

Planning for Sea Level Rise in the Matanzas Basin

Appendix F: Land Conservation Policies and Programs

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Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine research Reserve Sea-Level Adaption Study
Conservation Incentives Analysis
Julie Morris, Tom Hctor and Mike O'Brien

Department of Environmental Protection: Florida Forever

Florida Forever is our state land acquisition program and is run by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Florida Forever was typically funded at 300 million annually; in 2008 this dropped dramatically with the economic recession. Funding is slightly higher in FY2014 than in past years. Funding for Florida Forever is expected to increase to the full \$300 million/year with the passage of Amendment 1. This program has a fairly strict protocol for acceptance; the application process is 6 months. Once accepted into the program applications are ranked and placed into categories. The program purchases properties with high conservation value, utilizing both fee-simple and less-than-fee acquisition strategies (conservation easements). DEP frequently partners with water management districts to purchase property; St John's Water Management District often partners with the state on projects. Florida Forever is currently prioritizing less-than-fee projects and projects that bring partnership funding to the table. Florida Forever also has various project categories including a climate change category. It is likely that any future proposed Florida Forever projects adjacent or near the GTM reserve would qualify for this category, which might become a higher priority with ongoing climate change impacts.

Contact Paula.L.Allen@dep.state.fl.us for more information. Please see http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/fl_forever.htm for information on the Florida Forever Program.

Current Florida Forever Projects within the Study Area.

Flagler County Blueway Florida Forever Project. This project is approximately 5,000 acres in both Volusia and Flagler Counties; 3,799 acres of the project are within the study area. The project extends from just south of Pellicer Creek Conservation Area southward to the Flagler County Line. The project follows the intracoastal waterway and includes most of the undeveloped land east of I-95 in Flagler County. Part of the project borders the complex of conservation lands that include the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve (GTM). The St. John's Water Management District and Flagler County are both partners in this project (See Pellicer Creek Florida Forever Project Description). The project is ranked number 12 out of 30 in the Partnership Florida Forever Category. The project representative may want to consider working with DEP staff to move this project to the Climate Change Lands Category.

Northeast Florida Blueway Florida Forever Project. This project is ranked number 2 out of 14 in the Climate Change Lands Florida Forever Project Category, meaning that it has been deemed essential for acquisition because the lands are important to address the challenges of global

climate change. The project is just to the north of the complex of conservation lands surrounding the GTM, and also fills in gaps and buffers the complex to the east and south.

Pringle Creek Forest Florida Forever Project. This project is listed as a Florida Forever Project so GTM can apply for a NOAA grant. Because of its location in a research reserve watershed the project is eligible for federal funding (<http://coast.noaa.gov/czm/landconservation/applying/?redirect=301ocm>).

As stated above, funding for Florida Forever is expected to increase in the coming years. There are additional opportunities to submit additional Florida Forever Projects in the landscape to the west of the GTM. Please see Major Landowners map and the attached table for an overview of larger ownerships to the east of the GTM. The Conservation Trust for Florida is currently working in this landscape to put together a Florida Forever Project. Keith Fountain (keithrfountain@gmail.com) or Tom Hctor (tomh@geoplan.ufl.edu) could speak to that particular Florida Forever Project.

St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

SJRWMD has an active land acquisition program (see their 2014 Acquisition Map). The District considers offers of property and conservation easements on an ongoing basis. SJRWMD focuses on priority lands providing water resources protection such as floodplains, sensitive wetlands and groundwater recharge areas. The Existing Wetlands Map identifies high priority wetland areas that could be considered for acquisition by SJRWMD. SJRWMD has a long history of partnering with the state on acquisition projects in the region. There are multiple opportunities to leverage partnership dollars with SJRWMD and the state (Florida Forever or the Forest Legacy Program). There is a current SJRWMD acquisition project within the study area (See Existing and Planned Conservation Areas Map).

The contact person for SJWMD acquisition program is Lu Anne Wilson lwilson@sjrwmd.com. Please see <http://floridaswater.com/landacquisition/> for more information.

The Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program aims to protect and conserve forests that are threatened by conversion by non-forest uses. The program is led by the Florida Forest Service; the U.S. Forest Service makes the final selections and distributes the funds. Florida can submit multiple projects, but the U.S. Forest Service Regional Office can submit no more than 3 projects for the state to the national office for consideration; maximum funding is \$10 million per year per state. The Florida Forest Service places an emphasis on purchasing conservation easements, although fee-simple acquisition is allowed. The Florida program focuses on conservation easements to ensure that forests in the state remain economically viable.

The state's Forest Legacy Area map identifies which portions of the state that are eligible for protection under the Forest Legacy program. Please see this map for an idea of where there are current Forest Legacy Areas. <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/Land-Planning-and-Administration-Section/Florida-Forest-Legacy-Program/Florida-Forest-Legacy-Areas-Map>

The state is currently updating this map. The GTM study area falls within a Forest Legacy Area. Please see the landcover map and associated table; all of the areas in brown are potential areas to be considered for a Forest Legacy Conservation Easement. The Forest Landcover Map depicts which areas are natural forests and which are tree plantations. These areas overlap with many of the larger timber companies that may be willing to consider conservation easements (see Major Landowners Map). The majority of the study area is under some sort of forest landcover; the Forest Legacy Program would be an excellent avenue to pursue for conservation funding in the future. SJWMD has partnered with the program in the past to leverage funding.

Larame Ferry is the contact person for the Forest Legacy Program:

Larame.ferry@freshfromflorida.com Please see <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Our-Forests/Land-Planning-and-Administration-Section/Florida-Forest-Legacy-Program/The-Forest-Legacy-Program-FAQ> for additional information on the program.

Florida Forest Service: Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP)

The RFLPP is an agricultural easement program run out of the Florida Forest Service; it is designed to protect important agricultural lands through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements. The purpose of the program is to protect working landscapes, and easements are not restrictive. The program is very popular among landowners who would like to continue their agricultural operations. The RFLPP is not well funded; for FY 2014 it was funded at \$11 million and in FY2015 it is funded at \$5 million. There is a chance that funding could be increased with Amendment 1 funding and due to the fact that it is very popular and a simpler process than some of the other programs. RFLPP did successfully leverage their dollars in FY2014 with partnership funding from NRCS.

Contact John.Browne@freshfromflorida.com for more information. Please see <http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/For-Landowners/Programs/Rural-and-Family-Lands-Protection-Program> for additional information.

NRCS- Agricultural Conservation Land Easement Program: Wetland Reserve Easement

The Wetland Reserve Easement Program under NRCS is an easement program that purchases conservation easements over wetlands, or former wetlands often in need of restoration. NRCS

prioritizes wetlands that have been converted into other uses. NRCS will prioritize applications based the easement's potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife. The Potential Wetlands Map shows former wetlands in the GTM study area. The Potential Wetlands by Landcover Map depicts the current land use in the areas that were former wetlands. WRE's are more restrictive than other easements. NRCS has the right to restrict grazing rights for restoration purposes. NRCS has not done this and they say it is highly unlikely they ever will, as cattle are an important management tool in Florida. However landowners need to be aware that this possibility exists. WRE's are stand-alone easements; NRCS doesn't partner with other entities to purchase these easements. Contact Crenel.francis@fl.usda.gov for more information. Please see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/fl/programs/easements/> for additional information.

NRCS- Agricultural Conservation Land Easement Program: Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

The ALE is a partnership program and is geared for working landscapes. NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. Eligible partners include Indian tribes, state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that have farmland or grassland protection programs. The ALE program will provide up to 50% match for working agricultural lands and 75% where there are grasslands of special significance. There are no grasslands of special significance in the GTM study area. The ALE program does prioritize specific soils; these areas are termed Farmland of Unique Importance. Lands that have farmland of unique importance will receive priority ranking for a 50% match from NRCS. Please see the map: Farmland of Unique Importance. There are many areas within the study area that would rank well in the ALE program. NRCS doesn't purchase these easements, rather they contribute 50% to a partner. There is a strong possibility of a funding partnership with SJRWMD or another state program in certain areas. This is a relatively new program so we haven't had many partnerships with NRCS ALE in the state as of yet. However, the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP) under the Florida Forest Service has successfully partnered with the NRCS ALE program.

Contact: nina.bhattacharyya@fl.usda.gov for more information. Please see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/fl/programs/easements/> for more information.

Potential additions: Dispersed water storage as an independent section and a Wetlands Mitigation bank section.

Wetland Mitigation Banking

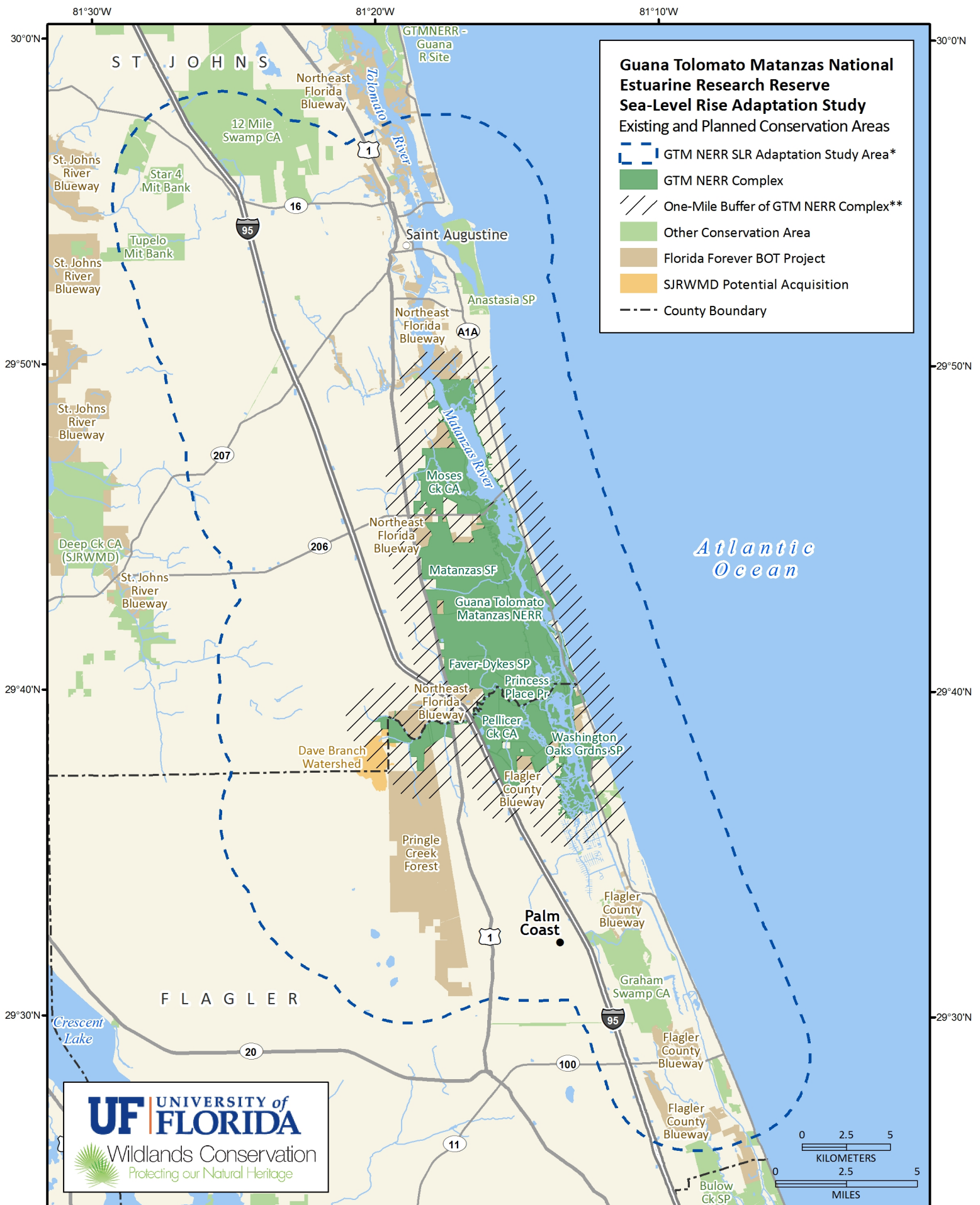
Mitigation banking is a practice in which an environmental enhancement and preservation project is conducted by a public agency or private entity (“banker”) to provide mitigation for wetland impacts within a defined region (mitigation service area). The bank is the site itself, and the currency sold by the banker to the entity impacting wetlands is referred to as a credit, which represents the wetland ecological value equivalent to the complete restoration of one acre. The number of potential credits permitted for the bank and the credit debits required for impact permits are determined by the permitting agencies. Mitigation banks are authorized by a State permit, issued by either a Water Management District or the Department, and by the US Army Corps of Engineers as a Mitigation Bank Instrument (MBI).

There are certain strategic areas within the GTM study area that could be potential wetland mitigation banks. Wetland bankers receive more credits for wetlands they restore, versus preserve. Restorable wetlands in high priority areas for conservation will more likely receive approval by the regulatory entities. Please see the Potential Wetlands map and the Surface Water Protection map for potential areas for mitigation banking.

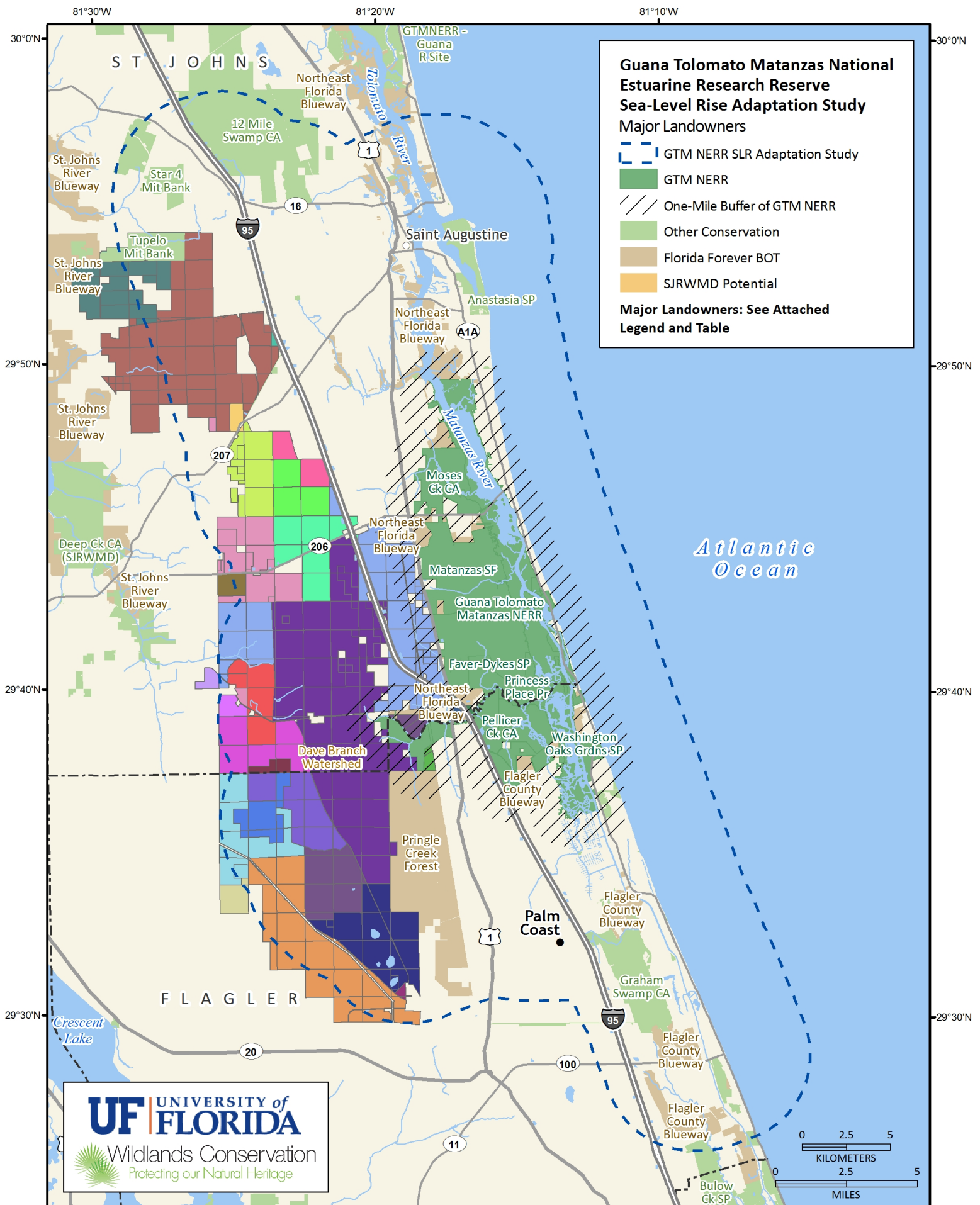
Please see : <http://webapub.sjrwmd.com/agws10/mt/faq.htm> for information regarding mitigation banking within the SJRWMD. Contact: Reid Hilliard
jhilliard@sjrwmd.com@sjrwmd.com

Dispersed Water Storage

WRE’s discussed above are also a specific example of the opportunity to fund efforts to restore wetland, floodplain, and watershed function that is becoming a more important part of Florida conservation efforts. This includes efforts further south (primarily in the South Florida Water Management District) to re-establish dispersed water storage by rehydrating drained wetlands or encouraging other forms of small-scale water storage to improve water quality and timing of flows. The GTM should consider proposing similar efforts in the watershed to improve hydrologic function and potentially increase resilience to sea level rise (by reducing salt marsh degradation associated with eutrophication). Areas where dispersed water storage could be considered include tree plantation where headwaters of Pellicer Creek and the several other major creeks draining into the Matanzas River have been degraded through wetland ditching and draining. Please see the Potential Wetlands map for areas where wetland restoration could be considered.

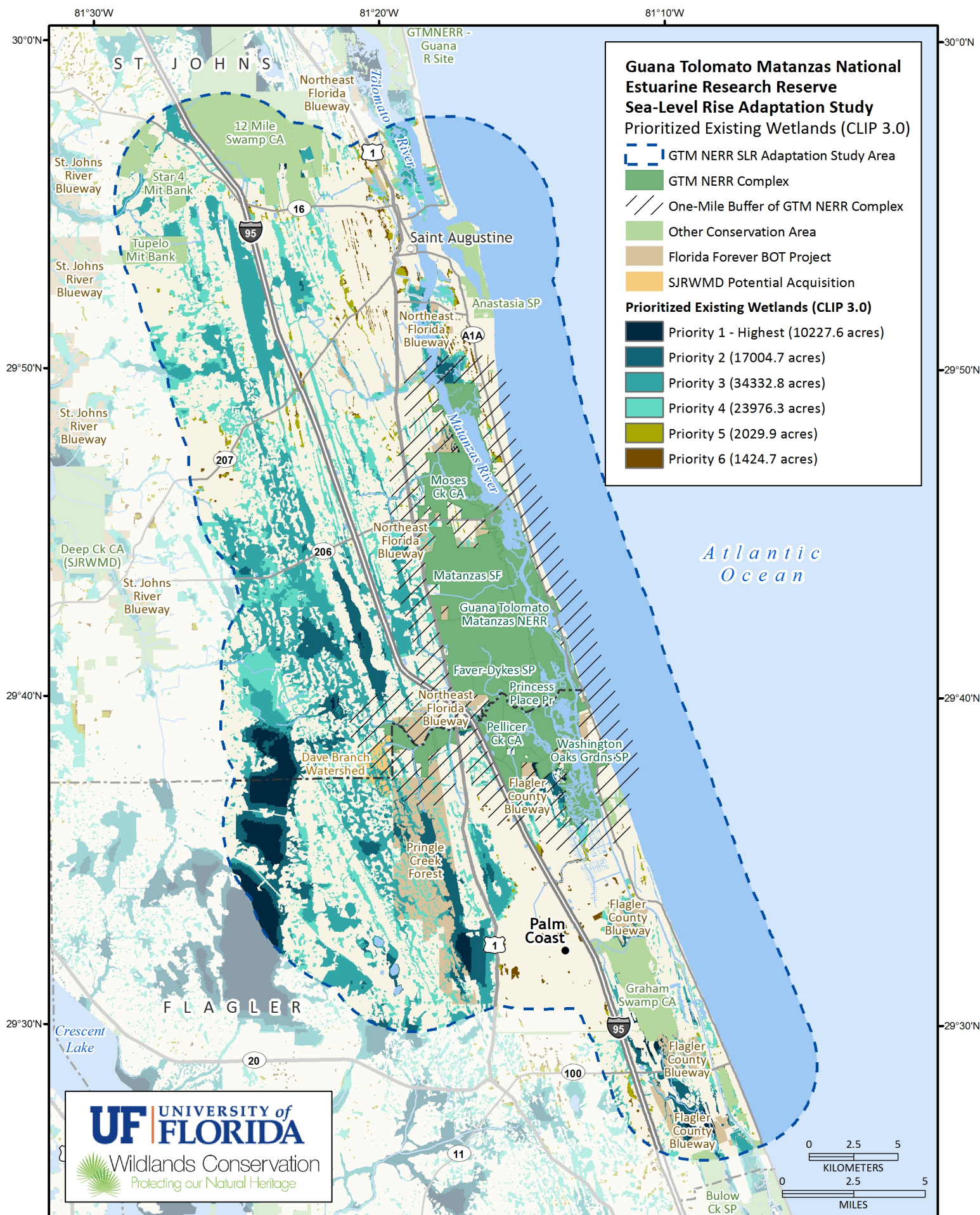


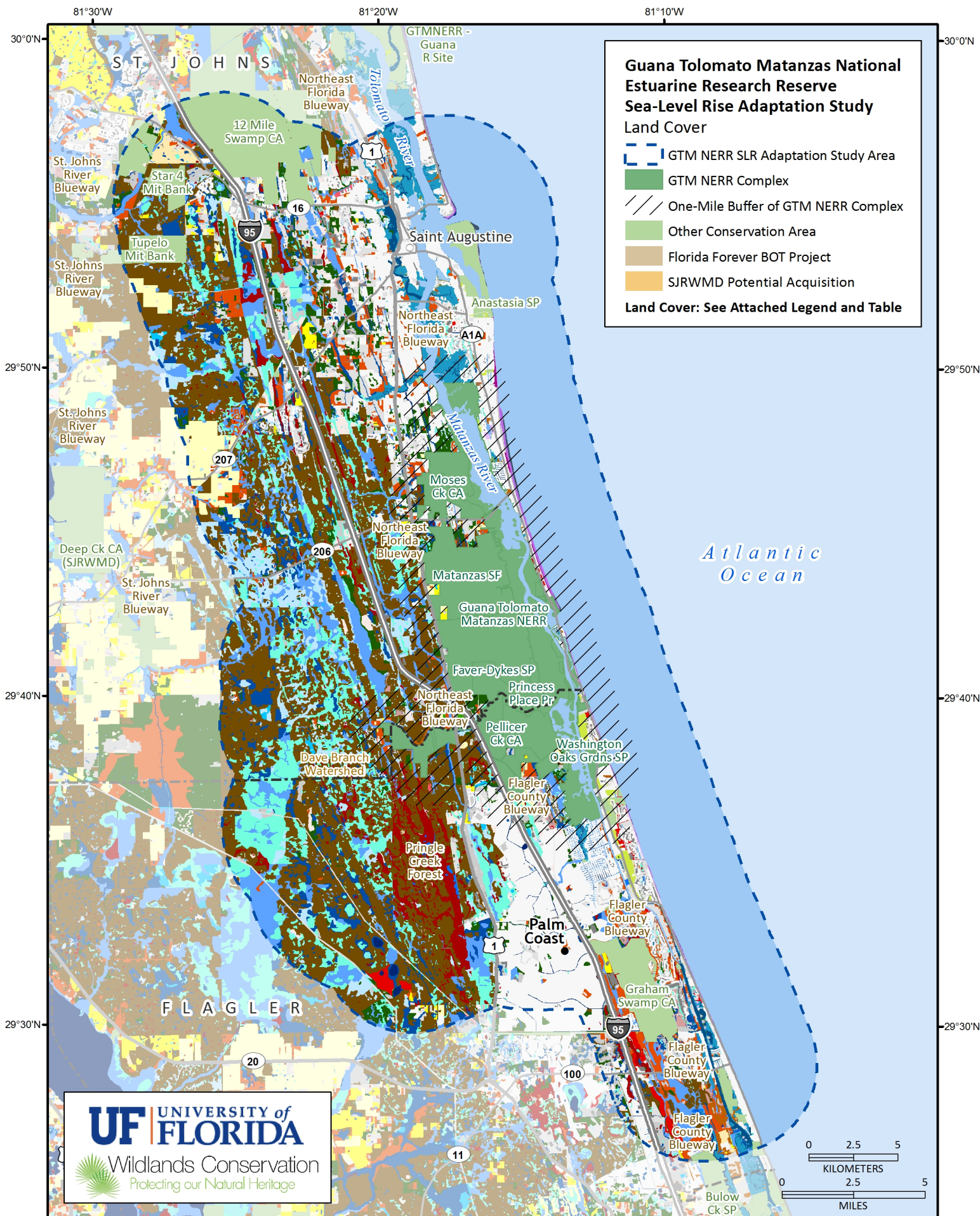
*Approximately 334038 acres. **Approximately 36769 acres. Map date: October 2014. Data: ESRI, FGDL, FNAI, SJRWMD, UFCLCP, USGS.
Projection: Transverse Mercator (State Plane Florida East). Map intended for conceptual conservation-planning applications only.



**Guana Tolomato Matanzas National
Estuarine Research Reserve
Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Study
Major Landowners Legend and Acreage Table**

	Owner Name	Acres
	BBC ELKTON LLC	2,708.4
	BRICK ROAD MITIGATION HOLDINGS	2,961.9
	CAMELOT WOODS LLC	2,086.8
	COMMONWEALTH FOREST	3,194.3
	CRACK FREDERICK G	493.9
	CUMBERLAND STREET LLC	3,250.5
	ELKTON GREEN INC	4,086.5
	GRAY FLAGLER PROPERTIES LLC	63.6
	HEAD FAMILY LTD PRTRNSHP ETAL	79.4
	MELDRIM HERITAGE TIMBERLANDS LLC	284.1
	OKEECHOBEE COUNTY PROPERTIES	354.9
	OLD BRICK ROAD ESTATES I LLC E	2,790.6
	PARRISH DORIS MAE TRUSTEE	1,911.0
	PARRISH PROPERTIES	1,075.6
	PETERSON F H	684.9
	PLUM CREEK TIMBERLANDS LP	3,587.6
	RAINY DAY FARMS LLC	393.7
	RAYONIER ATLANTIC TIMBER COMPANY	10,211.3
	RAYONIER FOREST RESOURCES LP	3,456.4
	RAYONIER TIMBERLANDS OPERATING	189.9
	ROBINSON IMPROVEMENT CO	14,081.4
	ROBINSON IMPROVEMENT COMPANY	65.9
	SMITH C PERRY	1,531.5
	SMITH H WESLEY,FAITH K TRUSTS	267.3
	ST JOHNS RIVER WATER MGT DIST	93.7
	TERRAPOINTE LLC	84.4
	TIMBERLANDS HOLDING COMPANY	4,863.1
	TIMBERLANDS LLC	8,292.3
	TUPELO MITIGATION COMPANY LLC	1,534.2
	WILSON GREEN LLC	19,709.7





**Guana Tolomato Matanzas National
Estuarine Research Reserve
Sea-Level Rise Adaptation Study
Land Cover Legend and Acreage Table**

Land Cover	Acres
11 - Hardwood Forested Uplands	1,618.8
121 - Scrub	1,230.1
124 - Sandhill	369.2
1311 - Mesic Flatwoods	14,788.3
1312 - Scrubby Flatwoods	374.8
14 - Mixed Hardwood-Coniferous	8,916.3
15 - Shrub and Brushland	3,971.0
161 - Beach Dune/Coastal Grassland	659.8
162 - Coastal Berm	0.6
164 - Coastal Strand	184.3
165 - Maritime Hammock	1,553.0
167 - Sand Beach (Dry)	1,102.5
1821 - Low Intensity Urban	8,204.7
1822 - High Intensity Urban	33,764.3
183 - Rural Lands	5,859.8
1832 - Agriculture	3,888.4
183213 - Improved Pasture	941.7
183214 - Unimproved/Woodland Pasture	737.0
18323 - Tree Plantations	69,559.9
184 - Transportation	2,665.8
185 - Communication	24.6
186 - Utilities	1,448.1
187 - Extractive	852.3
21 - Freshwater Non-Forested Wetlands	115.6
211 - Prairies and Bogs	19,297.8
2111 - Wet Prairie	1,005.8
212 - Freshwater Marshes	1,148.4
2122 - Coastal Interdunal Swale	171.4
221 - Cypress/Tupelo	12,656.8
2221 - Wet Flatwoods	10,213.0
223 - Mixed Wetland Hardwoods	20,420.6
2232 - Hydric Hammock	246.9
224 - Other Wetland Forested Mixed	10,941.2
23 - Non-vegetated Wetland	727.6
245 - Wet Coniferous Plantations	32.4
31 - Natural Lakes and Ponds	183.0
32 - Artificial Lakes and Ponds	3,548.1
41 - Natural Rivers and Streams	1,367.8
42 - Canal/Ditch	16.7
5 - Estuarine	9,139.3
524 - Saltwater Marsh	10,824.9
525 - Mangrove Swamp	259.2
6 - Marine	69,000.3
7 - Exotic Plants	4.9

