



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 23-00404

Agenda Date: 9/26/2023

Agenda Item Name:

Orange Lake Preserve 10-year Management Plan

Presenter:

Andi Christman - Program Manager, Environmental Protection Department (EPD), Land Conservation and Management; 352-264-6803; Scott Crosby - Senior Environmental Specialist; EPD, Land Conservation and Management; 352-213-0024

Description:

Request for the Board to approve the Orange Lake Preserve 10-year Management Plan (Exhibit 1).

Recommended Action:

Approve the Orange Lake Preserve 10-year Management Plan.

Prior Board Motions:

On February 6, 2002, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted the guiding principles for the Alachua County Forever Program, including guidance on management plan development for county nature preserves.

On December 10, 2019, the BOCC approved the acceptance of the Lochloosa Forest-Levy Prairie Connector Smith tract and authorized staff to execute additional documents as necessary to close the donation.

On May 12, 2020, the BOCC approved the acceptance of the Lochloosa Forest-Levy Prairie Connector Stephens tract and authorized staff to execute additional documents as necessary to close the donation.

Fiscal Note:

The annual maintenance costs are estimated to be \$850 which will be covered by the EPD General Fund and Wild Spaces Public Places surtax.

Breakdown of annual maintenance costs:

Establishment of photopoints in significant areas:	\$250
Removal of legacy solid waste:	\$400
Treat and monitor known invasive plant populations:	\$200

EPD General Fund: 001.41.4160.537.12.00 – Personnel

Wild Spaces Public Places: 021.41.4160.537.xx.xx – Materials and supplies

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

Orange Lake Preserve is a 29.17 acre nature preserve, comprised of two parcels. The preserve was acquired through two generous donations by the previous landowners. The preserve is located at 13419 SE 171st Lane, Hawthorne, Florida, in the south-central portion of Alachua County along the northeast shore of Orange Lake. The preserve's east boundary includes road frontage along SE 171st Lane (a private street), the north and south boundary lines abut private lands, and the preserve is bordered on the west by a marshy portion of Orange Lake that is owned by the Audubon Society. The land trust, Conservation Florida, is working on conservation easements with several adjacent and nearby landowners (approximately 100 acres) that are interested in protecting their lands. Outstanding biotic features of the preserve include three distinct natural communities, mesic hammock, basin swamp and dome swamp, all of which are in good to excellent condition. The most important feature of the Preserve is the connection to the basin swamp surrounding Orange Lake. Management on the Preserve will be in alignment with the Alachua County Forever (ACF) mission.

The Alachua County Forever Mission Statement is: To acquire, improve and manage environmentally significant lands to protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation. For the County's nature preserves, to improve and manage means land stewardship; to restore and enhance the natural resources to preserve their ecological function for future generations. It also means to provide and maintain functional and safe infrastructure for public access, where suitable. The County manages preserves under the BOCC adopted principal of "No Net Loss of Conservation Value" established as BOCC policy in 2002 as part of the guiding principles for the Alachua County Forever Program.

Land Conservation Program staff is responsible for the development of these management plans for ACF preserves. The management planning process was originally developed by the Land Conservation Stewardship Team (LCST) in 2003 and is based upon generally used best practices (Exhibit 2). It was updated in 2014 to comply with the ACF guiding resolution (now Resolution 22-066) to incorporate the Land Conservation Board (LCB) into the review process. All plans are also made available for public input and review as a part of the plan development process. The Orange Lake Preserve 10 Year Management Plan was reviewed by the Land Conservation Board on April 27, 2023, and presented at a public workshop for public comment on May 18, 2023. Input from these meetings and other comments submitted by the public has been incorporated into the plan.

The plan has been presented for consideration by the BOCC on the consent agenda due to the small size of the preserve and routine nature of the preserve management practices (Exhibit 3).