



## Agenda Item Summary

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**File #: 25-00634**

**Agenda Date: 9/9/2025**

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**Agenda Item Name:**

**Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, as Trustee of the Jau Wang Yoh Revocable Trust  
Assignment of Option Contract to Purchase Real Property**

**Presenter:**

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

**Description:**

Staff Requests the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) approve and exercise the attached Assignment of Option Contract to purchase the 66.25-acre Watermelon Pond – Real Property from Jau Wang Yoh as Trustee of the Jau Wang Yoh Revocable Trust, through the Alachua County Forever program.

The execution of this Assignment of Option Contract and Exercise of Option 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 execute the Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee Assignment of Option Contract (from Alachua Conservation Trust) to purchase Real Property (Exhibit 1); and
2. Approve and authorize the following, conditioned upon the County entering into the Assignment of Option Contract
  - a. Approve and Authorize Chair to exercise the Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee 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
  - b. Delegate to the County Manager the authority to decide whether to accept or reject title exceptions (#5, #6, and #8) 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
  - c. Delegate to the County Manager the authority to decide whether to close the acquisition subject to title exceptions (#5, #6, and #8) 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

- d. Authorize staff to execute additional documents as necessary to close the transaction; and
- e. Approve the attached budget amendment authorizing the expenditure of funds for due diligence and associated closing costs.

**Prior Board Motions:**

On June 10, 2025, the BoCC placed Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee 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 \$1,061,348 to complete this acquisition (Exhibit 7).

WSPP – Land Acquisition (Capital Expense) = \$927,500 (+10% contingency)

Fund#: 140.41.4160.537.61.00 – 6194101 Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee &

General Operating & Due Diligence (Operating Expense) = \$37,362 (+10% contingency)

Fund #: 140.41.4160.537.31.00 - 6184160

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

**Strategic Guide:**

Environment

**Background:**

The 66.25 acre Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee property was nominated to the Alachua County Forever program on May 12, 2025, and was added to the Active Acquisition List on June 10, 2025. The property is actively on the market, however, and due to its critical location as a linkage between Watermelon Pond Preserve and Goethe State Forest, Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) has obtained an assignable Option Contract to purchase the 66.25 acre Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee property, Exhibit 1. Following Contract Assignment to the County, the Option Contract will require transmittal of a signed Notice of Exercise of Option by the BoCC Chair, to the Sellers by October 27, 2025, the date the option period ends (Exhibit 2). Once the BoCC executes the assignment of option and exercises the Option, ACT has no remaining obligation or involvement in the transaction.

During the Inspection Period, the County shall have 60 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 60 days and to extend the closing date if necessary.

The Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee property (ACPA Tax Parcel: 02699-002-000) totaling 66.25 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 Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee parcel is about 1,000 feet east of the Gilchrest / Alachua County boundary line, and the parcel is directly across County Road 337 to the west and adjacent to the north of Goethe State Forest. In addition, the Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee parcel

is adjacent to the south to the Dumford & Palmer parcel that Alachua County recently closed on. This The Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee tract is within the Alachua County Forever Watermelon Pond Project Area and within the Watermelon Pond Strategic Ecosystem.

The main impetus for the parcel acquisition is to widen the connection of County Watermelon Pond Preserve land to Goethe State Forest. The entire Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee parcel is improved pasture grass that was previously a sandhill natural community. The parcel has not been grazed by cattle recently and is transitioning into fallow pastureland with sand live oaks, cabbage palm and a variety of native ground cover and shrub species sprouting up. Since the parcel is surrounded on three sides with sandhill on conservation land staff feel that some natural seeding and regeneration will occur. County staff will augment the natural regeneration with native plantings and prescribe fire to supplement the ecological restoration process.

Other than the dominant pasture grasses groundcover, minimal invasive species were observed during the Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee site visit. The mobile home and defunct automobiles on-site will be removed by the landowner, prior to closing. Additional information can be found in the attached property evaluation. (Exhibit 3 & 4)

There are no Permitted Exceptions in the Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee Option Contract, but these non-standard Title Exceptions are noted: (#5 & #6, and #8):

# 5. Reservations in favor of the State of Florida, as contained in that certain deed recorded in Deed Book 198, Page 488, Official Records of Alachua County, Florida. These reservations include an easement for a State Right-of-Way.

#6. Easements in favor of Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc. as recorded in O.R. Book 2812, Page 900, Official Records of Alachua County, Florida. This easement permits the Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Inc. to construct, reconstruct, operate and maintain electric transmission and distribution lines and related facilities over and across the property.

#8. Easement over the south fifteen (15) feet contained in instrument recorded February 29, 1996 in O.R. Book 2051, Page 2068, Official Records of Alachua County Florida. This is a non-exclusive easement over and across the south boundary of the property that provides access to the parcel immediately to the west.

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 on the Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee parcel is provided through its eastern road frontage along County Road SW 282nd Street.

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.

The Seller requested that the County indemnify the Seller for acts committed on its property during the inspection period. In accordance with the policy written in BoCC Resolution No. 2014-13 (Exhibit 9), the County generally does not indemnify contracted parties. However, the Board of County Commissioners may waive this policy based on the procedure in BoCC Resolution No. 2014-13. County staff has

complied with all of the requirements in the Resolution.

Comp Plan Reference:

Acquiring the Watermelon Pond – Jau Wang Yoh, Trustee 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.”