



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00830

Agenda Date: 10/14/2025

Agenda Item Name:

Application for Entity Status with USDA NRCA for partnership in Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Acquisition and Program Agreement Resolution

Presenter:

Andi Christman, Land Conservation Program Manager, 352-284-6803

Description:

Resolution authorizing County Manager signature on entity application and partnership agreements with the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) for the Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) program.

Recommended Action:

Request for the Board to adopt a Resolution authorizing the County Manager or her designee to complete and execute the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Entity Application for an Agriculture Land Easement Agreement, and execute all documents associated with it including any amendments to the application. Also, authorizing the County Manager or her designee to negotiate, finalize the terms and conditions, and execute the Program Agreement between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Alachua County for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) Agreement, and authorizing the County Manager or her designee to execute all the associated documents with this Program Agreement.

Prior Board Motions:

On September 10, 2024 the Board adopted BoCC Resolution 24-081 establishing a process for selecting and acquiring interest in agriculturally significant lands; and directed staff to prioritize projects with cost-sharing from partners or landowner donation.

Fiscal Note:

This action does not obligate any funds, but establishes an agreement allowing USDA partner funds to provide cost-share for County-acquired conservation easements, if approved. Any purchase contract for a conservation agreement will be presented to the Board for consideration on a separate agenda item, along with any acquisition costs or budget associated with that specific purchase contract.

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

The Entity Application for an Agricultural Land Easement (ALE) Agreement, form NRCS-CPA-41

(Exhibit 1), must be submitted for Alachua County to be accepted into the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's "Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE)" Program administered by the Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) Florida office. Acceptance into this program allows Alachua County to seek 50% federal cost-share and technical assistance toward the purchase of agriculturally related conservation easements that protect natural resources, water resources, and grasslands on working agricultural lands by prohibiting future non-agricultural land uses such as residential land development and sub-division of land while also limiting other uses.

In execution of the Entity Application, Alachua County certifies that the County has the resources necessary to acquire, monitor, manage, and enforce the easements being applied for and acknowledge that additional documentation to substantiate this may be required to receive Federal cost-share assistance. The County also verifies receipt and review of the ALE-Program Agreement (Exhibit 2) and associated attachments and understand that the terms of any agricultural land easement deed entered into by the County with USDA as a partner must address the provisions required as a condition of participation in ACEP-ALE as identified in the ALE-Program Agreement. Land Conservation Program Staff will perform the actions required through this certification and verification. Alachua County has previously entered into an ALE-Program Agreement with USDA (Exhibit 3), but the 5-year term of that agreement has ended.

Following acceptance as an entity by the USDA, staff will negotiate a Program Agreement between Alachua County and the USDA NRCS, and property-specific forms and documents for each conservation easement qualifying for potential USDA partnership. These agreements and documents will be presented for approval and execution by the County Manager and Board as appropriate and in accordance with County and Board policy and USDA NRCS requirements.