

## **ALACHUA COUNTY FOREVER PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The following criteria are used by staff of the Alachua County Forever program in the evaluation of properties nominated for acquisition by the County. The evaluation provides the Land Conservation Board and the Board of County Commissioners with a relative measure of the property's potential contribution to the attainment of program goals and objectives. Each criterion is given an individual score of one to five Scores within each Category (I and II) are then averaged. The average score for Category I criteria receive twice the weight of Category II criteria in calculating the final combined score for the property.

### **(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;
- B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;
- 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;
- D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.

### **(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES**

- A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;
- B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;
- C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;
- D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;
- E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;
- F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;
- G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;
- H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.

### **(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;
- B. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for species with large home ranges;
- C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;
- D. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering;
- E. Whether the property offers high vegetation quality and species diversity;
- F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species.

**(I-4) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES**

- A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;
- 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.

**(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);
- B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.

**(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;
- B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;
- 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.