



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0070, **Version:** 2

Agenda Item Name:

Right-of-way Wildflower Program

Presenter:

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Description:

Presentation of existing and proposed locations to establish and preserve wildflowers within the County maintained right-of-way.

(20 minutes)

Recommended Action:

Prep and hydro seed select portions of all 35 locations 5 - 10,000 ft² depending on total size of location, 10 acres spread across all locations (\$40,000) then manage with appropriate cultural practices; Manage existing and proposed areas with signage and cultural practices, with reseeding and expansion of areas as needed; limited mowing during period of October through June as-needed to address safety (e.g., line of sight); The 1st area to be seeded with wildflowers will be SW 91st Street, a County Scenic Road, and SW 8th Avenue

Prior Board Motions:

Resolution 2012-24 - Supporting the Conservation of Roadside Native Wildflowers on State and County Roadways

Fiscal Consideration:

There are 35 proposed locations totaling approximately 280 acres and 19 existing locations totaling approximately 120 acres. To establish wildflowers within the proposed location at 10 acres per year costing \$40,000 annually. Program would be funded in account 149.79.7900.541.46.00.

Background:

In preparation of Gator Nationals the mowing season unofficially began on March 5, 2019 when staff mowed County Road 225. Officially county wide mowing began March 25, 2019. The mowing Equipment Operators were instructed to mow first pass, from the edge of the pavement one mower deck in width, approximately 15 feet. They were not to mow the entirety of the right of way, when larger concentrations of wildflowers were present. Operators were instructed to disengage the blades and lift the mowing deck or contour mow around. Thus, leaving the wildflowers to produce seed. Overall, this has been achieved, but not without elements of human error. The operators have been warned that future mistakes of mowing through wildflower areas might result in disciplinary action; unless mitigating circumstances are present.

Alachua County's maintained right of ways contain a very diverse plant pallet, and are seldom

uniform during spring bloom. At many locations, the wildflowers are sparsely intertwined with other vegetation. Situations such as these commonly occur, lending to the question of what and how much to mow. An Operator's individual judgement call, has at times, lead to complaints from the public. Continued direction is provided to avoid mowing actively blooming wildflowers. These instructions are reemphasized by educating staff and stressing the importance of maintaining an aesthetically pleasing, diverse flowering plant life.

The proposal is to develop new procedures to preserve, establish, and maintain wildflower within the right-of-way. This is primarily accomplished by designated wildflower areas to avoid unwanted, premature mowing of the flowers before they have an opportunity to set seed.