

***APPLICATION FOR NOMINATION OF PARCELS
AS ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS***

A. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

1. Property Name: Spring Hill Central Park Acquisition Project (example: Smith Property)
2. Property Location: Section 13, Township 23 SOUTH, Range 17 EAST.

Street Address of Subject Property:
North of Spring Hill Dr., West of Mariner Blvd, South of Northcliffe Blvd.
3. Owner(s) of record of proposed property. Attach additional sheets if necessary.
Name: Loren E Hamm Tr.
Address: 1843 1/2 55th St. South Gulfport, FL 33707
Telephone: Unknown
4. If different from owner information, the applicant or contact person:
Name: Jeffrey Hays, Environmental Planner I
Address: 20 N. Main St. Rm. 262 Brooksville, FL 34689
Telephone: 352-754-4057
5. County Tax Parcel Number: R13 423 17 000 0010 0000
6. Is this nomination being made by an agency or a nonprofit organization? *YES or NO.* Hernando County Planning Department
7. Are there other funds available to assist in the purchase of the site? *YES or NO.* If yes, please explain (include any donation or transfer of property or property rights):
Unknown; Grants Possible
8. Are you aware of any liens against the property? *YES or NO.* If yes, please explain: _____
9. Have any easements or encroachments been established on the property? *YES or NO or UNKNOWN.* If yes, please explain:
Powerline Corridor
10. Total Land Area: 479.75 acres. Total number of parcels: 1. Please indicate the acreage of each parcel:

<i>PARCEL</i>	<i>ACRES</i>
00375944	479.75

11. Please attach a legal description or property tax card and any available survey showing boundaries of the property, existing streets, buildings, watercourses, easements, section lines and any deed restrictions or encumbrances, as applicable. Applications made by property owners should include a copy of the deed.
12. Have any waste management or disposal activities been conducted on the property? *YES or NO or UNKNOWN*. If yes, please explain in the narrative required in Section C.4.

B. VALUATION

1. Do you have an estimated fair market value? *YES or NO*. Attach documentation such as an appraisal, if available.
2. Attach documentation of current assessed value from the Hernando County Property Appraiser's Office.
3. Attach any available documentation of owner's willingness to arrange transfer of the property.

C. ATTACHMENTS

1. Provide a map with sufficient detail to locate the property in the field. Property boundaries must be clearly depicted. Recent aerial maps at a scale of 1"= 200' with landmarks depicted will be appropriate.
2. Photographs or videos depicting the characteristics of the property may be provided by the applicant.
3. Provide a brief narrative which discusses why the project should be considered an environmentally sensitive land. The narrative should address the attached requisite conditions for designation as an ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND which apply to this property.
4. Provide a narrative which describes historic and current uses of the property. Such uses may include but not be limited to dredge and fill activities, structural improvements, mineral extraction, waste management activities, and agricultural development. Provide copies of any soil or farm management plans, if available.
5. Persons acting as an agent for the property owner must attach an affidavit to that effect.

**REQUISITE CONDITIONS FOR DESIGNATION AS ENVIRONMENTALLY
SENSITIVE LANDS**

The following basic selection criteria will be applied to property upon Nomination, prior to designation as environmentally sensitive lands:

- (1) Supports prime examples of ecological communities native to Hernando County and/or significant features as identified in Section 1 of the Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Manual.
- (2) Supports exceptional biodiversity - sites which represent several ecological communities or exhibit high species diversity within an ecological community native to Hernando County.
- (3) Manageability - feasible to manage in a fashion that will protect and enhance the resource.
- (4) Feasibility of acquisition - ownership patterns, property restrictions or other conditions should not pose significant barriers.
- (5) Surrounding land use - the current land use of adjacent property should be compatible with the proposed management and preservation of the site as environmentally sensitive.
- (6) Threatened by development - when sites are in imminent danger of development, they should receive preference for purchase.
- (7) Size and location - large sites are preferable in order to encompass a diversity of resources and a mixture of uses. Exceptions will be small vegetative communities for which only small populations of listed plants or animals remain and properties which will function as greenway/wildlife corridors. The site has proximity to other resources which would heighten its value as a sensitive land or is within an area of long range planning with the objective of preserving greenway/wildlife corridors between existing protected resources. The property is within the mapped designation of environmentally sensitive lands as described in Section 2 of the Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Manual.
- (8) Other methods of protection - sites which receive substantial protection by other strategies should receive lower priority.
- (9) Rarity/Representation - vegetative communities which are poorly represented in public ownership should receive preference. These communities include those species which, while not currently listed, are known to be poorly represented in the state or county. The property provides protection to lands which have not been strongly represented in public ownership.
- (10) Consistency with Comprehensive Plan - the property satisfies a goal, objective, or policy of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.
- (11) Historical/archaeological/paleontological resources - must satisfy the criteria provided in Section 1 of the Hernando County Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Manual.
- (12) Hydrology - the property is critical to preserving hydrologic integrity of significant natural systems and/or contributes substantially to recharge of the Floridan Aquifer.

LITTLE WITHLACOOCHEE RIVERINE CONNECTOR ACQUISITION PROJECT NARRATIVE

Introduction

This proposed ESL acquisition project seeks to acquire and consolidate 1800 acres stretching between the Cypress Lakes Preserve and the Croom and Richloam tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest. The majority of this area is the previously platted Ridge Manor Estates subdivision. This proposed project focuses on the FEMA 100-year floodplain associated with the Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee rivers. If acquired along with the already approved Withlacoochee State Forest Connector ESL Project and the Annutteliga Hammock Florida Forever Project, this project will complete the east-west conservation corridor between the Green Swamp and the Chassahowitzka WMA/NWR listed in the University of Florida report *Identification of Critical Linkages Within the Florida Ecological Greenways Report* (2003).

Ecological Communities (ESL Requisite Condition 1)

The project area comprises primarily mesic hammock, pine-xeric oak sandhill, wet prairie, river/lake swamp and pine flatwoods. This mosaic of habitat types in close proximity is a unique feature to this section of the County.

Biodiversity and Listed Species (ESL Requisite Condition 2)

The project area contains sandhill habitat which is home to the gopher tortoise and several other listed commensals. The Long Lake section of the project area contains a good deal of emergent vegetation and apple snails. On recent site visits staff has identified roseate spoonbill, little blue heron, white ibis, and even the endangered everglades snail kite (possibly an accidental due to Hurricane Charley) utilizing this habitat and food source.

Hydrology and Water Quality Issues (ESL Requisite Condition 12)

The project area contributes to the water quality of the adjoining wetlands and riverine systems of the Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee rivers. The project area largely consists of areas that were platted and lie within the associated floodplains of these two rivers. Preserving the functioning floodplain from increased development and possible abatement of established limerock roads will assist in preventing repetitive property losses and help to maintain the water quality of the riverine systems.

Public Access, Recreation, Education and Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan (ESL Requisite Condition 10)

There is potential for establishing a multi-use trail along Long Lake which would connect the Cypress Lakes Preserve and the Withlacoochee State Forest. As the neighborhood develops around the proposed acquisition, this trail would be a unique bicycle/pedestrian amenity. This

opportunity for a linear park will assist the County in meeting the level of service standards for parks set out in the Comprehensive Plan.

Threatened by Development (ESL Requisite Condition 6)

The majority of the project area is currently platted with lots and there is an existing network of limerock roads. There are relatively few dwelling units in the project area at this time, but as the eastside of the County continues to grow more homes are likely to be constructed.

Feasibility of Acquisition (ESL Requisite Condition 4)

Although this area has been largely platted into individual lots, many of the lots lie within wetland and/or floodplain and are undesirable. The probability of finding willing sellers is high. The high number of small residential lots however means that the probability of acquiring all of the parcels within the project area is low.

Surrounding Land Uses & Manageability (ESL Requisite Conditions 3 & 5)

The proposed area is surrounded by large conservation lands and residential development. The proposed project boundary includes all areas within the 100 year floodplain and a 200' buffer. This buffer will aid in management of the preserved area. The proximity of this management area to other large conservation areas should help to more efficiently manage the entire ecosystem.

STAFF EVALUATION

Little Withlacoochee Riverine Corridor Project

SECTION 1

Supports prime examples of ecological communities native to Hernando County and/or significant features as identified in Section 1 of the manual.

According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Landsat Habitat Maps and Florida Land Use Cover Classification System (FLUCCS) the majority of the project area is open land (urban) due to the preponderance of platted lots and limerock roads. The majority of the habitat is actually pine-xeric oak, upland coniferous forest, and mixed coniferous/hardwood hammock. The FLUCCS does however illustrate several wetland types within the project area including: river/lake swamp, cypress, freshwater marsh, and wet prairie.

SECTION 2

Supports exceptional biodiversity - sites which represent several ecological communities or exhibit high species diversity within an ecological community native to Hernando County.

Staff has not conducted any biological surveys within the project area. Extensive floral and faunal studies have been conducted at the nearby ESL Cypress Lakes Preserve. Several listed wildlife species have been observed at Cypress Lakes including: eastern indigo snake, Florida mouse, gopher tortoise, Florida gopher frog, wood stork, white ibis, little blue heron, snowy egret and roseate spoonbill. An everglades snail kite has also been observed within the project area along Long Lake. There are large contiguous areas of native sandhill and hammock within the project interspersed with numerous wetlands which would favor high biodiversity. The project area is a platted subdivision with limerock roads. This factor likely decreases biodiversity and/or abundance compared to a completely undeveloped condition.

SECTION 3

Manageability - feasible to manage in a fashion that will protect and enhance the resource.

If many of the small lots within the project can be acquired contiguously it will be possible to effectively manage the resource. There are small numbers of developed lots within the project area which will hinder management, specifically prescribed burning. In order to create manageable units, acquisition priorities should include parcels adjacent to current conservation land and conglomerations of parcels deemed unbuildable due to wetland and/or floodplain impacts.

SECTION 4

Feasibility of acquisition - ownership patterns, property restrictions or other conditions should not pose significant barriers.

The two proposed phases of the project contain 2330 parcels totaling 2600 acres; the largest being 50 acres and the majority being individual residential lots. Small lot acquisitions within such an expansive area is inherently difficult. The focus of the project is parcels within the 100-year floodplain. Many of these lots have impediments to their development due to wetland and floodplain regulations. This might make for a relatively high percentage of willing sellers. There are 177 dwelling units within the project area. These would most likely be avoided during any ESL acquisition.

SECTION 5

Surrounding land use - the current land use of adjacent property should be compatible with the proposed management and preservation of the site as environmentally sensitive.

The Future Land Use Map indicates that the area surrounding the project site is chiefly conservation and rural. One of the major goals of this acquisition project would be to connect the Croom and Richloam tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest.

Current zoning surrounding the project is CV (conservation), R1C (residential), and AG (agriculture).

SECTION 6

Threatened by development - when sites are in imminent danger of development, they should receive preference for purchase.

Ridge Manor Estates is currently zoned R1C (residential), is platted, and contains a network of limerock roads. The project area is relatively sparsely developed but, increased property costs and population in other parts of the county make it a more attractive area in which to live. Desirable lots within the project area will likely see an increasing rate of development over the near term.

SECTION 7

Size - large sites are preferable in order to encompass a diversity of resources and a mixture of uses. Exceptions will be small vegetative communities for which only small populations of listed plants or animals remain and properties which will function as greenway/wildlife corridors. These exceptions are not required to be depicted on the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Map.

The project area is approximately 2600 acres as proposed. Project boundaries could be adjusted once acquisition priorities are determined.

SECTION 8

Other methods of protection - sites which receive substantial protection by other strategies should receive lower priority.

The project area was platted before state and federal wetland and floodplain management regulations were enacted. There are a number of lots within low lying areas that would be economically unfeasible to develop due to wetland and/or floodplain mitigation requirements. The majority of the project area could be developed, however, with greater difficulty due to environmental constraints.

SECTION 9

Rarity - vegetative communities which are poorly represented in public ownership should receive preference. These communities include those species which, while not currently listed, are known to be poorly represented in the state or county.

The type of sandhill habitat found on this property is becoming increasingly rare in the county due to development pressures. There are many areas within the project where xeric habitats interface with floodplain forest and wetlands contiguous to the river system. Similar habitat is found on adjacent conservation areas.

SECTION 10

Consistency with Comprehensive Plan - the property satisfies a goal, objective, or policy of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Relevant Comprehensive Plan language is as follows:

GOAL 6.01

PROTECT WILDLIFE AND CONSERVE, APPROPRIATELY USE, AND PROTECT WILDLIFE HABITATS.

IDENTIFICATION AND PRESERVATION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS AND UNIQUE NATURAL VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

OBJECTIVE 6.01C: IDENTIFY AND PRESERVE ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS AND UNIQUE NATURAL VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES WHERE POSSIBLE

THROUGH LAND ACQUISITION, MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS, OR INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION IN THE MANNER THAT FURTHERS THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES IN

- POLICY 6.01C(1):** Prepare an annual report identifying environmentally sensitive lands and unique natural vegetative communities including a prioritization of acquisition by applicable criteria.
- POLICY 6.01C(2):** Develop and maintain a protection plan for County-owned environmentally sensitive lands and unique natural vegetative communities.
- POLICY 6.01C(3):** Assist state agencies in the development of protection plans for state-owned environmentally sensitive lands and unique vegetative communities.
- POLICY 6.01C(5):** As part of the protection plan, provide a method through which private developers could increase density or decrease on-site open space by providing funds or land for natural preservation areas.
- POLICY 6.01C(6):** Require in the land development approval criteria the promotion of density clustering and protection of unique natural vegetative communities.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

OBJECTIVE 6.01E: **COOPERATE WITH CITRUS AND PASCO COUNTIES AND THE CITY OF WEEKI WACHEE TO CONSERVE, PROTECT AND APPROPRIATELY USE UNIQUE VEGETATIVE COMMUNITIES LOCATED WITHIN MORE THAN ONE LOCAL JURISDICTION.**

- POLICY 6.01E(2):** Continue to coordinate with the FG&FWFC and the Division of Forestry regarding the management, protection, and use of CARL lands.

CREATION OF NATURAL AREA GREENWAYS

OBJECTIVE 6.01G: ENCOURAGE THE CREATION OF CONNECTING NATURAL AREA GREENWAYS BY CONNECTING ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS AND OTHER PRESERVED AREAS IN THE COUNTY.

POLICY 6.01G(1): Continue to encourage appropriate agencies and private organizations to develop or preserve natural area greenways which may function as wildlife corridors and/or recreation areas, and to meet the passive recreational needs of the County while preserving the County's natural vegetation.

POLICY 6.01G(2): The natural area greenways shall consist of environmentally sensitive lands, wetlands, preserved lands, and conservation easements with vegetative communities which are beneficial to threatened and endangered species.

POLICY 6.01G(3): Encourage inter-agency agreements for joint land acquisitions or through the use of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) for creation of natural area greenways.

POLICY 6.01G(5): Support appropriate agencies in obtaining conservation easements on private lands.

POLICY 6.01G(6): Continue to request assistance in public acquisition or through the use of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) of natural preserves under regional, state and federal programs.

POLICY 6.01G(7): Prevent fragmentation of wildlife corridors, where possible, and continue to preserve wildlife corridors and natural areas within development projects.

GOAL 6.05

CONSERVE, APPROPRIATELY USE AND PROTECT THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WETLANDS AS DESIGNATED BY SWFWMD AND DEP.

GOAL 6.08

GROWTH IN HARMONY WITH NATURAL CONDITIONS.

DEVELOPMENT COMPATIBLE WITH THE NATURAL SYSTEM

OBJECTIVE 6.08A: DEVELOPMENT SHALL BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE ABILITY OF THE NATURAL SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT THE INTENSITY OF DEVELOPMENT.

POLICY 6.08A(1): Minimum lot sizes for septic fields may be further restricted from the minimum ½ acre in prime aquifer recharge areas, sinkhole areas, areas adjacent to lakes or rivers or areas where soils have severe limitations (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)).

POLICY 6.08A(2): Development in flood-prone areas shall generally be less intensive and shall meet the standards established in the County flood plain ordinance.

POLICY 6.08A(3): The flood plain ordinance shall minimize development impacts on flood plains, including storage capacity and increase or decrease in the natural flow of floodwater.

SECTION 11

Location - the site has proximity to other resources which would heighten its value as a sensitive land or is within an area of long range planning with the objective of preserving greenway/wildlife corridors between existing protected resources. The property is within the mapped designation of environmentally sensitive lands as described in Section 2.

This project is within a critical greenway/wildlife corridor. If acquired it will create a conservation corridor between the Croom and Richloam tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest. If acquired along with the already approved Withlacoochee State Forest Connector ESL Project and the Annutteliga Hammock Florida Forever Project, this project will complete the east-west conservation corridor between the Green Swamp and the Chassahowitzka WMA/NWR listed in the University of Florida report *Identification of Critical Linkages Within the Florida Ecological Greenways Report* (2003).

SECTION 12

Historical/archaeological/paleontological resources - must satisfy the criteria provided in Section 1.

There are no known historical/archeological sites within the project area according to County data resources.

SECTION 13

Hydrology - the property is critical to preserving hydrologic integrity of significant natural systems and/or contributes substantially to recharge of the Floridan Aquifer.

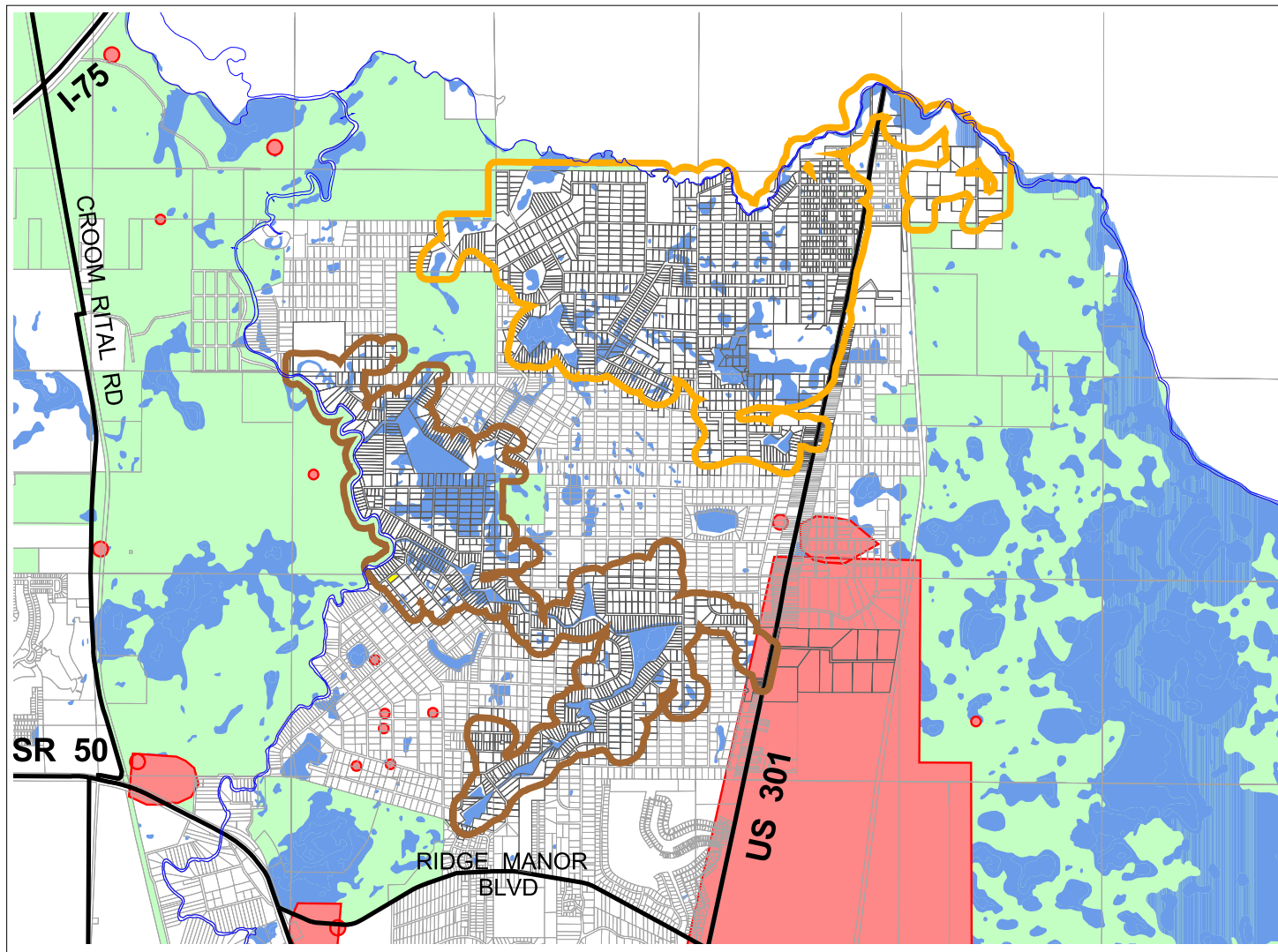
This project area is critical to preserving the hydrologic integrity of the Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee river systems. The acquisition of residential lots within the project area will keep a high density of septic systems out of sensitive floodplain. Once a contiguous block of lots is acquired there is the possibility of removing some the limerock roads and restoring native cover. Removing development potential on lots adjacent to Long Lake would also favorably impact the water quality entering this drainage system.






SECTION 14

Representation - the property provides protection to lands which have not been strongly represented in public ownership.

See discussion on rarity in Section 9.

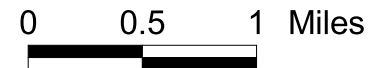
Proposed Little Withlacoochee Riverine Corridor



-  Phase 1: 1,247 parcels
-  Phase 2: 1,083 parcels
-  SPA*
-  Wetlands
-  Conservation

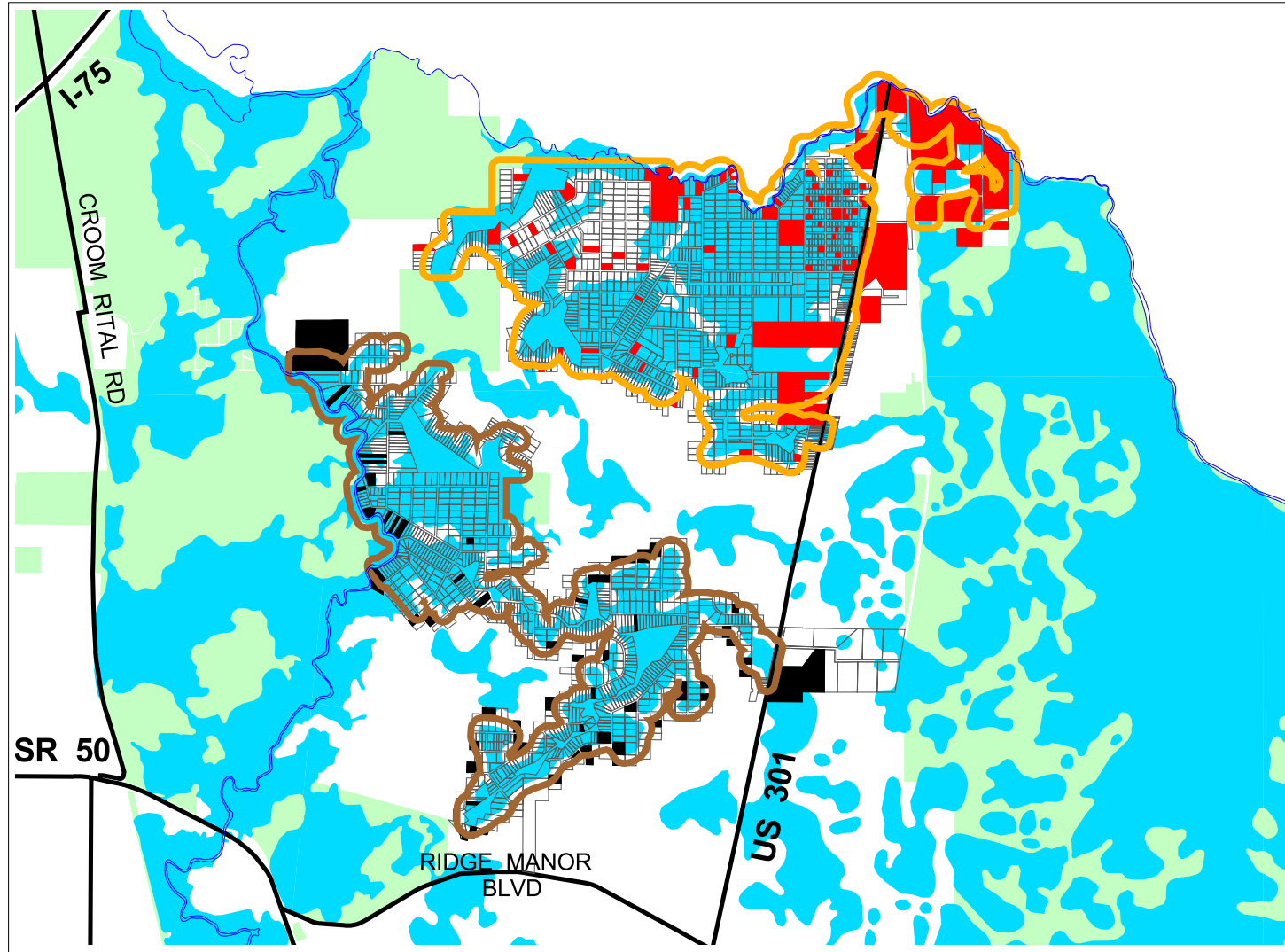


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* Special Protection Areas

Proposed Little Withlacoochee Riverine Corridor: 100-Year Floodplain

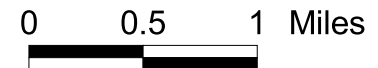


- Phase 1: 1,247 parcels
- Phase 1: DU Parcels (97)
- Phase 2: 1,083 parcels
- Phase 2: DU Parcels (79)
- 100-Year Floodplain
- Conservation

DU = Dwelling Unit

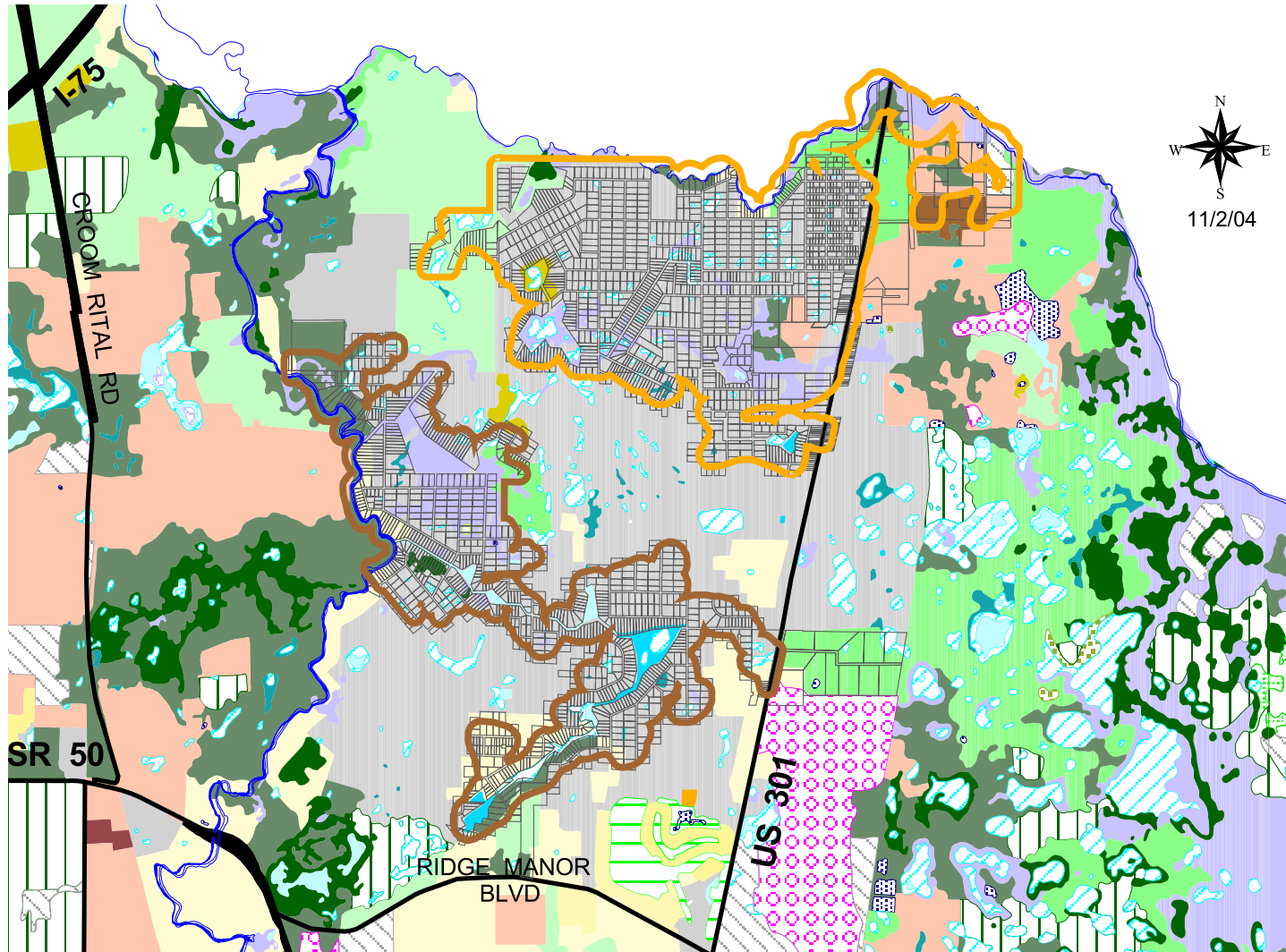


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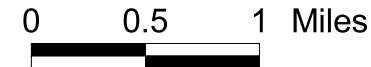


* Special Protection Areas

Proposed Little Withlacoochee Riverine Corridor - FLUCCS*



- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- FLUCCS**
- Aquatic Vegetation
- Commercial and Services
- Cropland and Pastureland
- Cypress
- Disturbed Land
- Extractive
- Feeding Operations
- Freshwater Marsh
- Industrial
- Intermittent Ponds
- Lakes < 10 acres
- Mixed Coniferous/Hardwood
- Open Land (Urban)
- Other Open Lands (Rural)
- Pine - Xeric Oak
- Pine Flatwoods
- Recreational
- Reservoirs < 10 acres
- Reservoirs 10 to 100 acres
- Residential: < 2 du/acre
- Residential: 2 to 5 du/acre
- Residential: > 5 du/acre
- River/Lake Swamp
- Specialty Farms
- Streams and Waterways
- Transportation
- Upland Coniferous Forests
- Utilities
- Wet Prairie
- Wetland Coniferous Forests
- Wetland Forested Mixed
- Wetland Hardwood Forests



* Florida Land Use/Cover Classification System