TEN-YEAR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR THE
COTTAGE HILL STATE FOREST

FLORIDA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & CONSUMER SERVICES
DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Approved by:

Jim Karels, Director
Division of Forestry

2-25-10
Date

David Core, Assistant Director
Division of Forestry

2-23-10
Date

Steve Jennings, Chief
Forest Management Bureau

2-23-2010
Date
TEN-YEAR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
COTTAGE HILL STATE FOREST

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Land Management Plan Executive Summary ..................................................................................1

I. Introduction .........................................................................................................................................2
   A. General Mission, Goals for Florida State Forests, & Management Plan Direction .................2
   B. Goals/Objectives for Cottage Hill State Forest for Next Ten Year Period ...............................2
   C. Management Needs - Priority Schedule and Cost Estimates ....................................................4

II. Administration Section ....................................................................................................................4
   A. Descriptive Information ..................................................................................................................4
      1. Common Name of Property ........................................................................................................4
      2. Location, Boundaries and Improvements ..................................................................................4
      3. Legal Description and Acreage ..................................................................................................4
      4. Degree of Title Interest Held by the Board ...............................................................................5
      5. Proximity to Other Public Resources .......................................................................................5
      6. Aquatic Preserve/Area of Critical State Concern ......................................................................5
   B. Acquisition Information .................................................................................................................5
      1. Land Acquisition Program ..........................................................................................................5
      2. Legislative or Executive Constraints ..........................................................................................5
      3. Purpose for Acquisition ...............................................................................................................5
      4. Designated Single or Multiple-Use Management .......................................................................5
      5. Alternate Uses Considered ..........................................................................................................6
      6. Additional Land Needs ...............................................................................................................6
      7. Adjacent Conflicting Uses ..........................................................................................................6
      8. Surplus Land Assessment ..........................................................................................................6
   C. Agency & Public Involvement .........................................................................................................6
      1. Responsibilities of Managing Agencies .......................................................................................6
      2. Public and Local Government Involvement ..............................................................................6
      3. Compliance With Comprehensive Plan ......................................................................................6

III. Resource Section .............................................................................................................................6
   A. Past Uses .........................................................................................................................................6
   B. Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources ..................................................................................7
      1. Soil Types ......................................................................................................................................7
      2. Archaeological and Historical Resources .....................................................................................7
      3. Water Resources ..........................................................................................................................7
      4. Fish and Wildlife ...........................................................................................................................8
      5. Endangered and Threatened Species ............................................................................................8
      6. Beaches and Dunes .......................................................................................................................8
      7. Swamps, Marshes, or Other Wetlands .........................................................................................8
      8. Mineral Resources .......................................................................................................................8
9. Unique Natural Features .......................................................... 8
10. Outstanding Native Landscapes .............................................. 8
11. Timber Resources ................................................................. 8

IV. Management Concepts by Natural Communities and Proposed Management Activities .................................. 9
   A. Existing and Planned Uses ..................................................... 9
      1. Property Boundaries Establishment and Preservation ............. 9
      2. Soil and Water Protection ................................................... 9
      3. Roads ............................................................................. 10
      4. Fire Management ............................................................ 10
      5. Silvicultural Guidelines & Forest Resource Management Objectives .... 10
      6. Law Enforcement ............................................................ 10
      7. Wildlife and Fish Management ........................................ 11
      8. Non-Native Invasive Species ............................................ 11
      9. Insects, Disease, and Forest Health ................................... 12
     10. On-Site Housing .............................................................. 12
     11. Utility Corridors and Easements ......................................... 13
     12. Ground Disturbing Activities ............................................ 13
     13. Apiaries ............................................................................ 13
     14. Cattle Grazing ................................................................. 14
     15. Ground Cover .................................................................. 14
   B. Description of Natural Communities and Proposed Management Activities ................................ 14
   C. Impact of Planned Uses on Property Resources ...................... 14

V. Management Summary ................................................................. 14
   A. Operations Infrastructure ..................................................... 14
   B. Plans to Locate Fragile, Non-renewable Natural and Cultural Resources ................................ 14
   C. Conformation to State Lands Management Plan ........................ 15
   D. Potential Use of Private Land Managers .................................. 15

VI. References .................................................................................. 15
EXHIBITS

Location Map .............................................................................................................Exhibit A
Lease Agreement #434-3556 .....................................................................................Exhibit B
Compliance with Local Comprehensive Plan ............................................................Exhibit C
Soils Map ...................................................................................................................Exhibit D
Management Procedures for Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State Owned or Controlled Lands.................................Exhibit E
LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lead Agency: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry
Common Name: Cottage Hill State Forest
Location: Escambia County
Acreage Breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Communities</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bottomland Forest</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesic Uplands</td>
<td>24.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-productive</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acreage Total: 31.25

Lease/Management Agreement No.: 434-3556

Use: Single __ Multiple ___X

MANAGEMENT AGENCY
Florida DACS, Division of Forestry
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Division of Historical Resources

RESPONSIBILITY
General Management of Forest Resources, Recreation & Wildlife
Wildlife Resources & Laws
Historical and Archaeological Resource Management

Designated Land Use: Multiple-use State Forest
Sublease(s): None
Encumbrances: Gulf Power Company easement
Type Acquisition: Surplus under the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund
Unique Features: Mature longleaf pine forest
Archaeological/Historical: None
Management Needs: Prescribed fire management
Acquisition Needs: None
Surplus Lands/Acreage: All 31.25 acres
Public Involvement: Direct communication with individuals, user groups, and government officials.

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE (FOR DIVISION OF STATE LANDS USE ONLY)

ARC Approval Date: __________________________ BTIITF Approval Date: __________________________

Comments: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________________
I. INTRODUCTION

A. General Mission, Goals for Florida State Forests and Management Plan Direction
   The Division of Forestry’s (DOF) mission is to protect Florida and its people from the
dangers of wildland fire and manage the forest resources through a stewardship ethic to
assure they are available for future generations. Multiple-use management is the overall
concept used to perpetuate the sustainability of the forest’s native ecosystems and
biodiversity. This will be accomplished by implementing sound multiple-use
management principles, the objectives of which will be to:

   • To restore, maintain, and protect in perpetuity, all native ecosystems;
   • To ensure the long term viability of populations and species considered rare,
     endangered, threatened, or of special concern;
   • To restore, maintain, and protect hydrological functions related to the quality and
     quantity of water resources and the health of associated wetland and aquatic natural
     communities;
   • To integrate human use through a total resource concept, not emphasizing any
     particular use over the others, or over restoration, maintenance and protection of
     native ecosystems;
   • To protect known archeological and historical resources; and
   • To practice sustainable forest management utilizing sound silvicultural techniques.

This management plan provides the general direction for management Cottage Hill State
Forest (CHSF). It is not an annual work plan or detailed operational plan, but provides
general guidance for management of the CHSF for the next ten years and outlines the
major concepts that will guide management activities on the forest. The following
information presented is consistent with the requirements of Section 253.034, Florida
Statutes and was prepared using guidelines outlined in Chapter 18-2.021 of the Florida
Administrative Code.

B. Goals/Objectives for the Next Ten Year Period
   The following goals and objectives provide direction for the next ten-year planning
period. Funding, agency program priorities and the wildfire situation during the planning
period will determine whether these objectives can be met. Short-term goals shall be
achievable within a 2-year planning period, and long-term goals shall be achievable
within a 10-year planning period. These short-term and long-term management goals
shall be the basis for all subsequent land management activities.

GOAL 1: Habitat restoration and improvement

   OBJECTIVE 1: Achieve and maintain 25 acres within a 3 year fire return interval.
   (Short-Term Goal/Long-Term Goal)
   Performance Measure: Number of acres within fire return interval target.
OBJECTIVE 2: Develop a fire management plan that addresses the prevention, detection, and suppression of wildfires, and prescribed burning operations. (Short-Term Goal)
   **Performance Measure:** Complete CHSF Fire Management Plan and update the plan annually.

GOAL 2: Hydrological preservation and restoration

OBJECTIVE 1: Protect water resources during management activities through the use of Silvicultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) for public lands. (Short-Term/Long-Term)
   **Performance measure:** Compliance with state lands BMPs.

GOAL 3: Sustainable forest management

OBJECTIVE 1: Implement the process, as outlined in the State Forest Handbook, for conducting stand descriptions and forest inventory including a GIS database containing forest stands, roads & other attributes (including but not limited to: threatened & endangered species, archaeological resources, exotic species locations, historical areas). (Short & Long Term Goals)
   **PERFORMANCE MEASURE:** Complete GIS database and re-inventory **ALL** attributes every 3-5 years or as needed.

OBJECTIVE 2: Conduct Forest Inventory updates each year, according to established criteria. (Short Term Goal)
   **PERFORMANCE MEASURE:** Number of acres inventoried annually.

GOAL 4: Exotic and Invasive Species Maintenance and Control

OBJECTIVE 1: Develop a plan to locate, identify, and control non-native invasive plant species. (Short-Term Goal)
   **Performance Measure:** Total number of acres identified, mapped and successfully treated.

GOAL 5: Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 1: Maintain 1.3 miles state forest boundary annually. (Short-Term/Long-Term Goal)
   **Performance Measure:** Miles of forest boundary maintained.

GOAL 6: Cultural and historical resources

OBJECTIVE 1: Ensure all ground disturbing activities are managed in compliance with Division of Historical Resources (DHR) guidelines. (Short-Term/Long-Term)
   **Performance measure:** Number of Archaeological Site Monitors and number of Ground Disturbing Activities handled per DHR guidelines.
OBJECTIVE 2: Ensure that any sites that are discovered during ground disturbing activities are recorded in the DHR Master Site file. (Long-Term)

Performance measure: Send updates to DHR Master Site file as needed and monitor the recorded sites.

C. Management Needs, Priority Schedule and Cost Estimates

This tract contains a mixture of longleaf pine/wiregrass and bottomland hardwoods. Approximately 24.35 acres is considered located in a mixed upland forest (mesic upland). Approximately 4.7 acres are considered in a bottomland forest (floodplain wetlands). A Gulf Power Company easement encompassed the remaining 2.2 acres (non-productive).

Prescribed burning to reduce fuel loading and promote natural plant and animal responses is the primary land management need. All planned prescribed fires will undergo a smoke screening process prior to the burn to insure air quality standards are met.

Use of and creation of firelines will be kept to a minimum, with emphasis placed on protection of nearby houses and property. All permanent firelines will be harrowed to reduce any possible adverse effects. Foam lines and natural firebreaks will be used whenever possible.

Eradication of non-native invasive plant species will be implemented when and if any are detected on the state forest.

No management costs are budgeted for this tract at this time but if they arise they will come from the Blackwater Forestry Center budget. Because of the custodial nature of this tract, none of the activities listed are considered priority or key management activities. The activities will be conducted by the DOF as staffing and funding permit.

II. ADMINISTRATION SECTION

A. Descriptive Information

1. Common Name of Property
   Cottage Hill State Forest (CHSF).

2. Location, Boundaries, and Improvements
   CHSF is a 31.25 acre tract located approximately 1.75 miles east of State Highway 95A on McKenzie Road in the Cottage Hill community (Exhibit A). The only improvement on this tract is an environmental open air shelter. A graded access road and bridge have also been added.

3. Legal Description and Acreage
   The 31.25 acre tract is located in the SW1/4 of section 36, T2N, R 31W. See Exhibit B for more information on the legal description and deed.
4. **Degree of Title Interest Held by the Board**
The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund (BOT) holds fee simple title to the property (lease agreement 3556).

5. **Proximity to Other Public Resources**
The CHSF is located within three miles of the Escambia River Wildlife Management Area, which is owned by the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD).

6. **Aquatic Preserve/Area of Critical State Concern**
This area is not within an aquatic preserve or an area of critical state concern, nor is it in an area under study for either designation.

**B. Acquisition Information**

1. **Land Acquisition Program**
The property was listed as surplus prior to being placed under DOF management by Agreement 3556, March 1979.

2. **Legislative or Executive Constraints**
There are no legislative or executive directives specifically aimed at this tract that act as constraints on the use of the forest.

3. **Purpose for Acquisition**

4. **Designated Single-Use or Multiple-Use Management**
CHSF is designated for multiple-use management. Authority for multiple-use management is given under Chapters 253 and 589, Florida Statutes. Sustainable multiple-use management is the overall goal for the property. Multiple-use management includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: silvicultural management, recreation, wildlife management, archaeological and cultural resource management, ecosystem restoration, environmental education, and watershed management. The goals of the DOF are to protect and manage ecosystems, restore and maintain biological diversity, and integrate public use through multiple-use of the forest resources. Multiple-use resource management and the practice of sustainable forestry will provide for the greatest public benefit in perpetuity, while at the same time protecting all the values and resources of the land. Local demands and geographic factors influence the array of uses to be applied to any area of the forest. Only uses compatible with the forest and its ecosystems will be implemented. Forest management practices should ensure that all resources of the forest are sustained for the future. Sustainable forest management will be practiced to ensure long-term forest health.
5. **Alternate Uses Considered**
Recreational improvements have been considered, but ruled out due to insufficient public use, high cost, and lack of adequate user supervision necessary to prevent vandalism. Managed hunting was also determined to be impractical because of the forest’s small size.

6. **Additional Land Needs**
There are no additional land needs adjacent to this tract.

7. **Adjacent Conflicting Uses**
There are no conflicts between planned land uses on this tract and current uses on adjacent lands.

8. **Surplus Land Assessment**
The small size and limited access of CHSF limits effective management for all multiple use purposes. The tract is considered surplus to our needs.

C. **Agency & Public Involvement**

1. **Responsibilities of Managing Agencies**
The DOF is responsible for the overall management of the forest. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will assist the DOF in providing technical advice on the management of wildlife populations (game and non-game), setting hunting seasons, establishing bag limits, and enforcing rules and regulations related to the management of the wildlife resources. The DHR cooperates with the DOF regarding appropriate management practices on historical or archaeological sites on the forest as stated in Section 267.061(2) (d), Florida Statutes.

2. **Public and Local Government Involvement**
This plan has been prepared by the DOF and will be carried out primarily by that agency. The DOF responds to public involvement through direct communication with individuals, user groups, and government officials.

3. **Compliance with Comprehensive Plan**
This plan was submitted to the Board of County Commissioners of Escambia County for review of compliance with their local comprehensive plan (Exhibit C).

III. **RESOURCE SECTION**

A. **Past Uses**
Bagdad Lumber Company had a major impact on the forest resources of northwest Florida during the late 1800s and early 1900s. A large volume of timber was harvested from this region. Many areas of forest land were also open to grazing. Records also indicate that large turpentine operations were ongoing until the 1960s.
B. **Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources**

1. **Soil Types**
The USDA soil survey (1997) of Escambia County, Florida identifies five soil types on the CHSF (Exhibit D).

   38- **Bonifay loamy sand (0-5% slope)**. This very deep, well drained soil is on nearly level summits and gently sloping shoulder slopes of ridges in the central and northern parts of the county. This map unit is in the longleaf pine-turkey oak hills ecological community.

   49- **Dorovan muck and Fluvaquents (Frequently flooded)**. It is located on flood plains along rivers and streams in the central and northern parts of the county. Slopes are less than 2 percent. It is in the swamp hardwoods ecological community.

   52- **Robertsdale sandy loam (0-2% slope)**. This very deep, somewhat poorly drained soil is in flat or slightly depressional positions on uplands and toeslopes in the central and northern parts of the county. This map unit is in the mixed hardwood and pine ecological community.

   54- **Troup-Poarch complex (8-12% slope)**. This map unit consists of the sandy, somewhat excessively drained Troup soil and the loamy, well drained Poarch soil. It is on strongly sloping hillslopes in the central and northern parts of the county. This map unit is in the mixed hardwood and pine ecological community.

   55- **Troup-Poarch complex (2-5% slope)**. This map unit consists of the sandy, somewhat excessively drained Troup soil and the loamy, well drained Poarch soil. It is on gently sloping summits and side slopes of ridges in the central and northern parts of the county. This map unit is in the mixed hardwood and pine ecological community.

2. **Archaeological and Historical Resources**
The review of information contained in the DHR’s Florida Master Site File has determined that there are no archaeological or historical sites recorded with the CHSF. The DOF will comply with the procedures outlined in “Management Procedures for Archaeological or Historical Sites and Properties on State Owned or Controlled Lands” (Exhibit E) and protect known archaeological and historical sites.

3. **Water Resources**
A small stream crosses CHSF. It is part of the headwaters of Williams Creek, which flows into the Escambia River and Escambia Bay. This stream is not large enough to support boat or canoe traffic. All water bodies are considered Class III - Recreation, Propagation, and Maintenance of a Healthy, Well-Balanced Population of Fish and Wildlife in accordance with Rule 62-302.400 F.A.C.
4. **Fish and Wildlife**
Management on the CHSF will be directed to the production of biological diversity and species composition consistent with the natural community types present. Such communities will be restored and/or maintained through habitat management. All biological resources will be managed to maintain diversity of native species. The wildlife associated with the longleaf pine/wire grass ecosystem and/or bottomland hardwoods include: deer, squirrels, rabbits, woodpeckers, bluejays, mockingbirds, bobwhite quail, amphibians, reptiles, and a variety of other wildlife.

5. **Endangered and Threatened Species**
According to the Florida Natural Areas Inventory, there are no endangered or threatened species of plants or animals found on CHSF.

6. **Beaches and Dunes**
No beaches or dunes occur on the CHSF.

7. **Swamps, Marshes, and Other Wetlands**
There is a small clear stream running through CHSF. The bottomland hardwoods associated with this area including: sweetgum, sweetbay, redbay, red maple, and magnolia with an understory of gallberry and smilax.

8. **Mineral Resources**
There are no known commercial mineral deposits on the forest.

9. **Unique Natural Features**
The longleaf pine/wire grass ecosystem is a known unique natural feature which includes several significant species of plants and animals. This type ecosystem also has the potential to support red-cockaded woodpeckers and gopher tortoise.

10. **Outstanding Native Landscape**
The single outstanding feature of this tract is the presence of mature longleaf pine forest, an increasingly rare resource.

11. **Timber Resource**
The DOF will implement silvicultural practices, including harvesting, thinning, burning, and reforestation, in an attempt to establish a healthy forest with an age distribution that best duplicates natural conditions. Well-timed and executed timber harvests play an integral role in the health of forest ecosystems. Thinning dense forest stands improves understory habitat and allows for better quality prescribed burn. Timber harvesting is also used in reestablishing native species by removing off-site trees.

All on-going timber management practices will follow the recommendations for water quality protection and erosion control contained in the current Silviculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual.
The management of timber resources on CHSF will not seek to maximize short-term economic revenue but rather to achieve a wide array of long-term public benefits - many of which are intrinsic and not easily quantified. Good stewardship and resource sustainability are essential goals for any proposed silvicultural activity. The health of the forest ecosystem is paramount in importance.

The DOF practices sustainable timber management in the state forest system, which means annual harvest volume on each state forest will not exceed the annual growth rate. This is accomplished by periodically obtaining accurate estimates of standing timber volumes in order to ensure that the timber resource will not be depleted.

IV. MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS BY NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

A. Existing and Planned Uses

The tract will be managed under the multiple-use concept. As previously stated, Florida Statutes describe the general management philosophy on public land, specifically Florida Forever lands, in order to achieve the greatest combination of benefits to the people of the state. Activities to occur on CHSF will include: forest resource management, maintenance, and protection. Activities that will be integrated into these goals include: timber management, wildlife management, and watershed management.

1. Property Boundaries Establishment and Preservation

State forest boundaries were blazed by surveyors prior to the sale of the land to the State. When DOF acquired management of the forestlands, the agency’s employees established the boundary lines in accordance to the DOF’s Policy and Procedures Chapter 525.108 and the State Forest Handbook, Chapter 6.9.2. The surveyors had already placed corner post and painted witness trees along the boundary lines. The DOF employees then placed the standard DOF state forest boundary signs along all the boundaries. The underbrush clearing of the boundary lines was accomplished by mechanical means. These boundary lines serve as firebreaks and as easily distinguishable property boundaries. One hundred percent of the forest boundary has been marked and maintained in accordance with the DOF guidelines. In cases where a trespass has occurred, efforts will be made to have the line surveyed and an agreement reached to return this property to state forest management. As of October 2008, CHSF had 1.3 miles of boundary.

2. Soil and Water Protection

With the exception of some erosion related to the forest road and firelines, CHSF has no known major soil erosion problems. Much of the upland areas are strongly-sloping with high erosion potential.

To prevent soil erosion and to protect water resources on the forest, all management activities will strictly adhere to the current Silviculture BMP Manual. Copies of this publication are available upon request from the DOF Forest Hydrology Section.
3. **Roads**
There is a single, unpaved access road to the forest from McKenzie Road, to the north. This road crosses an adjacent parcel of private land before it reaches the State Forest boundary. There is one wooden bridge to allow vehicle access to the pavilion. The road is maintained by the Blackwater Forestry Center personnel to provide access for management and occasional visitors.

4. **Fire Management**
All guidelines as outlined in the DOF’s Fire Management Policy will be used on CHSF. The DOF utilizes a total fire management program on state forests that includes prevention, detection, suppression and prescribed burning. This program is the responsibility of the DOF under the direction of the Blackwater Forestry Center. DOF personnel and equipment will be utilized for pre-suppression practices and rehabilitation of firelines on the forest. BMPs for fireline construction will be followed as described in the Silviculture BMP Manual (DOF 2008). If firelines are installed as a result of suppression actions during a wildfire, every effort will be made to rehabilitate these lines within two weeks of the wildfire “controlled” date. Emphasis will be placed on prescribed burning, fire prevention, and education to help reduce wildfire occurrence on the forest and in the surrounding rural residential community. To prevent soil erosion and to protect water resources on the forest, all management activities will strictly adhere to the current Silviculture BMP Manual. Copies of this publication are available upon request from the DOF Forest Hydrology Section. Smoke management in and around the community will be addressed during preparation of prescribed fire prescriptions by utilization of the smoke screening system. DOF personnel and equipment will be used for these activities. All prescribed burning will be the responsibility of the DOF personnel from the Blackwater Forestry Center and will be planned and carried out in accordance with the BRSF Fire Management Plan. This plan will be in compliance with the DOF Fire Management Policy.

5. **Silvicultural Guidelines & Forest Resource Management Objectives**
Most of the pine timber has an even-aged structure, with little or no pine regeneration. CHSF sustained considerable timber loss from Hurricane Ivan in 2004. The gaps in the tree canopy allow light to reach the ground. Prescribed burning will reduce the brushy understory and forest litter, which will create good conditions for natural regeneration.

It is not anticipated that there will be a need to harvest timber from CHSF within the next ten years, except as emergency salvage should another hurricane or other disaster occur.

6. **Law Enforcement**
The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Office of Agricultural Law Enforcement (OALE) will handle primary law enforcement responsibilities. Wildlife officers from FWC will enforce fish and wildlife regulations, and provide assistance in enforcing state forest rules. The Escambia County Sheriff's Offices
provide additional law enforcement support. Special rules (Chapter 5I-4, Florida Administrative Code) of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, DOF, have been promulgated for the public use of state lands, restrictions of forest traffic and camping. These rules are on file at Blackwater Forestry Center headquarters and at the DOF State Office in Tallahassee.

7. **Wildlife and Fish Management**
Due to the small size of CHSF and its proximity to nearby residents, CHSF is closed to public hunting. FWC will be utilized to assist in the management of fish and wildlife species as deemed necessary.

In order to enhance wildlife habitat, the following general management guidelines are observed to best meet the needs of both the wildlife and resources of CHSF:

a. **Timber Management**
Timber management will be conducted in a manner specified in above sections to this plan. The DOF recognizes the importance of snags for wildlife value. As a general rule, snags will be left alone in their natural environment unless they are deemed to be a potential safety hazard.

b. **Prescribed Burning**
Prescribed burning will be conducted in a manner specified in above sections to this plan. Prescribed burning provides numerous benefits to the forest. Many plant and wildlife species are not only adapted to frequent fires but require fire to promote seed production and germination. Burning improves wildlife habitat by promoting the growth of tender new vegetation, encouraging herbaceous ground cover and helping to break down coarse woody debris for use by herpetofauna and invertebrates.

c. **Managing Non-Game Species**
Non-game species, including rare and sensitive species, will be managed and protected through the maintenance of the native ecosystems found on the property. Research done by DOF, other state agencies, educational institutions, and the federal government will provide valuable information in determining the management objectives for non-game wildlife species.

8. **Non-Native Invasive Species**
DOF employees continually monitor the forest for non-native invasive species while conducting management activities. The policy of the DOF is to locate, identify, and eradicate non-native invasive species. Small infestations of Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), and Chinese tallow tree (*Triadica sebifera*) have been observed on CHSF. All have been treated with herbicide treatment. Blackwater Forestry Center personnel will periodically check for new infestations and treat them appropriately.
9. Insects, Disease and Forest Health
Currently, there are no insect or disease problems on CHSF. Should unexpected insect/disease outbreaks occur, State Forest management staff will consult with the Forest Health Section to develop scientifically sound responses and/or management prescriptions.

In compliance with section 388.4111, Florida Statutes and in Sec. 5E-13.042, F.A.C., all lands have been evaluated and subsequently designated as environmentally sensitive and biologically highly productive. Such designation is appropriate and consistent with the previously documented natural resources and ecosystem values and affords the appropriate protection for these resources from arthropod control practices that would impose a potential hazard to fish, wildlife and other natural resources existing on this property. With the approval of this plan documenting this designation, the local arthropod control agency in Escambia County will be notified of this designation.

As a result, prior to conducting any arthropod control activities on CHSF, the local agency must prepare a public lands control plan, that addresses all concerns that DOF may have for protecting the natural resources and ecosystem values on the state forest. In this regard DOF will provide the local agency details on the management objectives for CHSF. This public lands control plan must be in compliance with DOACS guidelines and using the appropriate DOACS form. The plan must then be approved and mutually adopted by the county, DOF and DOACS, prior to initiation of any mosquito control work. Should the local mosquito control district not propose any mosquito control operations on the property, no arthropod control plan is required.

10. On-Site Housing
DOF may establish on-site housing (mobile/manufactured home) on CHSF if deemed necessary to alleviate security and management issues. The need and feasibility specific for the state forest will be evaluated and established if considered appropriate by the Center/District manager and approved by the DOF Director. On-site housing will only be available to individuals approved by the Director. This type of housing will not exceed three homes per location with the possibility of more than one on-site housing location occurring if considered necessary by the Center/District manager and approved by the Director.

Prior to the occurrence of any ground disturbing activity for the purpose of establishing on-site housing, a notification will be sent to the Division of State Lands as well as packages to the DHR and Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) for review and recommendations. The package will contain a description of the project (location, number of units, type and amount of ground disturbance, affected natural community type and nearby known archaeological or historical sites), maps (topographic and aerial) and photographs of the area.
11. **Utility Corridors and Easements**

The use of state forest property for utility lines, pipelines, linear facilities, and transportation corridors will be discouraged to the greatest extent possible. The placement of these linear facilities in a forest fragments the natural communities. Requests for linear facility uses will be handled according to Governor and Cabinet’s linear facility policy which can be found in Chapter 2 of the State Forest Handbook.

Gulf Power Company has a right of way (R.O.W.) for power transmission lines through the property. This R.O.W. is 250 feet wide, though only 120 feet have been cleared for the existing lines. The total area in the R.O.W. is 6.25 acres.

The state has an easement with Estes Timber Company for access to the tract from McKenzie Road to the north. Part of this easement crosses the Gulf Power easement on Estes Land. Gulf Power’s easement with Estes predates the state’s easement and has precedence.

The DOF does not favor the fragmentation of natural communities with linear facilities; consequently, easements for such uses will be discouraged to the greatest extent possible. The DOF does not consider CHSF suitable for any new linear facilities. When such encroachments are unavoidable, previously disturbed sites will be the preferred location.

12. **Ground Disturbing Activities**

Although the DOF’s approach to handling ground disturbing activities is identified in various sections of this plan, the DOF’s overall approach to this issue is summarized here. The DOF recognizes the importance of managing and protecting sensitive resources and will take all necessary steps to insure that ground disturbing activities will not adversely impact sensitive resources. This includes areas such as archaeological and historical sites, ecotones, wetlands, and sensitive species. “Management Procedures for Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State Owned or Controlled Lands” (Exhibit E) will be followed.

The construction of new pre-suppression fire lines will be limited to the greatest extent practicable. When new pre-suppression firelines, recreational trails, or other low-impact recreational site enhancements are necessary their placement will be carefully reviewed by state forest field staff and they will be developed so as to avoid sensitive areas. For other ground disturbing activities such as construction of buildings, parking lots and new roads the DOF will consult with the FNAI and the DHR.

13. **Apiaries**

The feasibility of pursuing and establishing apiary leases on CHSF in areas where appropriate will be evaluated in accordance with guidelines stated in Chapter 9.1 of the State Forest Handbook (DOF, 2004)
14. **Cattle Grazing**
   Cattle grazing is not practical on CHSF due to the steep terrain, erodible soil, and sparse grass.

15. **Ground Cover**
   Management activities will be considered and conducted to protect and enhance the condition and integrity of the native ground cover. Management techniques, such as prescribed fire in the growing season, are used to rejuvenate and maintain ground cover to the greatest extent practical.

B. **Description of Natural Communities and Proposed Management Activities**
   This tract contains a mixture of longleaf pine/wiregrass and bottomland hardwoods. Approximately 24.35 acres is considered located in a mixed upland forest (mesic upland). Approximately 4.7 acres are considered in a bottomland forest (floodplain wetlands). A Gulf Power Company easement encompassed the remaining 2.2 acres (non-productive).

   Prescribed burning, fireline maintenance, and exotic species control are the primary management activities planned for CHSF.

C. **Impact of Planned Uses on Property Resources**
   No adverse impacts on renewable or non-renewable resources are expected to result from the management proposed for this ten year period.

V. **MANAGEMENT SUMMARY**

A. **Operations Infrastructure**
   The only road on the property is an unimproved gravel road that is maintained by bulldozer. The only structure located on the forest is a pavilion.

   The pavilion has been identified as needing demolition due to roof damage suffered during Hurricane Ivan in 2004.

B. **Plans to Locate Fragile, Non-Renewable Natural and Cultural Resources**
   Representatives of the DHR and FNAI will be consulted prior to the initiation of any proposed significant ground disturbing activity by the DOF or any other public agency. The DOF will make every effort to protect known archaeological and historical resources. Ground disturbing activities not specifically covered by this plan will be conducted under the parameters of the “List of ARC/Division of State Lands Approved Interim Management Activities”.

1. **Archaeological Resources**
   The DOF has state forest personnel trained as archaeological monitors. Trained monitors will oversee ground disturbing activities in which the DHR recommends monitoring. All significant ground disturbing activities or projects will be sent to the DHR for review. Recommendations outlined in the “Management Procedures for
Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State Owned or Controlled Lands” will be followed whenever and wherever appropriate (Exhibit E).

2. **Soil and Water Resources**
   This tract is primarily comprised of intact, undisturbed natural communities and there are no soil or erosion problems present. All activities planned for the tract will be conducted in accordance with Florida’s Silviculture Best Management Practices and/or other appropriate measures as deemed necessary by the DOF’s Forest Hydrologist and/or Best Management Practices (BMP) Forester. In addition, if future soil and/or water resource problems should arise, they will be immediately assessed and the appropriate action will be proposed and implemented under the direction of the DOF’s Forest Hydrologist and/or the BMP forester.

3. **Other Resources**
   Applicable surveys will be conducted by DOF staff or others during the process of planning and implementing forest management activities. DOF personnel will remain alert for any environmentally significant resources and protective actions will be taken as necessary.

C. **Conformation to State Lands Management Plan**
   Management of this tract under the multiple-use concept complies with the State Lands Management Plan and provides optimum balanced public utilization of the property. Specific authority for the Division of Forestry’s management of public lands is derived from Chapters 589 and 253, Florida Statutes.

D. **Potential Use of Private Land Managers**
   The forest manager makes ongoing evaluations of the use of private land managers, consultants and contractors to facilitate the restoration or management of this state forest. Opportunities for such outsourcing of land management work have included or are anticipated to include: contract logging operations, site preparation and timber stand improvement contractors, and tree planting contractors.

VI. REFERENCES

Division of Historical Resources. Revised 2007. Management Procedures for Archaeological and Historical Sites and Properties on State-Owned or Controlled Lands. Florida Department of the State, Division of Historical Resources.


Florida Natural Areas Inventory. February 1990. “Guide to the Natural Communities of Florida.” Florida Natural Areas Inventory and Florida Department of Natural Resources.