



Legislation Text

File #: 19-0826, **Version:** 1

Agenda Item Name:

Approve a Change of Status on the Active Acquisition List for the Hickory Sink - Kanapaha Timber Land & Cattle Tract

Presenter:

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Description:

Staff requests that the Board of County Commissioners change the status of the 3,947.5 acre Hickory Sink - Kanapaha Timber Land & Cattle Tract on the Active Acquisition List from Bargain-Share to Full-Price, and authorize staff to pursue fee acquisition of portions of the property in addition to a conservation easement as part of any agreement to conserve the property.

Any option or purchase and sale agreement will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Recommended Action:

1. Approve a change of status on the Active Acquisition List for the Hickory Sink - Kanapaha Timber Land & Cattle Tract from Bargain-Share to Full-Price.
2. Authorize staff to negotiate an agreement that may include both the purchase of fee title and a conservation easement.

Prior Board Motions:

On October 10, 2017, the BoCC placed Hickory Sink - Kanapaha Timber Land & Cattle Tract on the Active Acquisition List, Bargain-Share List, for acquisition as a conservation easement.

Fiscal Consideration:

Pre-Acquisition Services: \$50,400

Fund 021.41.4160.537.61.00 (WSPP)

Background:

As with all of our conservation lands, if acquired this property will go through the vetting process for the Registry of Protected Places.

At its June 22, 2017 meeting, the Land Conservation Board (LCB) placed the Hickory Sink-Kanapaha Timber Land and Cattle property in the Priority Pool and recommended that the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) add it to the Acquisition List under the Bargain-Share category as a conservation easement. The current Bargain-Share List restriction mandates that Alachua County cannot pay any greater than 50% of the acquisition costs. In addition, the original LCB and BoCC approval was set only as a conservation easement project which does not authorize staff to negotiate

for the acquisition of the property in fee simple.

Due to high land values in this project area, the large scale of the project and the lack of available cost share partners for conservation easements, negotiations have not progressed. In June of 2019, one of the property owners, Val Lee, requested that the LCB reconsider the property recommend that the BoCC place the property on the Active Acquisition List without the Bargain-Share/conservation easement limitations. At the June 27, 2019 LCB meeting, the LCB passed a motion recommending that the Board of County Commissioners entertain all acquisition opportunities (Bargain-Share and/or Full-Price) over portions of the 3,947.5 acre Hickory Sink - Kanapaha Timber Land & Cattle Tract.

Having a wider range of acquisition options (Bargain-Share & Full-Price), will allow staff to negotiate a deal that could involve any combination of land conservation techniques. The goal of negotiations would be to develop a project that protects the site's most significant natural communities and geologic features, and perhaps providing for some public access. To achieve this goal at an affordable cost, it may also be necessary to designate portions of the property that the owners could reserve for potential development in the future.

Comp Plan Reference:

Policy 6.0 Land Conservation Program within the Conservation and Open Space Element, states "Establish and maintain a land conservation program for the purchase, preservation, and management of natural areas and open space to complement the regulatory approaches identified in other section of this element."