



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0067, **Version:** 1

Agenda Item Name:

Addition of a certain land conservation project to the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List.

Presenter:

Charlie Houder / (352) 264-6804

Description:

Request the Board of County Commissioners approve the addition of Watermelon Pond - Pinkoson & Upshaw land conservation project to the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List (Full Price List). Addition of this project to the Active Acquisition List authorizes staff to: obtain title work and appraisals, negotiate price and terms with the owner, and execute an option contract.

The execution of any option will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Recommended Action:

Approve the addition of Watermelon Pond - Pinkoson & Upshaw property to the Active Acquisition List (Full Price List).

Prior Board Motions:

N/A

Fiscal Consideration:

Pre-Acquisition Services & Due Diligence: ~ \$34,000

Due Diligence - Operation: 021.41.4160.537.31.00 - 6184160
(Exhibit 2)

Background:

Section 5.a. of Resolution 18-101 lists criteria which, along with other factors deemed significant by the Board, should be considered in the decision to add properties to the Active Acquisition List. Information collected by staff that specifically addresses these criteria is located in the matrix within the written property evaluation (Exhibit 1) and in the cost estimates (Exhibit 2).

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

On October 17, 2019, Mr. Pinkoson nominated the subject property to the Alachua County Forever Program. On December 12, 2019, the Land Conservation Board placed the ~119.3 acre Watermelon Pond - Pinkoson & Upshaw property on the Priority Pool.

The Pinkoson & Upshaw property consists of one whole parcel (02649-000-000) and a portion of

another (02646-000-000). The property is located in southwest Alachua County, and is less than 4 miles south of the City of Newberry. The property's proximity to Alachua County Forever managed land is 1.3 miles due north of the Watermelon Pond Preserve Metzger Tract, and 1.3 miles northwest of the Watermelon Pond Preserve Wright and Kinnard Tracts. Access to the Pinkoson & Upshaw property is from a private road, SW 63rd Ave, via, SW State Road 45. This private road may not be appropriate for public access for recreational opportunities.

The Pinkoson & Upshaw property is primarily high quality, intact sandhill natural community, with a highly diverse ground cover, an uneven-aged longleaf pine canopy with widespread longleaf pine natural regeneration. Sites with intact groundcover are both extremely rare in Alachua County and additionally highly valuable as seed donor sites. Local groundcover seeds could be collected from this site and utilized during restoration projects on other ACF Preserves that have degraded ground cover.

Numerous active gopher tortoise borrows were observed throughout the site. Sherman's fox squirrels, indigo snakes, pine snakes, northern bob white quail, Florida black bear, Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, kestrels, Eastern bluebirds, and many other wildlife species have been observed on site by the land owner and FFS County Forester.

The only non-native exotic plant species observed was a small patch of bahiagrass and one tropical soda apple plant. (Exhibit 1)

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."