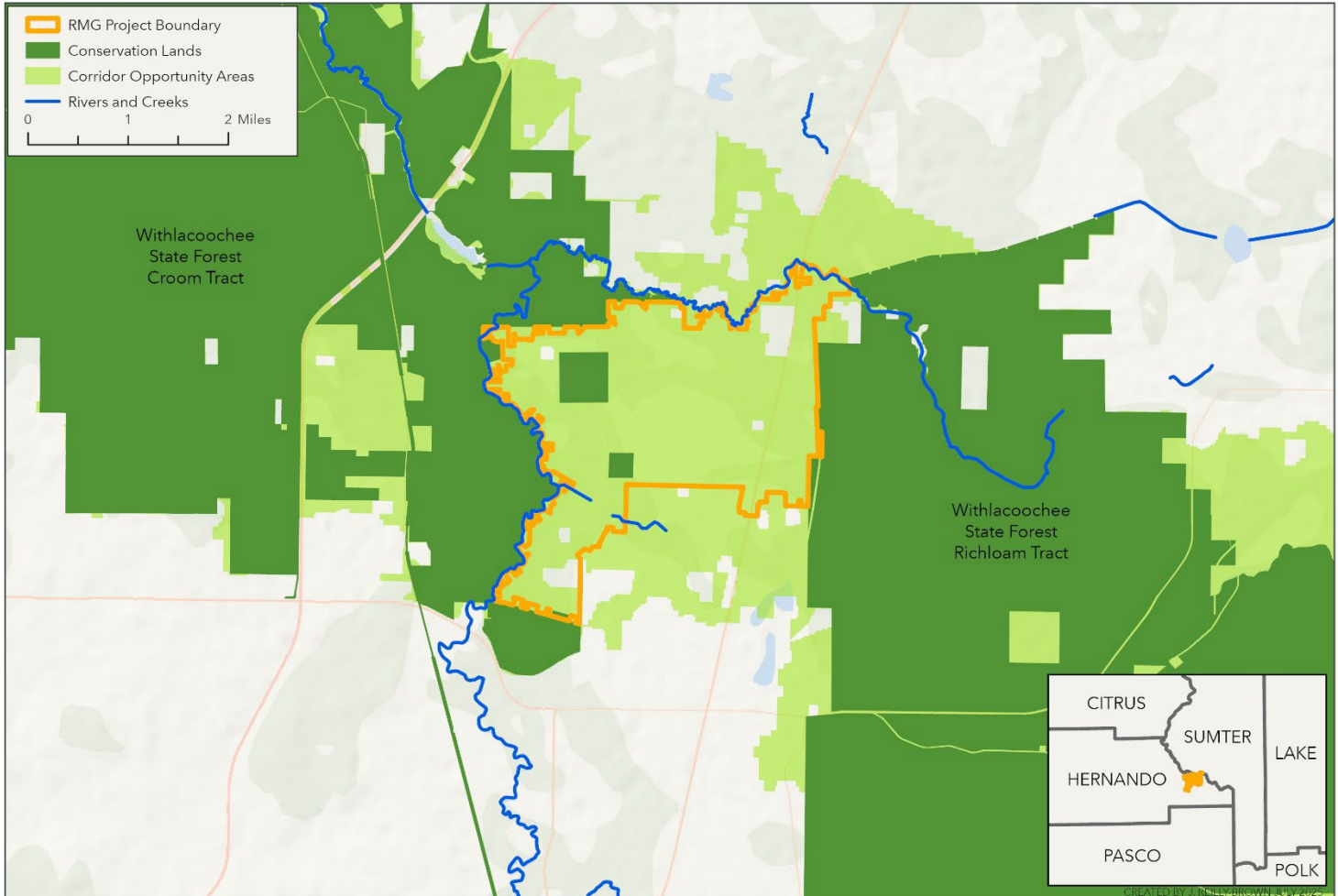




PUTNAM LAND CONSERVANCY HERNANDO COUNTY RIDGE MANOR GAP PROJECT AREA



RIDGE MANOR GAP

PROJECT LOCATION

PROJECT TYPE

CONSERVATION VALUES

Hernando County, FL

Small lot fee simple purchase, aggregation, and sale

Florida Wildlife Corridor, water resources, flood protection
imperiled species protection, Florida Trail connection

PROJECT SUMMARY

Located in the Ridge Manor area of Hernando County, Florida, the Ridge Manor Gap project area sits between two disjunct tracts of the Withlacoochee State Forest - the Richloam Tract to the east and the Croom Tract to the west. Ridge Manor Gap is bordered to the north by the Little Withlacoochee River and to the west by the Withlacoochee River, and the area was platted into thousands of very small parcels in the 1960s and 70s.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation has identified Ridge Manor gap as one of multiple critical unprotected gaps in the Corridor. The Foundation identifies these gaps as essential areas to protect due to their high conservation value and because their protection is essential to ensure that the

Corridor is not permanently severed. These critical gaps present unique land protection challenges because, like the Ridge Manor Gap, they typically comprise large numbers of very small parcels and are therefore under high development pressure.

The Ridge Manor Gap area is currently feeling the impacts of this increased development pressure. According to local residents and conservation advocates, the area was platted in the 1960s and 1970s but recently the real estate market exploded such that every day neighbors report seeing new lots being actively cleared and listed for sale. In addition, much of the Ridge Manor Gap area experienced sustained flooding during and for several months after Hurricane Milton in 2024. The increased development pressure and land clearing currently occurring in Ridge Manor coupled with the potential for more frequent and sustained flooding associated with stronger storm seasons means the time is ripe for progress to be made on conserving this area and closing this critical gap in the statewide Florida Wildlife Corridor.

PROJECT GOAL

The Ridge Manor Gap project is a partnership between Putnam Land Conservancy (PLC) and the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation with the goal of developing and implementing a land protection strategy that can be applied to conserve Ridge Manor and other critical, highly parcelized gaps in the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

ACQUISITION STRATEGY

The acquisition strategy to conserve Ridge Manor Gap is twofold: first, because Ridge Manor Gap comprises thousands of small (majority less than 2 acres), individually-owned parcels, PLC will acquire parcels in target areas within the gap, aggregating them into larger tracts as lots are purchased. PLC has a demonstrated history of successful small lot acquisition and the organization is therefore uniquely positioned to complete this type of acquisition transaction. The second aspect of the acquisition strategy involves PLC selling the aggregated tracts to a government or conservation buyer entity that will ensure the land is protected and managed in perpetuity. To this end, PLC has submitted for approval a new Florida Forever project specific to Ridge Manor Gap, which, when approved, will make lands within Ridge Manor Gap eligible for state acquisition after parcel aggregation.

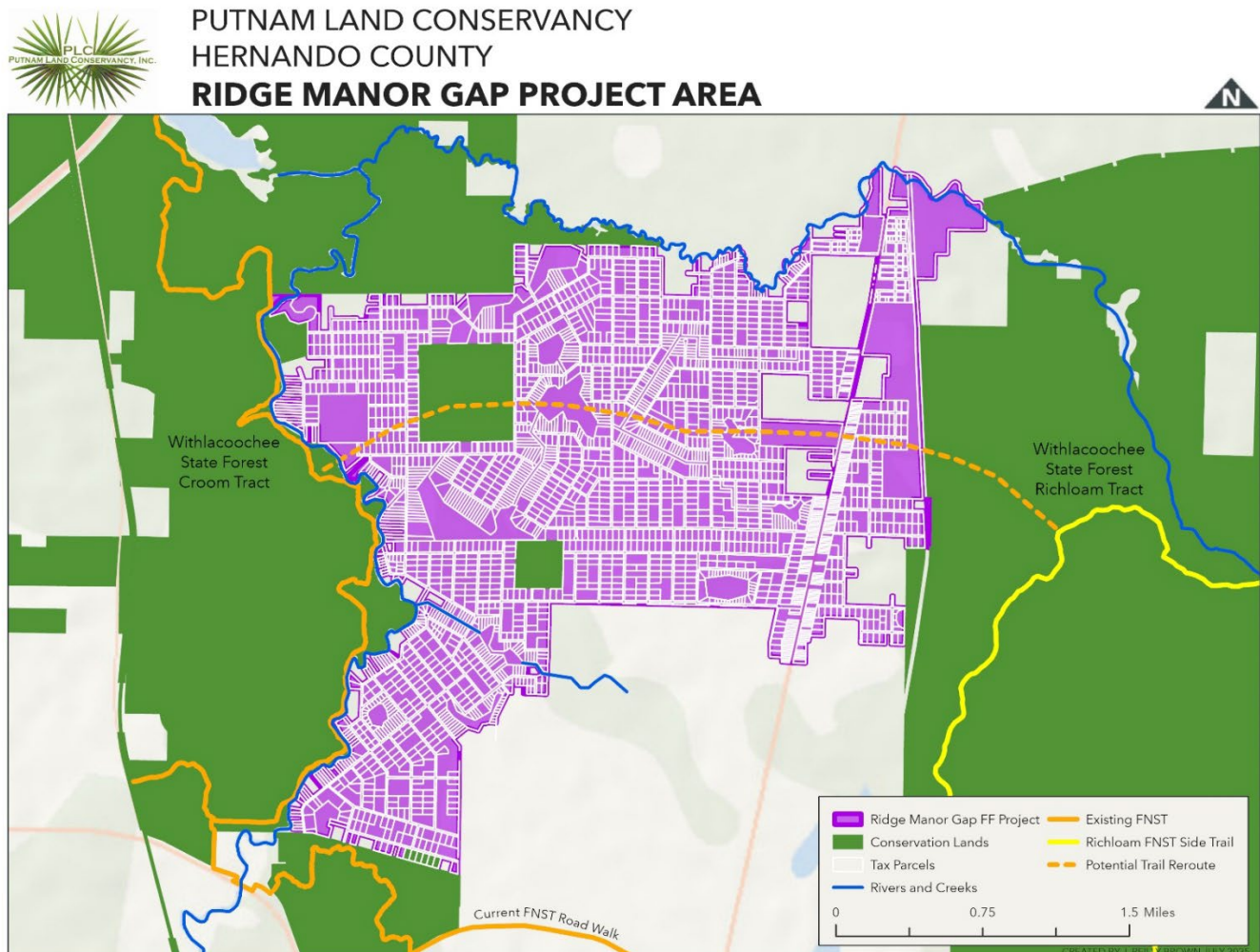


CONSERVATION VALUES

- Critical gap in the statewide Florida Wildlife Corridor
- Water resource protection – Withlacoochee and Little Withlacoochee rivers, wetlands, high recharge area
- Flood management
- Florida National Scenic Trail also has a gap at Ridge Manor and this project has the potential to eliminate over two miles of “road walk” if Ridge Manor Gap is protected
- Imperiled species habitat protection including rare endemic Floyd’s Sandhill Millipede, gopher tortoise, state threatened angle pod vine, and state endangered Florida spiny pod vine.

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

PLC is seeking acquisition funding to fund purchase of parcels within the Ridge Manor Gap area for aggregation and sale to the State of Florida through the Florida Forever program or to another conservation buyer. Project funding is intended to function as a “revolving fund” such that in the event that PLC closes on the sale of any tracts of land purchased with project funding, the proceeds of the sale shall then be applied toward further land acquisitions within the Ridge Manor Gap project area until the gap is protected.

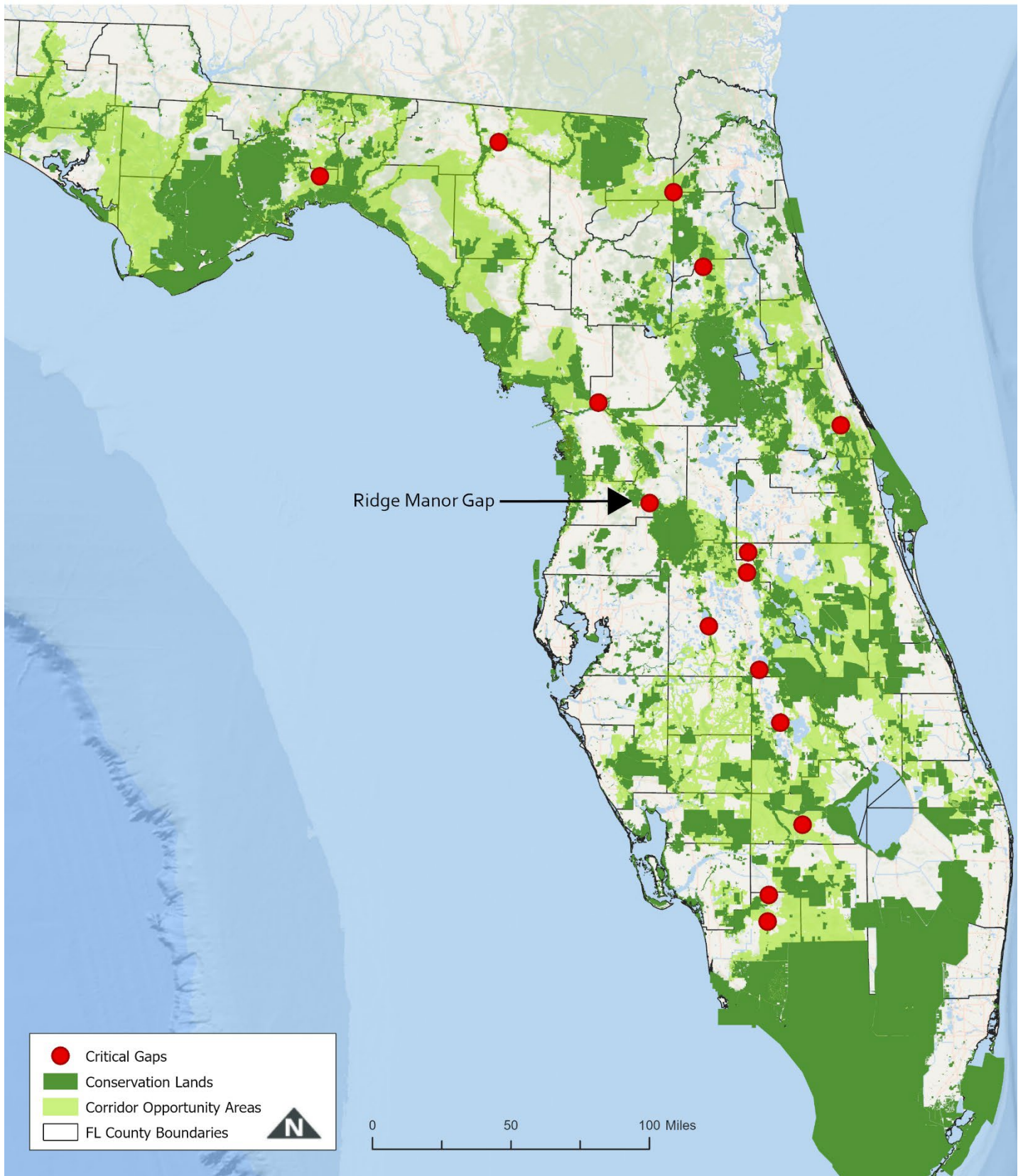




PUTNAM LAND CONSERVANCY

RIDGE MANOR GAP PROJECT

STATEWIDE FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR CRITICAL GAPS





Thank you for reviewing the Ridge Manor Gap project.
Please don't hesitate to contact us with any feedback or questions.

CONTACT Joanna Reilly-Brown, Conservation Acquisition Planner
EMAIL joanna@putnamlandconservancy.org
OFFICE PHONE (386) 336-5400

CONTACT Willy the Losen, CEO and Conservation Director
EMAIL willy@putnamlandconservancy.org
OFFICE PHONE (386) 336-5400

