



# **Lochloosa Slough Preserve: 10-Year Preserve Management Plan**

**September 9, 2025**

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Land Conservation Program





To acquire, improve, and manage environmentally significant lands that protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

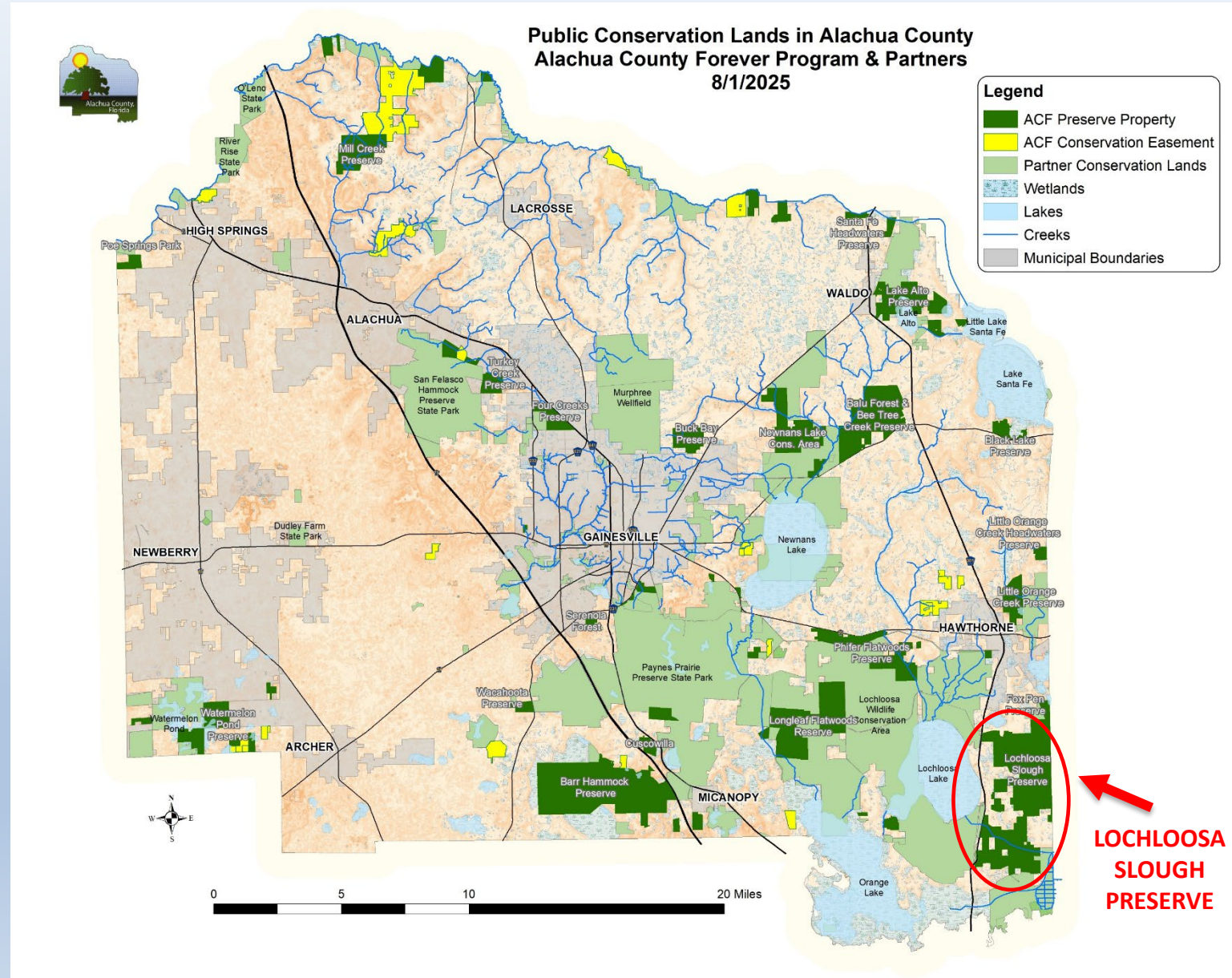
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# LOCHLOOSA SLOUGH PRESERVE IN THE CONSERVATION LANDSCAPE



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# LOCHLOOSA SLOUGH PRESERVE HIGHLIGHTS

- 6,266.8 acres
- 4 separate acquisitions, \$17,543,300 (WSPP surtax)
- Twelve intact natural communities on the Preserve
- 2.5-mile portion of Lochloosa Slough
- Approx. 200 individual wetlands totaling 1,560 acres
- 3,276 acres (52%) pine plantation
- Preserve is well suited to provide diverse habitats for both wildlife and public recreation opportunities



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# KEY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain, enhance, or restore existing natural communities.
2. Inventory natural features of the site, including flora, fauna, and natural communities.
3. Protect populations of significant and listed plant and animal species.
4. Develop and implement a prescribed fire management plan.

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# KEY MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

5. Develop and implement a forest resource management plan.
6. Protect water resources from adverse impacts.
7. Effectively and responsibly manage cultural resources.
8. Promote public outdoor recreation and environmental education consistent with preserving the historic and natural resources of the site.

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# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- FIRE MANAGEMENT - Implement prescribed fire to restore and maintain fire-dependent natural communities.
- FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – Implement a forest resource management strategy to convert planted timber to longleaf pine natural communities.
- RESTORATION - Restore approximately 3,200 acres of pine plantation with timber management and prescribed fire and monitor the condition of other natural communities.
- INVASIVE PLANTS - Control or eradicate invasive, non-native plant species.

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# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- **FERAL ANIMAL REMOVAL** – Monitor and remove feral animals as needed.
- **CULTURAL RESOURCES** - Protect known sites from disturbance, and coordinate with Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources regarding identification and protection of cultural sites.
- **MONITORING** - Monitor property through field inspections and photo points to assess the effects of management activities and public use on the resources.

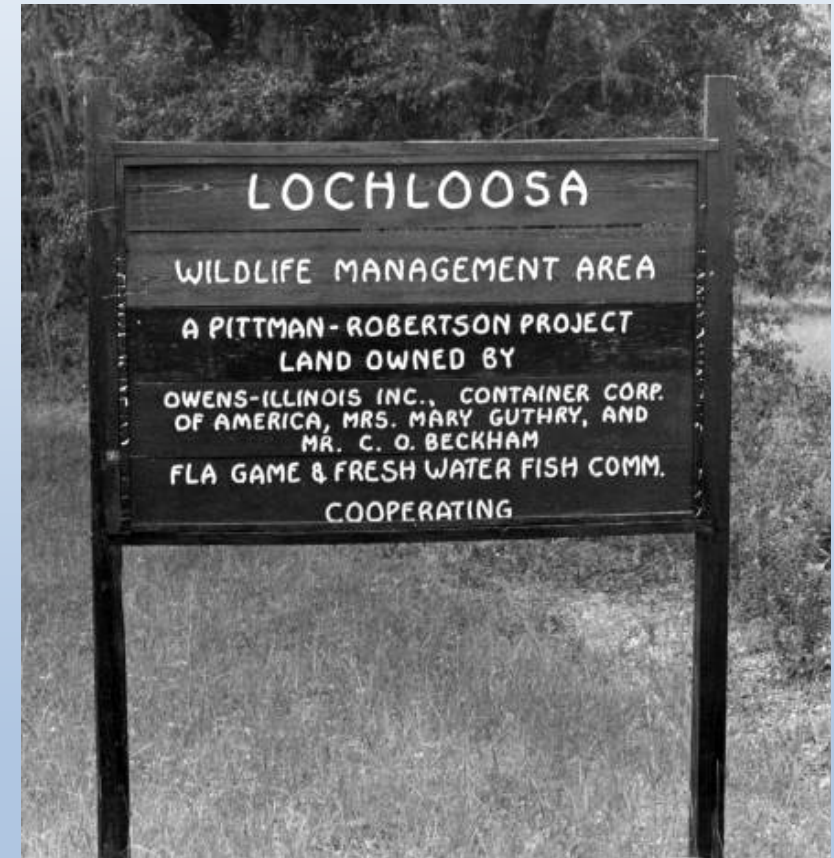
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# PREVIOUS USES

- Silviculture, hunting, cattle grazing
- Formerly included in the Lochloosa WMA in the 1960s and '70s
- Turpentine and naval stores industries
- Archeological evidence of human use in the Lochloosa Lake area dating back as far as 8,500 BCE



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# NATURAL COMMUNITIES

- Twelve distinct natural communities, five altered communities
- 2.5-mile portion of Lochloosa Slough
- 1,560 acres of wetlands
- Many of the natural communities are in good condition, the most dominant being basin marsh
- Primary altered landcover type is pine plantation, totaling 3,276 acres

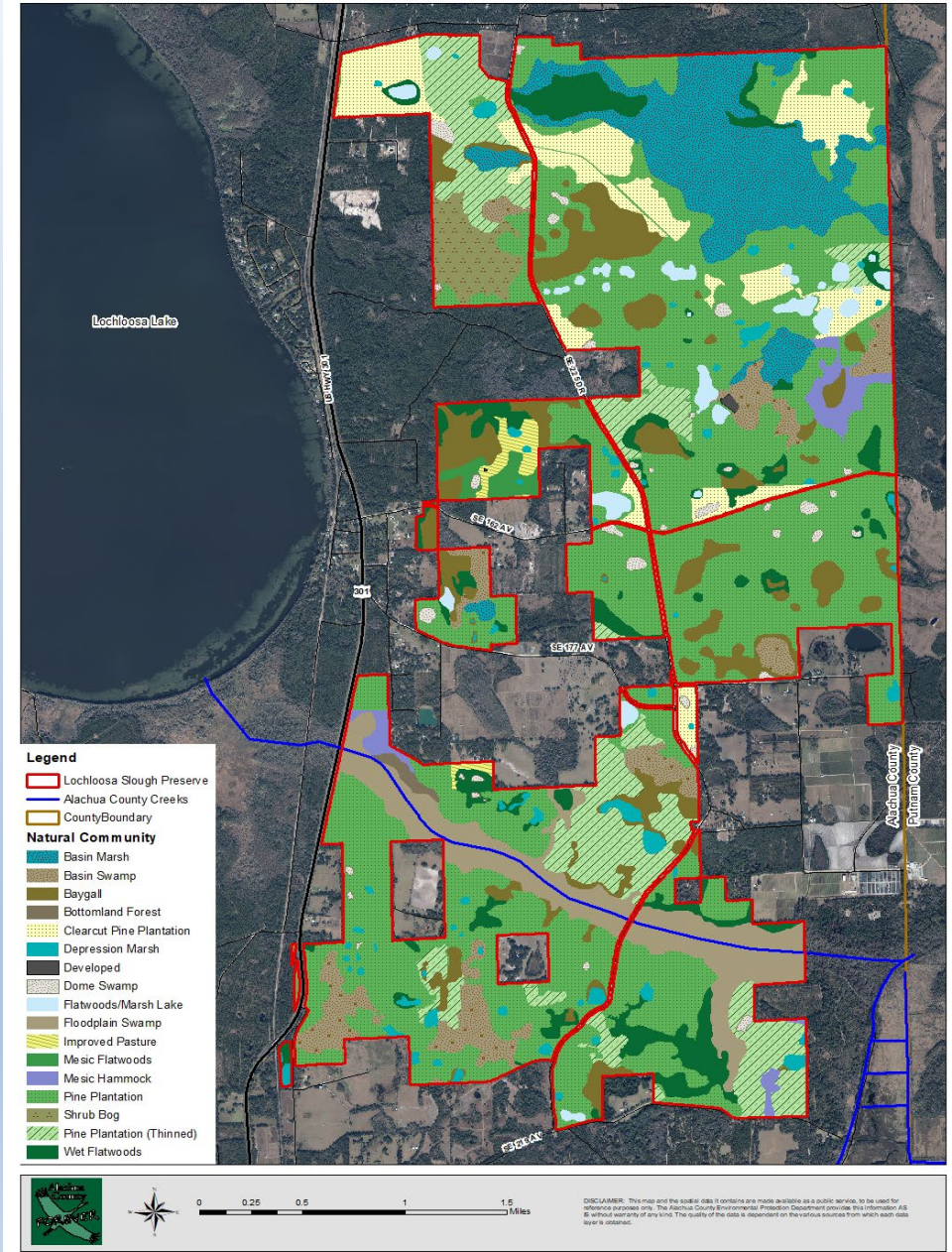
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## EXHIBIT C Lochloosa Slough Preserve Natural Community Map



# NATURAL COMMUNITITES



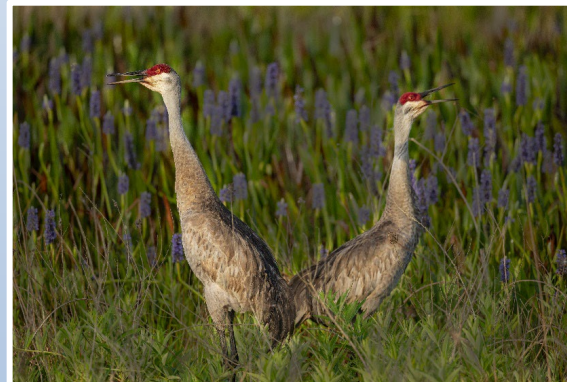
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# PLANTS & WILDLIFE

- Plants: 1 state threatened, 3 state endangered, 5 commercially exploited species
- Animals: 3 state threatened, 1 federally endangered species



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# NON-NATIVE INVASIVE PLANTS

- 30 non-native invasive plant species



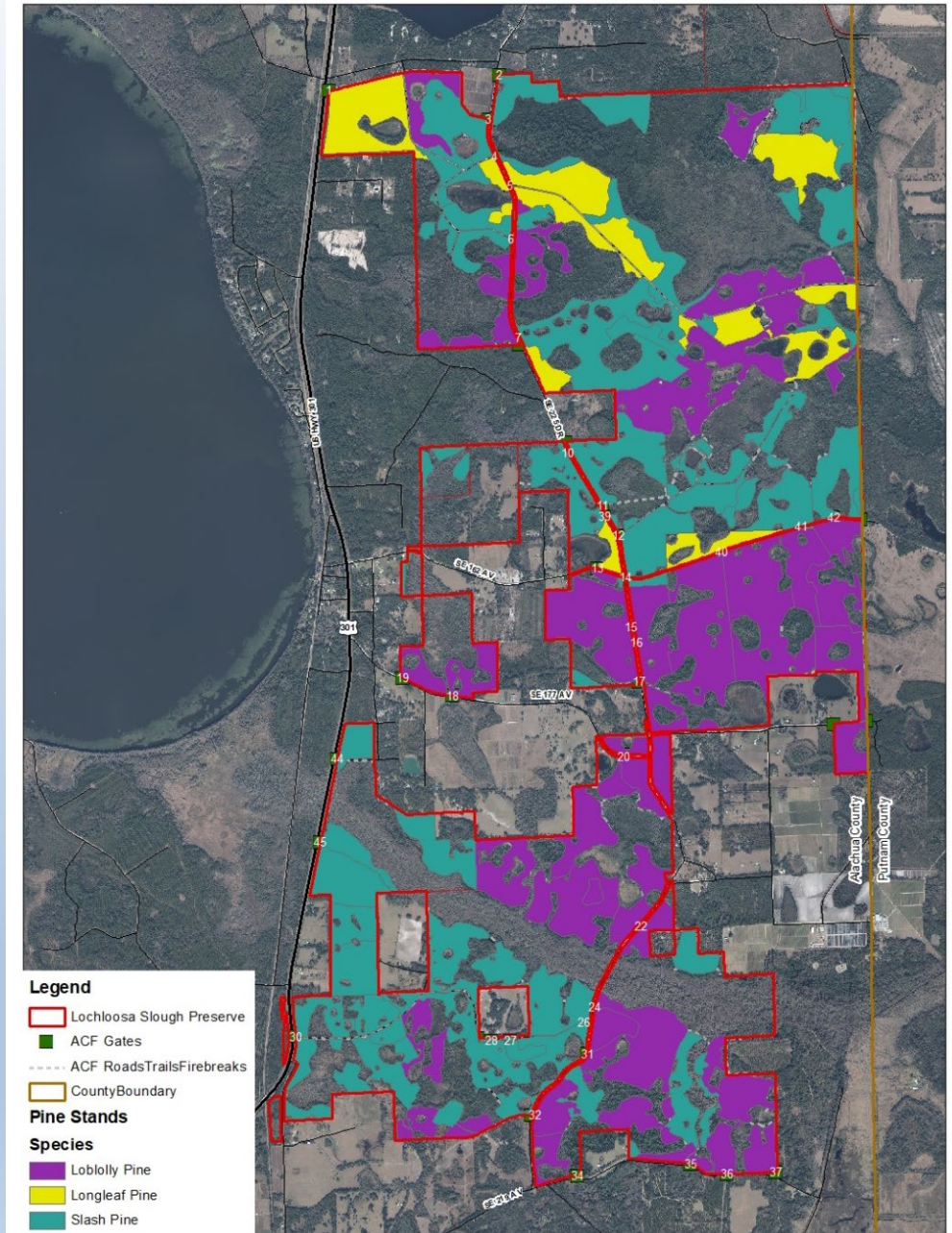
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# FOREST RESOURCES

- 3,276 acres in pine plantations
- Will be managed with timber harvests
- 375 acres have been planted in longleaf pine



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# PRESCRIBED FIRE

- Approximately 4,200 acres of fire-dependent landcover
- Annual burn goal: 1,000 - 2,000 acres
- 25 miles of firebreaks planned for FY 25



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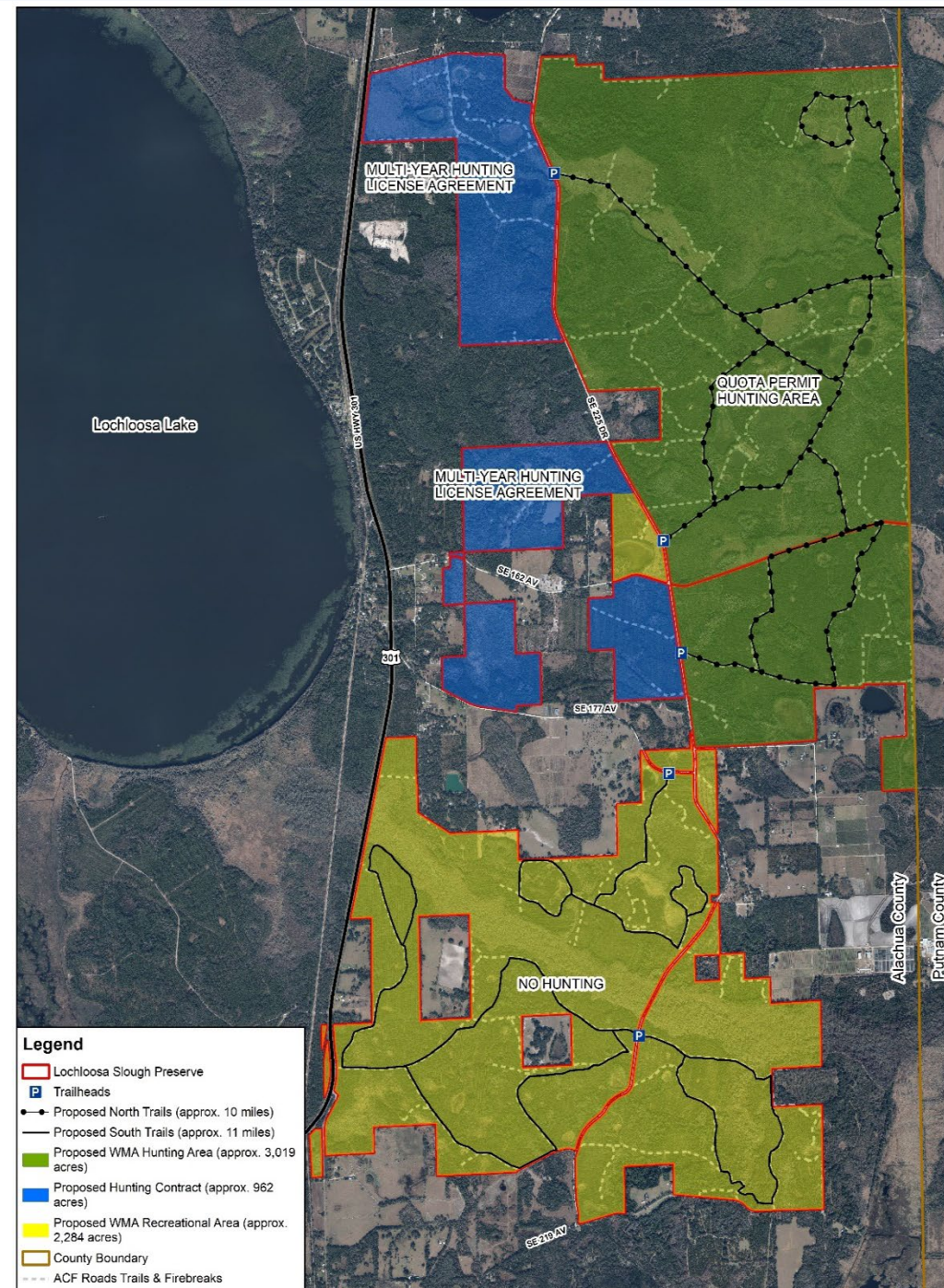
# CONCEPTUAL RECREATIONAL SITE PLAN

- 5 trailhead parking areas
- ~21 miles of recreational trails
- Proposed 5,303-acre WMA (green and yellow areas)
- 2,284 acres (yellow) will be closed to hunting, allowing for other recreational opportunities 365 days per year
- 3,019 acres will be open to FWC-managed public hunting by quota permit (green)
- 2 hunter caretaker license agreement areas totaling approximately 962 acres (blue)

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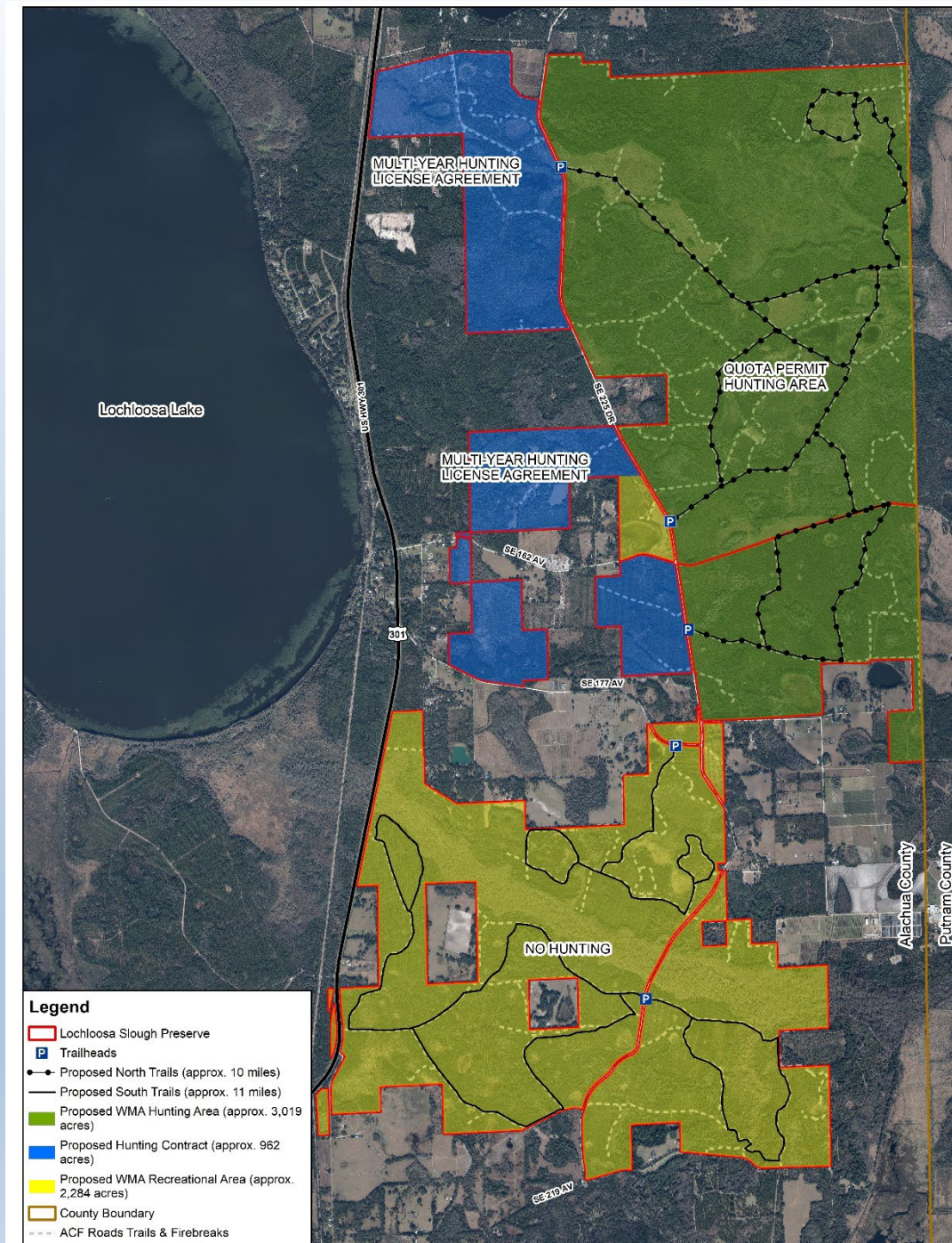
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# PROPOSED WMA HUNTING AREA DETAILS

- FWC managed hunt on 3,019 acres (green area on map)
- 10 quota permit holders (+1 guest) per weekend
- 51 weekend days Sept – April
- Archery, muzzleloading, family hunt, general gun, small game, youth turkey, spring turkey
- Seasons limited to deer, turkey, small game, and wild hogs
- Limited driving for permit holders – walk-in only for small game
- Open for other recreation on non-hunting days



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# WMA ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

## 2025

- BOCC authorized staff to pursue WMA on December 5, 2023
- County staff and FWC biologists proposed 5,303 acre WMA and discussed proposed Rules
- Survey of proposed WMA concepts currently available for public comment
- Draft WMA Rules, proposed hunting dates, and BOCC Chair letter prepared for FWC Commissioners – *Sept 2025*
- FWC Commissioners take initial vote on draft WMA Rules – *Nov 5 & 6, 2025*
- County staff and FWC hunting biologists finalize proposed rules and begin negotiations on contractual agreement – *beginning Nov 2025*

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# WMA ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

## 2026

- FWC Commissioners vote on Final Rules and draft an Establishment Order to designate the new WMA – *winter meeting 2026*
- FWC Commissioners execute WMA Establishment Order – *spring meeting 2026*
- County staff and FWC staff work to draft WMA brochure and map – *beginning spring 2026*
- Public applications for quota hunts begin – *May 15, 2026*
- WMA Rules added to Florida Administrative Code and becomes effective – *July 1, 2026*
- WMA hunting season begins – *fall 2026*
- County retains management authority for preserve and WMA rule development, while FWC manages hunts and provides enforcement support.

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# MANAGEMENT PLAN PUBLIC OUTREACH

- 3 Neighborhood outreach meetings and one field tour.
- Plan has been presented to the Land Conservation Board.



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# QUESTIONS?

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