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GOVERNOR AND CABINET 165-ACRE ACQUISITION

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GOVERNOR AND CABINET APPROVE 165-ACRE ACQUISITION

~Santa Rosa County parcel will protect natural resources and buffer military base~

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – Today, Governor Rick Scott and the Cabinet members approved the purchase of the 165-acre Clear Creek/Whiting Field parcel in Santa Rosa County for \$705,000 from Paradise Bay Developers. This Florida Forever acquisition will expand a conservation corridor between state and private conservation lands for wildlife and recreational use as well as buffer Whiting Field Naval Air Station from development. The parcel is planned to be purchased through a cost-sharing proposal between the state of Florida and the U.S. Department of Defense of 25/75 percent, respectively.

The parcel will be managed by the Department of Environmental Protection's Division of Recreation and Parks as part of the Blackwater Heritage State Trail. This acquisition increases the potential for trail development along with opportunities for hiking, bicycling and nature study.

"The department is committed to safeguarding the environment and supporting our military," said DEP Secretary Jon Stevenson. "Purchasing this parcel adjacent to Whiting Field will augment a wildlife corridor, expand recreational activities and buffer

the naval air station.”

“The success of this acquisition is directly tied to the tremendous partnership we share with the state of Florida,” said Randy Roy, Whiting Field's community planning liaison officer. “The Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program’s success in Florida is touted throughout the Department of Defense as a model for the rest of the nation.”

In addition to being ranked 8th in the Florida Forever Partnerships and Regional Incentives project category, this parcel is a top priority for Whiting Field Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) project parcels to be acquired.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

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