

Gainesville Sensitive Lands Prioritization Project

Undeveloped parcels within or near the City of Gainesville protect creeks and wetlands, provide habitat for wildlife and plants, and could provide recreational opportunities for the public. Despite the environmental value of these remaining vacant urban greenspaces, they generally are smaller and more expensive than vacant parcels in other parts of the county. For this reason, they often fall through the cracks of existing land purchasing programs such as Alachua County Forever. A City of Gainesville conservation land acquisition program would help to protect some of the remaining natural areas in and around the city. In addition, a land buying program would be viewed favorably by potential partners such as Alachua County Forever, and better enable the City of Gainesville to protect more land by leveraging funds from state land acquisition programs.

With assistance from City Planning staff, City of Gainesville Nature Operations Division staff identified over 3000 undeveloped parcels within the City which could potentially serve as conservation land. From these, a subset of parcels was prioritized as ecologically significant based upon multiple factors including:

- their size
- their proximity and connection to existing conservation lands and greenway corridors,
- significant natural communities or features they are known to contain, and
- published reports recommending their conservation.

It should be noted that these recommendations were based on professional judgments derived from existing information, and not on a comprehensive evaluation of all 3000 parcels.

City staff also solicited comment from Alachua County Forever (ACF) and the Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT). Both entities expressed a strong interest in working with the City to obtain funds from the Florida Communities Trust and with negotiating with landowners. In addition, ACT recommended some additional parcels for consideration. These additional lands have not been evaluated by the City, but are included for reference on the attached map.

The parcels recommended for acquisition are listed below and highlighted on the attached Sensitive Lands Acquisition Priorities Map. Both parcels that would be considered for purchase and those that would be candidates for protection through other means (conservation easements, interlocal agreements, etc.) are included.

Top Priority Parcels:

	Property	Size	Location	Comments	Parcels	Zoning
1	Johnson	89 acres	E. University Ave.	Swamp, flatwoods, sandhill, and creek directly across from Morningside.	10890-000-000 10889-000-000	R2, R1b* R2*
2	Barnes	50 acres	Adjacent to I-75	Last remaining unprotected portion of Hogtown Prairie; adjacent to Split Rock Conservation Area.	06684-000-000 06684-001-000	Residential*
3	Burch	40 acres	S. of Newberry Rd. Behind Creekside Mall	Hogtown Creek floodplain and important greenway connector; Adjacent to Green Acres Park.	06514-000-000	Con. MU1
4	Barnes #2	44.5 acres	E of Lake Kana-paha near I-75	Upland woods adjacent to Hogtown Prairie; potential access point for Lake Kanapaha and Split Rock Conservation Area.	06828-000-000	Ag*
5	Rubric	17 acres	SW 62 nd Blvd. near Terwilliger Pond	Connector between existing greenway properties and SW 62 nd St.; nice hammock.	06566-000-000	PD

2nd Priority Parcels:

	Property	Size	Location	Comments	Parcels	Zoning
6	Hogtown Creek floodplain	Approx 189 acres	West of SW 34 th St., south of Green Acres Park	Several undeveloped parcels containing large portions of the Hogtown Creek floodplain. Adjacent to Green Acres Park. UF conservation areas, and the city's Pinkoson property.	06745-000-000 06743-004-000 06738-000-000 06724-000-000 06723-000-000 06715-001-000 06715-000-000 06712-000-000 06695-000-000	Ag* Ag* Ag* Ag, R-3* Ag* Ag* A RMF5 A. Con
7	Cone Park Southwest	70 acres	Between SR 26 and SR 20, East of SE 24 th St.	Several undeveloped parcels containing the convergence of Lake Forest Creek tributaries; degraded but contains remnant flatwoods and sandhill.	11243-000-000 11283-000-000 11284-000-000 11288-000-000 11286-000-000 11287-000-000 11356-000-000	RMF 5 RSF 4 RMF 5 RMF 6, MU 1 RSF 1 RSF 1 RSF 1

				16073-000-000 06146-000-000 06677-000-000 06676-000-000 06680-004-000 10860-000-000	RSF 1 BR* Residential* R2A* RMF6* Residential*
8	Henderson #2	Approx 20 acres	South side of SW 20 th Ave.	3 Parcels: Adjacent to Spitt Rock Conservation Area; contains high quality hammock.	
9	Crawford	40 acres	N. of Loftin School, at end of NE 11 th Place	Separated from Morningside by undeveloped SBAC and State lands; contains extensive wetlands and flatwoods, with some sandhill-like uplands.	

Possible less-than-free acquisitions:

	Property	Size	Location	Comments	Parcels	Zoning
A	Macahocta	200 acres	SW Williston Rd.	Already owned by City of Gainesville. Contains large area of remnant sandhill and upland pine forest, hammock in excellent condition, and has importance as a wildlife corridor between Paynes Prairie and Kanapaha Prairie.	07341-000-000	Ag*
B	Morning-side Buffers	1,236 acres	North and East of Morningside Nature Center	State-owned, undeveloped lands, not currently classified as conservation. Could potentially be protected through inter-governmental agreement; the possibility of acquiring Crawford (above) and exchanging with State for lands adjacent to Morningside should be explored.	10862-000-000 10863-000-000 10885-000-000	Ag* Ag*
C	Hogtown Head-waters Easements	12.5 acres	NW 19 th St. north of 45 th Avenue	Protection of natural values on these properties adjacent to the FCT-funded Hogtown Headwaters Nature Park project would allow better protection of the natural resources in the potential park. Pending acquisition of Home Depot property, the City should pursue conservation easements with the owners.	07900-000-000 07900-001-000 07893-000-000	RSF 1 RSF 1 RSF 1

*Property outside the Gainesville city limits.

Additional properties recommended by ACT (Not evaluated)

	Property	Size	Location	Comments	Parcels	Zoning
D	Newman's Lake Southwest Corridor	172 ac. 287 ac. 15 ac. 12 ac. 16 ac.	South of Palm Point park	Several large undeveloped parcels potentially connecting the west shore of Newman's Lake (and Palm Point park) to private conservation land (Santa Fe Land Trust), and in turn to Paynes Prairie.	17942-000-000 17944-000-000 17944-500-000 17944-500-001 17944-050-000	
	Serenola Forest	96 ac	South of SW Williston Rd., east of Oak Hammock	One large undeveloped parcel potentially connected to Paynes Prairie through several parcels of active agriculture.	07176-020-000	Planned Devp
	Blues Creek Ravine Access	62 ac	N. of Milhopper Rd. and West of NW 43 rd St	ACT and ACF have pursued a lease for access to the Blues Creek Preserve (ACT) through University of Florida property. The State is asking approximately \$120,000 for a 50-year lease to a 62 acre access area.	06005-000-000	