



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00454

Agenda Date: 6/10/2025

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. Watermelon Pond – Yoh Jau W Trustee (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. Watermelon Pond – Yoh Jau W Trustee (Full Price List)

Prior Board Motions:

None for this parcel

Fiscal Note:

Watermelon Pond – Yoh Jau W Trustee (Fee Simple) - Cost Estimates:

Total estimated cost for acquisition and 10-year stewardship: \$530,474

The current annual property tax revenue of all the project parcels is: \$8,077.56

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:

Watermelon Pond – Yoh: On May 12, 2025, the Yoh Jau W Trustee property was nominated to the Alachua County Forever Program (ACF) by the landowner for consideration as a fee simple acquisition. The project includes one parcel (Alachua County Property Appraiser Tax Parcel Number 02699-002-000) under a trust. On May 22, 2025, the Land Conservation Board (LCB) placed approximately 66-acre property in the Priority Pool.

The Yoh property is in southwestern Alachua County near both the Gilchrest and Levy County boundaries. The property is within the ACF Watermelon Pond Project Area and the Watermelon Pond Strategic Ecosystem, and it has a little over 1300ft of road frontage on CR 337. Goethe State Forest is adjacent to the south, east across CR 337, and there is an additional tract of the Goethe State Forest within a mile to the north. The parcel is part of a larger land conservation project that the ACF program is already working on in the Watermelon Pond area. If acquired, it would provide a physical connection between Goethe State Forest to the south and the current land conservation project to the north which consists of two properties under contract and in the due diligence phase, and two properties which have been recently acquired by the County.

The property is entirely pasture, and there is one mobile home onsite. It was evaluated as a desktop evaluation and did not receive an individual property score, but was presented to the LCB as an addition to the existing land conservation project area to the north, pursuant to BOCC Resolution 22-066 section 4(2)d.. The property is already within the Watermelon Pond ACF project area boundary, which has a REPA score of 7.47.

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

The staff recommendation is based on the addition of these properties 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.”