

Conservation Land Ranking Criteria

Category	Variable	Description
Ecological Significance	Size	In general, the larger a parcel the greater the conservation value. Since the City of Gainesville does not have many parcels greater than 100 acres within its boundary, this category is scaled to meet possible acquisition potential within the City's Urban Reserve.
	Number of viable FNAI Natural Communities	Natural community types are determined using the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) classification system. These are defined by FNAI using a combination of structure, composition, topography, substrate, soil moisture, climate, and fire conditions. Natural communities are considered viable if these functional components have not been seriously altered or distrubed to the point that the community could no longer be recognizable as an FNAI community.
	FNAI Natural Communities Ranking	This is a measure of the rarity or vulnerability of a natural community as designated by FNAI. S1 = Critically imperiled within the State of Florida because of extreme rarity or vulnerability to extinction, S2 = Imperiled within the State of Florida because of rarity or vulnerability to extinction, S3 = Either rare or local throughout its range or found locally in a restricted range, S4 = Apparently secure in Florida but may be rare in parts of its range, and S5 = Demonstrably secure in Florida.
	Ecological Processes	Fire and hydrology are the two most common processes that shape and characterize Florida's natural communities. The degree to which these processes have been altered is a critical determinant of intactness. However, the extnet to which the natural community can still support these process is also considered. Intact = typical ground cover present, little to no alteration of hydrology, presence of fire in typical return interval, and high species diversity and interactions. Intact, some restoration needed = minor hydrological alterations, fire excluded beyond typical return interval but potential for return is high, and presense of typical species. Moderately altered = moderate hydrological alterations, disturbance of groundcover where revegetation may be necessary, or other natural community restoration may be necessary. Highly altered = hydrology, groundcover or fire would be difficult to restore and restoration would be prohibitively expensive with improbable success rates.
	Typical Species	These species are listed in the FNAI Guide to Natural Communities. Those lists will be used to evaluate whether few, some or most of the typical plant and animal species are present for the natural communities on site.

	Listed Species	Any listed plant or animal species observed during site visits or previously documented are ranked with respect to their current status on the Federal, State of Florida, or FNAI lists. FNAI S1, S2, S3, and S4 were previously defined in the FNAI Natural Communities Ranking variable. Federal and State E = Endangered, Federal and State T = Threatened, Federal C = Candidate Species for Listing, State SSC = Species of Special Concern, State SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need. S4 and S5 receive points only if on the FNAI Tracking List.
	Potential Listed Species	This category was created because extensive listed species surveys cannot always be completed in the appropriate observable time of year for any given site evaluation. This category estimates the number of listed species which could occupy the site based on the quality, number and type of existing natural communities found.
	Exotic Species	The most up to date Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council Category I and II listing is used to identify exotic species found on a site.
	Water Quality Protection	This variable is ranked with respect to the site's relative importance to the Floridan aquifer as well as surface waters and flood protection. The scores for these two parameters are averaged. Karst features are those made up of porous limestone where unconfined water can filter directly into the aquifer.
Effect on Public Property	Management Potential	Factors that affect management potential of a site include size and location of property, extent of exotic infestations, ability or practicality of prescribed fire application, restoration needs, and public access development.
	Boundary Impacts	Sites that contribute to the contiguity of City-owned conservation lands and to the regularity of the boundary of City-owned conservation lands are more highly desired than those sites that are isolated from existing conservation land. A property that "compacts" a conservation area is one that by its acquisition would make the boundary of the conservation area more regular, or by its surplus would leave the remaining City property with an irregularly-shaped boundary.
	Connectedness	Properties that are near or adjacent to large conservation areas are more highly valued than properties near or adjacent to smaller conservation areas; properties separated from conservation areas by land uses that allow movement of wildlife or natural processes are more highly valued than properties separated by roads or urban land uses.
Recreational Significance	Recreational Value	Because the City of Gainesville acquires land for the benefit of the public, lands that provide public access and/or recreational opportunities are of greater value. Recreational value includes existing or potential trails or other amenities, noise or visual buffers to recreational amenities, and existing or potential access points to City conservation areas.
Preservation Expectation	Archaeological Resources	The Florida Department of Historical Resources Master Site File will be evaluated on GIS to determine if any archeological sites exist on a site.

Extrinsic Considerations	A particular property may have protection expectations in the form of deed restrictions, conservation easements, grant requirements, or citizen advocacy. Sites with those expectations will be given greater consideration. If the site is evaluated for acquisition and is already protected, the score will be low. If the site is evaluated for disposition and has protection expectations, the score will be high.
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