

8/22/2024

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Altered landcover types are successional hardwood hammock, old field pine plantation, improved pasture, and low impact development.

Wetland features on the property include a marsh lake and a sandhill upland lake. The property contains 4.2 acres (approximately half) of an 8.6 acre marsh lake which crosses the northern boundary into an adjacent property. The marsh edge is populated with maidencane, meadowbeauties, and several species of St. John's Wort. A sandhill upland lake adjacent to the marsh has apparent connectivity to the aquifer, based on landowner accounts. The hydrology of the wetlands visible in the historic aerial imagery appears to be reduced, possibly due to planted pines. Approximately 27.2 acres of the property fall within the hundred-year floodplain associated the wetlands.

Upland communities include sandhill, xeric hammock, sinkholes, planted pine, and successional hardwood hammocks. The west side of the property is predominantly former sandhill, in fair condition, with longleaf pine and turkey oak. Patches of successional oak midstory have encroached due to fire suppression, but other areas retain characteristic sandhill open understory and intact groundcover of wiregrass, gopher apple, and herbaceous diversity. The former sandhill has an understory of various species of pawpaw, prickly pear, Florida rosemary, saw palmetto, and a canopy of sand live oak, successional hardwoods, and occasional mature longleaf pine and turkey oak.

Aerial imagery indicates the presence of hardwood hammock on the east side of the property dating back to the 1930s, although the current hardwood community cover is far more extensive due to fire suppression. Young laurel and live oaks, along with sparkleberry, comprise the majority of the midstory, but a number mature sand live oaks form the canopy. The presence of terrestrial lichens indicate a history of xeric hammock, and the abundance of coontie suggests a mesic hammock with historic human habitation.

The old field pine plantation has a mixed oak and pine canopy including mature sand live oaks and occasional mature longleaf pines with midstory of blueberry and pawpaw species. The planted pine areas are mostly longleaf and some loblolly, some with an open understory of pasture grasses and some with a midstory of successional oaks and little groundcover. Two improved pastures totaling approximately 8 acres lie to the north and west of the homestead.

The property's agricultural use history included row crops and later swine farming. The swine pastures have since been converted into pine plantations. Solid waste associated with the agricultural operations include old fencing, sheds, and a water tank. Staff also found a small dump site of bottles and other glass and metal household waste probably dating to the 1970s or prior. Two good condition pole barns and a good condition mobile home occupied by the property owner are located in the cleared area of the eastern parcel. Two sheds and a garage are associated with the homesite. An old mobile home in very poor condition with a large attached screen porch lies in the western parcel. Invasive plants observed on the site visit included a few scattered mimosa trees and a camphor tree. An established population of non-native bamboo was found on the western parcel with a heavy infestation covering approximately 1.5 acres around the old mobile home.

Wildlife observations included deer, gopher tortoise as well as numerous signs of the larger deer and tortoise populations including deer tracks, buck rubs, and numerous gopher tortoise burrows.

Many frog, insect, and bird calls were heard and a tricolored heron was observed in the marsh along the north boundary of the property. The landowner reported sightings of turkey, bobcat, diamondback and pygmy rattlesnake, fox squirrel, occasional quail and indigo snake, three species of rat snake, and alligator.

No archaeological sites are known to occur on the property. Site disturbances include historic land clearing for pasture areas, likely soil disturbance and native groundcover extirpation by pigs during farm operation, planting of offsite pines in some of the planted pine areas, and planting of offsite hardwoods and non-native bamboo.

Development Review:

This development analysis is based on a limited desk-top review and is founded upon current County Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies. The Development Scenario is oversimplified and is meant only to convey a general sense of the potential of development intensity that could be possible based on land use and zoning conditions.

The parcels are currently owned by Gary D. Hawkins and have a Future Land Use of Rural/Agriculture. Under the current land use and zoning, development of the parcels is limited primarily to agricultural uses and low-density single-family development (1 unit per 5 acres), with other development types allowed on a limited basis. The parcels are located in unincorporated Alachua County, east of SW 230th St. and north of SW 119th Ave. They are located north of the Ashton Biological Preserve and east of the Watermelon Pond Preserve.

There are natural features on the parcels that would have protection from development activities under current regulations. Review of wetlands data and aerial imagery indicates there are several wetlands on the subject property, totaling approximately 8.67 acres. The wetlands on site would be protected by Chapter 406, Article VI of the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC), as well as an upland buffer that would be required to maintain a 50' minimum, 75' average width. Given the estimated extent and location of the wetlands and the 75' average buffer, approximately 20.1 acres of the property would be protected from development. The wetlands are located primarily within the northern half and in the southeast corner of parcel 02711-000-000, and within the eastern half of parcel 02711-006-002. This leaves the center of parcel 02711-000-000 and the western half of parcel 02711-006-002 available for development. In addition, there are 27.16 acres associated with the wetlands that are located in a flood zone. The parcels are not located within a strategic ecosystem.

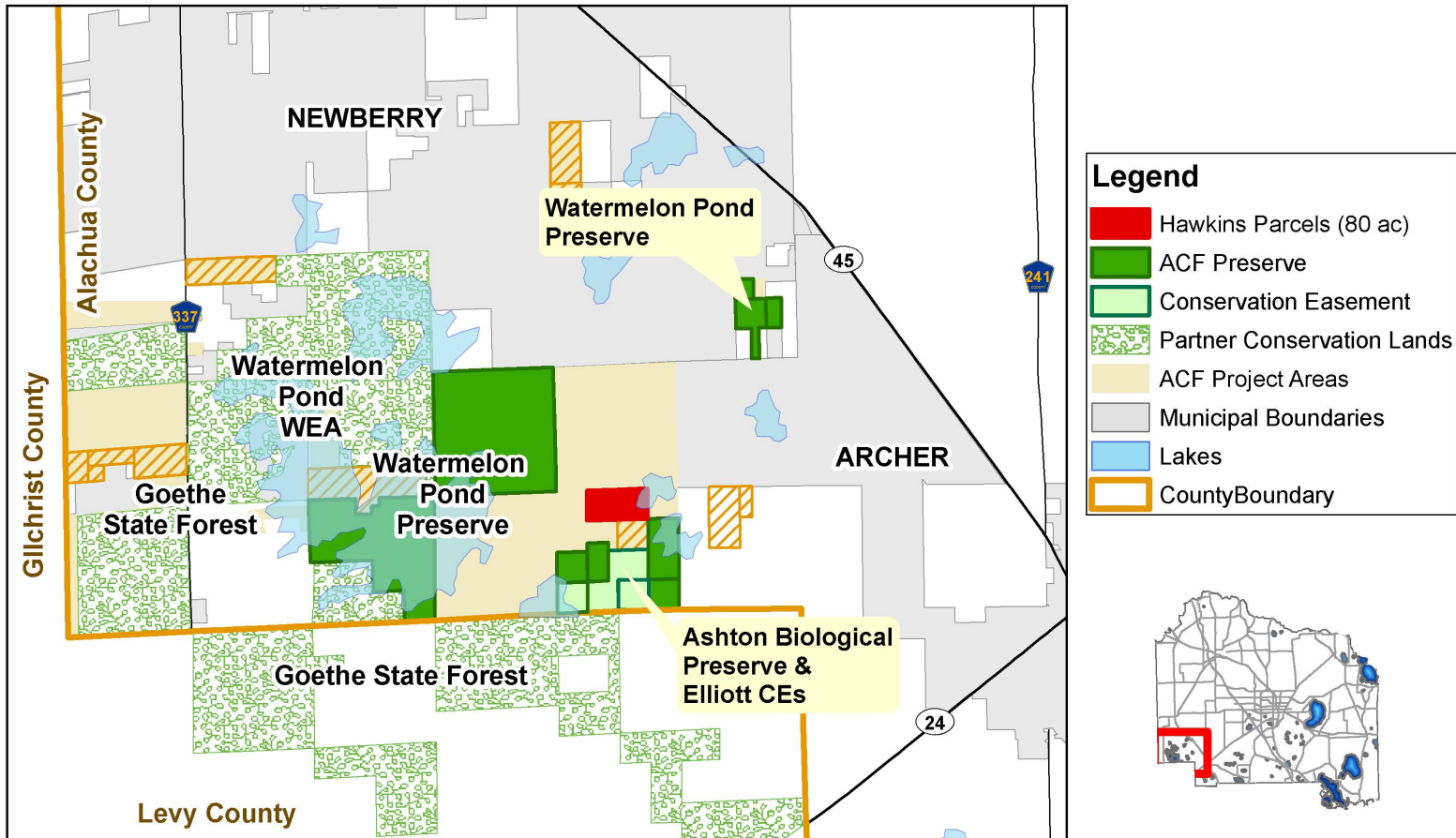
Given the current zoning and future land use and the location and extent of the wetlands on the parcels, these properties are still developable. However, the remote location, limited availability of infrastructure, construction costs, and generally limited development demand in the area would limit development potential for these sites.

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CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(I-1) PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES	A. Whether the property has geologic/hydrologic conditions that would easily enable contamination of vulnerable aquifers that have value as drinking water sources;		5		
	B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;		5		
	C. Whether the property contains or has direct connections to lakes, creeks, rivers, springs, sinkholes, or wetlands for which conservation of the property will protect or improve surface water quality;		1		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		2		
(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES	A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;		2		
	B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;		3		
	C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;		2		
	D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;		4		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		3		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		3		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		3		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		4		
(I-3) PROTECTION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES	A. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species or species of special concern;		4		
	B. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for species with large home ranges;		4		
	C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;		5		
	D. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering;		3		
	E. Whether the property offers high vegetation quality and species diversity;		3		
	F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species.		4		
(I-4) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;		2		
	B. Whether the property contributes to urban green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective.		3		
	AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES			3.25	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	1.333			4.33
(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES	A. Whether it will be practical to manage the property to protect its environmental, social and other values (examples include controlled burning, exotics removal, maintaining hydro-period, and so on);		3		
	B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.		4		
(II-2) ECONOMIC AND ACQUISITION ISSUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions;		2		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;		3		
	C. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the environmental, social or other values of the property through development and/or lack of sufficient legislative protections (this requires analysis of current land use, zoning, owner intent, location and		3		
	AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES			3.00	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	0.667			2.00
	TOTAL SCORE				6.33
NOTES					
	General Criteria Scoring Guidelines				
	1 = Least beneficial, 2 = Less Beneficial than Average, 3 = Average, 4 = More Beneficial than Average, 5 = Most Beneficial				

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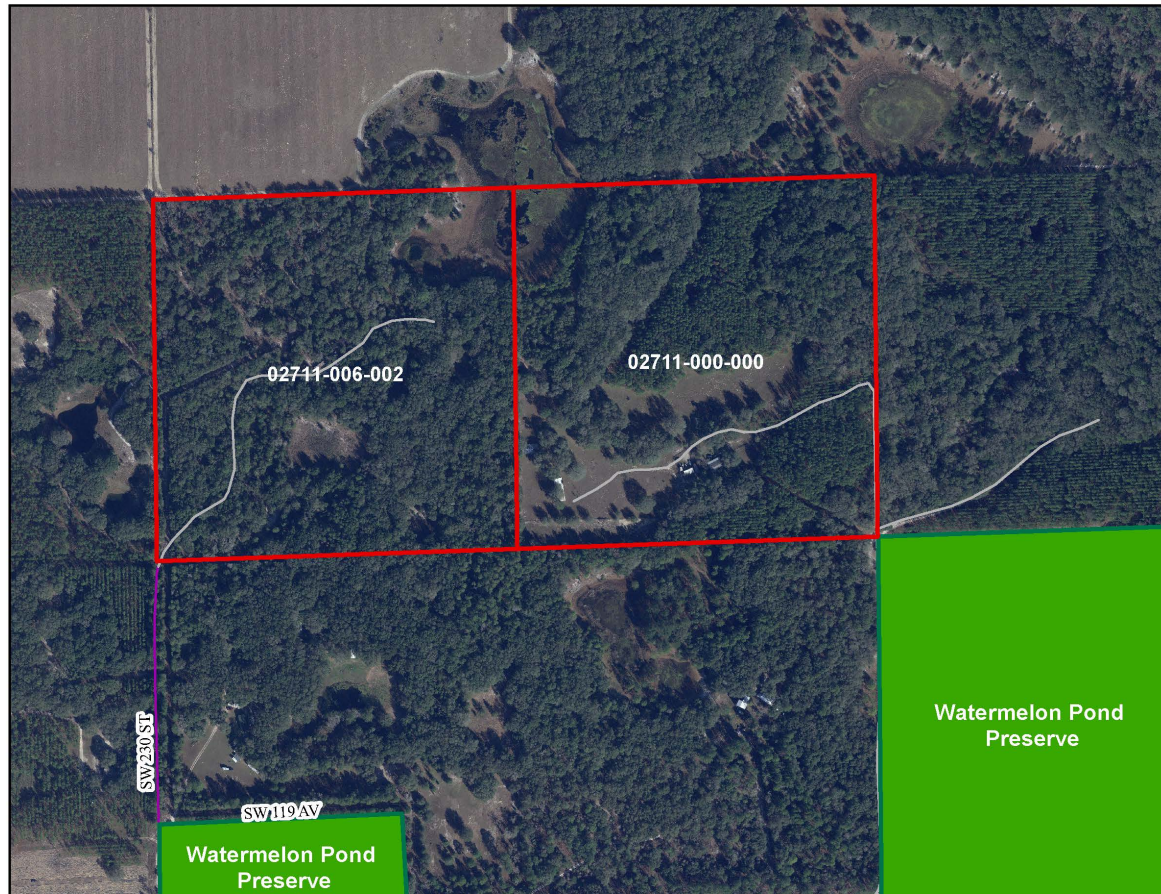
Watermelon Pond - Hawkins Location Map



0 1 2 4 Miles

DISCLAIMER: This map and the spatial data it contains are made available as a public service, to be used for reference purposes only. The Alachua County Environmental Protection Department provides this information AS IS without warranty of any kind. The quality of the data is dependent on the various sources from which each data layer is obtained.

Watermelon Pond - Hawkins Parcel Map

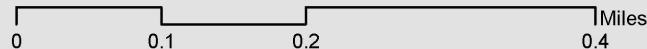
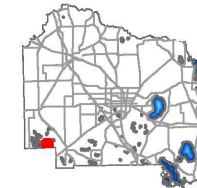


Legend

- Hawkins Parcels (80 ac)
- ACF Preserve

Lesser Roads

- Private Street
- Unnamed



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