans focus on Water Quality and Water Supply
- Some delegation/operating agreement refinements to align with program changes and technology
- Updates to Interagency regulatory processing



# So similar, yet...

#### Regulatory agencies are regulated differently

- Approach from different perspectives
- Geographical differences
- Institutional and Mission

#### State Applicant's Handbook Volume II

- Addresses regional differences
- Provides design, performance standards, and criteria specific to each District
  - Water quality and water quantity
  - Special basins
  - Flood protection

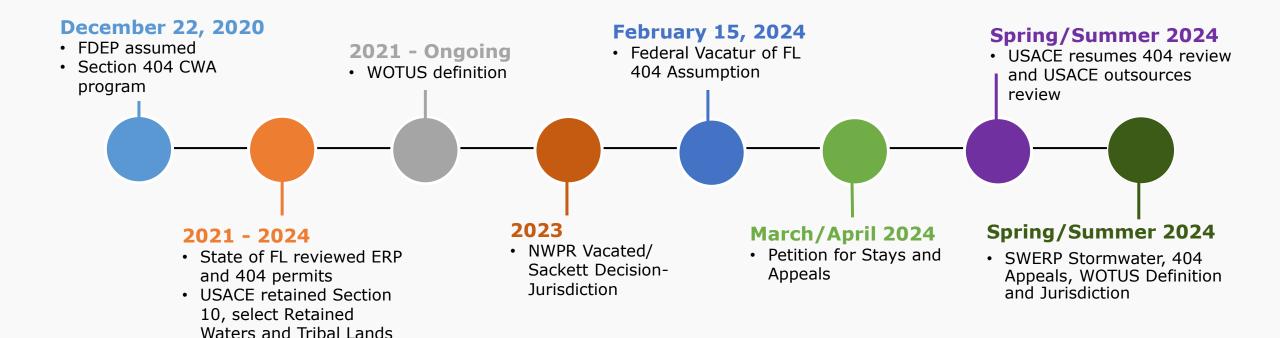
#### **Federal Regional Supplements**

- Provide additional guidance for implementing the Clean Water Act Section 404 program
- USACE focus is activities involving the discharge of dredged or fill material into jurisdictional waters



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## The 404 Dance





# **Department of the Army Corp Permits**

#### **Standard**

#### **Regional General Permits**

- Issued for a specific geographic area
- Specific terms and conditions which must be met to be verified
- Example: RGP SAJ-92 for Transportation Projects

#### **Nationwide permits**

- Authorize activities causing only minimal adverse environmental impacts to aquatic resources, separately or cumulatively
- Specific criteria must be met to be verified
- 5-year duration –can reauthorize

#### **Authorized Jurisdictional Determination-AJD**

- Separate permit action
- Define jurisdictional footprint of project (like State FWD)
- Must be reviewed by USACE and EPA

**No Permit Required** 

Consultation with USFWS, NMFS, EPA and 408

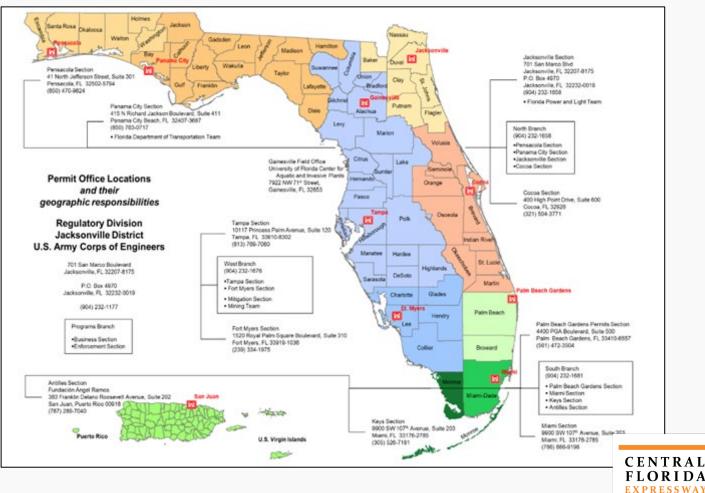


# Department of the Army Corp Permits (cont.)

- Applicants apply directly to the Corps using the Corps of Engineers form ENG 4345 & ENG 6082
- Agencies do not send a copy of application to the Corps
- Regional offices accept at designated email addresses
- NEW online system is coming online for certain activities



#### **Map of Regulatory Offices**



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## **USACE 404**



Learning

Curve

nuances

FL vs. USACE



NWP/ SP/NPR 404 permitting

Outsourcing



## **Mitigation**

Banking rules

Jumping basins

Compliance -MBI allow? Type for Type

### Forms and **Processes**

TA /Fed Nexus FWS

### **Constantly Evolving** WOTUS/Sackett/

Rules

White

Appeals/Stays

Election year

Species and cultural

### Outsourcing and Regional resources Know your Section 10 Waters



# **Evolving Solutions**

# Reach out immediately to assigned reviewers to establish relationships

- Stay in communication
- Assist in providing data, forms and documents

#### **Utilize pre-application coordination**

- Keep abreast of policy changes within the agencies
- Early technical assistance with wildlife
- Adapt application reports and documents to agency requirements

## "You can get through life with bad manners, but it's easier with good manners."

**Lillian Gish** 



