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Florida Native Plant Society Purchases 12.5 Acres to Protect Endangered Species

With generous private donations and grant awards from the Felburn Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, the Florida Native Plant Society completed the purchase of 12.5 acres of rare sandhill habitat in Marion County that will help protect the critically endangered plant Clasping warea (*Warea amplexifolia*) and the federally threatened Florida Sand Skink (*Plestiodon reynoldsi*). Marion County is home to the largest population of Clasping Warea and one of the northernmost occurrences of the Florida Sand Skink.

In 2014, the Florida Native Plant Society and Putnam Land Conservancy formed a partnership to acquire and preserve an approximately 400 acre corridor of lands to protect rare and endemic species (found only in Florida) and link together publicly-protected properties (St. Johns River Water Management District and the Ocala National Forest) in Marion County.

FNPS Executive Director Juliet Rynear is thrilled with the recent acquisition, “We are so grateful to Putnam Land Conservancy and all of our amazing partners in this project. It is so rewarding to work with such a great group of people who are so dedicated to conservation in our state.”

To date, the Putnam Land Conservancy has preserved 8 parcels through donation of fee title and conservation easements.

Willy The Losen, Conservation Director for the Putnam Land Conservancy, "We're excited the partnership between our organizations is making the protection of these species a reality. Thanks to FNPS and its volunteers for bringing to light the importance of conserving this area and heading up this acquisition."

This is just the first acquisition by the FNPS and this project will have a long-term need for many more small acquisitions, including many properties that are less than an acre. Anyone interested in more information about how they can help with this project, please contact Juliet Rynear at executivedirector@fnps.org.

To make a donation to this project, please visit: https://www.fnps.org/participate/support and click on “Land Conservation.”

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) preserves, conserves and restores the native plants and native plant communities of Florida. Since the 1980s, this organization has been advocating for increased protection for threatened and endangered plants and plant communities. FNPS encourages the planting of native plants in

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home, commercial, and institutional landscapes. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit membership organization with over 4300 members in 35 chapters statewide.