

# Proposed Alachua County Forever (ACF) Acquisitions



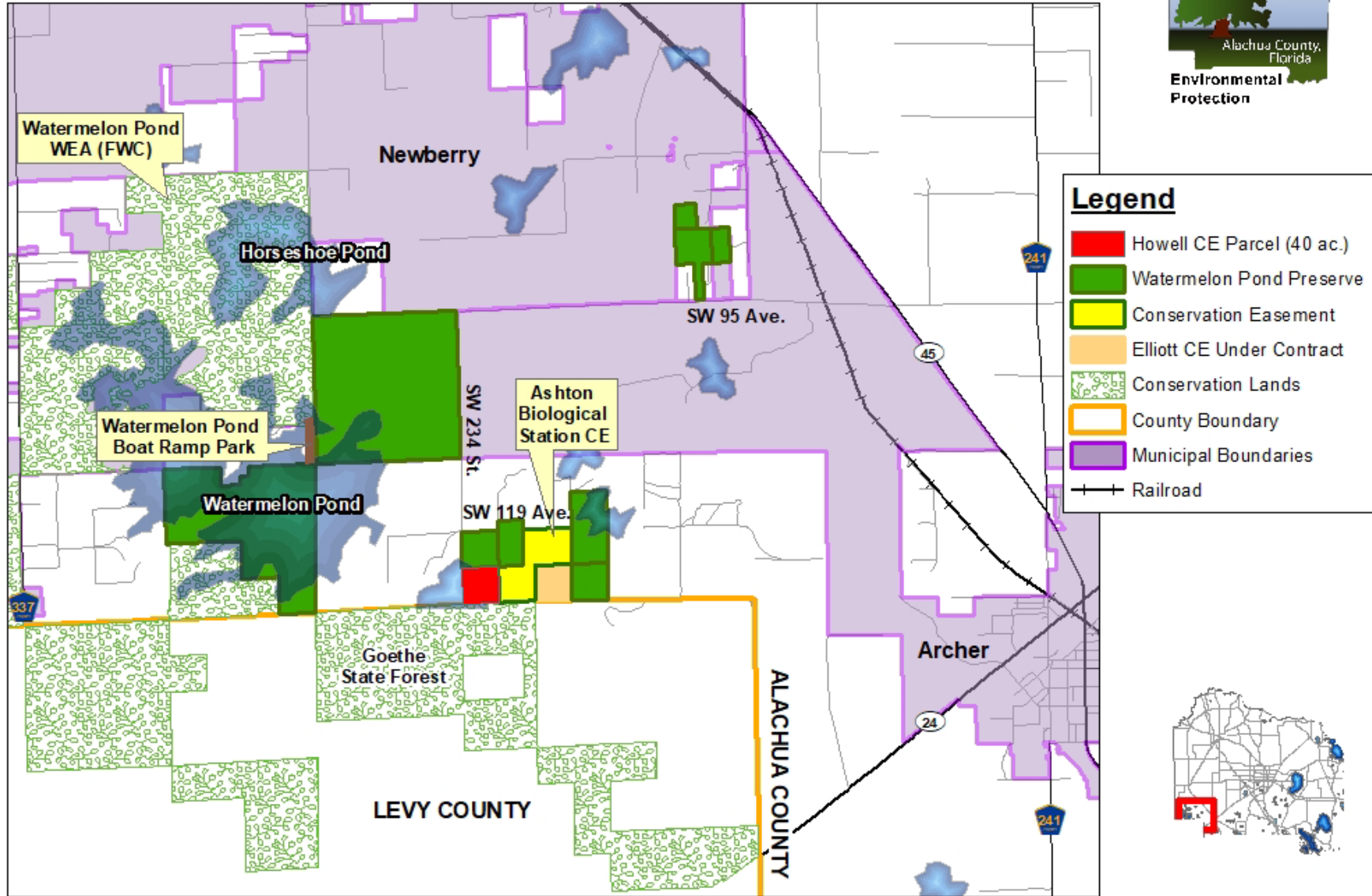
## **Watermelon Pond – Howell Conservation Easement Acquisition**

Andi Christman  
Program Manager, Land Conservation & Management

# Summary of Proposed Howell Conservation Easement Acquisition

- **Owner:** Julian H. Howell, Jr.
- **Parcel number:** 02711-006-006
- **Acreage:** ± 40 acres
- **Zoning/Land Use:** Agricultural (A)/Rural-Agriculture
- **Matrix project score:** 7.47
  - Placed on the Priority Pool 3/28/2002 & Placed on Active Acquisition List 4/23/2002.

# Watermelon Pond - Howell Location Map



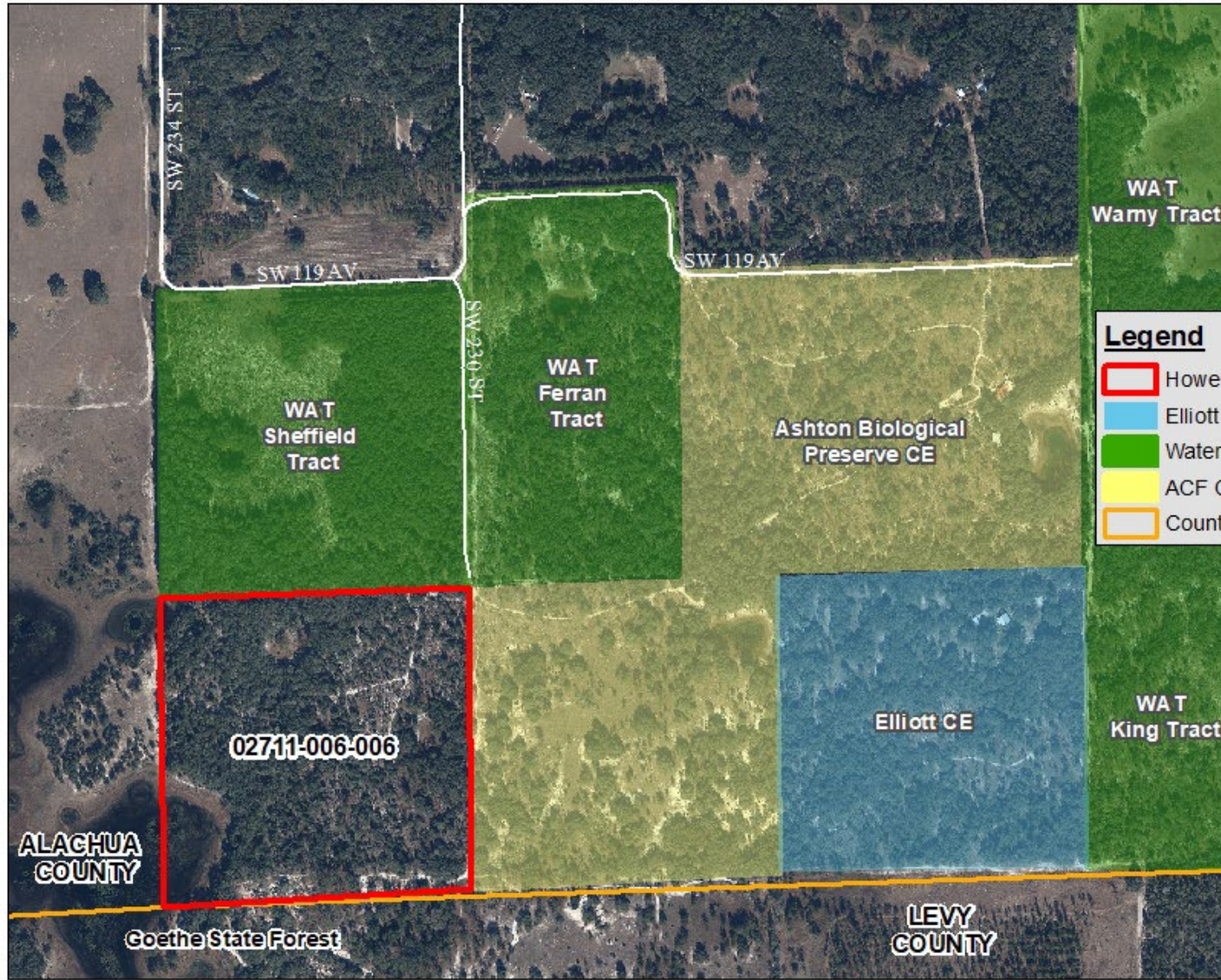
**Legend**

- Howell CE Parcel (40 ac.)
- Watermelon Pond Preserve
- Conservation Easement
- Elliott CE Under Contract
- Conservation Lands
- County Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries
- Railroad



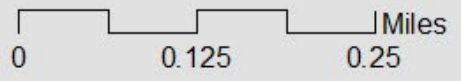
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# Watermelon Pond - Howell Parcel Map



**Legend**

- Howell Parcel (40 ac.)
- Elliott Parcel (Under Contract)
- Watermelon Pond Preserve
- ACF Conservation Easement (CE)
- County Boundary



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# Howell Conservation Easement

## Natural Resources

- Natural Communities:
  - Sandhill, sinkhole pond, rosemary scrub, and oak hammock and a portion of Barrel Pond
- Located within:
  - Watermelon Pond ACF Project Area
  - Florida Forever Watermelon Pond Project Area
- Addition to Larger Scale Projects:
  - Fills a conservation inholding between the County's Watermelon Pond Preserve – Sheffield and Ferran Tracts and the County's Conservation Easement on the Ashton Biological Preserve.
  - Adjacent to Goethe State Forest
  - Contributes towards protecting as much of the Watermelon Pond area as feasible and adds to Alachua County's southern wildlife corridor.

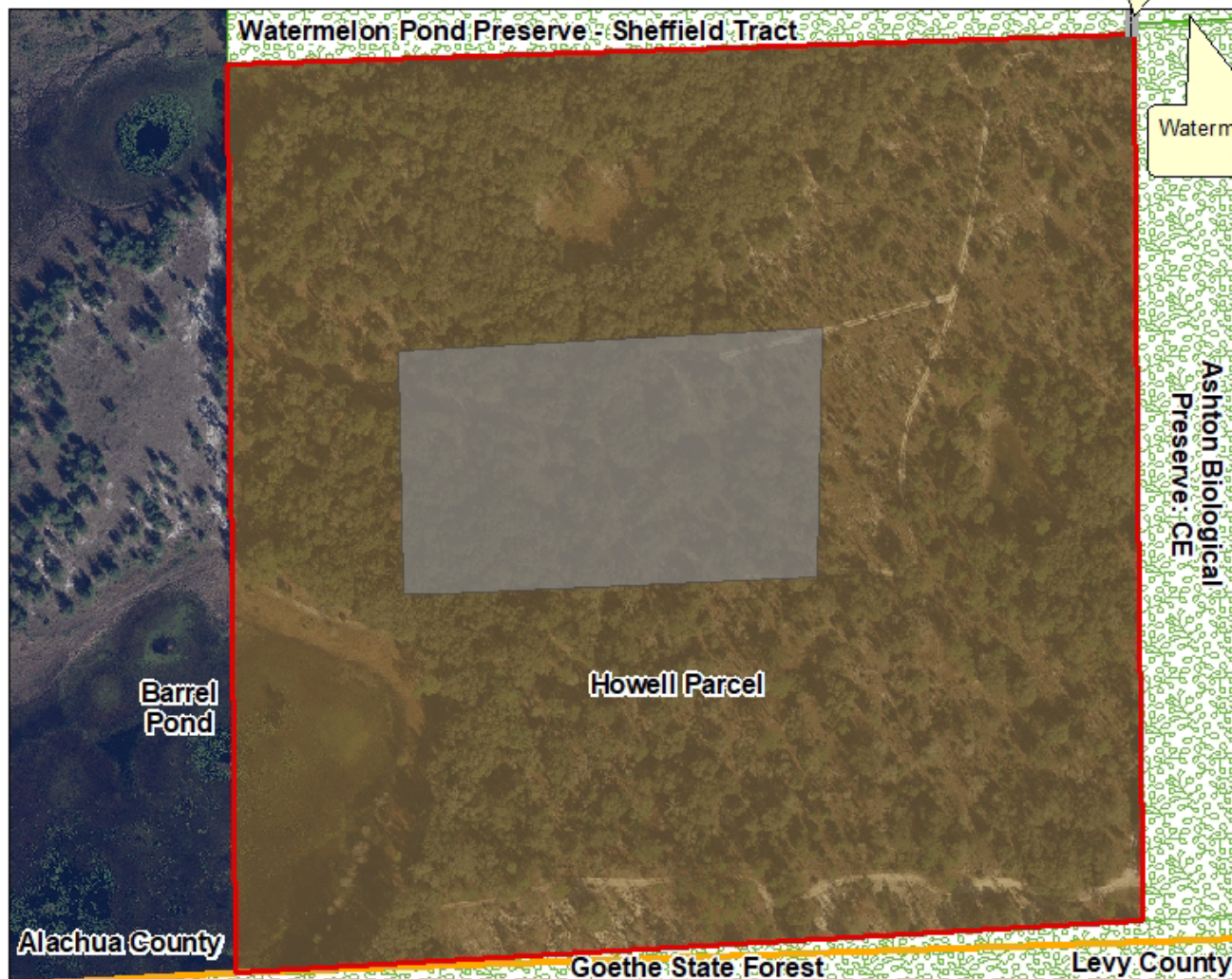
# Howell Conservation Easement Land Use Zones

Designated land use zones allow specified uses while also requiring certain conditions or limitations to protect the conservation values of the property.

- **Preservation Zone** – 35 acres (sandhill, sinkhole pond, rosemary scrub, and oak hammock natural communities and a portion of Barrell Pond, existing dirt roads)
- **Building Envelope** – 5 acres (Primary residence of landowner)

A conservation easement does not include the right of public access.

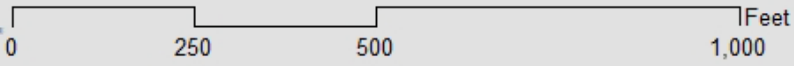
# Watermelon Pond - Howell Conservation Easement Zone Map



SW 230 Street Private

Watermelon Pond Preserve Ferran Tract

- Legend**
- Howell Parcel (40 ac.)
  - Building Envelope (~5 ac.)
  - Preservation Zone I (35 ac.)
  - Preserve
  - Conservation Easement
  - Access Road
  - County Boundary



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# Howell Conservation Easement Acquisition Land Management Principles

1. Maintenance, enhancement and ecological restoration of native plant and wildlife habitat.
2. Protection of unique and fragile natural areas and rare species habitats, specifically sandhill, sinkhole ponds, rosemary scrub and Barrel Pond.
3. Protection and maintenance of natural resource values in avoiding land fragmentation.
4. Protection of open space and the scenic and other distinctive natural characteristics of the landscape.
5. Maintenance of soil health and control of soil erosion.
6. Protection of surface water and ground water quality and recharge to the Floridan Aquifer, wetlands, riparian areas, and specifically Watermelon Pond.
7. Maintenance of the health of the forest resources.
8. Protection of federal and state listed imperiled species and their habitats.

# Howell Conservation Easement Prohibitions

1. Division, partitioning, lot-splitting, or subdivision in any manner of the Property;
2. Development rights or density credits transferred to any other property;
3. Construction or placing buildings, roads, signs, billboards or other advertising, utilities, or other structures on or above the ground not specifically permitted in the deed;
4. Dumping or placing soil or other substance or material such as landfill or dumping or placing of trash, waste, debris, or unsightly or offensive materials;
5. Removing or destroying trees, shrubs, or other vegetation (excluding exotic invasive species or for ecological restoration), “Removal of Vegetation and Introduction of Exotic Plants” deed sections, or “Conservation Easement Stewardship Plan”;
6. Surface use, except for purposes that permit the land area to remain predominantly in its natural condition;
7. Activities detrimental to drainage, flood control, water conservation, erosion control, soil conservation, or fish and wildlife habitat preservation;
8. Commercial Water Wells are strictly prohibited on the Protected Property;

# Howell Conservation Easement Prohibitions cont'

9. There shall be no exploration for and extraction of oil, gas, minerals, peat, muck, marl, limestone, lime rock, kaolin, fuller's earth, phosphate, common clays, gravel, shell, sand, and similar substances, under and by virtue of the authority of a grant or reservation or other form of ownership of or interest in or control over or right to such substances;
10. Obtain a mortgage superior to the priority of the Conservation Easement;
11. Hunting or trapping outside compliance of Florida Laws or beyond, deer, turkey, and feral hogs;
12. Introduce, or allow the intentional introduction or propagation of non-native, exotic plants;
13. Activities that may reasonably be expected to adversely affect state and federally listed, threatened, or endangered species;
14. Introduce, or allow the intentional introduction or propagation of non-native, exotic plants;
15. Storage and application of Fertilizer;
16. Construction of new trails within the Preservation Zone.




# Summary of Proposed Howell CE Acquisition

- Howell Option Contract: No Permitted Exceptions
- Non-standard exceptions the County may permit: Schedule B-II Title Exceptions #3, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9:
  - #3. Any Owner's Policy issued pursuant hereto will contain under Schedule B the following exception: Any adverse ownership claim by the State of Florida by right of sovereignty to any portion of the Land insured hereunder, including submerged, filled and artificially exposed lands, and lands accreted to such lands.
  - #5. Easement recorded in O.R. Book 1526, Page 768, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.
  - #6. Easement in favor of Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc. recorded in O.R. Book 2397, Page 2974, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.
  - #7. Declaration of Submission to Watermelon Triangle Corporation as recorded in O.R. Book 3903, Page 996, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida.
  - #8. Coverage is excepted as to riparian and littoral rights; the possible right of the public to use beach area and/or waterways; and any Land insured herein that was formerly or is currently submerged, including any filled lands, artificially exposed lands, and lands accreted to such lands, for the rights of the United States Government and the State of Florida. If the Navigational Servitude Endorsement is attached to this policy and made a part hereof, the coverage afforded thereby shall not extend to any portion of the Land subject to a claim of ownership by the State of Florida by right of sovereignty. Commitment exception #3 is hereby deleted in its entirety.
  - #9. This policy does not insure title to any mobile home located on the Land insured herein.
- **Some of the title exceptions may be deleted prior to closing based on additional title examination or the survey.**

# Summary of Costs

## Howell Conservation Easement Acquisition

- Estimated due diligence cost = \$49,600
    - Boundary survey and signage
    - Title insurance
    - Baseline Documentation Report
    - Phase I ESA
    - Attorney's fees and recording
  - Total Expenditure Request: = **\$219,560**
    - Land cost = \$150,000
    - Due diligence = \$49,600
    - 10% contingency = \$19,960
  - Closing Date: November 2024
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# Howell Conservation Easement Acquisition Recommendations

1. Approve and authorize the Chair to:
  - a) Exercise the Option to Purchase the Watermelon Pond – Howell Conservation Easement pursuant to the Option Contract, subject to the County’s rights to conduct due diligence inspections and notice Seller of Title Defects and Environmental Defects as set forth in the Option Contract, and
  - b) Execute the Watermelon Pond – Howell Conservation Easement Deed in advance of closing;
2. Delegate to the County Manager the authority to determine whether the County will accept the non-permitted title exceptions, #3, #5, #6, #7, #8, and #9; and
3. Approve the acquisition subject to an approximately 30’ wide utility corridor replacement easement, to be drafted during due diligence, allowing replacement and termination of title exception #6; and
4. Authorize staff to execute additional documents as necessary to close the transaction; and
5. Approve the attached budget amendment authorizing the expenditure of funds for due diligence and associated closing costs.

**QUESTIONS?**

