



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 24-00384

Agenda Date: 6/11/2024

Agenda Item Name:

Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve 10-Year Management Plan Update

Presenter:

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Description:

Request Board approval of the updated Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve 10-Year Management Plan (Exhibit 1). The update incorporates the addition of the Raydient Tract to the preserve and updates the Preserve site development and improvement plan to include public access infrastructure (Exhibit 2).

Recommended Action:

Approve the Updated Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve 10-Year Management Plan.

Prior Board Motions:

April 9, 2013 – BoCC exercised option to purchase Buck Bay Flatwoods – Cox and Moore Tract.

May 26, 2015 – BoCC approved the Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve Management Plan.

August 13, 2019 – BoCC exercised option to purchase Buck Bay Flatwoods – Raydient Tract.

Fiscal Note:

Project 6214104 Land Management: Buck Bay Flatwoods already exists for the maintenance of the Raydient Tract of this preserve, funded from Wild Spaces Public Places funds. The Department has been setting aside over \$1million per year for land management on properties acquired with WSPF funds since FY21 which includes the additional budget to cover the expenses for management of this tract. Management of the original Cox and Moore acquisition will be funded through timber sale revenues (fund 261.41.5594.389.9100) which have been generated from the property, and the annual department general fund budget which supports staff time and equipment for acquisitions which predated the 2016 Wild Spaces and Public Places funding.

Total estimated \$10,000 in annual maintenance costs.

Wild Spaces Public Places Fund: 021.41.4160.537.xx.xx Project#6214104 Land Management – PRS Buck Bay Flatwoods – General Site Maintenance - \$3,150.

Conservation Lands General Fund: 001.41.4160.537.xx.xx - \$6,850

Strategic Guide:
Environment

Background:

Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve is composed of three parcels of land, totaling 637 acres, located in central Alachua County, just north of the Gainesville city limits, at 6502 North County Road 225, Gainesville, FL. The initial 464-acre Cox and Moore tract property was acquired in 2013 with funds from the 2008 Wild Spaces Public Places surtax, and the 173-acre Raydient tract addition was acquired in 2019 with funds from the 2016 Wild Spaces and Public Places referendum.

Outstanding ecological features of Buck Bay Flatwoods Preserve include nine distinct natural communities, and a 4,000-foot section of Hatchet Creek, a locally significant blackwater stream. The Preserve is adjacent to the City of Gainesville Murphree Water Plant and lies within the primary and secondary protection zones of the city well fields, with the closest active production well located within 200 feet of the Preserve boundary. Lands within the Preserve were acquired to improve and manage environmentally significant lands, and to protect water resources, wildlife habitats, and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation. The Preserve was opened for public access on October 28, 2022, providing 4 miles of multi-use recreational trails.

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 Commission-adopted principal of "No Net Loss of Conservation Value" established as Commission 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. It was updated in 2014 to comply with the Resolution 22-066 to incorporate the Land Conservation Board (LCB) into the review process (Exhibit 3). This plan update was reviewed by the LCB on January 27, 2022. All plans are also made available for public input and review as a part of the plan development process.