



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0740, **Version:** 1

Agenda Item Name:

Authorization to Pursue an Agreement with the State of Florida to Manage the Lake Santa Fe - Murphey Property

Presenter:

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Description:

Staff requests authorization to pursue an agreement to manage the Lake Santa Fe - Murphey Property which is being acquired by the State of Florida through the Florida Forever program. The Murphey Property is on the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List.

Recommended Action:

Authorization for staff to pursue an agreement to manage the Lake Santa Fe - Murphey Property through the Alachua County Forever program in accordance with the information presented and subject to the successful transfer of title to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and approve the budget amendment that provides funding for land stewardship costs.

A final lease agreement will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Prior Board Motions:

On February 27, 2007, the Board placed the 70.2-acre Lake Santa Fe - Murphey Property (18397-000-000) on the Active Acquisition List (Full Price).

Fiscal Consideration:

All land acquisition costs will be paid by State of Florida. This Florida Forever purchase saves Alachua County the cost of acquisition.

Cost Estimates for Land Stewardship (Exhibit 3)

- \$2,860 :Capital Improvements - (Budget Amendment securing these funds)
 - Account: 021-41-4160-537-52.00
- \$2,965 :Average Annual Management Cost (Not anticipated to be expensed in FY20 or FY21)
 - Account: 001-41-4160-537-46.00

The current annual property tax revenue for the Murphey property is \$658.10.

Background:

The Lake Santa Fe Florida Forever project is currently ranked 22nd on the Partnerships and Regional Incentives list. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of State Lands

has negotiated a contract to purchase the 70.2-acre property owned by Milledge and Kathryn Murphey (parcel: 18397-000-000) that is a part of this Florida Forever project. However, DEP staff contacted County staff and indicated that it would only enter into the contract if Alachua County will commit to managing the property. DEP has requested a commitment by the Board on the management of the property prior to the State's closing on the property.

The Murphy property is one of the few remaining larger undeveloped privately owned properties on the lakefront. The property has approximately 730 feet of frontage on the western side of Little Lake Santa Fe. The property's untouched 29 acres of lakeshore swamp is located along this lake edge. The northwestern 41 acres of the property are uplands that consist mainly of mature pine plantation. Intermittent flatwoods groundcover plant species persist along with a small population of gopher tortoises exist in the pine plantation. Also present on-site, are some impressive mature live oaks. There are sporadic populations of exotic plants, including cogongrass, tallow and mimosa. Physical infrastructure on the property includes perimeter fencing and an approximately 880 foot long wooden boardwalk in very poor condition that traverses the lakeshore swamp to provide a vista of Little Lake Santa Fe.

Lake Santa Fe and Little Lake Santa Fe are the headwaters for the Santa Fe River, an Outstanding Florida Water. While the Santa Fe River is impaired for nutrients, Lake Santa Fe is currently still meeting water quality standards. Much of the margins of Lake Santa Fe and Little Lake Santa Fe are in a residential land use and may be contributing to nutrient pollution from septic systems, landscapes, and stormwater. As such, the Alachua County water Resources staff are concerned that water quality is degrading and staff will be conducting a watershed assessment in the near future to identify potential sources of pollution and proposing policies to improve water quality. Land conservation efforts in the basin and specifically along the lakeshore will be essential for protecting water quality and preventing further degradation.

The property was placed on the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List on February 27, 2007. Attempts to purchase the Murphey property in 2007 were unsuccessful due to an impasse on price. Purchase of the property by the State of Florida achieves the County's conservation objectives using Florida Forever rather than local funds. Management of the property can be provided in a cost effective manner in conjunction with other nearby lands that County staff are already managing. The County's Lake Alto South Preserve, for example, lies approximately one mile to the west.

The Land Conservation Board voted to support County management of the Murphey Property at its August 27th meeting.