

Austin Cary Flatwoods

Richard

4/28/2022

Project Score		Natural Community	Condition
6.4 of 10.00		Basin Swamp	Excellent
Inspection Date		Dome Swamp	Excellent
4/8/2022		Mesic Flatwoods	Good
Size		Wet Flatwoods	Good
117.63		Blackwater Stream	Good
Parcel Number	Acreage	Other	
17515-000-000	37.74	Borrow Area	
17515-001-000	79.89		
Section-Township-Range		Bald Eagle Nests	
25-08-21		1 within 3 miles	
Buildings		Archaeological Sites	
ACPA-none, 1 camper trailer on-site		0 onsite, 1 site within 1 mile	
Just Value	Just Value Per Acre		
\$135,942	\$1,155.67		
Total Value (Just, Misc, Bldg)	Total Value Per Acre	Acquisition Type	
\$135,942	\$1,155.67	Fee Simple	

REPA Score: 7.36 of 9.44 (Austin Cary Flatwoods ACF Project Area)

KBN Rank: 15th of 47 Projects (Austin Cary Flatwoods Strategic Ecosystem)

Overall Description:

The Richard property is located within the Austin Cary Flatwoods Project Area in northeastern Alachua County, south of Waldo along US Highway 301. The property consists of two parcels (ACPA TPN 17515-000-000 and 17515-001-000) under one ownership that total 117.63 acres. Almost all the property is within the Austin Cary Flatwoods Strategic Ecosystem, with just 1.3 acres east of Hwy 301 located within the Lake Alto Swamp Strategic Ecosystem. The property is made up of several natural community types including basin swamp, dome swamp, wet flatwoods, mesic flatwoods, and blackwater stream, with wetlands covering approximately 45% of the property.

The Richard property would fit into a matrix of properties on the ACF Active Acquisition List that could connect Balu Forest and Bee Tree Creek Preserve to the Lake Alto Preserve tracts. The Richard parcels are surrounded by the Burch & Penturff parcels to the north and west, which were added to the ACF Priority Pool on March 24, 2022. There is a large wetland system overlapping both of these properties near Hwy 301 which feeds into one of the tributaries of Bee Tree Creek. The property also falls within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

The dominant landcover is mesic flatwoods, most of which is in good condition. The overstory is a mix of slash, loblolly, and longleaf pines, with understory dominated by saw palmetto and gallberry, as well as some wiregrass, deer moss, yellow-eyed grass, highbush blueberry, and shiny blueberry. Shrubs in the mesic flatwoods included persimmon, loblolly bay, swamp bay, rusty lyonia, American holly, southern magnolia, water oak, and wax myrtle. Grading down into wetter flatwoods and wetland edges, red maples, sweetgum, and American hornbeam were observed in the shrub and overstory layer.

The dome swamp and basin swamps found on the property were mostly in excellent condition and were dominated by pond cypress and swamp tupelo in the overstory, and royal fern, netted chain fern, cinnamon fern, lizard's tail, and cattail in the understory. The larger basin swamp in the northern parcel had a significant presence of loblolly and slash pine with large duff cones at the base. There were signs of historic fire, including char marks on stumps deep in the interior of the basin swamp, but no evidence of recent prescribed fires anywhere on the property. The ecotones of these wetlands would benefit greatly from a reintroduction of prescribed fire.

A notable feature is the approximately 32-acre former borrow pit on the eastern portion of the property. Developed sometime in the late 1950's or 1960's, this borrow material was used for road projects along Hwy 301, according to Mr. Richard. Overall, the borrow area appears to be approximately 2-3 feet lower in elevation than the surrounding natural grade, with a few strips of high ground stretching through the middle. Even with the impact to the natural landcover, loblolly, slash, and longleaf pine have naturally recruited into the borrow area footprint, and ground cover plants were found throughout including orange and yellow milkwort, foxtail clubmoss, witchgrasses, St. John's worts, and sundews indicating higher soil moisture content. There were several trails mowed through the area, so it likely stays at least partially dry for much of the year. Only the northern portion of the borrow pit extending onto parcel 17515-000-000 had standing water in it during the evaluation.

There is an old airstream camper trailer on site, which appears to mostly be used for storage and is located near the gate to the property along Hwy 301. There is some solid waste in this area as well, consisting mostly of plastic bottles, containers, and pvc pipes. Numerous tree stands and feeders were observed on the evaluation, and there is an active hunting lease on the property. No exotics were detected during the site evaluation, and there are no archaeological sites documented on the property. Two commercially exploited plants were observed on the property: Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*), and Cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*). Wildlife species observed during the evaluation include pileated woodpecker, white-eyed vireo, catbird, and white-tailed deer.

Restoration activities would primarily focus on reintroduction of prescribed fire, with selective timber thinning and hardwood removal where needed. With its proximity to Lake Alto Preserve, recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and wildlife observation would seem to be appropriate for portions of this property.

Development Review:

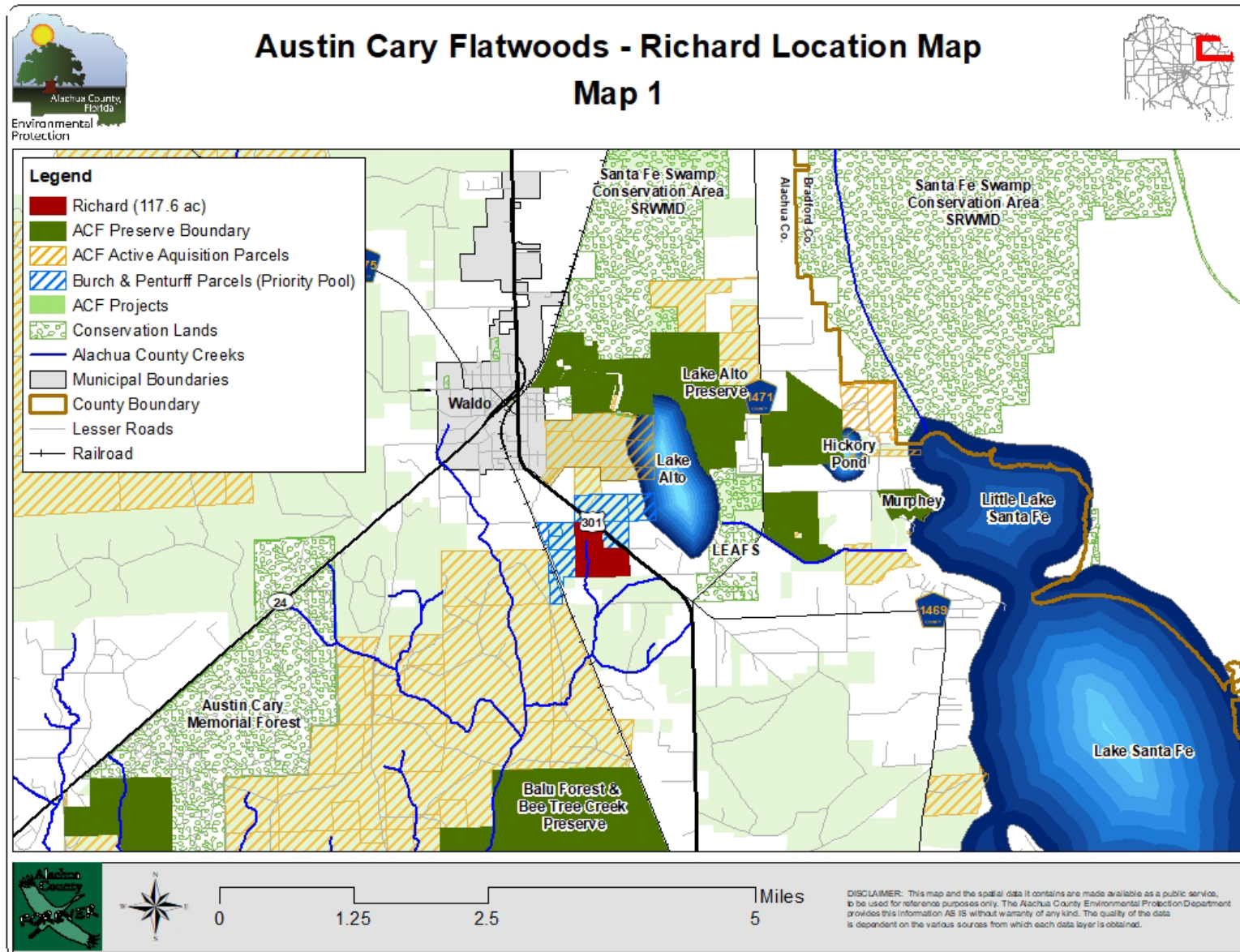
This development analysis is based on a limited desk-top review and is founded upon current County Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies. The Development Scenario is

oversimplified and is meant only to convey a general sense of the potential of development intensity that could be possible based on land use and zoning conditions.

The parcels are zoned Agricultural, with a future land use designation of Rural Agricultural. In accordance with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, Rural Agricultural areas are intended to be protected in a manner consistent with preservation of agriculture, open space, rural character, and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Under the current land use and zoning the property may be developed at a maximum intensity of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres. There are natural features that would have protection from development activities under current regulations including a large wetland area on the western half of the subject property, as well as a few smaller wetland areas along the southern and eastern perimeters totaling approximately 53.43 acres. As per the County Unified Land Development Code (ULDC), the wetlands on site would be protected as well as an upland buffer that will be required to maintain a 50' minimum, 75' average width. Due to the location and configuration of the wetlands and required buffers, all of parcel 17515-000-000 is essentially undevelopable. Development of parcel 17515-001-000 is limited in the western half of the parcel due to wetlands, but most of the eastern half is still developable. These parcels are located within the Austin Cary Flatwoods strategic ecosystem, and the northeast portion of parcel 17515-000-000 is located in the Lake Alto Swamp strategic ecosystem. The location and extent of strategic ecosystem resources must be evaluated but could result in at least 50% of the uplands on site or the entire resource area being protected as a conservation management area, whichever is lesser. In addition, the remote location, limited infrastructure, and associated higher construction costs diminishes the prospects and potential for development activities.

REPA - Austin Cary - Richard 4/28/22

CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(I-1) PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES	A. Whether the property has geologic/hydrologic conditions that would easily enable contamination of vulnerable aquifers that have value as drinking water sources;		2		
	B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;		5		
	C. Whether the property contains or has direct connections to lakes, creeks, rivers, springs, sinkholes, or wetlands for which conservation of the property will protect or improve surface water quality;		3		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		3		
(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES	A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;		2		
	B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;		3		
	C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;		3		
	D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;		4		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		2		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		4		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		1		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		4		
(I-3) PROTECTION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES	A. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species or species of special concern;		2		
	B. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for species with large home ranges;		4		
	C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;		3		
	D. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering;		4		
	E. Whether the property offers high vegetation quality and species diversity;		3		
	F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species.		4		
(I-4) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;		3		
	B. Whether the property contributes to urban green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective.		5		
	AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES			3.20	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	1.333			4.27
(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES	A. Whether it will be practical to manage the property to protect its environmental, social and other values (examples include controlled burning, exotics removal, maintaining hydro-period, and so on);		3		
	B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.		4		
(II-2) ECONOMIC AND ACQUISITION ISSUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions;		2		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;		4		
	C. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the environmental, social or other values of the property through development and/or lack of sufficient legislative protections (this requires analysis of current land use, zoning, owner intent, location and		3		
	AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES			3.20	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	0.667			2.13
	TOTAL SCORE				6.40





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