



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0367, **Version:** 3

Agenda Item Name:

Resolution 20-XX - Accepting the Donation of Real Property from the Stephens Family

Presenter:

Charlie Houder / (352) 264-6804

Description:

Staff request approval of the Resolution accepting the donation of 14.186 acres of real property from the Stephens Family for use as an Alachua County Forever (ACF) Preserve.

Recommended Action:

- 1) Adopt Resolution 20-XX, accepting the donation of real property from the Stephens Family for use as an Alachua County Forever (ACF) Preserve, subject to the completion of due diligence with the review and approval by the County Manager; and
- 2) Authorization of expenditures for title insurance, recording fees, and legal fees necessary to complete the transaction

Prior Board Motions:

None

Fiscal Consideration:

The Property Appraiser's Just Value for the 14.186-acre property is \$37,580.

Estimated annual operating cost: \$5,000

Estimated attorney's fees & closing costs: \$2,000

Title commitment cost: \$1,460

Boundary survey cost: \$1,000

Phase I environmental assessment: \$2,530

TOTAL EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY REQUESTED: \$6,990

WSPP - Land Acquisition:

021.41.4160.537.61.00 - 6194101 Lochloosa Forest Connector - Stephens

Loss of property tax revenues of \$875 annually.

Background:

On December 5, 2019, the Stephens family nominated their land (Parcel 18354-037-007) to the Alachua County Forever Program as a donation, so it could be preserved in perpetuity in concert with

adjacent lands. On December 12, 2019, the Land Conservation Board placed the 14.186 acre Lochloosa Connector - Stephens property on the Priority Pool as a donation. The Stephens property is located in Cross Creek and sits on the marshy northeastern shoreline of Orange Lake. The Audubon Society Inc. owns the adjacent land to the west of the Stephens property. The parcel is also adjacent to the December 2019 Smith & Smith Preserve donation. These parcels will be managed together by Alachua County Forever Staff as a ~30-acre Preserve, but there are no plans to open it for public access at this time. The property has access from County Road 325 via SE 171st Lane, an unpaved private road.

Conservation Florida holds a conservation easement over a 25-acre parcel less than one-quarter mile to the south. Several other owners of adjacent or nearby properties also have an interest in protecting their lands in the future.

The Stephens property is situated in the Cross Creek Special Area Study with a designation of "Exceptional Upland Habitat". Specifically, the property is dominated by mesic hammock natural community in excellent condition that transitions from a cabbage palm, live oak dominated habitat on the western side of the property to a more diverse upland hardwood forest type community on the eastern portion of the site. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission indicates that there are 9 bald eagle nests and one bear within a mile of the Stephens Property.

Access to the property is by way of a private easement through the Kennedy Survey subdivision from CR 325. Title exceptions for the property relate to easements along the eastern boundary of the property for access and utilities serving lots in the subdivision.

Closing transactions would occur once there has been a determination by the County Manager that there are no title, survey or environmental defects.