

2022



Infrastructure Surtax Oversight Board (f/k/a
Wild Spaces Public Places Citizens Oversight
Board)

Executive Summary

The Citizens Oversight Board was originally established due to the passing of the Wild Spaces Public Places Infrastructure Surtax by Ordinance 16-06 on May 10, 2016 and Resolution 17-36 on March 28, 2017. The Resolution was amended in 2020 (Resolution 20-78) and again in 2022 (Resolution 22-105). Ordinance 22-08 was approved on March, 22, 2022 expanding the scope of the surtax and increasing it from a half-cent to a full-cent surtax.

The Oversight Board is responsible to

- assure citizens and elected officials that all Surtax Revenues, including those expended by the County and each municipality, are expended only for the purposes authorized by Ordinance 16-07 and Ordinance 22-08, respectively;
- track overall expenditure of the Surtax Revenues;
- perform a pre-expenditure review of proposed Surtax Revenue expenditures and projects at the request of the municipalities or the County and advise them if they are surtax eligible;
- review Surtax Revenue expenditures and shall provide a written financial report of said expenditures for presentation to the Board on at least a quarterly basis. The Oversight Board Liaison shall be responsible for presenting the Oversight Board's financial report to the Board.
- If the Oversight Board believes that a project or expenditure of a municipality or the County is not eligible use of Surtax Revenue or that additional information is necessary to make a determination, the Oversight Board may perform an in-depth audit of the expenditure(s) and request that the municipality or County making the expenditure provide additional supporting documentation. If the Oversight Board determines that Surtax Revenue was expended on ineligible project or use, the Oversight Board Liaison shall notify the staff of the offending municipality or County and advise them of the deficiencies to allow the appropriate staff to review and correct issues associated with the expenditure. If the offending municipality or County does not report to the Oversight Board, by the next regularly scheduled Oversight Board meeting, the steps being taken to remedy the identified deficiencies, then the Oversight Board may immediately report its findings to the Board of County Commissioners, as well as the governing body of the offending municipality, if applicable. If the Oversight Board finds that the municipality or the County is not taking appropriate steps to remedy the identified deficiencies, then the Oversight Board may immediately report its findings to the Board of County Commissioners, as well as the governing body of the offending municipality, if applicable. If the Board of County Commissioners determines that Surtax Revenue was inappropriately used for ineligible expenditures, the Board of County Commissioners shall demand repayment and may take all steps necessary to effectuate that demand.
- The Oversight Board Liaison shall request that the municipalities and County must certify annually to the Oversight Board that there was an audit of the prior fiscal year's Surtax Revenue expenditures and there were no findings.

Oversight Board Accomplishments:

- Held meetings on Feb. 21, 2022; and Mar. 21, 2022.
- Reviewed Oct. 1, 2020 – Sept. 30, 2021 financial reports from Alachua County, City of Alachua, City of Archer, City of Gainesville, City of High Springs, Town of LaCrosse, Town of Micanopy, and City of Newberry.
- The Board of County Commissioners adopted Resolution 22-105 adding two additional members, changing the name to the Infrastructure Surtax Oversight Board, and requiring (at a minimum) quarterly meetings.

FY 2023 Goals:

- Hold public meeting(s) at least quarterly to review Oct. 1, 2022 – Sept. 30, 2023 quarterly and annual financial reports.

FY 2022 City/County Accomplishments:

Alachua County

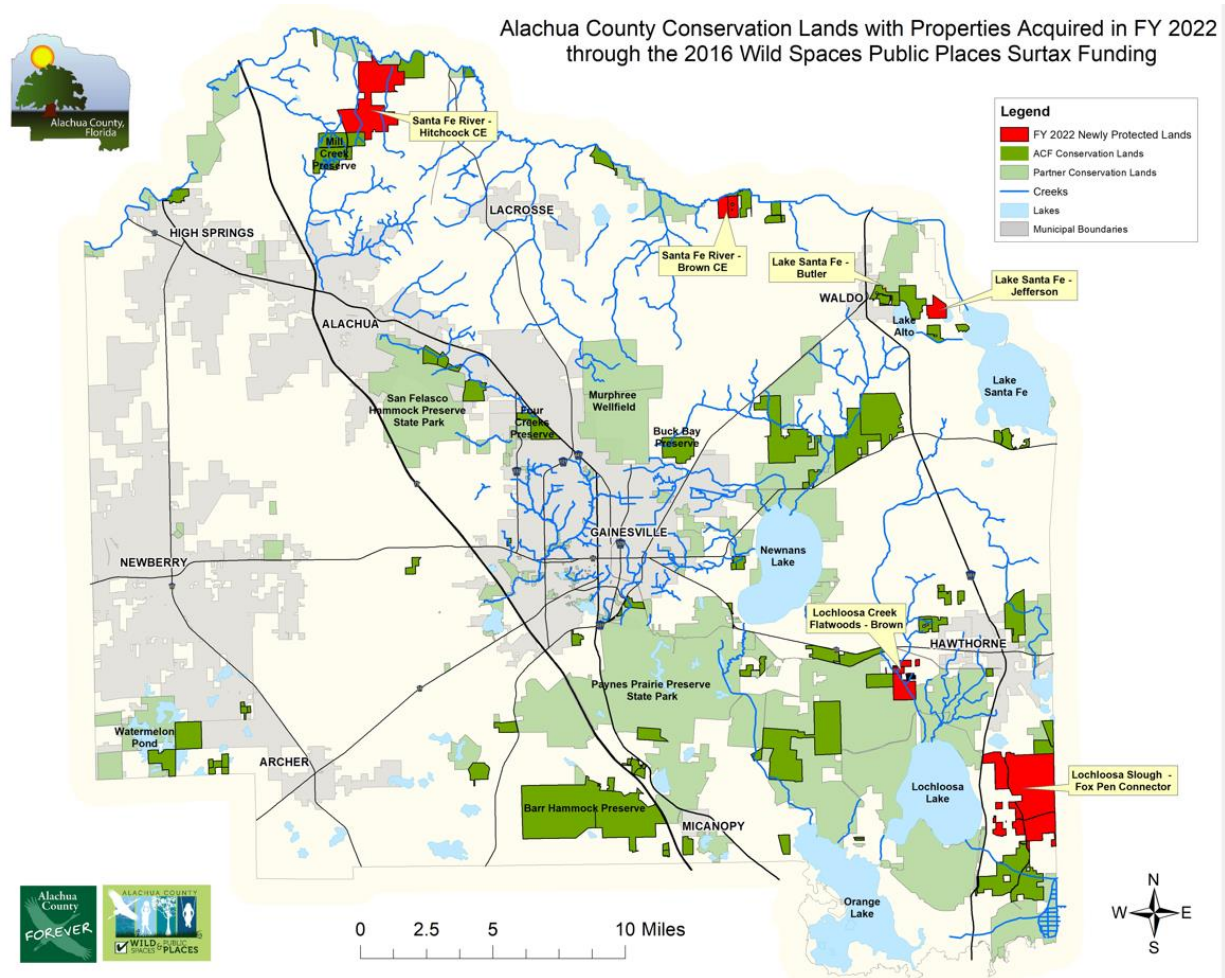


Figure 1 Alachua County Conservation Lands Acquired through FY 2022



Alachua County Forever, the County's environmental land acquisition program, has closed on the purchase of 605.27 acres from members of the family of Carrie C. Brown. The property is adjacent to the County's 1,044-acre Phifer Flatwoods Preserve and protects over two miles of Lochloosa Creek as it flows toward Lochloosa Lake.

The closing was held on Friday, August 26, 2022, which would have been the 107th birthday of Carrie C. Brown, the family matriarch. Protection of the land,

through the sale to Alachua County as a nature preserve, means that Carrie Brown's legacy of wise stewardship of the property to safeguard her family's future will continue.

This property provides a key linkage in the network of protected lands surrounding Lochloosa Lake, an Outstanding Florida Waterway. The property also falls within the Florida Wildlife Corridor, a statewide landscape corridor identified as critical to the protection of wildlife habitats. Management of the property will focus on maintaining high-quality wetlands and improving the pine flatwoods for native wildlife species. Public use opportunities will be evaluated during the development of the management plan.

Wild Spaces and Public Places, the voter-approved, one-half-cent sales tax, provided funding for the \$1.5 million purchase price. Since Wild Spaces and Public Places was reauthorized by County voters in 2016, Alachua County Forever has protected an additional 13,405 acres. The program has protected 32,506 acres since its inception in 2000.



For active parks, Cuscowilla Nature & Retreat Center renovations were completed for the Lodge and South Pool Building including: ADA restroom, building access, and sidewalk. Facilities will be available for rent starting this fall. Additional site improvements include resurfaced parking area, waterfront dock, climbing tower, and butterfly garden.

The pool will be open to the public on the weekends beginning Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend. Pool hours are 10am-5pm Saturday and

Sunday. Guests may purchase a \$5 day pass or \$20 season pass onsite or online prior to pool entry.

Cuscowilla Nature and Retreat Center is available for rentals including overnight cabin stays, tent camping, activities, meeting spaces, parties, weddings, and private pool parties.

City of Alachua



The City of Alachua completed renovation and construction of the 105-acre Legacy Park Multipurpose Center utilizing their Wild Spaces Public Places allocation. The facility features (4) multipurpose rooms, performance stage, lobby with concession stands. Activities including Zumba, Karate, rec league basketball and more are offered.

City of Archer



The City of Archer invested more than \$131,000 to install a playground at Wilson Robinson Park during FY 2022. The park previously offered a splash park, resurfaced tennis and basketball courts, security system, and upgraded restroom facilities.

City of Gainesville



Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Center

Educational exhibits were developed and installed at Gainesville's newest nature center at the Hogtown Creek Headwaters Nature Park. The center features interactive exhibits, as well as science programs for children and a guest speaker series for adults. The project cost was \$50,000.

Northside Park

Improvements to the tennis and pickleball courts were completed in August. The project cost was \$23,464. New light poles and additional court lights were also installed in April to better illuminate the courts. The project cost was \$63,500.



Clarence R. Kelly Community Center Mural

As a part of the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department's 352walls initiative, Haitian American artist Mwanel Pierre-Louis, AKA One L, created a mural at the front entrance of the community center, paying tribute to Clarence R. Kelly who passed away in 2011 at the age of 56. Kelly was the director of the then Northeast Recreation Center for 35 years. The center was renamed in his honor after his death. The project cost was \$9,000.

Clarence R. Kelly Community Center & Park

Construction of the new community center and park was completed in May. Improvements included the construction of a new 3,800 square foot community center and a neighborhood park. The park includes a new playground, adult fitness equipment, a full-sized basketball court, a fenced community garden and much more. The project cost was \$2,292,276.

A fence was also installed around the park's stormwater pond in July at a cost of \$9,850, followed by exterior lighting installation in September. The new lighting allows basketball players to enjoy the park's court until 10 p.m. The project cost was \$17,711.



Tom Petty Park

Reconstruction of the four tennis courts was completed in October. The courts were originally constructed in the 1970s and required a complete rebuild. The project cost was \$158,245. Accessibility improvements also took place in June on the path by the playground. The project cost was \$2,600.

Sweetwater Wetlands Park

Construction of a garage to house two future electric vehicles for the park was completed in May. One vehicle will be used for tours while the other will be used for maintenance operations. The project cost, inclusive of the two electric vehicles, was \$71,505.

San Felsasco Park

Construction of pétanque courts at San Felsasco Park was completed in April. The project cost was \$17,928.



Fred Cone Park

A fence was installed between the bleachers and the track at Fred Cone Park in April. The project cost was \$14,000.

[City of Hawthorne](#) - No completed projects during this period of time.

City of High Springs



The City of High Springs purchased the Canoe Outpost to provide continued recreational access to the Santa Fe River.

Town of LaCrosse

The Town of LaCrosse is constructing a .7 mile walking trail along NW 49 Ter. This is a section of the historic Woodpecker Trail that at one time ran from St. Petersburg through Appling County, Georgia. The trail should be open to the public in early 2023.

Town of Micanopy - No completed projects during this period of time.

City of Newberry



The City of Newberry invested in an irrigation system and professional services for new multi-purpose fields.

City of Waldo



The City of Waldo refurbished the event hall and auditorium within Waldo City Square.