



Special Area Study

FCL Timber, Land & Cattle, LLLP Property

(aka, Lee Property and Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem)

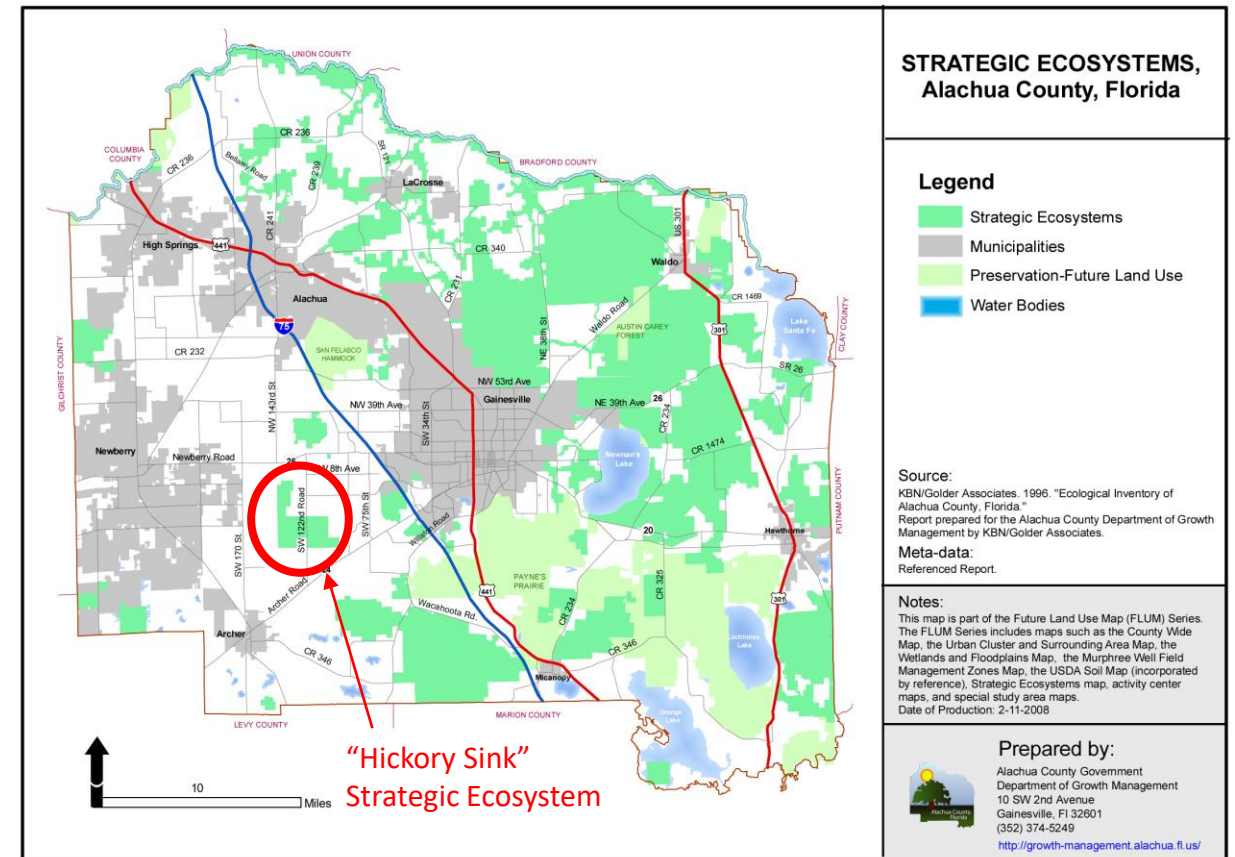
Board of County Commissioners Special Meeting
November 7, 2023

Purpose of Meeting

- Presentation of Special Area Study by staff and applicant
- Public input
- Commissioner questions and discussion
- BoCC consideration whether to *accept* the Special Area Study and authorize the process for preparation of Special Area Plan(s)

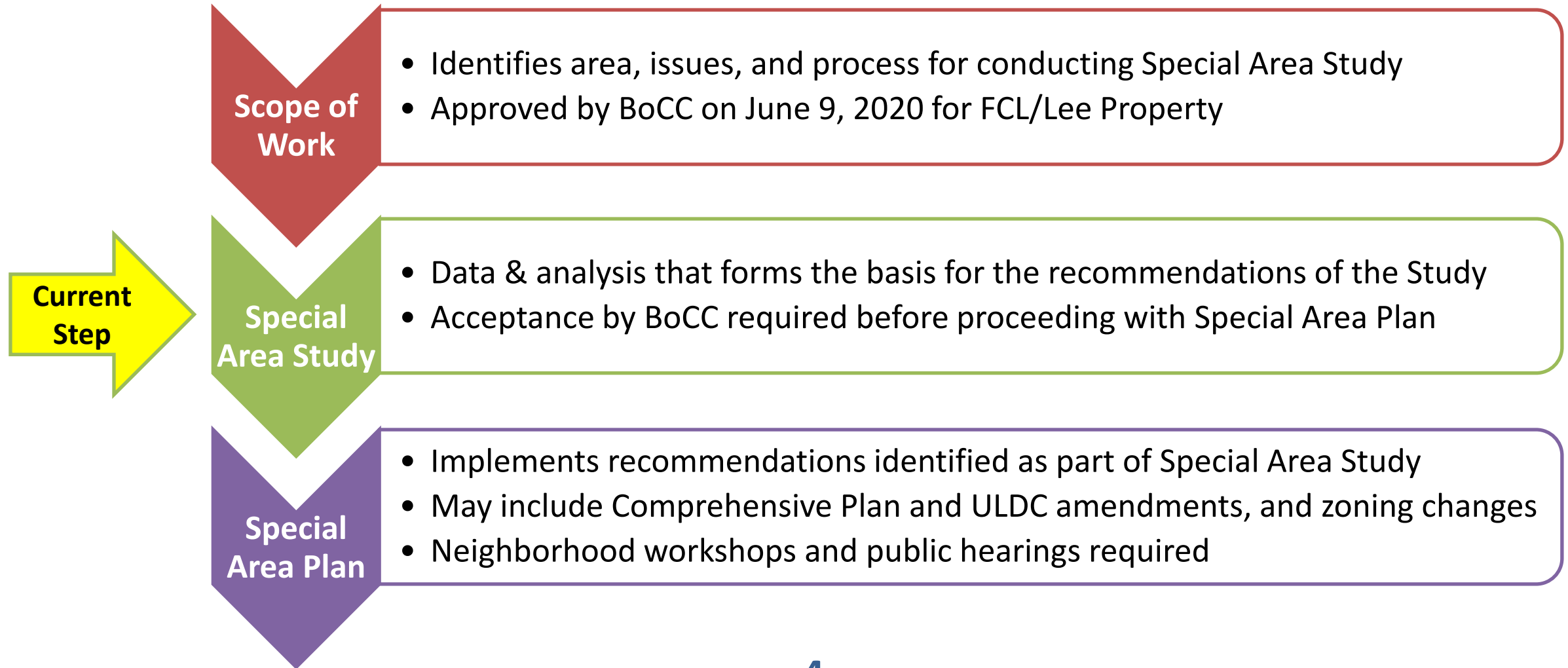
Special Area Planning

- In-depth planning process intended to address unique issues or circumstances
- *Required* by policy prior to land use or zoning change, or development application within Strategic Ecosystems or for new rural residential subdivisions >100 lots



Special Area Planning Process

Ch. 402, Article 16 Alachua County Unified Land Development Code



Special Area Study Requirements

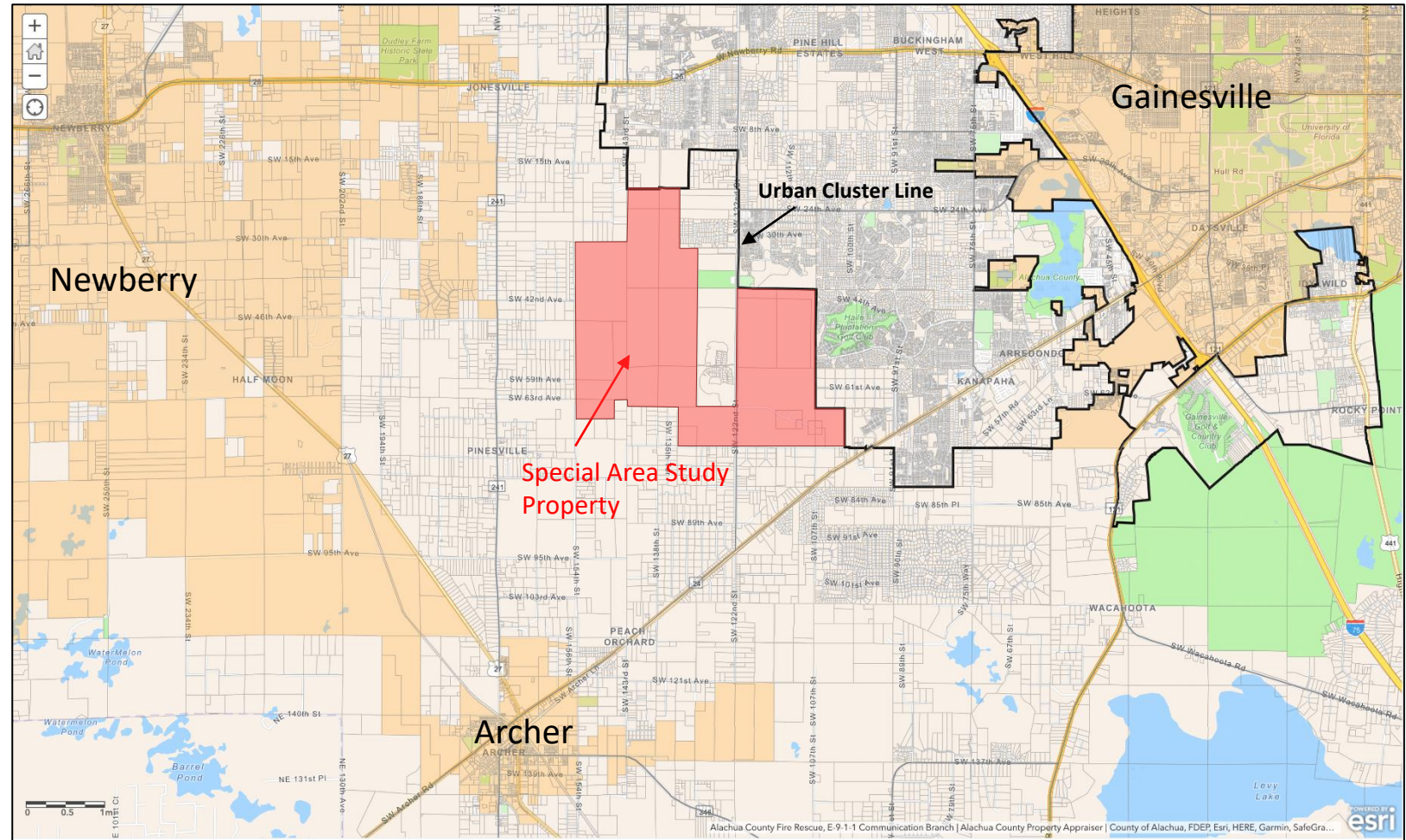
Section 402.101(a) through (f), ULDC

- a) Stakeholder Workshop
- b) Ground-truthing of site for natural resources assessment and delineation of Strategic Ecosystem resource areas
- c) Analysis of existing land use and potential future land use scenarios (e.g., agriculture, silviculture, conservation, and development areas)
- d) Public infrastructure and services analysis
- e) Recommendations and strategies for follow-up action as part of a Special Area Plan in the next step of the process
- f) Presentation to Board of County Commissioners

Review of Special Area Study and Staff Recommendations

Special Area Study Property

- +/- 4,068 acres
- Future land use designation per Comprehensive Plan is “Rural/Agriculture”
- Property contains much of “Hickory Sink” Strategic Ecosystem as designated in County Comprehensive Plan



Lee Property Special Area Planning Process Background

- May 1, 2020 - Applicant submitted request and proposed Scope of Work to initiate Special Area Study
- June 9, 2020 – BoCC approved Scope of Work for Special Area Study
- October 2021 – Applicant submitted initial environmental reports to County
- November 2021 – EPD staff technical comments on environmental reports provided to applicant
- March 2022 – Applicant-led stakeholder public workshops (3/23 in-person and 3/30 virtual)
- April 11, 2022 – Full Special Area Study Report submitted to County
- May 16, 2022 - County staff technical comments on Special Area Study Report provided to applicant
- July 5, 2022 – First Supplement to Special Area Study Report submitted to County
- September 20, 2022 – BoCC stakeholder meeting on Special Area Study
- September 19, 2023 – Revised Special Area Study ("Second Supplement" Report) submitted to County
- October 2, 2023 – Applicant-led stakeholder public workshop at Terwilleger Elementary

Special Area Study Documents Submitted by Applicant

1. Special Area Study Report - April 11, 2022
2. First Supplement Report - July 5, 2022
3. Second Supplement Report - September 19, 2023

Special Area Study – Land Use Considerations

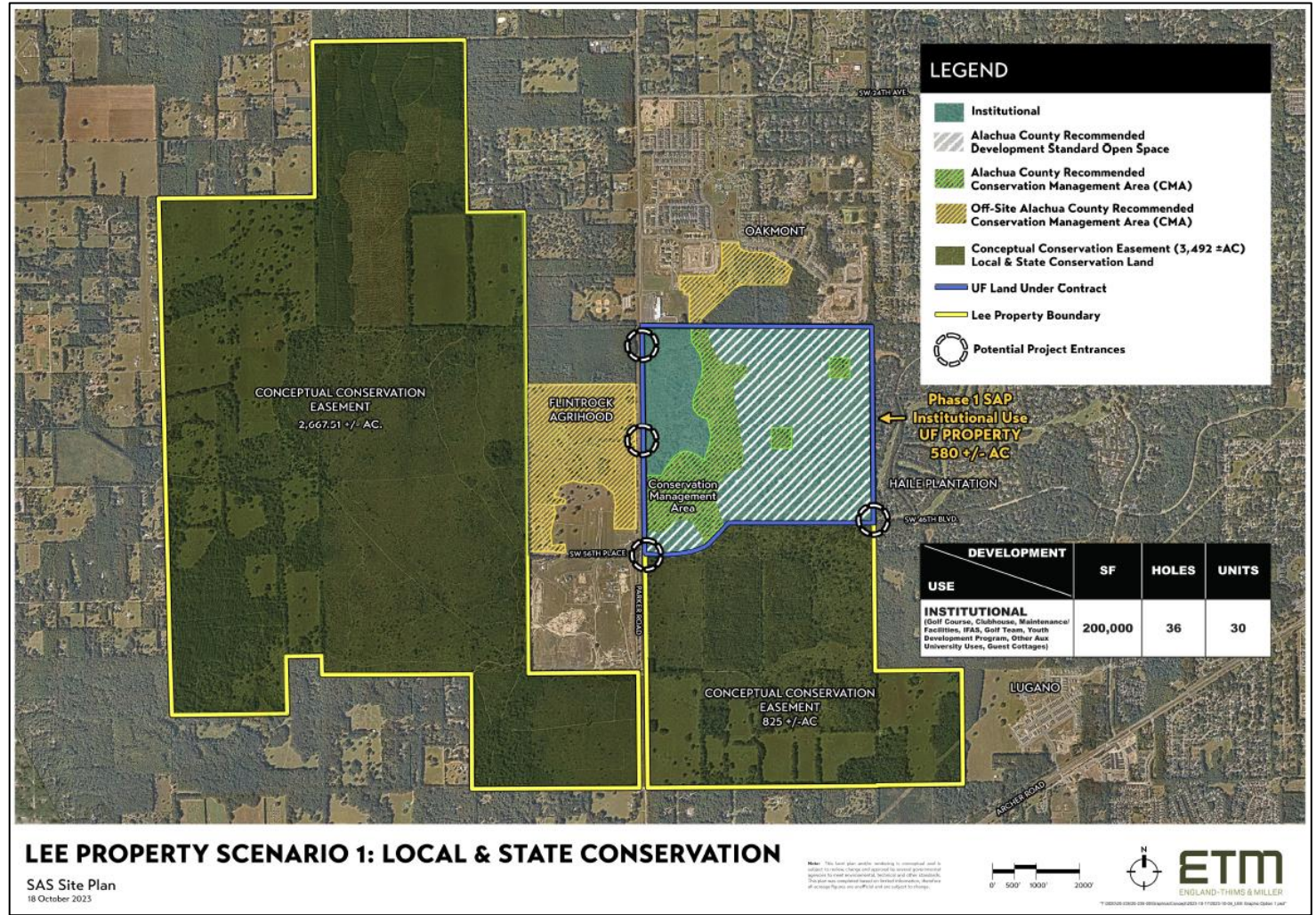
Second Supplement Report identifies 2 potential land use scenarios for the property:

1. “Local and State Conservation”
2. “Collaborative Planning”

Land Use Scenarios

“Local & State Conservation”

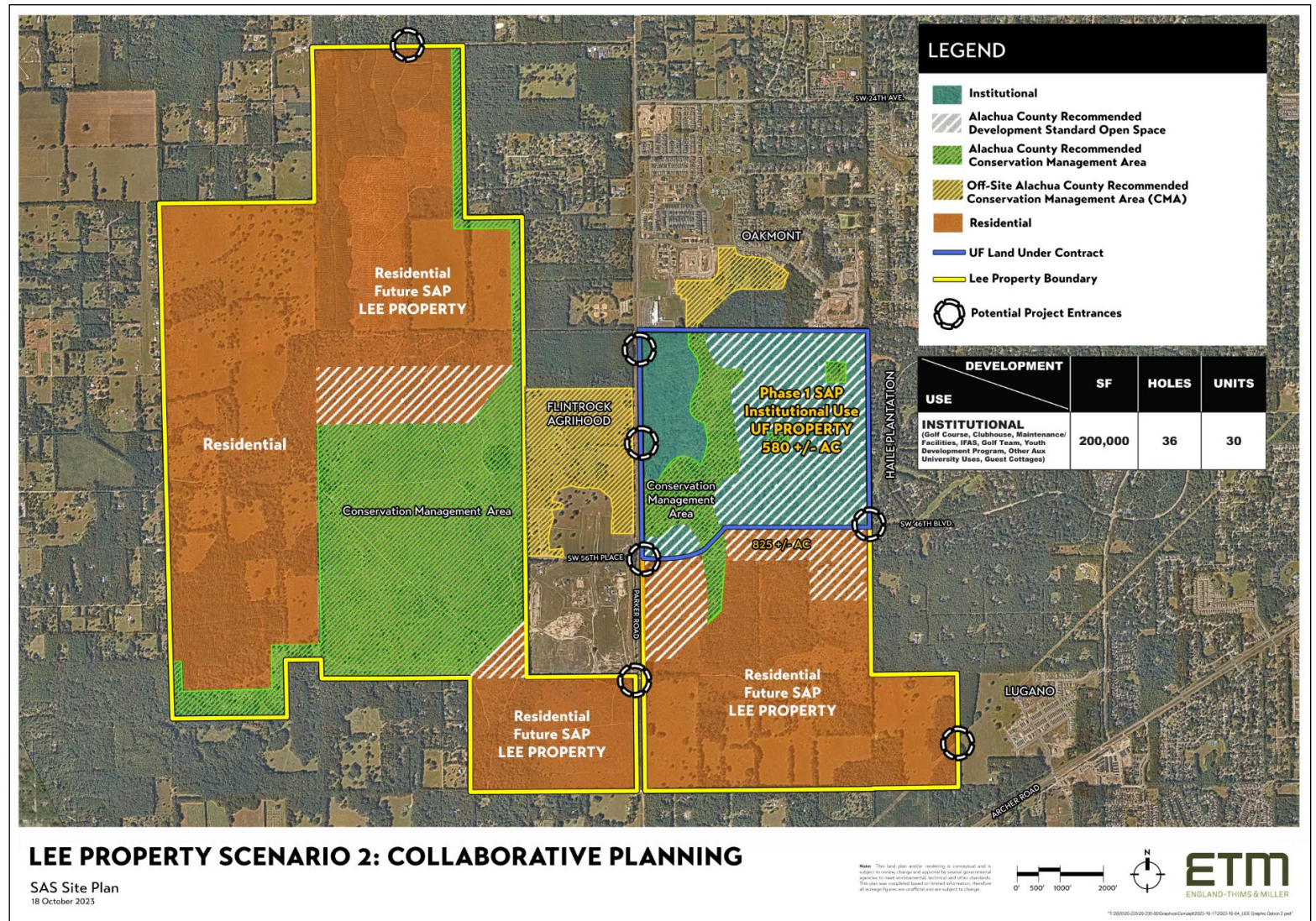
- UF Institutional: ~580 acres
 - 36-hole golf course
 - 30 guest cottages
 - 200,000 sf institutional facilities
- Phase 1 Special Area Plan would cover the ~580 acre Institutional/UF area
- Conceptual Conservation Easement: ~3,492 acres



Land Use Scenarios

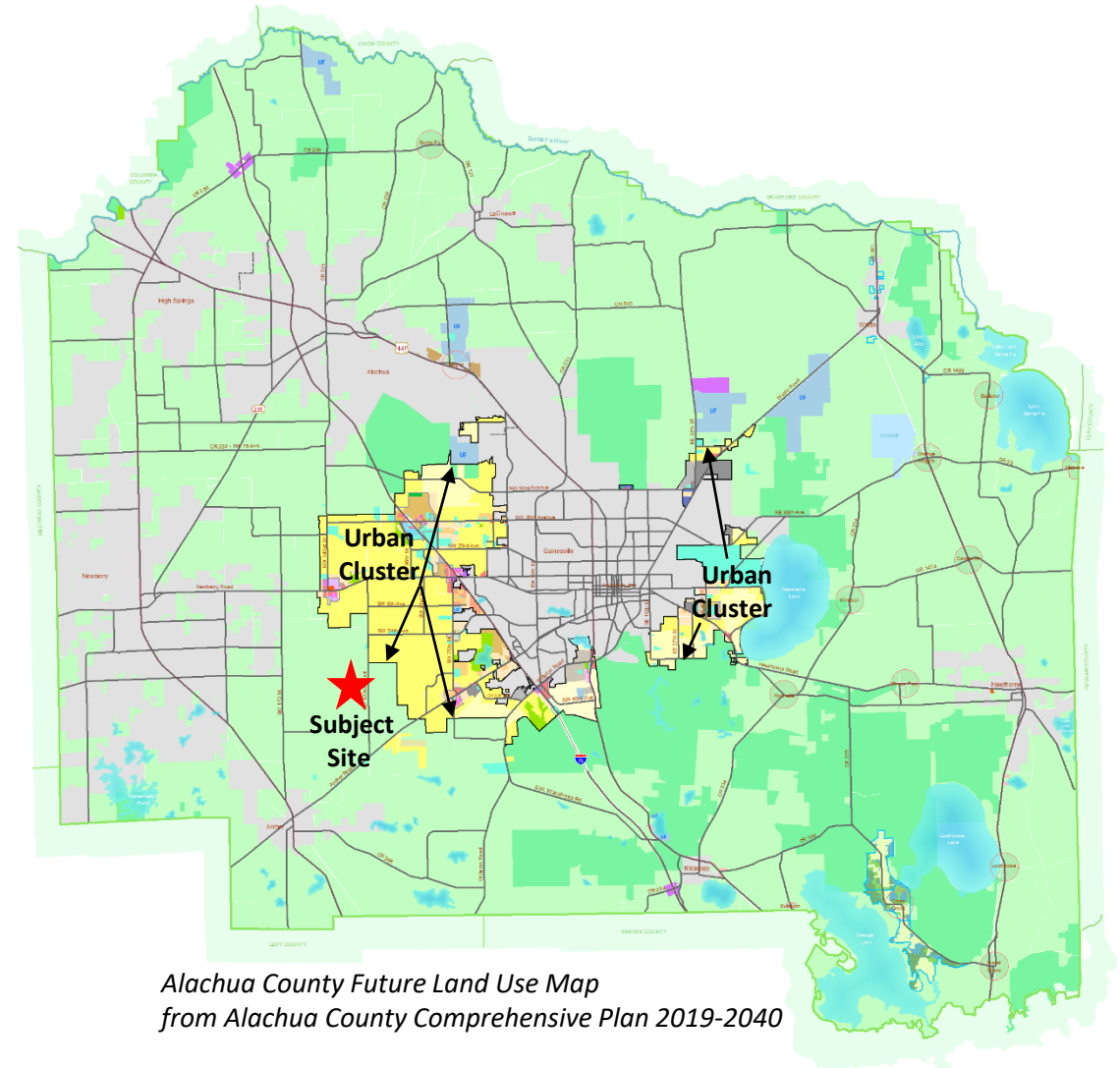
“Collaborative Planning”

- Institutional: ~580 acres
 - UF 36-hole golf course
 - 30 guest cottages
 - 200,000 sf institutional facilities
 - Phase 1 of SAP would cover 580-acre Institutional/UF area
- Residential Future SAP
 - Number of units and density would be proposed as part of future Special Area Plan application(s).



Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy Framework

- Urban Cluster sets boundary for urban development in the unincorporated area:
 - Allowable land uses include urban residential (>1 unit per acre up to 24+ units per acre), commercial, industrial, and mixed-use
 - Various infrastructure and services are provided or planned to serve urban levels of development
- Areas outside Urban Cluster:
 - Primarily agricultural, rural residential (1 unit per 5 acres) and preservation land uses
 - Urban levels of service are not planned
- Institutional land uses may be permitted within or outside Urban Cluster; major institutional land uses must be designated on Future Land Use Map



Comprehensive Plan Land Use Policy Framework

- Policies provide methodology for periodic evaluation of Urban Cluster's capacity to accommodate projected population growth for ten- and twenty-year planning periods
- If evaluation shows additional land is needed, then the County must consider the following measures:
 - Increase residential density within the Urban Cluster
 - Allocate additional growth within municipalities
 - Phased expansion of Urban Cluster
- *Staff recommends Condition #8 to ensure that the Urban Cluster policies are addressed at the Special Area Plan stage.*

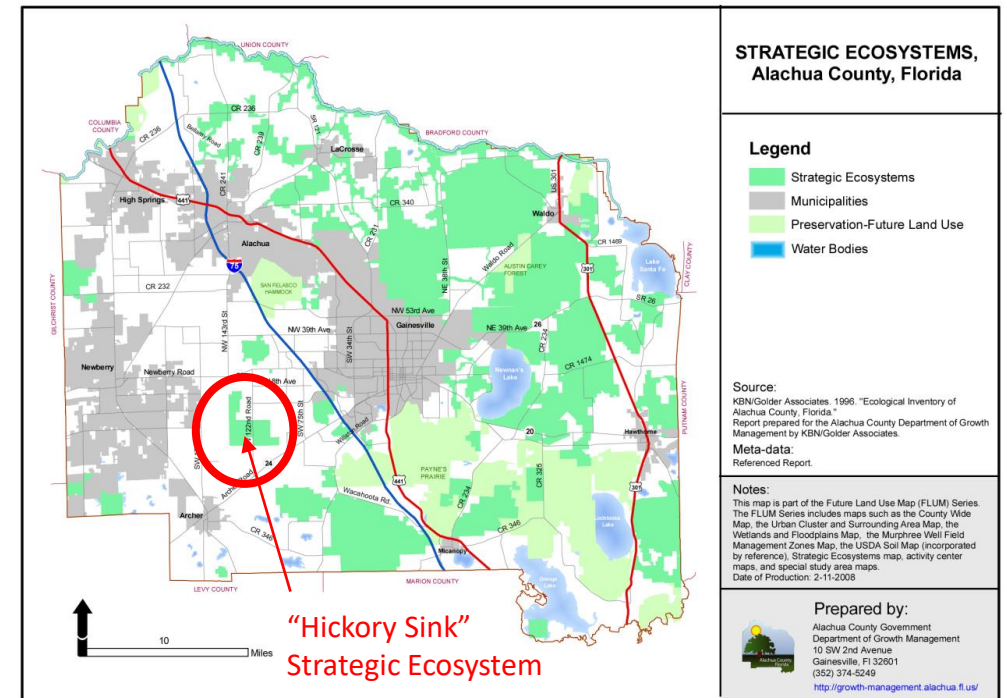
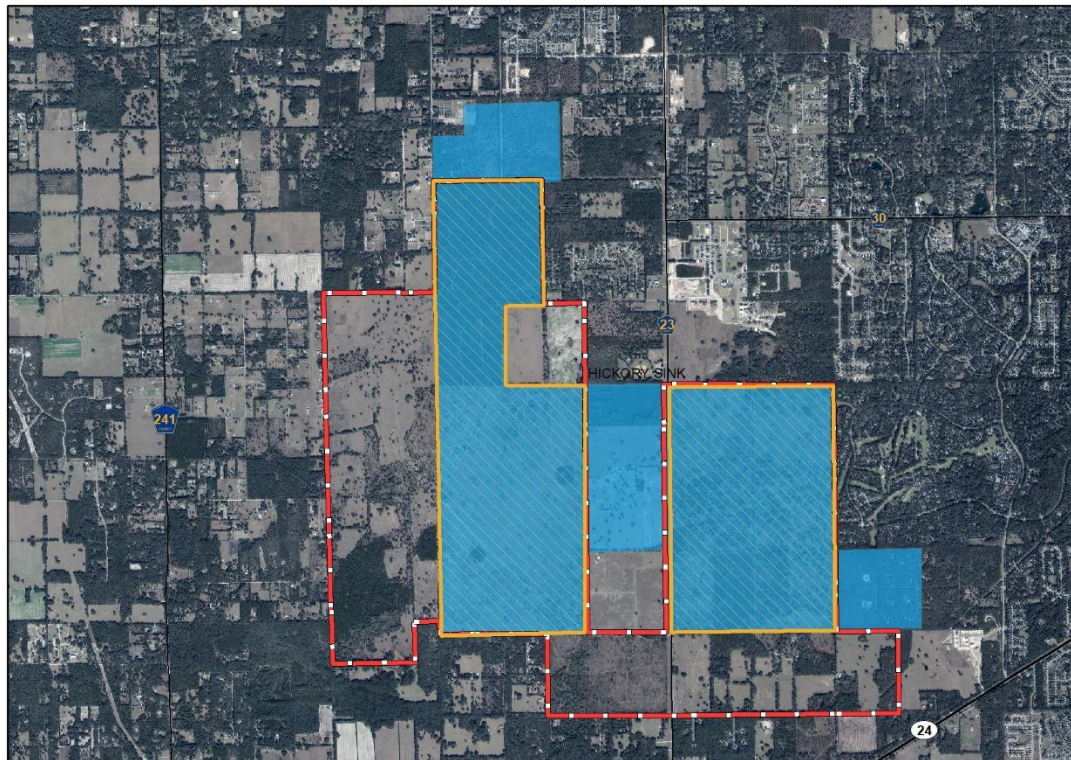
Water and Sewer Extension Outside Urban Cluster

Comprehensive Plan policies provide that extensions of potable water & sanitary sewer lines outside the Urban Cluster are subject to approval by the County Commission based on one of the following findings:

- Absence of such facilities would result in a threat to public health or safety;
- Necessary to enhance the safe, effective, and efficient delivery of central potable water or sanitary sewer service within an existing urban service area;
- Serve a purpose consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, such as the retention and expansion of existing business & industry or the attraction of new business & industry in accordance with the Economic Element, or the service of institutional or tourist/entertainment uses consistent with the Future Land Use Element; or
- Needed as part of comprehensive expansion of public services to encourage urban development in a new area as part of a comprehensive plan amendment.
- *Staff recommends Condition #9 to ensure that the water & sewer extension policies are addressed at the Special Area Plan stage.*

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

- Defined as sites identified in the KBN/Golder Associates report, “Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project” (1996)



Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

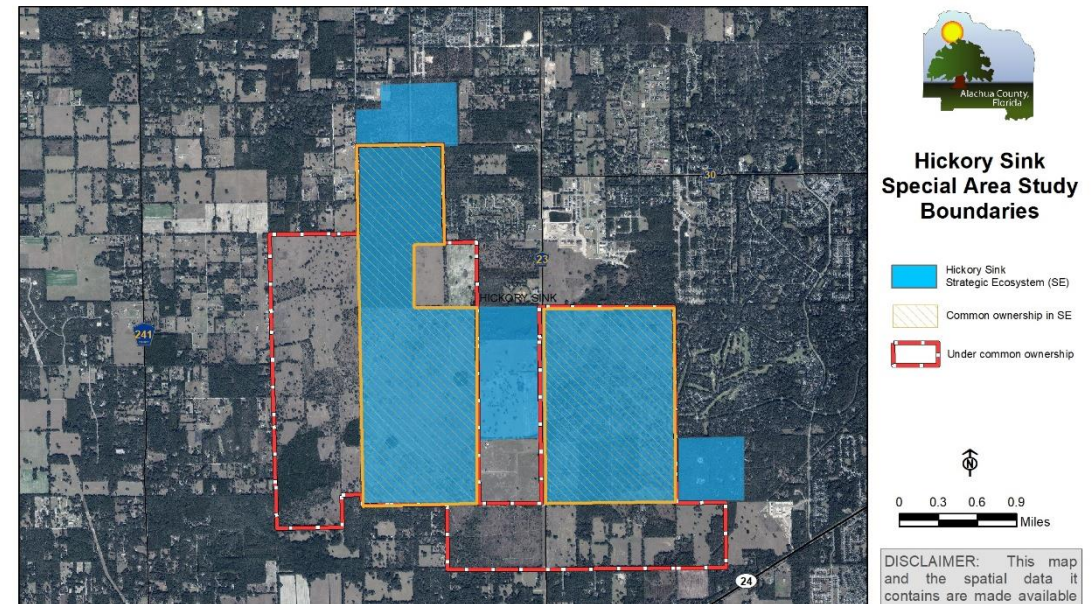
- **The KBN/Golder Associates report identified 47 areas in the county using 6 parameters:**
 - **Vegetation Value** (species diversity, presence of exotic (non-native) species)
 - **Endangered Species Habitat Value**
 - **Wildlife Habitat Value**
 - **Hydrology** (Floridan aquifer recharge, surface water and surficial aquifer protection, and vulnerability of Floridan aquifer)
 - **Landscape Ecology** (ecological community diversity, quality, rarity, and connectedness)
 - **Management Potential**

Hickory Sink Strategic Ecosystem (SE) Evaluation

Parameters and Sub-parameter Categories	Value
Species Diversity	1
Exotic (nonnative) Species Impacts	3
Endangered Species Habitat	3
Wildlife Habitat	3
Floridan Aquifer Recharge	4
Surficial Aquifer Resource Protection	1
Vulnerability of Aquifer	4
Community Diversity	1
Ecological Quality	1
Community Rarity	4
Functional Connectedness	1
Site Management Potential	3

Total size of Hickory Sink SE: 3,006 ac

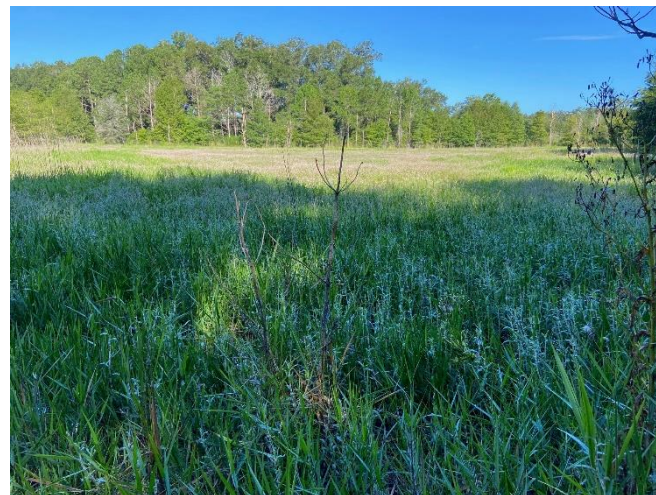
Mapped within this Project Area: 2,279 ac



Rating Scale: 1 = Very Low 2 = Low 3 = Moderate 4 = High 5 = Very High

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

- The project area contains remnant sandhill/upland pine community, upland mixed forest, caves, sinkholes and other geological features, a wetland (outside of SE area), improved pasture, unimproved pasture and pine plantation
- The next few slides show a summary of some of the results based on staff's assessment and data provided in the study

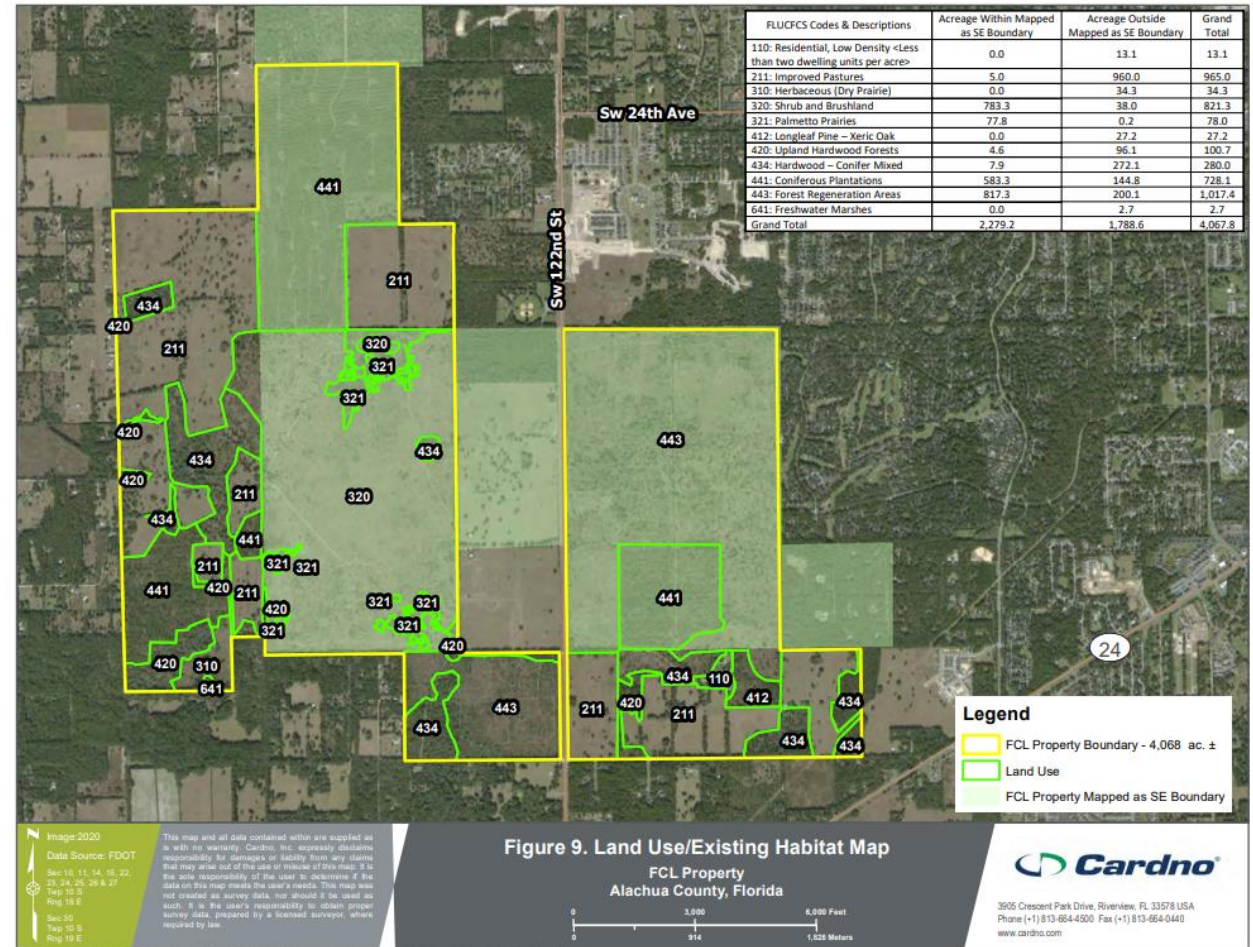


Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article III, Significant Plant and Wildlife Habitat

Applicant's Existing Habitat Map

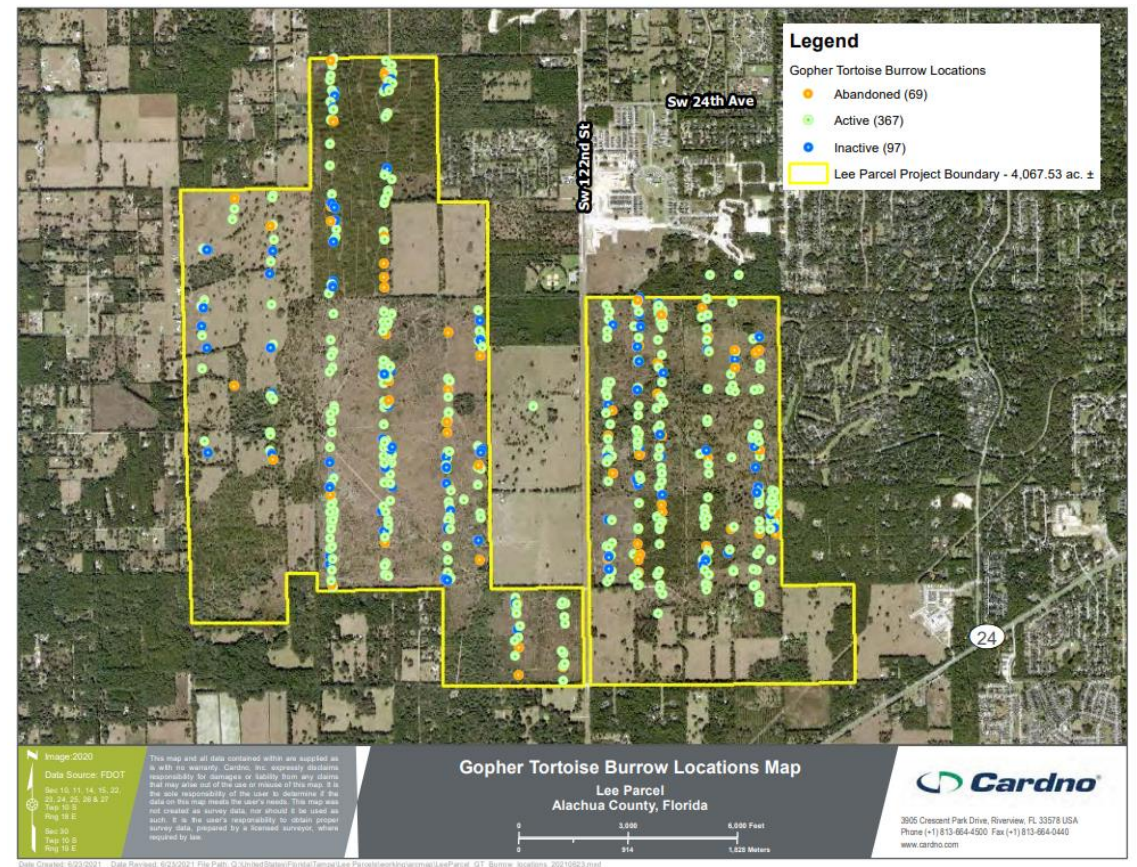
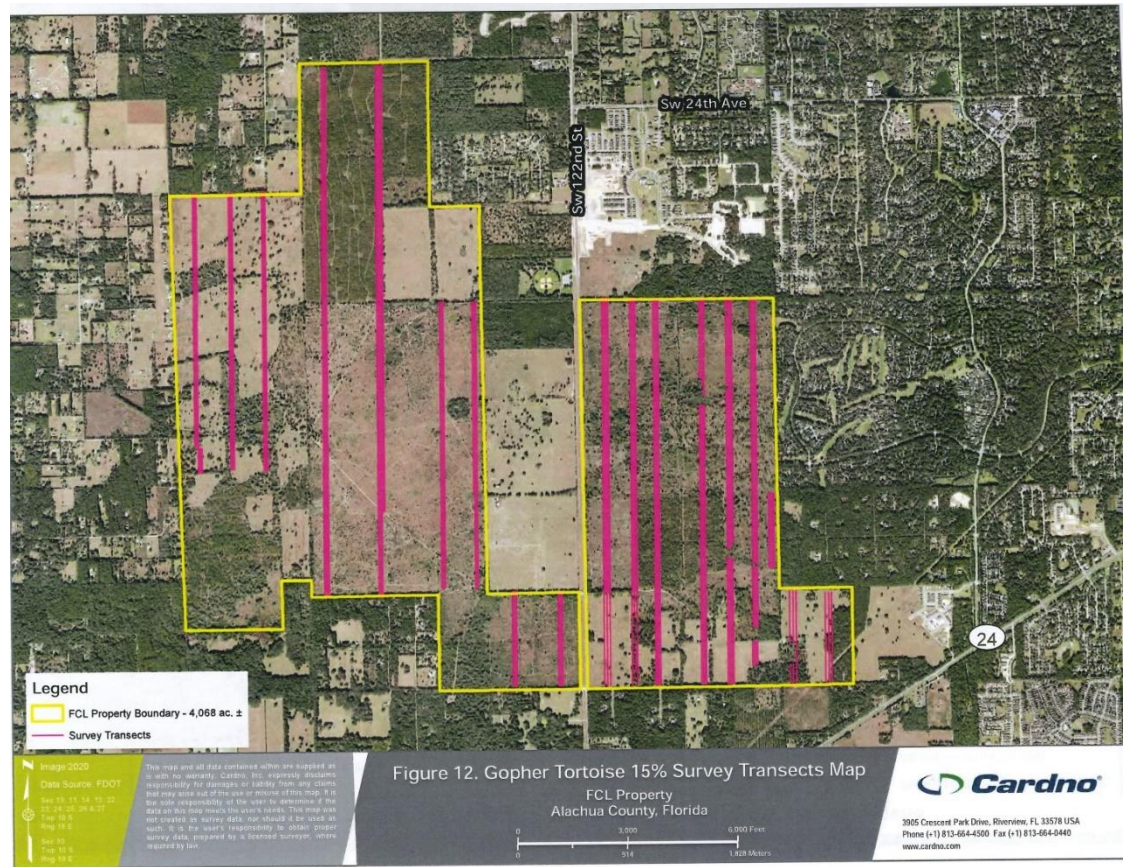
Recommendations include the Conservation Management Area Map and conditions # 3, 4, 5 & 6 included in the staff report to address protection of significant habitat



Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article IV, Listed Plant and Animal Species Habitat

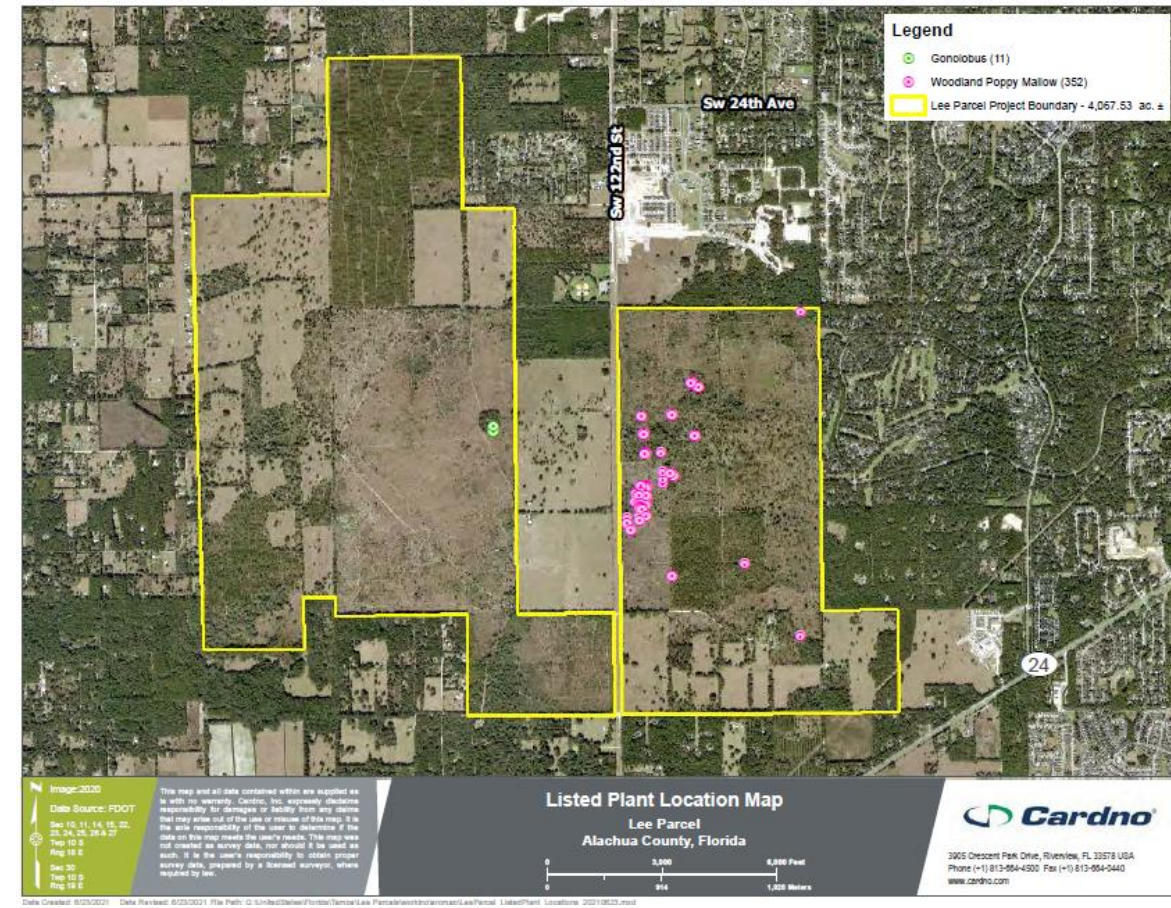
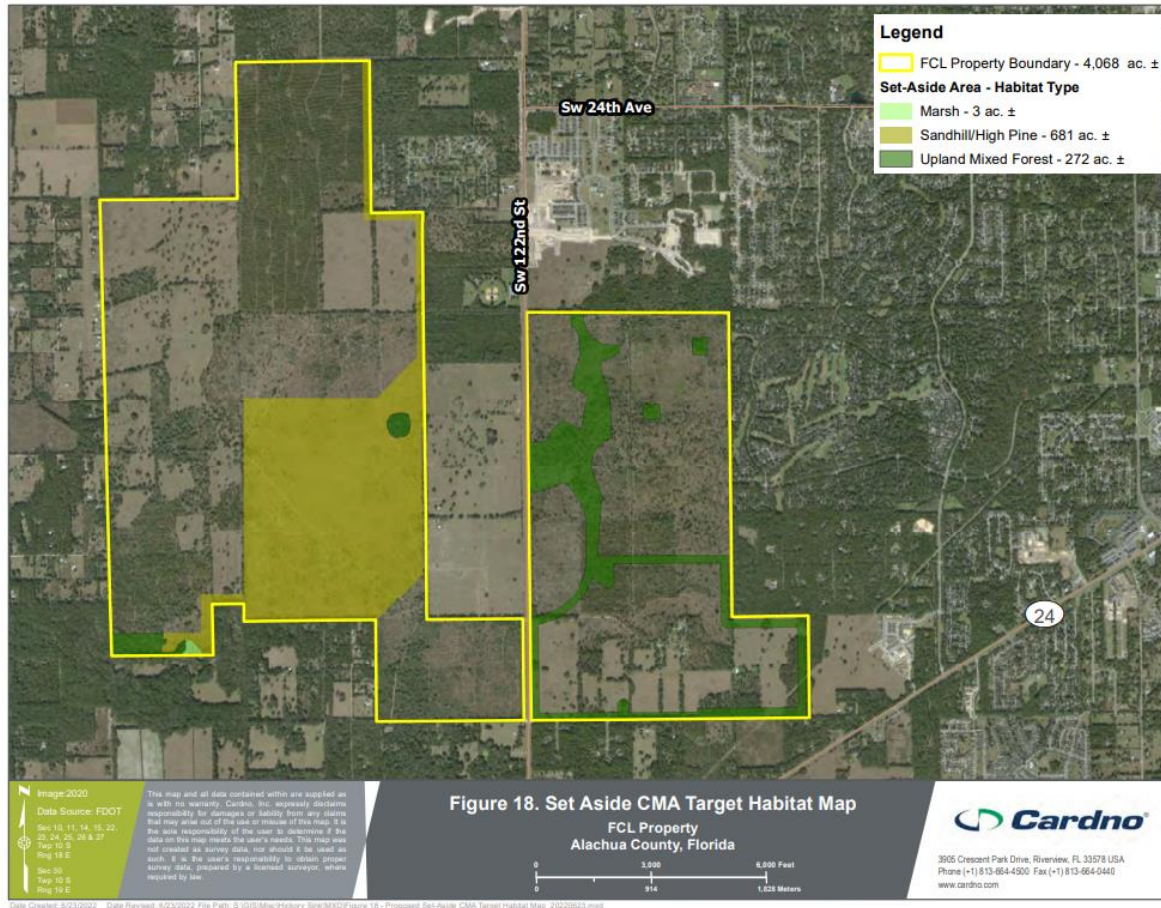
Applicant's Gopher Tortoise Survey Maps



Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article IV, Listed Plant and Animal Species Habitat

Applicant's Habitat Map and Poppy Mallow and other listed plant species maps



Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article IV, Listed Plant and Animal Species Habitat

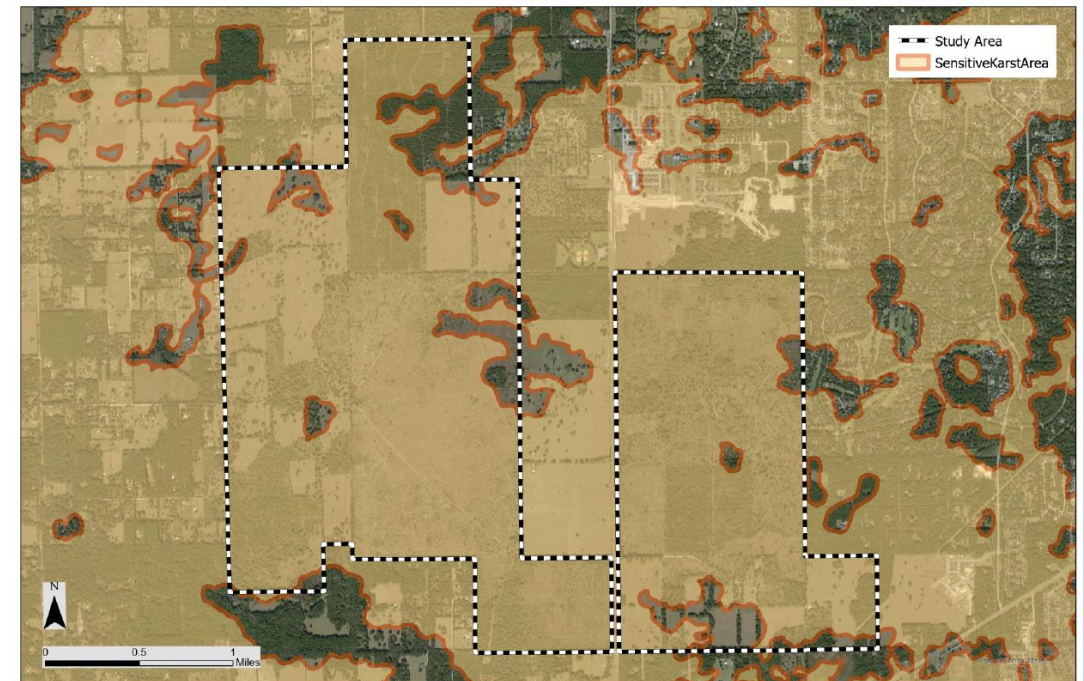
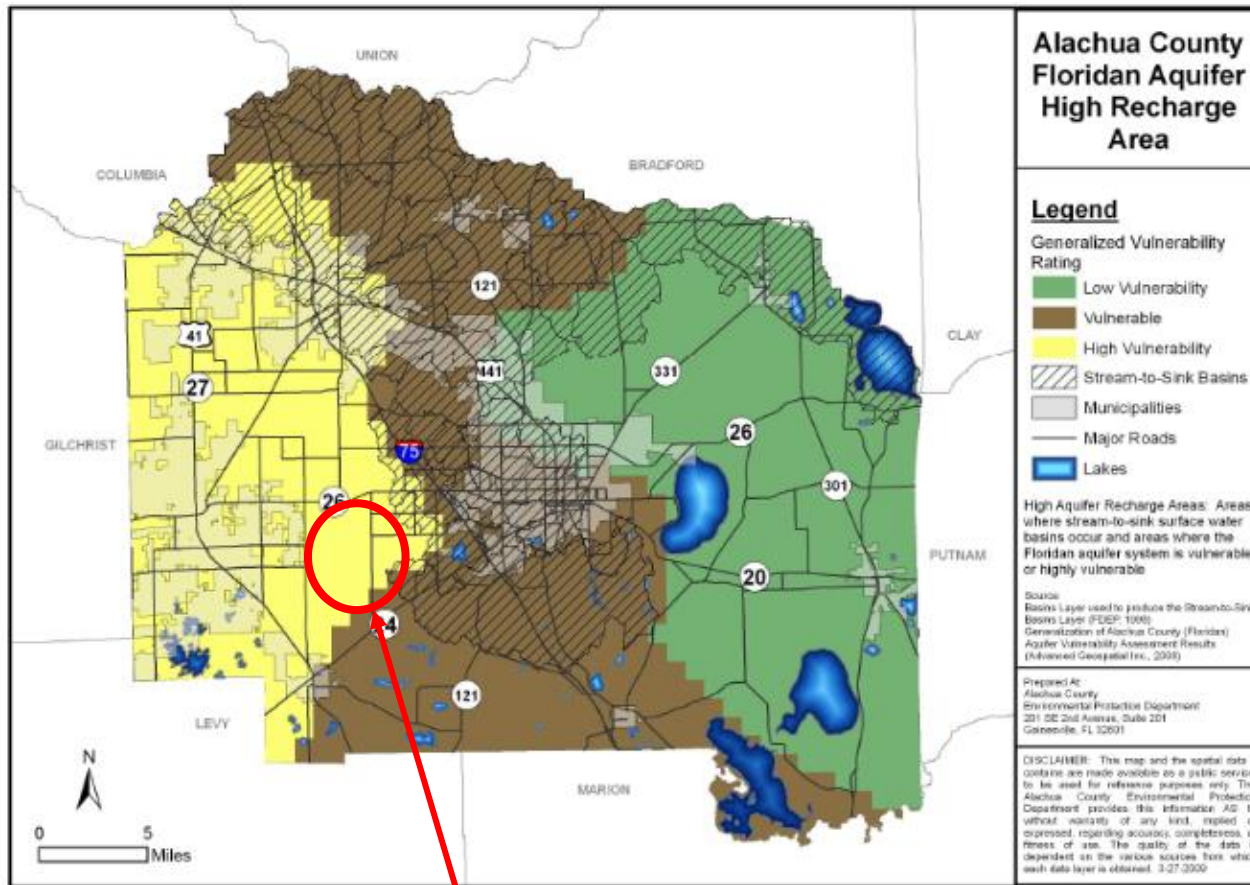
Staff's assessment: The applicant agrees with staff's recommendation to protect the conservation management areas identified in the report including 681 acres of Sandhill/upland pine habitat, as well as approximately 147 acres of the upland mixed forest habitat that also supports gopher tortoises and listed plant species in and around many of the sinkhole features, which will be protected as part of the first phase of the Special Area Plan.

Recommendations include the Conservation Management Area Map (Figure 1) and conditions #3, 4, 5 & 6 included in the staff report to address protection of listed species habitat

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article VIII, Springs and High Aquifer Recharge Areas

COSE Map 2. Alachua County Floridan Aquifer High Recharge Area.



Special Area Study Area

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article VIII, Springs and High Aquifer Recharge Areas

Staff's assessment:

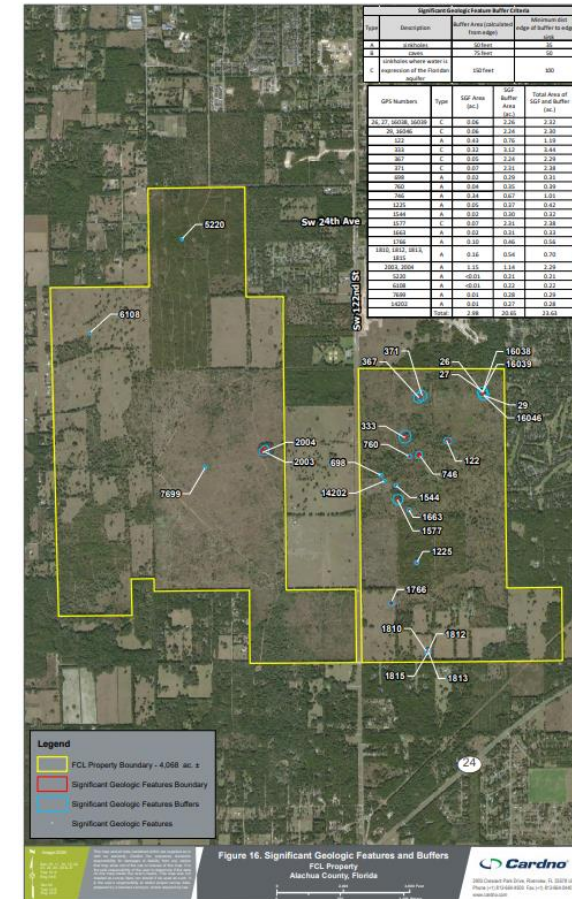
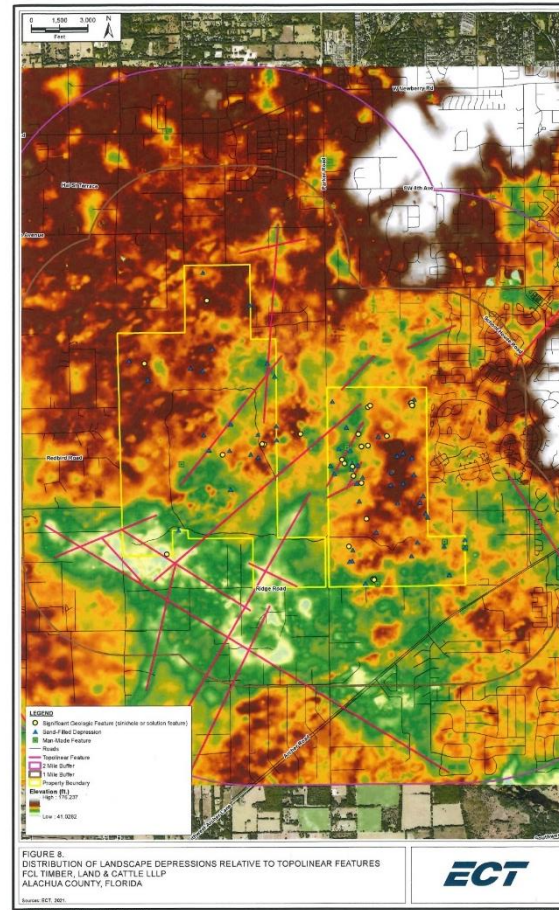
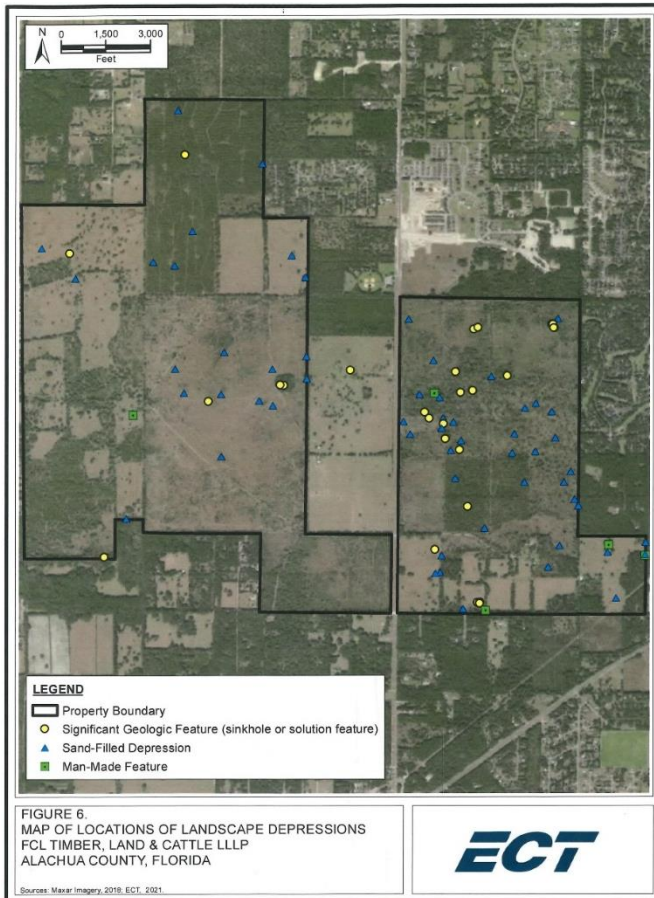
The majority of the property is within the Springs and High Aquifer Recharge Area and within the Sensitive Karst Area, with implications for water conservation, nutrient and stormwater management.

Staff is recommending conditions # 10, 11, 12 and 13 to address water quality concerns and to protect the aquifer.

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

Chapter 406, Article XVI, Significant Geologic Features

Applicant's Geologic Features Maps



Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

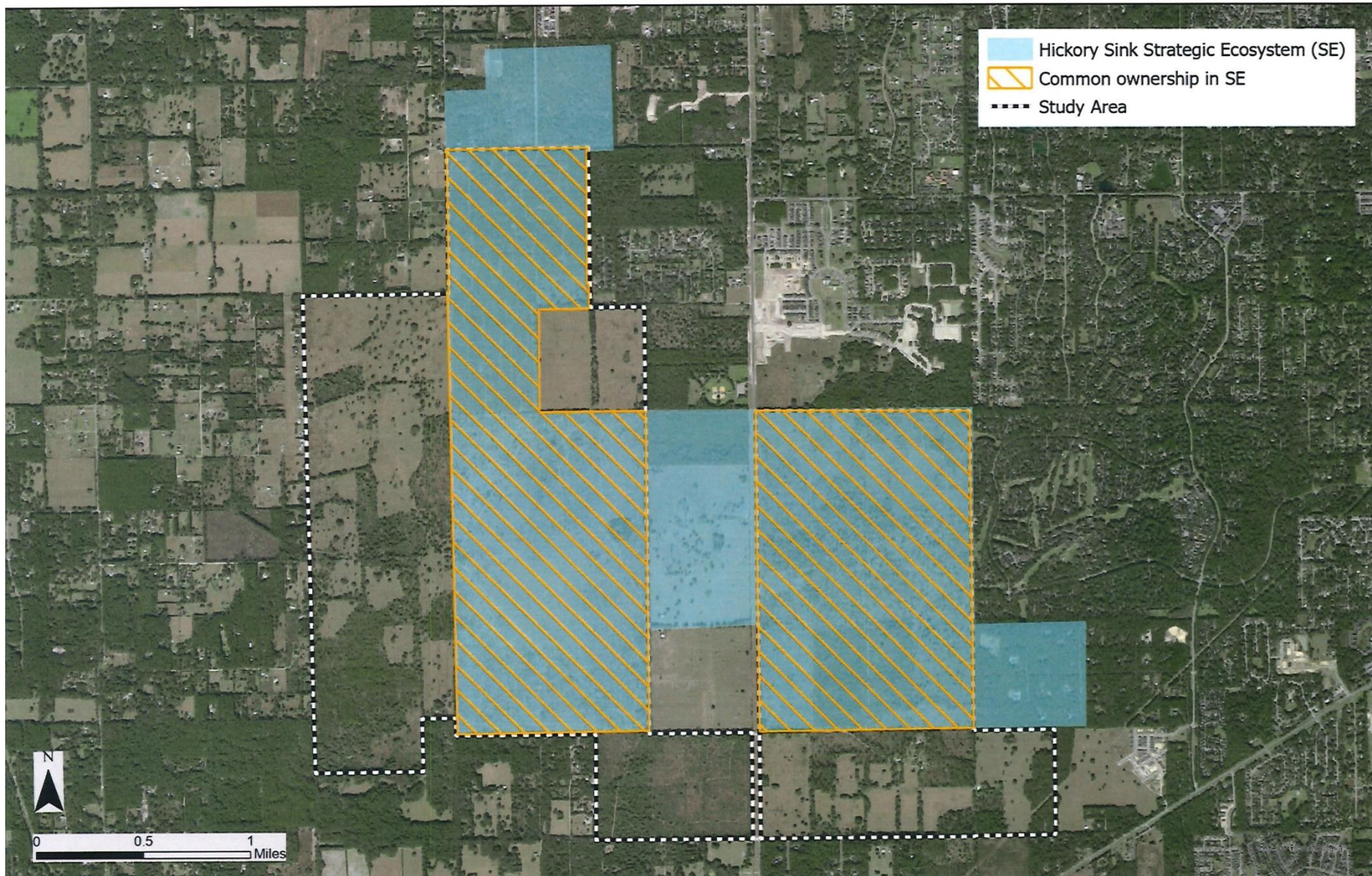
Chapter 406, Article XVI, Significant Geologic Features

Staff's assessment:

Staff agrees with the applicant's assessment of the location of the significant geologic features and supports the large area of protection for the largest cluster of features as well as a minimum of 5 acres of conservation areas around two isolated significant geological features. Staff has also recommended site design criteria to help reduce any potential secondary impacts to these features.

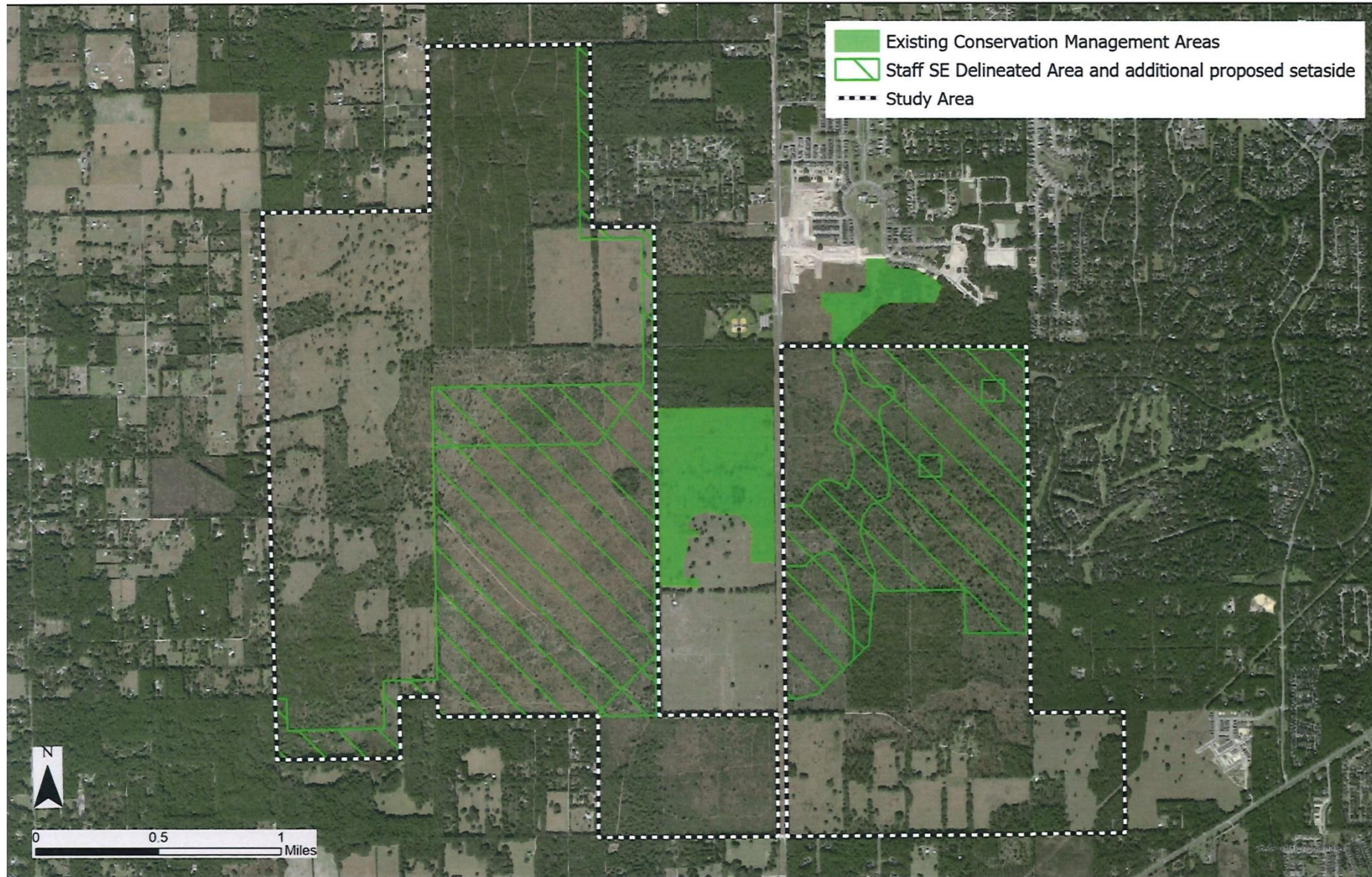
Staff is recommending conditions # 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 and 13 to address concerns with development in a karst area and in proximity to significant geologic features.

Mapped Strategic Ecosystem



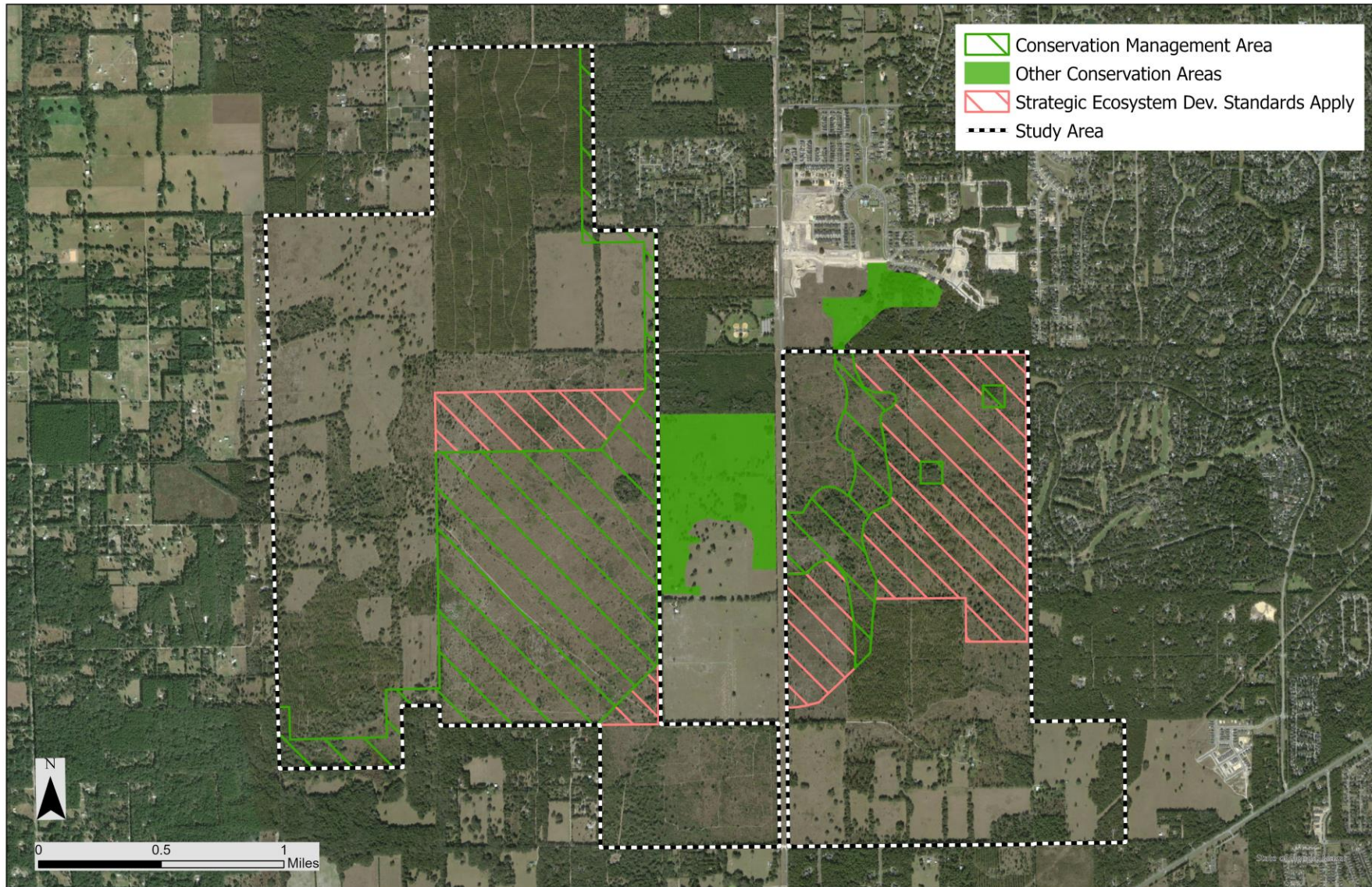
Mapped Strategic Ecosystem boundary prior to ground-truthing as part of the Special Area Study

Staff Delineated Strategic Ecosystem Area



Staff's recommended boundary of the Strategic Ecosystem within the project area based on the data provided in the special area study and staff site assessments

Staff's delineated set-aside and limited development areas



This map depicts proposed Conservation Management Areas (Green) to be set aside and additional areas (pink hatching), that if developed, are recommended by staff to follow specific development standards consistent with the County's Strategic Ecosystem Policies.

Golf Course Considerations

- Golf courses can be significant sources of nutrient pollution and contribute to over-pumping of the aquifer.
- As part of the first Phase of the Special Area Plan, a water quality and quantity management plan should be submitted documenting strategies to minimize water use and landscaping chemical (fertilizer and pesticides) use.
 - Possible strategies include soil amendments, Low Impact Development techniques, preservation of existing vegetation, use of native drought tolerant landscaping, non-irrigated landscapes, water reuse techniques, metering back-up well use, and site-specific best management practices.
- Staff is recommending Conditions #10 -13 address these issues

Staff Recommended Conservation Management Areas Map

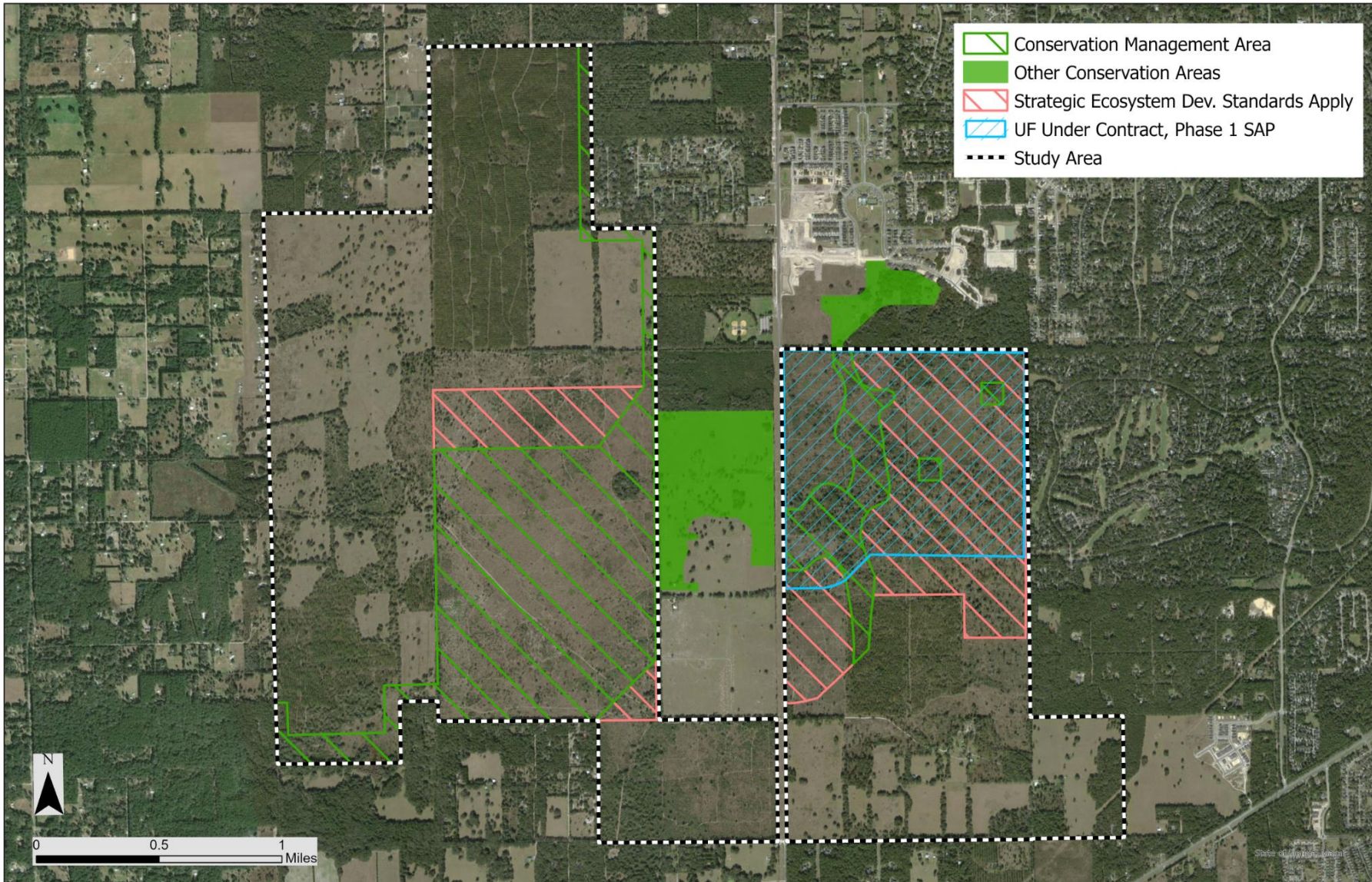


Figure 1 in the staff report - This map depicts proposed Conservation Management Areas (Green) to be set aside and additional areas (pink hatching), that if developed, are recommended by staff to follow specific development standards consistent with the County's Strategic Ecosystem Policies.

Strategic Ecosystem Background and Evaluation

- Based on the data provided in the special area study (SAS) and staff's site assessment, the property meets the designation of the strategic ecosystem based on average to high values for endangered species, wildlife habitat, community rarity, vulnerability and protection of the Floridan aquifer, and the presence of sink features and caves.
- Based on a lack of management in areas of the site, some habitat on site has reduced species diversity and quality (pink areas), but that does not disqualify these areas from retaining their strategic ecosystem designation.
- The SAS concludes that the areas in green represent the areas that should be protected. And staff concludes that these are the minimum areas that need to be protected to maintain the integrity of the strategic ecosystem under the current land use and zoning.

Staff Recommendation

Approve Resolution to *accept the Special Area Study* and authorize the process for a Special Area Plan(s) based on the recommendations contained in the applicant's Special Area Study Second Supplement report, and with the conditions recommended by County staff.

Board Discussion and Questions

Staff Recommended Conditions

Accept the Special Area Study and authorize the process for a Special Area Plan based on the recommendations contained in the applicant's Special Area Study Second Supplement Report and with the following conditions recommended by County staff. To the extent that the Special Area Study Second Supplement Report recommendations conflict with any conditions recommended by staff, the staff-recommended conditions shall prevail.

1. The Special Area Plan(s) shall be based on, and generally consistent with data, recommendations, and maps contained in the Special Area Study and conditions recommended in this staff report, as well as additional data and analysis that may be produced and submitted during preparation of the Special Area Plan(s). Acceptance of the Special Area Study does not guarantee any specific future land use designations or development program will be approved by the Board of County Commissioners as part of any Comprehensive Plan Amendments at the Special Area Plan stage.
2. The Special Area Plan may be prepared, submitted and approved in two phases. The first phase may include the 580 acres area identified in Figure 1 of this Staff Report as *Phase 1 SAP Institutional Use UF Property*. The second phase may include the remaining acreage identified in Figure 1 of this Staff Report as *Lee Property*. The second phase of the Special Area Plan for the *Lee Property* may be submitted for consideration by the County within 3 years following approval of first phase. If the second phase of the Special Area Plan for the Lee Property is submitted more than 3 years following approval of the first phase, an updated natural resources assessment of the property may be required at that time.

Staff Recommended Conditions

3. Figure 1 of this Staff Report identifies only the minimum conservation management areas to be set aside based on recommendations in the Special Area Study. Additional open space or conservation areas may be required as part of the Special Area Plan and development review process to meet all County policies, regulations and standards.
4. Conservation Management Areas located within the Phase 1 SAP Institutional Use UF Property area depicted in Figure 1 of this Staff Report shall receive permanent protection and a management plan limiting impacts, uses and the number of crossings prior to any site improvement or as part of the first approved final development plan within the boundaries of the *Phase 1 SAP Institutional Use UF Property*, whichever first occurs.
5. The Conservation Management Areas depicted in Figure 1 of this Staff Report and not located within the Phase 1 SAP Institutional Use UF Property Area, and any additional conservation areas that may be identified during preparation of the second phase of the Special Area Plan, shall be protected consistent with Section 406.103 ULDC prior to any site improvement or as part of the first approved final development plan within the boundaries of the second phase of the Special Area Plan occurs.

Staff Recommended Conditions

6. Any development proposed within areas identified in Figure 1 of this Staff Report as ‘Strategic Ecosystem Development Standards Apply’, shall be consistent with the ULDC and governed by subsections 406.03(b)(1) and (2). Alternatively, any proposed development within each of these areas shall be required to be developed in accordance with the Clustered Rural Residential Subdivision standards in Policies 6.2.9 through 6.2.13 of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element or other alternative protective measures acceptable to the County for ensuring compatibility with the Conservation Management Areas.
7. An historical/archaeological resources assessment shall be completed for the Special Area Plan and address any historical/archaeological resources requiring protection prior to or as part of the development of the property.

Staff Recommended Conditions

8. Any Comprehensive Plan amendments proposed as part of the Special Area Plan for the Phase 2 areas shown on the Collaborative Planning Scenario Map as *Residential Future SAP Lee Property* that would allow land use types that are not generally allowable pursuant to the Rural/Agriculture future land use designation, or gross residential densities greater than those allowable pursuant to the Rural/Agriculture future land use designation, shall be based on the following parameters and address the following considerations through appropriate goals, objectives, policies, maps, or data & analysis:
 - a. Such Comprehensive Plan amendments shall provide for the arrangement and clustering of proposed development areas in a manner that, (1) prioritizes the protection of Conservation Management Areas and (2) clusters any areas of urban development in as close proximity as possible to the Urban Cluster in order to minimize the geographic extent of necessary expansions of urban infrastructure, facilities, and services; minimize areas of urban/rural land use interaction; and ensure that land uses, densities and intensities are consistent and compatible with surrounding existing and future land uses.

Staff Recommended Conditions

8. (continued)

- b. Such Comprehensive Plan amendments shall address, with appropriate data and analysis, the requirements of Policy 7.1.3 of the Future Land Use Element regarding evaluation and expansion of the Urban Cluster.
- c. Proposed development areas shall be served by urban infrastructure, facilities, and services, including roads, transit, centralized potable water and sanitary sewer, fire and EMS, recreation, solid waste collection, stormwater management, public schools and law enforcement at the same levels of service that are provided within the Urban Cluster in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan's Capital Improvements Element. Data and analysis shall be provided on needs and costs for all necessary capital improvements to serve any proposed development areas. Necessary capital improvements and their funding sources shall be proposed for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan.
- d. Proposed development areas shall be served by centralized potable water and sanitary sewer services in order to minimize proliferation of individual wells and septic systems, subject to approval of the extension of potable water and sanitary sewer lines outside the Urban Cluster by the Board of County Commissioners in accordance with Policy 3.1.5 of the Comprehensive Plan, Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element.

Staff Recommended Conditions

8. (continued)

- e. The transportation system for proposed development areas shall be designed consistent with the Urban Transportation Mobility District policies in the Transportation Mobility Element, including connectivity with the surrounding road network and existing development within the Urban Cluster.
 - f. Proposed development areas shall provide for urban design concepts that are supportive of non-automotive modes of transportation in addition to automotive modes.
 - g. As part of the Special Area Plan, a percentage of the total proposed residential units shall be designated as affordable in accordance with the County Comprehensive Plan affordable housing requirements in effect at the time of submittal of any Special Area Plan phase that includes residential units.
9. Any phase of the Special Area Plan which proposes extension of potable water and sanitary sewer lines outside the Urban Cluster, shall address the requirements of Policy 6.2.2 of the Future Land Use Element and Policies 3.1.5 and 3.1.6 of the Potable Water and Sanitary Sewer Element regarding the extension of potable water and sanitary sewer lines outside the Urban Cluster.

Staff Recommended Conditions

10. The Special Area Plan shall identify water conservation and low-water use landscaping practices for all phases of the Special Area Plan and Phase 1 Institutional Uses (e.g., accessory clubhouse amenity, cottages, and maintenance area, excluding the golf course) such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Set specific limits on permanent landscape irrigation (including reclaimed water), irrigable area, and adherence to a water budget.
 - b. Prohibit permanently irrigated private residential lots.
 - c. Retain existing vegetation and design landscapes to mitigate impacts of climate change.
 - d. Use of native vegetation in landscaping and promote no-mow landscaping.

11. The Special Area Plan shall identify nutrient management practices for Institutional Uses (e.g., accessory clubhouse amenity, cottages, and maintenance area) such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Nutrient management shall be consistent with Chapter 77, Article IV, recognizing that the use of reclaimed water should result in reduced fertilizer application.
 - b. Minimize clearing of existing vegetation, soil compaction, and earthwork during construction.

Staff Recommended Conditions

12. The Special Area Plan shall address the requirements of Sections 404.66.5 and 406.59.1(e), ULDC, for the UF Golf Course and identify best management practices, utilizing *Best Management Practices for the Enhancement of Environmental Quality on Florida Golf Courses* (www.flgolfbmp.com) as a guide, such as but not limited to:
 - a. Address how the golf course design and associated facilities conserve sensitive habitat and karst topography, retain native vegetation, protect wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity and protect natural drainage patterns.
 - b. Limit excavation and fill throughout the site to protect the shallow karst topography and prevent sinkhole formation.
 - c. Evaluate the feasibility of stormwater reuse for irrigation, and limit irrigation need for all water sources and specifically the supplemental well water.
 - d. Account for all nutrient inputs (e.g., fertilizer, reclaimed water, soil amendments, etc.) in a comprehensive nutrient management plan for the golf course. Use soil and tissue tests to establish nutrient baseline levels and deviations from reported reference ranges when available.
 - e. Provide a plan for Water Quality Monitoring consistent with Section 404.66.5(b). An annual report shall be submitted to the County documenting water quality monitoring.

Staff Recommended Conditions

13. The Special Area Plan shall identify stormwater treatment and management practices such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Employ LID (Low Impact Development), as required by Chapter 77, Article 3 (Stormwater Treatment Code) distributed throughout the project. LID that stores and infiltrates runoff to meet the requirements of the Stormwater Treatment Code should, at minimum, preserve the underlying in-situ soil or be backfilled with on-site soils with sufficient fines to retain moisture and encourage denitrification. Where high nitrogen loads are expected in runoff, the use of engineered media/soil designed for denitrification is encouraged.
 - b. LID approaches that reduce runoff, such as disconnecting impervious surfaces, rain gardens or rainwater harvesting on lots, pervious pavements, vegetated natural buffers, and filter strips should be used to the greatest extent possible.