State of Alabama
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

Program Implementation Strategy

May, 2005
Public Comment Draft

Prepared by
The Alabama Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources,
State Lands Division
State of Alabama
Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
Implementation Strategy

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2002, Congress directed the Secretary of Commerce to establish a Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation (CELCP) Program “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses.”

In establishing this program, Congress:

- directed the Secretary of Commerce to develop guidelines delineating the criteria for grant awards through the program
- required that the funds be issued “in consultation with the States’ Coastal Zone Managers’ or Governors’ designated representatives based on demonstrated need and ability to successfully leverage funds, and shall give priority to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and which have significant ecological value” and
- required that states provide 1:1 matching funds for any financial assistance awarded under the program.

In June 2003, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management issued Final Program Guidelines for the states to follow in developing their own CELCP Programs. The NOAA guidelines describe a three-stage process for competitive funding:

- the development of a state coastal and estuarine land conservation plan;
- establishment of a process for identifying and ranking qualified projects within the state and nominating them to a national competitive selection process annually; and
- a process for conducting peer review and selection of projects at a national level.

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division, Coastal Section is the lead agency for the State of Alabama’s Coastal Area Management Program, which was authorized by NOAA in 1979. The State Lands Division is also the manager of all undeveloped state-owned trust lands and state water bottoms, and administers the state’s Forever Wild Land Trust. As such, ADCNR is the logical and appropriate lead agency for development and implementation of the Alabama Coastal & Estuarine Land Conservation Program.

As outlined in the CELCP Program Guidelines issued by NOAA in 2003, ADCNR has developed this program implementation strategy document to fully describe the state’s protocols for implementing the CELCP Program throughout Alabama. Specifically, this document describes:

- the geographic extent of Alabama’s CELCP Program;
- the priority areas for acquisition, including their extent and current threats, within the CELCP Program area; and
- a process for reviewing and ranking proposals for land acquisition through the federal CELCP Program

With this document, the State of Alabama seeks to position itself to take full advantage of the land acquisition funding opportunities provided on a competitive basis through the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program.
II. ALABAMA COASTAL & ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM AREA

GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT
The Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Final Program Guidelines issued by NOAA in 2003 defined “coastal and estuarine areas” as those areas within a coastal state that are within the coastal watershed boundary as described in NOAA’s Coastal Zone Boundary Review of October 1992. The coastal watershed is further defined as those 8-digit USGS hydrologic cataloguing units that contain head of tide. For coastal Alabama this area includes all of Baldwin and Mobile Counties and portions of Choctaw, Clarke, Coffee, Conecuh, Covington, Crenshaw, Escambia, Geneva, Houston, Monroe, Washington, and Wilcox Counties. The Alabama CELCP Program area comprises approximately 7800 square miles of land area that is geographically split into three separate drainage areas. The largest portion of the program area reaches the Gulf of Mexico via Mobile Bay or the Perdido or Escatawpa River watersheds. The other two units, the Yellow River watershed and the Choctawhatchee River watershed, cross into the Florida panhandle before reaching the Gulf. (See Maps in Appendix 2).

The Alabama CELCP Program boundary completely contains Alabama’s federally designated Coastal Area, which is defined as the continuous 10-foot contour of Mobile and Baldwin Counties seaward to the extent of state waters. The CELCP Program area contains one federally designated National Estuarine Research Reserve (Weeks Bay NERR) and includes land within the management area of another (Grand Bay NERR, MS). The CELCP Program area also contains two National Wildlife Refuges (Bon Secour and Grand Bay NWR*), portions of a National Forest (Conecuh National Forest), and a host of state and local conservation, recreation, and cultural resource sites. The CELCP Program area also includes the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and the Mobile-Tensaw River Delta, which is the state’s largest National Natural Landmark, as designated by the National Park Service (See Maps in Appendix 2).

*Note: The Alabama CELCP Program area is also adjacent to the Choctaw NWR, though none of the refuge’s current holdings are within this boundary.

POPULATION AND ECONOMY
The 14 counties included in the CELCP area had a total population in 2000 of 901,642 residents (See Table 1 below). An analysis of census 2000 block data suggests that some 657,400 of those residents were located within the CELCP boundary. These counties experienced a 10% population growth rate on average from 1990 to 2000, which is consistent with the statewide growth rate over that period. Baldwin County, however, accounts for more than half of that growth. In fact, it was one of the fastest growing areas of the state with its population increasing by nearly 43 percent between 1990 and 2000.

The economy of this region has been historically driven by the Mobile, AL and Pensacola, FL urbanized areas, each of which contains very active port developments. The Port of Mobile is the 14th largest port facility in the US in terms of total tonnage, providing a total annual economic impact of $3 billion (Alabama State Port Authority). Within the Mobile urban area, the dominant employers are retail, manufacturing industries and public service sectors (US Census, 2003). The economy of neighboring Baldwin County is driven largely by retail and tourism. In fact, in 2003 Baldwin County had more than 4 million visitors, representing 21% of the state’s total visitors, 28% of the state’s travel-related employment, 27% of the state’s travel expenditures and $228 million in lodging rentals (Alabama Bureau of Tourism and Travel, 2004). The dominant industry in much of the Alabama CELCP Program area is timber, as evidenced by Table 2 below, which shows that forested and agricultural lands account for nearly 75% of the land cover in this region. In the two coastal counties, the seafood industry also has a major presence employing over 4,000 workers and generating some $450 million in products annually (AUMERC, 1994).
### Table 1. Alabama CELCP Program Area Population Trends

*Source: US Census Bureau*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baldwin</td>
<td>140,415</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>140,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choctaw</td>
<td>15,922</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarke</td>
<td>27,867</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>25,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee</td>
<td>43,615</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conecuh</td>
<td>14,089</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covington</td>
<td>37,631</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>21,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crenshaw</td>
<td>13,665</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escambia</td>
<td>38,440</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>21,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geneva</td>
<td>25,764</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>5187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>88,787</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>23,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile</td>
<td>399,843</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>324.3</td>
<td>399,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
<td>24,324</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>657,401</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTALS: 901,642 (10.1 (avg.)) * 68 657,401

*The area outside of Baldwin County grew by 5.6%*

### Table 2. Land Cover in the Alabama CELCP Program Area, Square Miles

*Source: United States Geological Survey, National Land Cover Database, 1992*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HYDROLOGIC UNIT CODE (WATERSHED)</th>
<th>Forested Uplands</th>
<th>Agricultural Lands</th>
<th>Wetlands &amp; Open Water</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama (03150204)</td>
<td>1004.83</td>
<td>123.04</td>
<td>197.82</td>
<td>72.84</td>
<td>1398.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackwater (03140104)</td>
<td>124.55</td>
<td>13.88</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>145.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escambia (03140305)</td>
<td>209.41</td>
<td>107.24</td>
<td>14.69</td>
<td>30.97</td>
<td>362.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escatawpa (03170008)</td>
<td>465.17</td>
<td>150.61</td>
<td>57.45</td>
<td>29.28</td>
<td>702.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Choctawhatchee (03140203)</td>
<td>42.40</td>
<td>70.30</td>
<td>17.38</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>134.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Tombigbee (03160203)</td>
<td>1265.16</td>
<td>70.03</td>
<td>227.56</td>
<td>55.83</td>
<td>1618.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Coastal (03170009)</td>
<td>28.23</td>
<td>25.10</td>
<td>181.61</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>241.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Bay (03160205)</td>
<td>168.95</td>
<td>191.64</td>
<td>452.80</td>
<td>60.62</td>
<td>874.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile-Tensaw (03160204)</td>
<td>545.71</td>
<td>61.40</td>
<td>283.11</td>
<td>77.13</td>
<td>967.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdido Bay (03140107)</td>
<td>44.40</td>
<td>49.70</td>
<td>53.90</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>162.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perdido (03140106)</td>
<td>407.80</td>
<td>170.59</td>
<td>59.54</td>
<td>42.55</td>
<td>680.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow River (03140103)</td>
<td>334.95</td>
<td>128.78</td>
<td>29.58</td>
<td>20.82</td>
<td>514.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTALS: 4641.55 (59.49%) 1162.30 (14.90%) 1576.87 (20.21%) 421.13 (5.40%) 7801.85 (100%)
III. Priorities for Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection

CONSERVATION TARGETS IN THE ALABAMA CELCP PROGRAM AREA

It is no secret that Alabama is a very biologically rich state. There are two major driving forces behind Alabama's diversity. First is the geomorphology of the state, which includes six major physiographic regions, ranging from the southern Appalachian mountains in the northern portion of the state to the coastal plains province that borders the Gulf of Mexico. The second major biodiversity influence is Alabama's abundant supply of water resources. Our water resources are so important to this state that the major river systems are prominently displayed in the official state seal.

The Alabama CELCP Program area is also defined – literally and figuratively – by its major coastal river systems, and these rivers and associated riparian corridors are the source of much of the species diversity of the coastal area. With such an abundance of potential conservation targets coupled with limited acquisition resources, it is important to establish a system of prioritizing acquisition efforts and evaluating proposed acquisition sites.

In selecting conservation targets for the Alabama CELCP Program area, the state found itself in a position where much previous work has been done toward conservation and there are several strong land acquisition programs in place. The Alabama Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need document, published in 2002, identified through a very public process many of the forested habitats worth conserving throughout the state. Additionally, the State Lands Division and the Forever Wild Land Trust Program have devoted a great deal of effort and resources in Coastal Alabama, conserving over 50,000 acres in Alabama's coastal counties since 1992 (see www.conservation.alabama.gov/public-lands/ for an updated list of Forever Wild acquisitions).

During development of the CELCP Program strategy, State Lands Division staff also participated in a series of conservation planning workshops sponsored by the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and The Nature Conservancy of Alabama through its Effroymson Fellowship program (December 9-11, 2003 and March 16-18, 2004). These workshops focused on the Mobile Bay, Escatawpa, and Perdido watersheds, covering the majority of the CELCP Program area. The workshops were widely attended by TNC staff and representatives from several state, federal and local agencies with conservation interests in Coastal Alabama. By participating in these workshops, State Lands Division staff were able to further identify and refine suitable conservation targets for the CELCP Program while also sharing information about the CELCP opportunity with the various partner agencies.

As part of its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) established a Coastal Habitats Coordinating Team (CHCT) in April 2004. The purpose of this stakeholder committee is to assemble all the entities in coastal Alabama who have interest in land acquisition and conservation in an effort to coordinate diverse efforts. The State Lands Division is one of many partners involved in the CHCT and the Alabama CELCP Program will be one of the many tools utilized by this forum to identify and acquire sensitive lands. The CHCT held its first formal meeting in May 2004 and the Alabama CELCP Program expects to work closely with this committee in order to continue identifying specific tracts for acquisition.

As part of its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) established a Coastal Habitats Coordinating Team (CHCT) in April 2004. The purpose of this stakeholder committee is to assemble all the entities in coastal Alabama who have interest in land acquisition and conservation in an effort to coordinate diverse efforts. The State Lands Division is one of many partners involved in the CHCT and the Alabama CELCP Program will be one of the many tools utilized by this forum to identify and acquire sensitive lands. The CHCT held its first formal meeting in May 2004 and the Alabama CELCP Program expects to work closely with this committee in order to continue identifying specific tracts for acquisition.

The Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP) has identified specific conservation and management targets for the coastal area through its Special Management Area and Geographic Area of Particular Concern designations. In addition, the Gulf of Mexico Program, in conjunction with coastal area management programs in all of the Gulf States, has developed the Gulf Ecological Management Sites (GEMS) program, which identifies unique Gulf coast ecosystems worthy of protection. Finally, several watershed-scale comprehensive conservation and management planning efforts have been conducted in the Alabama coastal area, many of which have specific land conservation targets (listed in references section).
Table 3 summarizes the priority conservation targets pulled from the above sources. The Alabama CELCP Program considers all of these lands to be suitable for acquisition and has developed a site evaluation tool (described in Section IV and in Appendix 3) that will assist the State in prioritizing nominations in any given program year.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Conservation Targets</th>
<th>Intrinsic Qualities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
<th>Geographic Extent</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gulf Beach and Dune Systems, including Primary and Secondary Dunes, barrier island complexes</strong></td>
<td>Alabama Beach Mouse (endangered, endemic) Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Sea Turtle Nesting Habitat Wading Bird Rookeries Natural Hazard Mitigation</td>
<td>Development Beach Erosion</td>
<td>Alabama Gulf Front Fort Morgan Peninsula Gulf State Park Cat Island Dauphin Island</td>
<td>Bon Secour NWR Fort Morgan Peninsula Gulf State Park Cat Island Dauphin Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maritime Live Oak-Pine Forest</strong></td>
<td>Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Alabama Barrier Islands</td>
<td>Orange Beach Maritime Forest Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bottomland Hardwood Forests and Swamps</strong></td>
<td>Black Bear Habitat Migratory Bird Stopover Habitat Alabama Red Bellied Turtle (endangered, endemic)</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Throughout CELCP Area</td>
<td>Mobile-Tensaw River Delta Hell’s Swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wet Longleaf Pine Forests, Flatwoods, and Savannas</strong></td>
<td>Pitcher plant seeps Herbaceous plant diversity</td>
<td>Development Fire Suppression</td>
<td>Southern Coastal Plains Areas</td>
<td>Grand Bay Savanna Splinter Hill Bog Wolf Bay Lillian Swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upland Longleaf Pine and Wiregrass Sandhill Community</strong></td>
<td>Gopher Tortoise (federally listed as threatened in the portion of its range west of Mobile River) Indigo Snake Red Cockaded Woodpecker (historical range)</td>
<td>Development Conversion Fire suppression</td>
<td>Throughout CELCP Area</td>
<td>Perdido River Corridor Conecuh National Forest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlantic Whitecedar Swamps and associated Blackwater River Systems</strong></td>
<td>Migrational corridors for many species</td>
<td>Development Shoreline Armoring</td>
<td>Throughout CELCP Area</td>
<td>Includes Blackwater, Perdido, Pea, Choctawhatchee, Conecuh, Escatawpa, and Styx Rivers and associated tributaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Riparian Corridors, particularly along ecoregional priority streams and their tributaries</strong></td>
<td>Migrational corridors for many species</td>
<td>Development Shoreline Armoring</td>
<td>Throughout CELCP Area</td>
<td>Includes Blackwater, Perdido, Pea, Choctawhatchee, Conecuh, Escatawpa, and Styx Rivers and associated tributaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Red Hills and Lime Hills (beech-magnolia bluff and ravine forests)</strong></td>
<td>Red Hills Salamander (endangered endemic)</td>
<td>Development Conversion</td>
<td>Red Hills Eco-region (see Map 2)</td>
<td>No public land currently supports this target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designated Gulf Ecological Management Sites (GEMS), Special Management Areas, and Geographic Areas of Particular Concern</strong></td>
<td>Various; All are designated due to federal, state and local criteria.</td>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Designated Alabama Coastal Area</td>
<td>Mobile Tensaw River Delta Mon Louis Island Weeks Bay NERR Grand Bay Savanna Lillian Swamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estuarine Zones and adjacent, undeveloped wetlands and uplands</strong></td>
<td>Water quality protection Shellfish nursery habitat Finfish Nursery Habitat</td>
<td>Development Nonpoint Pollution</td>
<td>Tidal, estuarine waters</td>
<td>Weeks Bay Wolf Bay Bon Secour Bay Perdido Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. State Process for Implementing the CELCP Program

The State of Alabama is modeling its Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program after its own very successful Forever Wild Land Trust Program. It is likely that many lands acquired through the Alabama CELCP Program will be matched using the Forever Wild Land Trust funds. However, regardless of the source of matching funds for acquisition, all nominations for land acquisition under the Alabama CELCP Program will be held to the same proven procedures and review standards as Forever Wild. The following summary of the Forever Wild Program is provided as background.

THE ALABAMA FOREVER WILD LAND TRUST. A complementary state land acquisition program

In 1992, the Alabama Legislature passed the Forever Wild Land Trust Act, which authorized a statewide referendum that, when passed by the citizens, diverted a portion of offshore oil and gas royalties to establish a trust fund to be utilized for acquisition and permanent preservation of unique lands throughout Alabama. The Forever Wild Amendment was passed by an unprecedented 83% of Alabama voters. A summary of the key highlights, particularly with respect to implementation of the CELCP Program, is included in the paragraphs that follow.

The Forever Wild Program is built on three basic policies as stated in the amendment:

1. To protect, manage, and enhance certain lands and waters of Alabama with full recognition that this generation is a trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;

2. To protect, to the fullest extent practicable, recreational lands and areas of unique ecological, biological and geological importance; and

3. To promote a proper balance among population growth, economic development, environmental protection, and ecological diversity.

To implement the program the amendment established:

a revenue source and fund for land acquisition. Specifically, the Amendment established the Forever Wild Land Trust and specified that certain annual percentages of trust income earned by the Alabama Trust Fund would be allocated to the Forever Wild Land Trust.

an appointed Board to oversee activities of the program. Specifically, the Amendment established the 15-member Board of Trustees of the Forever Wild Land Trust and empowered said Board to implement the program by reviewing acquisition proposals, maintaining a list of targeted acquisition sites, and making recommendations for acquisition.

a state lead agency for the program. The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is vested with implementing the Forever Wild Program. The Amendment also specifically established the Natural Heritage Section of the ADCNR State Lands Division and charged that agency with maintaining a natural heritage databank, producing an inventory of Alabama’s natural heritage, developing a natural heritage plan, and managing properties acquired under the Forever Wild Program.

a final review committee. Composed of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker of the state House of Representatives. Before any Forever Wild purchase can be implemented, a written proposal of said purchase must be reviewed by this committee and approved by a simple majority.

The Forever Wild Amendment also established minimum standards and requirements for implementing the program. These same standards will be applied to all acquisitions under the CELCP Program, including:
All purchases must be made from willing sellers (e.g., *eminent domain may not be utilized*).

Two independent appraisals must be obtained and reconciled in order for any purchase to be authorized.

Fee-simple title to land is typically the preferred approach to land conservation. However, conservation easements may be utilized as needed in order to maximize the ability to achieve the objectives of the Forever Wild Program.

Anytime a property is purchased using Forever Wild funds, an additional 15% of the appraised value of that purchase must be placed into a separate Forever Wild Land Trust Stewardship Account. These funds are set aside at the time of purchase in an effort to endow the future management and stewardship of the acquired land.

Within one year of acquisition, the Forever Wild Board, working closely with Heritage Section staff, is required to develop a tract-specific management plan which spells out allowable uses of the property and identifies how the property will be maintained. To this end, the Amendment requires that all lands be managed under the multiple-use management principle.

The Forever Wild Board meets quarterly to conduct its business. Any citizen may nominate a tract for consideration by the Forever Wild Board of Trustees, provided that the owner of the property is a willing seller. Since its inception, the Board, working closely with ADCNR staff, has established protocols for evaluating tracts nominated for acquisition. Prior to the CELCP Program, the Board had established separate Site Assessment Sheets designed to concurrently gauge a site’s best suitability for acquisition under either of four future uses: Recreation Area, Wildlife Management Area, Nature Preserve, or State Park. In implementing the CELCP Program, the State Lands Division has developed a fifth Site Assessment Sheet that is specific to the goals of the federal and state CELCP Programs (See description below, or Appendix 3 for a complete worksheet).

Once acquired, all lands are managed under a multiple use management principal, to ensure that all resources including recreation, hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, aesthetics, soil, water, forests and minerals are protected or enhanced. The State Lands Division writes the management plan that is presented to the Board for approval within one year of purchase.

**ALABAMA CELCP PROGRAM TRACT NOMINATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURES**

*Lead Agency Roles & Responsibilities*

The State Lands Division (SLD) of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is the lead agency for the Alabama Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. Such a role is a natural fit for the Division, which is also the lead agency for the NOAA-sponsored Alabama Coastal Area Management Program and Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Division is also the designated steward of all undeveloped state-owned lands, including state water bottoms. SLD is the single designated title holder for all lands acquired through the Forest Legacy Program. Finally, The State Lands Division, through its Natural Heritage Section, administers the Forever Wild Program for the State of Alabama.

The State Lands Division will be responsible for accepting and managing nominations for acquisition on an ongoing basis. Staff will also determine the willingness of the owner to sell and will conduct site assessments in accordance with the CELCP Program worksheet and will prepare nomination packages to NOAA for the highest ranking acquisition proposals, in accordance with the nomination and review procedures described below.
Nomination and Review Procedures

The State of Alabama will implement its Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program as follows:

1. The State Lands Division will continuously accept nominations for acquisition through the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. Nominations may be accepted from anyone at any time, so long as they are made in writing.

2. Land may only be acquired from willing sellers. While any tract may be nominated, it will be the responsibility of State Lands Division staff to determine the willingness of the owner to sell the property at or below fair market value.

3. State Lands Division staff, which includes the managers of the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program and the Weeks Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, will perform all site evaluations in accordance with the CELCP Program Site Assessment guidelines located in Appendix 3.

4. Prior to acquisition of any land under the Alabama CELCP Program, State Lands Division will secure two independent appraisals and a Phase I Environmental Assessment of the nominated property. The independent appraisals must be reconciled prior to purchase. Appraisals will be conducted in accordance with the current Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA; “Yellow Book”) and the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).

5. State Lands Division will ensure that the required nonfederal matching funds are available for any acquisition nominated to the federal CELCP Program. Nonfederal match may come from state and/or local government funds, sponsoring or partner non-governmental organizations, and/or the Forever Wild Land Trust. Where the Forever Wild Program is utilized for matching funds for the CELCP Program, State Lands Division staff will present nominations to the Forever Wild Board of Trustees for consideration in accordance with Forever Wild Program procedures.

6. State Lands Division staff will make final determination of projects to be submitted for consideration in the competitive, federal CELCP Program and will be responsible for developing all nomination packages for submission to NOAA, in accordance with the timeframes and procedures established for the federal program.

7. State Lands Division will hold title to all properties acquired through the CELCP Program and will be responsible for maintaining all documentation as required by the Federal CELCP guidance.

8. Within one year of purchase, State Lands Division staff will develop a tract-specific management plan, modeled after plans developed in conjunction with the Forever Wild Program. All properties acquired under this program will be managed in accordance with applicable state laws, which could include lease arrangements to local governments to utilize the land (i.e., for public water access). Any revenues generated through responsible management of acquired tracts will be utilized by the State Lands Division toward the continued, long-term stewardship of the properties in accordance with the established management plan.
ALABAMA CELCP PROGRAM SITE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

The State Lands Division has developed an intricate site assessment worksheet that allows the State to objectively and independently rank proposed acquisition sites based on their intrinsic qualities relative to the goals of the CELCP Program. The CELCP Program Site Assessment is modeled after the existing Forever Wild Program. The entire assessment worksheet is included in Appendix 3, but the basic outline is presented below in order to give a general overview of the types of attributes that strengthen a property’s score under the Alabama CELCP Program.

There are three evaluation categories considered in the Alabama CELCP Program, as follows:

1. **Site Characteristics Related to Intended Use.** This category reviews the site for a number of physical characteristics, including size, accessibility (or inaccessibility, if desirable), population served, scenic quality, habitat values, rare/threatened species presence, geological/archaeological features, level of site disturbance, and viability of natural communities and rare species populations.

2. **Acquisition Considerations.** This category assesses whether any restrictions would exist on the purchase, whether surrounding land use impacts the purchase, whether purchase of said tract supports federal, state, or local planning programs, whether alternative sites exist, and what the surrounding development threat is to the targeted habitat.

3. **Management Considerations:** This category ranks a proposed acquisition on its suitability for multiple use, manageability, and stewardship cost considerations.

Each site will be independently evaluated based on its own merits. The Alabama CELCP Program Site Assessment protocols have been designed to fully support the goals of the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program and to tie the program to other state and federal management activities within the Alabama coastal watersheds. As evidenced by the site assessment protocols, there are numerous links to the federally designated Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP).
V. Coordination of Public Involvement

As mentioned earlier in the Conservation Targets section, public involvement and interagency coordination with regard to land acquisition in coastal Alabama was underway well before the establishment of the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation program. The CELCP Program is very similar to the Forest Legacy Program, which recently (September, 2002) conducted a statewide assessment of need for acquisition of forest land in Alabama. The Alabama Forest Legacy Program conducted a statewide opinion survey and held 6 public meetings to gauge public opinion on the types of lands that should be preserved through acquisition. As authorized by the CELCP guidance issued by NOAA, Alabama is utilizing the Forest Legacy needs assessment findings as a substantial baseline for its CELCP Program.

Since the CELCP Program is administered through NOAA and is directly linked to the state Coastal Zone Management Program, Alabama also utilized existing committees established for the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program (ACAMP) in order to secure input for the development of the state CELCP Program. State Lands Division staff presented an early draft of this Program Implementation Strategy to the ACAMP Technical Interagency Committee (TIC) and Coastal Resource Advisory Committee (CRAC) at regularly scheduled meetings on April 8 and 12, 2004 (respectively). The TIC contains representatives from all of the federal and state resource management and research oriented agencies operating in coastal Alabama. The CRAC is a stakeholder-based committee appointed by the Governor to advise the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program. Members of the TIC and CRAC provided additional feedback on the program procedures as well as the priority conservation targets, which were incorporated into this final draft document. The State also received input, particularly with regard to identification of conservation targets from The Nature Conservancy of Alabama and the Coastal Habitat Coordination Committee of the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program.

Upon release of this final review draft implementation strategy in May 2005, the state is formally seeking comment from the aforementioned agencies, local governments in the CELCP area, and the general public. Interagency committees and the general public will be notified of the availability of the final review draft document and invited to comment. Copies of the program document will also be submitted to local governments within the CELCP Program boundary, and at least one public meeting will be held to collect feedback from the general public. The final strategy will also be presented to the TIC, CRAC, Coastal Planner Roundtable, and Mobile Bay NEP Management Committee during the public comment period.

Once public input is incorporated into the document, a final draft will be submitted to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for federal approval. As required by the CELCP Program guidance issued by NOAA, Alabama's Implementation Strategy document will also be reviewed by the Alabama Coastal Area Management Program for consistency with coastal zone management policies and regulations. The final draft document will also be presented to the Governor and his appointed Commissioner of Conservation and Natural Resources for final authorization.
VI. Selected References

The following documents were utilized for statistical data and to identify conservation target areas and priorities.


Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center. 2004. *Bon Secour River Watershed Management Plan.* Mobile, AL.


Boyce, Timothy C., Dan DuMont, and Mark Bailey. 2002. *Alabama Forest Legacy Program Assessment of Need Document.* 79pp ([www.forestry.state.al.us/forestlegacyprog.htm](http://www.forestry.state.al.us/forestlegacyprog.htm))


VII. For More Information

For more information on the Alabama Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, to nominate a tract for consideration, or for information about management of state-owned lands in general, please contact the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division:

State Lands Division
64 North Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130
(334) 242-3484
Toll Free: (800) Land-ALA

Coastal Section
23210 US Hwy 98, Suite B-1
Fairhope, AL 36532
(251) 929-0900

www.conservation.alabama.gov
APPENDIX 1
ALABAMA COASTAL & ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM
CERTIFICATION LETTERS

1) State Authorization Letter
2) Coastal Consistency

(Note: These will be added following public review and approval)
APPENDIX 2
ALABAMA COASTAL & ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM
RESOURCE INVENTORY MAP PRODUCTS

Map 1: Alabama CELCP Program area Land Cover
Map 2: Resource Inventory Key to Individual Watershed Maps
Map 3: Yellow River Watershed
Map 4: Blackwater River Watershed
Map 5: Perdido River Watershed
Map 6: Perdido Bay Watershed
Map 7: Lower Choctawhatchee River Watershed
Map 8: Escambia River Watershed
Map 9: Lower Alabama River Watershed
Map 10: Lower Tombigbee River Watershed
Map 11: Mobile-Tensaw River Delta Watershed
Map 12: Mobile Bay Watershed
Map 13: Escatawpa River Watershed
Map 14: Mississippi Coastal Watershed
Alabama CELCP Program Resource Inventory
Map 9: Lower Alabama Watershed (HUC: 03150204)

GIS Data Disclaimer: Data presented are from a variety of sources. The Alabama State Lands Division makes no guarantees of the quality or accuracy of the data. For planning purposes only.
ALABAMA COASTAL AND ESTUARINE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM (CELCP) SITE ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Site Name ________________________________ Location ________________________________ County(ies) ________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION CATEGORY</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<th>WEIGHT</th>
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<td>I. Site Characteristics Related to Intended Use</td>
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<td>B. Accessibility</td>
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<td>C. Contribution of timber, improvements to purchase goal</td>
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<td>D. Population served</td>
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<td>E. Scenic quality</td>
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<td>F. Significant natural communities</td>
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<td>I. Other significant physical/biological features</td>
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<td>J. Site disturbance</td>
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<td>K. Rarity of this type of natural area</td>
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<td>L. Fragility of the site</td>
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<td>M. Natural site designations</td>
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<td>N. Cultural site designations</td>
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<td>O. Viability of natural communities</td>
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<td>P. Viability of rare species population</td>
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<td>II. Acquisition Considerations</td>
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<td>A. Encumbrances or Restrictions on Use</td>
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<td>E. Enhancement of Accessibility to existing public land</td>
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<td>F. Investment Security</td>
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<td>G. Defensibility</td>
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<td>H. Alternative Sites</td>
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<td>I. Development Threat</td>
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<td>J. Immediate Service Area Needs</td>
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<td>K. Public Use</td>
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<td>L. Public Support</td>
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<td>III. Management Considerations</td>
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<td>A. Extent of multiple use</td>
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<td>1. Suitability for scientific research</td>
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<td>2. Suitability for educational use</td>
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<td>3. Suitability for recreational use</td>
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<td>C. Management costs/Alternatives</td>
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<td><strong>MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS SUBTOTAL</strong></td>
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**RAW SCORE:** Σ __________________

**TOTAL SCORE:** Σ ________________ / 3.66 = ________________
Alabama Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program
SITE RATING CRITERIA AND INSTRUCTIONS

Proposed CELCP Tract:________________________________________________________

CELCP Sites are considered to be tracts of land acquired and permanently protected or managed for the purpose of forwarding the stewardship and conservation of native plant or animal communities, or rare or valuable individual members of such communities or any other natural features or significant scientific, recreational, educational, geological, ecological, or scenic value. This definition embraces areas of many sizes, shapes, and characteristics which have bearing on Coastal Alabama’s watersheds and their respective estuary systems. The most important of these characteristics for evaluating potential natural areas are listed below.

Instructions: Rank each of the following characteristics according to its degree of significance at the site. If the quantity or quality of the characteristic is very high, rank it as 3; if lower, 2 or 1. Rank it as 0 if there is no such characteristic on the site, or if it is of very poor quality. MARK ONE RANKING FOR EACH CHARACTERISTIC.

I. SITE CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO INTENDED USE

A. Adequacy of acreage for long term maintenance of the site. (Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)
   An adequate land base is of utmost importance to preserve, protect and interpret a natural resource.
   − The site has sufficient acreage to support expansion of the significant natural features for which the site is to be purchased. ......................................................... 3
   − The site has enough acreage to support in its current status the significant natural features for which the site is to be purchased. ...................................................... 2
   − The site does not have sufficient acreage to support the existing significant natural features in their current status, but adjacent acreage might be available. ................................................................................................ 1
   − The site has insufficient acreage to support the existing significant natural features in their current status and no adjacent acreage is realistically available to expand the site ............................................................................. 0

Note to Evaluator: Calculate the weighted Site Characteristics subtotal on the cover sheet to this evaluation. If the subtotal is 8 points or greater, continue with the valuation. If the subtotal is less than 8 points, discontinue the rating as the site is not suitable as presented for Forever Wild acquisition.

B. Accessibility. (Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)
   Where site accessibility is desirable, a good transportation system which provides good access to the proposed nature preserve is important. Population density in the vicinity of the site is also important. For critical protection sites, inaccessibility is desirable.
   If accessibility is a positive factor,
   − Site is served by a primary paved road................................................................. 3
   − Site is served by a secondary paved road............................................................. 2
   − Site is served by an unpaved road.......................................................................... 1
   − Site is not served by a road, is remote and difficult to reach .................................. 0

   If inaccessibility is a positive factor,
   − Site is remote and difficult to reach. ................................................................. 3
   − Site is not adjacent to, but less than 1/4 mile from a paved roadway....................... 2
   − Site is adjacent to an improved road (either dirt or paved)...................................... 1
   − Site is adjacent to roadway and located near an inhabited area ............................. 0
C. Contribution of timber, improvements to purchase goal.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)

The timber type, quality and quantity and existing improvements on a site may enhance the desirability of a site for a particular purpose. Likewise such features may contribute no positive enhancement or they may even detract from the purchase objective.

- Timber type, quality and quantity or improvements are significant and greatly enhance the purchase goal. ................................................................. 3
- Timber type, etc. or improvements somewhat enhance the purchase goal................................................................................................. 2
- Timber type, etc. or improvements are insignificant. ................................................................. 1
- Timber type, etc. or improvements are substantial and greatly detract from the purchase goal ................................................................. 0

D. Population served.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)

If the purchase goal includes encouraging site use, the proximity of the site to population centers is an important factor. Where site protection is the primary concern, remoteness from population centers contributes to the purchase goal.

- Site accessibility is a goal and site is located within 50 miles of a population center of 250,000 or inaccessibility is the goal and the site is in a sparsely populated area. ................................................................. 3
- Site accessibility is a goal and site is located within 50 miles of a population center of 100,000 - if inaccessibility is the goal, site is in somewhat densely populated area. ................................................................. 2
- Site accessibility is a goal and site is located within 50 miles of a population center of 50,000 - if inaccessibility is the goal, site is in densely populated area................................................................. 1
- Site accessibility is a goal and site is located within 50 miles of a population center of less than 50,000 - if inaccessibility is the goal, site is in urban area................................................................. 0

E. Scenic quality.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 7 points)

Some features of a CELCP area are important primarily to the people who use the site, for they enrich the user's experience with scenic and other values.

The overall scenic quality of the site is:

- Excellent ................................................................. 3
- Good ........................................................................ 2
- Fair ......................................................................... 1
- Poor ........................................................................ 0

Identify each of the following features that accurately describe the site.  
(Mark 1 if the following statement is true; 0 otherwise):

- Site has scenic water features such as ocean beach, coastal marsh or lagoon ................................................................. 1 0
- Lakes located in a picturesque setting................................................................. 1 0
- Rivers or streams which please the senses ................................................................. 1 0
- Site has significant coastal vegetative or geological features with aesthetic appeal ................................................................. 1 0
F. Significant natural communities.  
(Subtotal: ____ of 4 points)  
A natural community is an association of plants and animals which appear together in a repeating pattern. Such communities can be significant because of their rarity (compared to what previously was there) or because they are of high quality (relatively undisturbed).  
Identify each of the following features that accurately describe the site. 
(Mark 1 if the following statement is true; 0 otherwise):  
- The site has one or more significant natural communities  
  (NOTE: if rating for this item is 0, the subtotal should be 0) .................................. 1 0  
- The site's natural communities are rare in Alabama.............................................. 1 0  
- The site's natural communities are in good condition, or offer substantial restoration potential. .................................................................1 0  
- The site's natural communities are threatened throughout the CELCP program area.................................................................1 0  

G. Rare Species.  
(Subtotal: ____ of 4 points)  
Identify each of the following features that accurately describe the site. 
(Mark 1 if the following statement is true; 0 otherwise):  
- Rare species are found on the site  
  (NOTE: if rating for this item is 0, the subtotal should be 0) .................................. 1 0  
- These species are relatively rare in Alabama........................................................ 1 0  
- The site's rare species populations are in good condition. .................................... 1 0  
- The site's rare species are threatened throughout the CELCP program area.................................................................1 0  

H. Geological/Archaeological features.  
(Subtotal: ____ of 3 points)  
Identify each of the following features that accurately describe the site. 
(Mark 1 if the following statement is true; 0 otherwise):  
- The site has geologic formations or mineral deposits which are unusual or which are useful in understanding Alabama's geologic history.....................................................................................................................1 0  
- The site has fossil strata which are unusual or which are useful in understanding Alabama's biological history........................................................... 1 0  
- Site contains evidence of unevaluated archaeological or historic elements, or site has potential to contain archaeological elements. .....................1 0  

I. Other significant physical and biological features.  
(Subtotal: ____ of 20 points)  
Identify each of the following features that accurately describe the site. 
(Mark 1 if the following statement is true; 0 otherwise):  
1. The site has an unusual or outstanding landform.............................................. 1 0  
2. The site has wetlands or unusual or outstanding water features. ................. 1 0  
3. Site has frontage on gulf, bay or a major river.................................................. 1 0  
4. Site has streams .................................................................................................... 1 0  
5. Site has oxbow lakes, beaver ponds, or other water-related enhancements........................................................................................................ 1 0  
6. Site has climax forest, consisting of native trees and other plants ............... 1 0
7. Site has waterfowl habitat as follows:
   - Good existing habitat .................................................................................................. 3
   - Fair existing habitat .................................................................................................... 2
   - Some habitat which can be improved ........................................................................ 1
   - None ........................................................................................................................... 0

8. Outstanding/Unique Features (steep slopes, ridges, dunes, overlooks, wetlands, natural communities)
   Rate the significance of the outstanding or unique natural features that the tract will protect.
   - Natural feature or habitat designated as a Gulf Ecological Management Site; Geographic Area of Particular Concern; Areas of Preservation and Restoration; or National Estuarine Research Reserve ......................................................... 3
   - Natural feature or habitat designated as a Natural Landmark; or a natural feature or habitat on any state register of Natural Areas .......................................................................................................................... 2
   - Significant wetland or rare natural community of the State as identified in the Natural Heritage Database, Site supports extremely high quality example of a natural community of the State .......................................................................................................................... 1
   - Sites which have limited or no special natural significance ........................................ 0

9. Endangered Species Habitat - (Defined as wildlife and plant species included on endangered or threatened species lists maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.)
   The ability of the habitat that will be preserved to support state or federally recognized endangered wildlife or plant species
   - Confirmed habitat for a federally listed endangered species ........................ 1 0
   - Confirmed habitat for a federally listed threatened species ......................... 1 0
   - Confirmed habitat for U.S.F.W.S. proposed endangered species ................... 1 0
   - Confirmed habitat for U.S.F.W.S. proposed threatened species .................. 1 0
   - Confirmed habitat for U.S.F.W.S. listed candidate species for listing as a federally endangered or threatened species............................... 1 0

    The assemblage of ecological communities is characterized by:
    - High diversity, high or low productivity ................................................................. 3
    - Low diversity, high productivity ............................................................................ 2
    - Low diversity, low productivity ............................................................................... 1
    - Not applicable ......................................................................................................... 0

J. Site disturbance. (Subtotal: _____ of 6 points)
   Human activities and non-native plant and animal species can interfere with the normal functions of natural communities and populations of rare species. Such interference has a negative effect on natural areas. (Degree of disturbance - 3, no disturbance, 0, extensive disturbance).
   - Lack of man-made disturbance .................................................................................. 3 2 1 0
   - Lack of disturbance by non-native plant or animal species ...................................... 3 2 1 0
K. Rarity of this tract as a natural area.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 4 points)
Rarity refers to the frequency of occurrence of the type of natural areas within a geographic area. In general, the rarer a type of natural area, the more important will be the need to protect it. (MARK THE HIGHEST SCORE THAT APPLIES):

- It is nationally rare. ............................................................................................................. 4
- It is rare in adjoining states. .................................................................................................. 3
- It is rare in Alabama. ............................................................................................................. 2
- It is common throughout the CELCP program area............................................................ 1
- The type is common throughout Alabama .......................................................................... 0

L. Fragility of the site.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)
Fragility refers to the site's vulnerability to change. For example, limited human use will not harm a river swamp, but will seriously upset the balance of a granite outcrop community. In general, the more fragile the site, the more important will be the need to protect it. Mark 3 if the site is very fragile, and 2 or 1 if it is less so. Mark 0 if the site is not fragile.

- The site is vulnerable to impacts from human use, non-native plants or animals, or off-site land uses ........................................................................................................ 3 2 1 0

M. Natural site designations.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)
Many organizations evaluate natural sites and recognize those which have special value. The U. S. Department of Commerce, the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the U. S. Department of the Interior designate suitable lands for a variety of conservation purposes. The State Lands Division's Natural Heritage Section also has listed qualified sites as significant areas. Sites which have survived these kinds of scrutiny, and have context to coastal systems, are the best of the sites considered for designation. (MARK ONE RANKING).

- Site contains all or a portion of a designated Gulf Ecological Management Site, Areas of Preservation and Restoration, National Forests National Natural Landmark, registered Natural Area, National Wild & Scenic River, Outstanding National Resource Water or Outstanding Alabama Water ........................................................................................... 3
- Site contains all or a portion of a proposed Gulf Ecological Management Site, Areas of Preservation and Restoration, National Forests National Natural Landmark, Natural Area, National Wild & Scenic River, Outstanding National Resource Water or Outstanding Alabama Water ........................................................................................... 2
- Site contains all or a portion of a Natural Heritage Inventory "Significant Area" or Outstanding Alabama Water" ........................................................................................... 1
- Site contains no areas with designations of special significance for natural resources ...................................................................................................................... 0

N. Cultural site designations.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)
The cultural features of a natural area are of significant importance, since management of the natural area may protect and interpret archaeological or historical elements that would otherwise be lost. To what extent are valuable cultural features present on the site?

- Site has a designated or potential National Historic Landmark ......................................... 3
- Site has known historical or archaeological sites listed or eligible for listing on the National or the Alabama Register of Historic Places ......................................................... 2
- Site contains evidence of unevaluated archaeological or historic elements, or site has the potential to contain archaeological elements ................................................................................................. 1
- Site contains no evidence of archaeological or historic elements ........................................ 0
O. Viability of natural communities.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  
The extent to which the natural communities on the site are viable over the long term is:

- Communities will likely be enhanced with good management of this tract ................................................................. 3
- Communities will maintain current status .................................................................................................................. 2
- Communities will likely decline in viability ............................................................................................................... 1
- Communities are not viable over the long term ........................................................................................................ 0

P. Viability of rare species population.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  

- Species will likely be enhanced with good management of this tract ................................................................. 3
- Species will maintain current status ......................................................................................................................... 2
- Species will likely decline in viability ...................................................................................................................... 1
- Species are not viable over the long term .................................................................................................................. 0

Note to Evaluator: Calculate the weighted Site Characteristics subtotal on the cover sheet to this evaluation. If the subtotal is 100 points or greater, continue with the evaluation. If the subtotal is less than 100 points, discontinue the rating as the site is not suitable as presented for acquisition.

II. ACQUISITION CONSIDERATIONS

A. Encumbrances or Restrictions on use.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  

- Tract is not subject to encumbrances or restrictions which would prevent immediate use as a CELCP Site .................................................................................. 3
- Tract is subject to some temporary use restrictions but is immediately accessible for use as a CELCP Site ......................................................................................... 2
- Tract is subject to some temporary use restrictions and is temporarily in-accessible for use as a CELCP Site (i.e., a retained life estate) .................................................................. 1
- Use of the tract for the intended purpose is substantially impaired on a permanent basis ......................................................................................................................... 0

B. Cost.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 10 points)  

The extent to which a portion of the total value of the property is a gift:

- 100% ................................................................................................................................................................. 10
- 90% .................................................................................................................................................................. 9
- 80% .................................................................................................................................................................. 8
- 70% .................................................................................................................................................................. 7
- 60% .................................................................................................................................................................. 6
- 50% .................................................................................................................................................................. 5
- 40% .................................................................................................................................................................. 4
- 30% .................................................................................................................................................................. 3
- 20% .................................................................................................................................................................. 2
- 10% .................................................................................................................................................................. 1
- None ................................................................................................................................................................. 0
C. Adjacent land use influence.  

Land use adjacent to a CELCP Site has a significant impact on potential users. To what extent does the land contiguous to the site enhance the conservation objectives? (Mark only one)

- The site is completely or nearly surrounded by extensive holdings of public land which complement the site ................................................................. 3
- Most of the land contiguous to the site is in private ownership, but its use is compatible with the site and is unlikely to change in the next ten years ........................................................................................................... 2
- Most of the adjacent land is in private ownership, some has been developed and more is likely to be converted within the next ten years to uses which will be incompatible with the proposed purpose .................. 1
- Most of the adjacent land has already been developed, and more than half of this development detracts from the proposed purpose ........................................ 0

D. Cost of improvements.  

The suitability of a site for intended use

- Site is suitable for proposed use and will require very little site work to provide for public use .................................................................................................................. 3
- Site will require some minor site work to provide for public use (e.g., firelanes and boundary posting) ........................................................................................................ 2
- Site will require significant development site work (e.g., development of primary access-road and parking) ................................................................. 1
- Site will require major site work .......................................................................................................................... 0

E. Enhancement of accessibility to existing public land.  

The extent to which a project reinforces local, regional, state and special planning efforts (e.g. longleaf, coastal zone management, wild and scenic rivers) in addition to being identified for state preservation concerns.

- Reinforces a major ACAMP planning effort ................................................................. 3
- Reinforces a watershed planning effort ........................................................................ 2
- Reinforces a county planning effort ................................................................................ 1
- Does not reinforce an active planning program ............................................................... 0

F. Investment Security.  

The importance of a project in protecting or increasing the value of existing state open space and recreation resource investments.

- Eliminates or prevents encroachment of incompatible development which would detract from public use and enjoyment of an existing state/federal area or provides the space required to complete recreation development of a state area .............................................................................. 3
- Protects against possible encroachment of incompatible development which would detract from an existing state/federal area ........................................ 2
- Eliminates or prevents encroachment of incompatible development which would severely detract from a state, county or municipal park ................................................. 1
- Project site is not important in preserving integrity of an existing area ............................. 0
G. Defensibility.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  
The vulnerability of a project to disruptive or damaging activities originating outside of the site, once acquired.

- Sites where the surrounding land is effectively protected from incompatible development or site is of sufficient size to include adequate buffers to protect critical resource values ........................................................... 3
- Site where incompatible development of adjacent land is unlikely, or such development would not significantly detract from site's qualities ................................................. 2
- Site where incompatible development of adjacent land is likely ........................................ 1
- Site which is highly vulnerable to adverse impact from activities outside of state lands .......................................................................................................... 0

H. Alternative Sites.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  
The potential of existing sites to meet the protection or recreation needs which would be served by the tract, and the availability of alternative sites which could serve the same needs.

- Existing public sites in the vicinity of the tract either lack the potential to serve the same needs to provide the same type protection and/or quality of recreational opportunities as the proposed tract or would be more expensive to develop to serve the same recreation needs ........................................ 3
- Existing public sites could be developed or alternative sites in the vicinity of the tract could be acquired and developed to meet the majority but not all of the needs which would be satisfied by a tract at a comparable cost ........................................................................................................ 2
- Existing public sites could be developed or alternative sites in the vicinity of the tract could be acquired and developed to meet all of the needs which would be satisfied by a tract at a comparable cost ........................................................................................................ 1
- Existing public sites meet the needs or can be developed to meet the needs or alternative sites with the same protection or recreation potential are available at a lower cost ........................................................................................................ 0

I. Development Threat.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  
The probability of loss of the site for open space or recreation purposes.

- Incompatible development of the site is highly likely in the near future.............................. 3
- Incompatible development of a significant portion of the site is expected to occur in the near future ........................................................................................................ 2
- Incompatible development of a significant portion of the site is expected to occur at some future date ........................................................................................................ 1
- Not developable ................................................................................................................... 0

J. Immediate Service Area Needs.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)  
An analysis of the protection needs of the site or recreation needs of the area that will be served by the tract and the opportunities that will be made available indicates:

- High requirement; existing opportunities are extremely limited ........................................ 3
- Moderate requirement; existing opportunities are inadequate ........................................... 2
- Limited requirement; existing opportunities appear adequate ............................................ 1
- No requirement ................................................................................................................... 0
K. Public Use.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)

The potential increase in public use and enjoyment of the cultural and natural features may either be a positive or negative factor for a nature preserve. Critical habitat and imperiled status of rare species may suggest that a tract be restricted to general public use.

Public use of the site will be:

If Accessibility is the goal:
- Substantial .............................................................. 3
- Moderate ............................................................... 2
- Minimal ................................................................. 1
- None ......................................................................... 0

If Inaccessibility is the goal:
- Substantial .............................................................. 3
- Moderate ............................................................... 2
- Minimal ................................................................. 1
- None ......................................................................... 0

L. Public Support.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 6 points)

The amount of public support of the project.

1. General Public Support
   - Projects which have attracted a statewide public interest with little or no opposition ............................................................... 3
   - Projects which have attracted significant regional or local public interest with little or no opposition ............................................................... 2
   - Projects which have not attracted significant public opposition ............................................................... 1
   - Projects which lack widespread public interest and have generated considerable public opposition ............................................................... 0

2. Expressed Public Support
   - Public offers of financial and management assistance ............................................................... 3
   - Public offers of financial assistance .................................................................................... 2
   - Public offers of management assistance ............................................................................ 1
   - No offers of public support ............................................................................................. 0

III. MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

A. Extent of multiple use.  
(Subtotal: _____ of 11 points)

A given natural area may be viable, but the State may be unable to protect it effectively. State resources are limited. Natural areas which the State can easily protect have a higher priority for action than those whose protection will be expensive, difficult, or uncertain to achieve.

1. Suitability for scientific research.
   - The site contains resources of scientific interest ............................................................... 1
   - Careful scientific research on the site is compatible with resource protection ............................................................... 1
   - The site is within 50 miles of an academic institution which has biological research capability and an interest in using the site for research ............................................................... 1
2. Suitability for *educational* use.

- The site contains resources of educational interest ................................................. 1 0
- Educational programs on the site are compatible with resource protection ................................................................. 1 0
- The site is within 50 miles of schools or institutions of higher learning which have the desire and ability to use the site for educational purposes .............................................................................................................. 1 0

3. Suitability for *recreational* use.

The site is suitable for:

- Hunting .................................................................................................................. 1 0
- Fishing .................................................................................................................... 1 0
- Wildlife observation ................................................................................................ 1 0
- Camping .................................................................................................................. 1 0

B. Manageability. **(Subtotal: _____ of 6 points)**

*The location and design of existing facilities within a proposed Nature Preserve and other man-made or natural features, affect management efficiency. Identify each of the following features which accurately describes the site. (Mark 1 if the following statement is true, 0 otherwise):*

- The site is composed of one main parcel with a continuous boundary ................. 1 0
- The shape of the boundary poses no special management problems .............. 1 0
- There are no inholdings which would significantly affect management. .. 1 0
- Existing conditions, including natural and man-made features, provide for controlled entry and exit ................................................................. 1 0
- There are no easements (access, utility, etc.) which would significantly affect tract management ........................................................................................................... 1 0
- The tract is adequately buffered or vacant land is available at reasonable cost ........................................................................................................... 1 0

C. Management Costs/Alternative Management Options. **(Subtotal: _____ of 3 points)**

*The anticipated expense of operating and maintaining the tract.*

- Management costs will be less than the amount provided by the Forever Wild stewardship account or the tract will be managed for public use or recreation purposes by a non-state agency ......................................................... 3
- Management costs will be equal to the amount provided by the Forever Wild stewardship account ......................................................................................................................... 2
- Management costs will be more than the amount provided by the Forever Wild stewardship account ......................................................................................................................... 1
- Management costs will far exceed the amount provided by the Forever Wild program, or the Forever Wild Program is not involved ......................................................................................... 0