



Alachua County Board of County Commissioners

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Administration
Michele L. Lieberman
County Manager

August 15, 2024

The Honorable Gib Coerper, Mayor
City of Alachua
15100 NW 142 Terrace
Alachua, FL 32615

Re: Affected Party Status at the City's August 26, 2024 Hearing

Dear Mayor Coerper,

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners appreciates the City of Alachua's continued dedication to sound planning. Thank you for working with us to protect our community's shared water resources.


At its August 13, 2024, regular meeting, the County Board directed staff to provide data and reports to the City related to Mill Creek Sink and its sensitive connection to our springs and Floridan aquifer, as many of the reports are currently offline as we update our website. In furtherance of these shared interests, and pursuant to Section 2.3.1 of the City's Land Development Regulations, the County hereby requests affected party status and the opportunity to present testimony and evidence for the Tara Forest final plat item on the City's August 26, 2024, agenda. The County is a substantially affected party due to its position as receiver and operator of the public water utility named the Santa Fe Hills Water System and its status as the beneficial holder of a conservation easement covering approximately 198 acres of Camp Kulaqua in northwestern Alachua County. In 2005 and 2006, a dye trace study was performed in the Mill Creek Sink area and demonstrated the direct hydrological connection between Mill Creek Sink and the Santa Fe Hills Water System, as well as Camp Kulaqua. The Tara Forest development is in close proximity to the Mill Creek Sink. Impacts to the Mill Creek Sink from the Tara Forest development could more directly or more substantially harm the County's property interests when compared to the general impacts on the public at large. A copy of the dye trace study is attached to this correspondence for your review. Please advise regarding any requirements on affected parties for submitting proposed evidence prior to the hearing on the Tara Forest Final Plat, including any applicable timelines.

In support of your efforts to protect these shared resources, the County encourages the City to request the County's technical, fiscal, and other resources (including expert staff in the County's Environmental Protection Department) to assist your staff with the review of upcoming projects with the potential to adversely affect the health, safety, and welfare of our shared residents (*i.e.*, Tara Forest West, Tomaka Hills, and Tara Phoenicia). Our Environmental Protection Department staff are available to consult with your professional staff and answer questions on the sensitivity of this area if that would be helpful.

In the next week or two, we will provide a copy of several known reports and available data to the City related to the sensitivity of Mill Creek Sink and its associated watershed, and the connection of this system to our shared springs and aquifer.

If you are interested, please contact me, County Manager Lieberman, or Stephen Hofstetter, Director of our Environmental Protection Department. I look forward to hearing from you and working together to preserve our community and protect our water resources.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Alford, Chair
Alachua County Board of County Commissioners
Chr24.045

- cc: Board of County Commissioners
Michele L. Lieberman, County Manager
Sylvia Torres, County Attorney
Stephen Hofstetter, County Environmental Protection Department Director
Mike DaRoza, Manager, City of Alachua
Marian Rush, City Attorney