



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 25-00959

Agenda Date: 12/9/2025

Agenda Item Name:

North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) – Notice of Grant Award Requirements

Presenter:

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Description:

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, has awarded land acquisition reimbursement funding to Alachua Conservation Trust and Alachua County through the North Florida Wetland Connector Conservation Project: Phase 3. Alachua County, as an established partner in the Project, will receive up to \$400,000 in land acquisition reimbursement funding for acquisition of lands within the North Florida Wetlands Connector Conservation Project. The grant award and partner commitments require that a notice of grant requirements be recorded for any properties included in the grant project.

Recommended Action:

1. Approve and Authorize Chair Signature on the Notice of Grant Requirements for the Lake Santa Fe – Dinh property (Exhibit 1) upon receipt of executed grant award agreement between ACT and USFWS; and
2. Approve and Authorize Chair Signature on the Notice of Grant Requirements for the Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods - Brown property (Exhibit 2) upon receipt of executed grant award agreement between ACT and USFWS; and
3. Direct staff that the Notice of Grant Requirements for the Lake Santa Fe - Dinh property and the Notice of Grant Requirements for the Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods - Brown property be recorded in the official records for Alachua County upon signature by the Chair.

Prior Board Motions:

1. March 22, 2022 – The Board approved and authorized the Chair to exercise the option to purchase the Lochloosa Creek - Brown property.
2. March 28, 2023, the Board approved and authorized the Chair to exercise the option to purchase the Lake Santa Fe - Dinh property.
3. June 28, 2022 - the Board authorized the Chair to sign and submit the Partner Contribution Statement for Alachua Conservation Trust's North Florida Wetland Connector Conservation Project - NAWCA Phase 3 grant application. In signing the partner contribution statement, the County also affirmed willingness to apply a Notice of Grant Agreement or other recordable document to the grant properties.

Fiscal Note:

Total NAWCA grant award is \$1,000,000.00. This grant is for a larger geographic area applied for by the Alachua Conservation Trust in which they will receive \$600,000.00; Alachua County will receive up to \$400,000.00 in land acquisition reimbursement funding which will be applied to the Due Diligence and Acquisition project tiers in Fund 021 (Wild Spaces Public Places). (Fund 021.41.4160.331.3900).

Strategic Guide:

Environment

Background:

Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) was awarded grant funding for conservation land acquisition from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) program to protect critical habitat for migratory birds and other wetland-dependent species in north central Florida. As a partner in this project, Alachua County will receive up to \$400,000.00 in land acquisition reimbursement funding from ACT for Phase 3 of the North Florida Wetland Connector Conservation Project, under the grant awarded to Alachua Conservation Trust from the United States Department of the Interior – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service North American Wetlands Conservation Fund.

This grant award required evidence that ACT is supported by a partner entity that is already committed to conservation of land and water resources within the NAWCA grant region and that the grant awards will complement those existing conservation efforts in the same region. Alachua County provided those commitments in the form of Partner Contribution Statement (Exhibit 3) for the Phase 3 grant application process, specifically contributing the county's acquisition expenditures for the Alachua County Forever Program's (ACF) Lake Santa Fe – Dinh and Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods – Brown acquisitions as required match. The grant award and partner commitments require that a notice of grant requirements be recorded for any properties included in the grant project. The Notice of Grant Requirements establishes the obligation to comply with the grant terms and conditions (Exhibit 4), to ensure the long-term conservation of the Property and to obtain the consent of the US Fish and Wildlife Service – Division of Bird Habitat Conservation (DBHC) prior to the sale, conveyance or encumbrance of any interest therein. If any interest is converted, sold, conveyed, or otherwise encumbered, an attributable share may be owed to DBHC.

Approval and recording of these Notices of Grant Requirements serves as public notice that the County must use the property consistent with the purposes of the grant (Exhibit 5) and cannot dispose of the property. Upon receipt of the executed award agreement between ACT and the USFWS (receipt delayed due to recent federal government shutdown), the agreement number and date will be added to the Notice of Grant Requirements for each property, and the NOGR will be signed by the Chair and recorded.

A similar Notice has been approved by the BOCC and recorded for previous NAWCA match properties including: Lochloosa Slough Preserve (in 2024), Little Orange Creek Preserve (in 2012) and Barr Hammock Preserve (in 2008). These types of recorded Notices are typical for land conservation grants. The purposes of the land conservation projects are unchanged under the terms of the grant and remain consistent with the County's goals when the properties were acquired under the Alachua County Forever program.

Comp Plan Reference:

Alachua County Comprehensive Plan (2019-2040):

Conservation and Open Space Element: 6.0 LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM; Objective 6.4 “Other Acquisition Programs,” states: “Coordinate with other programs for the acquisition and management of natural areas and open space for recreational, open space and conservation purposes.”

Policy 6.4.1 states:

“The County shall seek to maximize the effectiveness of local revenue sources by using them to leverage funds available from federal, state, municipal, private non-profit, and Water Management District programs, such as Florida Forever, Florida Communities Trust (FCT), Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL), and Save-Our-Rivers (SOR).”

Policy 6.4.2 states:

“The County shall provide support, in the form of information, coordination, assistance in obtaining grants, and other support activities to organizations and agencies that acquire and protect natural areas and open space for conservation, open space, and recreational purposes.”