



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00123

Agenda Date: 2/11/2025

Agenda Item Name:

Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell Contract to Purchase Real Property

Presenter:

Andi Christman, Environmental Program Manager – Environmental Protection Dept., (352) 264-6803

Description:

Staff Requests the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approve and exercise the attached Option Contract to Purchase the 30-acre Watermelon Pond - Moore, Purcell, and Trammell property from Karen Purcell Trammell, Cynthia Purcell Moore, and Michael David Purcell through the Alachua County Forever program.

The execution of this Contract to purchase Real Property, is the final BoCC action on the acquisition of this project.

Recommended Action:

1. Approve and authorize the Chair to exercise the Watermelon Pond - Moore, Purcell, and Trammell Option Contract to purchase Real Property, 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 Contract; and
2. Delegate to the County Manager the authority to decide whether to accept or reject title exceptions (#5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12 & #13) based on the County Manager's evaluation as to whether said title exceptions will substantially impair the County's proposed use of the property; and
3. Delegate to the County Manager the authority to decide whether to close the acquisition subject to title exceptions (#5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12 & #13) based on the County Manager's evaluation as to whether said title exceptions will substantially impair the County's proposed use of the property; 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.

Prior Board Motions:

On August 13, 2024, the BoCC placed Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell property on the Active Acquisition List (Full Price List).

On June 28, 2022, the BoCC adopted Resolution 22-66 amending the process for selecting and acquiring Environmentally Significant Lands purchased using Wild Spaces and Public Places local government infrastructure surtax proceeds. This authorizes the acquisition of lands through fee simple and less-than-fee means and provides the process for such.

Fiscal Note:

The attached Journal Entry requests \$258,684 to complete this acquisition (Exhibit 6).

WSPP – Land Acquisition (Capital Expense) = \$210,000

Fund#: 140.41.4160.537.61.00 – 6194101 Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell
&

Fund #: 021.41.4160.537.61.00 – 6184160 Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell
&

General Operating & Due Diligence (Operating Expense) = \$25,167

Fund #: 140.41.4160.537.31.00 - 6184160

Please see Exhibit 6 (Budget Amendment) & Exhibit 7 (Acquisition and Stewardship Costs) for additional details.

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

Staff has negotiated the attached Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell Option Contract to Purchase Real Property (Option), Exhibit 1, and it was executed by the Manager on January 31, 2025. The Option requires transmittal of a signed Notice of Exercise of Option by the BoCC Chair, to the Sellers by February 28, 2025, the date the option period ends. (Exhibit 2)

During the Inspection Period, the County shall have 120 days after the BOCC exercises its Option to conduct all due diligence on the property. The County may exercise its rights to resolve any due diligence matters pursuant to the terms of the contract within those 120 days and to extend the closing date if necessary.

The Moore, Purcell, and Trammell (MPT) property (ACPA Tax Parcel: 02697-000-000) totaling 30 acres is located in southwestern portion of Alachua County, 6.5 miles south of the City of Newberry and 7.6 miles west of the City of Archer. The MPT parcel's western side is along the Gilcrest / Alachua County boundary line, and the parcel's eastern side is adjacent to the Johnson (under contract) & Eichhorn parcels. The MPT parcel is 4,400 feet to the west and 1,500 feet to the north and south of Goethe State Forest.

The MPT parcel is within the Alachua County Forever Watermelon Pond Project Area and falls within the Watermelon Pond Strategic Ecosystem. There is one natural community type on the property: sandhill, in good to fair condition. Sandhill is a globally imperiled natural community, with a limited footprint in Alachua County. In addition to extremely high species richness and diversity, the deep sandy soils provide important aquifer recharge, making have the opportunity to protect and restore it extremely valuable. The MPT parcel has an overstory that consists of mature longleaf pine trees with natural regeneration occurring, with a wide range of species diversity in the mid-story and groundcover. The property does have a 200-foot-wide cleared utility line traversing through the property from north to south. The power line is Pinellas County Power Company, and the gas line is

owned by Sabal Trail Transmission, LLC.

A low density of invasive species was observed during the MPT site visit; within the powerline and gas line right of way, staff observed Bahia and centipede grass. Additional information can be found in the attached property evaluation. (Exhibit 3 & Exhibit 4)

There are no Permitted Exceptions in the Moore, Purcell, and Trammell Option Contract, but these non-standard Schedule B-II Title Exceptions are noted: (#5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12 & #13):

5. Easement to Pinellas County Power Company recorded July 25, 1946 in Deed Book 226, Page 121, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida (as to Parcel)

#6. Easement for ingress and egress contained in warranty deed recorded May 25, 1978, in O.R. Book 1138, Page 495, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to EASEMENT INTEREST 3)

7. Terms and conditions of the ingress and egress contained in instrument recorded in O.R. Book 1138, Page 496, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to EASEMENT INTEREST 1)

#8. Terms and conditions of the ingress and egress contained in instrument recorded in O.R. Book 1138, Page 497, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to EASEMENT INTEREST 2)

#9. Easement for ingress and egress contained in instrument recorded May 25, 1978, in O.R. Book 1138, Page 498, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to PARCEL)

10. Terms and conditions of the ingress and egress easement contained in instrument recorded in O.R. Book 1138, Page 499, Public Records of Alachua County Florida. (as to EASEMENT INTEREST 3)

#11. Right of way easements contained in Grants of Easement recorded August 15, 1979 in O.R. Book 1227, Page 193, as affected by Road Maintenance Agreements recorded in O.R. Book 2092, Page 333, O.R. Book 2092, Page 335 and O.R. Book 2092, Page 337, together with terms and conditions contained in said Easement and Agreements, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to EASEMENT INTERESTS 1 and 2)

#12. Grant of Easement for pipeline purposes to Sable Trail Transmission, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company recorded July 31, 2015 in O.R. Book 4369, Page 1, Public Records of Alachua County, Florida. (as to PARCEL)

#13. Rights of others in and to the use of roads crossing a portion of the Land. (as to EASEMENT INTERESTS 1, 2 AND 3)

Some of the title exceptions are expected to be deleted prior to closing based on additional title examination or the survey. (Exhibit 5)

Legal and functional access via easements start from County Road 337 / SW 282nd Street and across cross the Dumford & Palmer parcel and then the Johnson parcel. The Johnson parcel is under contract with Alachua County, and it's anticipated that the Dumford & Palmer parcel will soon be under contract with Alachua County.

A boundary survey and phase I environmental assessment are the next steps of due diligence that will

be initiated after the Option is Exercised by Alachua County. Closing transactions would occur once there has been a determination by the County Manager that there are no title, survey, or environmental defects.

Comp Plan Reference:

Acquiring the Watermelon Pond – Moore, Purcell, and Trammell Tract fulfills multiple objectives endorsed within the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, Policy 6.0 Land Conservation Program within the Conservation and Open Space Element, states “Establish and maintain a land conservation program for the purchase, preservation, and management of natural areas and open space to complement the regulatory approaches identified in other section of this element.”