



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00137

Agenda Date: 2/25/2025

Agenda Item Name:

Addition of Land Conservation Projects to the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List

Presenter:

Emily Uhlmann, Senior Planner – Environmental Protection Dept., (352) 275-2050

Description:

Staff requests the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approve the addition of the following land conservation project to the Alachua County Forever Active Acquisition List. The staff recommendation is based on the addition of this property to the Priority Pool by the Land Conservation Board (LCB) as outlined in Resolution 22-066.

1. East Newnans Lake – Putz (Full Price List)

Addition of this project to the Active Acquisition List, authorizes staff to: obtain title work and appraisals, negotiate price and terms with the owners, and execute purchase or option contracts. Any purchase contract or option will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Recommended Action:

Approve the addition of the following property on the Active Acquisition List.

1. East Newnans Lake – Putz (Full Price List)

Prior Board Motions:

None

Fiscal Note:

Total estimated cost for acquisition and 10-year stewardship: **\$287,255**

The current annual property tax revenue of all the project parcels is: **\$1,214.4**

Purchase and maintenance would be funded from the Wild Spaces Public Places surtax.

Additional details can be found in Exhibits 3 and 4.

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

East Newnans Lake – Putz: On December 20, 2024, Jack Putz nominated his property to the ACF program for consideration as a fee simple acquisition. The ~54.94-acre property is two parcels (ACPA TPN 17991-000-000 and 17993-000-000) located east of the City of Gainesville, on the south side of Newnan's Lake. It is within the East Side Newnans Lake Strategic Ecosystem and the East Newnans Lake ACF project area. It borders a State of Florida publicly owned parcel within Newnan's Lake. The property has been used as a research area and classroom by the landowner, who is a professor of ecology at the University of Florida. The communities present on the property include basin swamp (lake shore swamp), mesic hammock, baygall, mesic-scrubby flatwoods, and pine plantation. On January 23, 2025, the LCB placed the property in the Priority Pool.

Natural communities on the property are in fair to very good condition and the site contained a nice diversity of native hardwoods. The cypress along the edge of Newnan's Lake are estimated to be over 100 years old, and there is a national co-champion slash pine recorded in the bayhead. There is also a previously recorded eagle nest onsite that was seen by staff. It is unknown if the nest is active currently, but eagles and great horned owls were both heard during the site visit and could be potential users.

Coral ardisia was the primary invasive species observed and was most abundant in areas of historic disturbance around the former homesite and former citrus grove. Air potato and non-native bamboo were also observed in low densities. Staff observed several bird species during the site visit, and the landowner also stated that he has seen a variety of snake species, gopher tortoises, and evidence of black bear activity onsite.

Additional information can be found in the attached evaluation. (Exhibits 1 and 2)

The staff recommendation is based on the addition of this property to the Priority Pool by the Land Conservation Board as outlined in Resolution 22-066. As with all Alachua County conservation lands, those accepted as fee-simple acquisitions, will go through the vetting process for the Registry of Protected Places

Comp Plan Reference:

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."