

**Seminole County
Acquisition and Restoration Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 29, 2024**

Members Present:

Beverly Evans, Tim Jackson, Jay Exum, Gabbie Milch, Phyllis Hall, Jeanette Schreiber

Members Absent:

David Bear

Guests:

Gay Sharpe, Parks and Natural Resource Director for Polk County via TEAMS

Staff Present:

Michael Wirsing, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
Sherry Williams, Special Projects Program Manager
Amanda Salazar, Parks and Recreation Division Manager
Gerlin Kahn, Assistant County Attorney
Cindy Kelley, Administrative Assistant

Location:

Boombah Soldiers Creek Park
2400 SR 419, Longwood, FL 32750

Pledge of Allegiance, Welcome and Introductions

The ARC meeting was called to order at 2:09 PM. Chair, Jay Exum led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Exum asked if there were any comments or edits to the May 1, 2024 minutes. There was a motion to approve by Jeanette Schreiber and seconded by Gabbie Milch with no edits. The motion passed unanimously.

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New Business:

- Gaye Sharpe from Polk County Parks and Natural Resources went over their process of Criteria for Acquisition of Land. Her PowerPoint was later transmitted to ARC members.

Old Business:

- Seminole Forever Land Acquisition Program Nomination Form was approved. Along with the timeline for properties. Staff was to supply, and comments were given by committee. Was accepted by unanimous vote. Jeanette Schreiber sent motion to approve and seconded by Phyllis Hall.
- Discussion of the Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition was begun with several examples including the criteria used for Seminole County's previous land acquisition program, Polk County's scoring criteria and a draft methodology tailored to the Seminole Forever program. ARC members agreed to review all these approaches for a more detailed discussion at the next meeting.
- Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition does not need public hearing. Only commissioner vote. Need by August 15, 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 PM.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES NEEDING ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THESE PROCEEDINGS SHOULD CONTACT THE HUMAN RESOURCES, ADA COORDINATOR 48 HOURS IN

ADVANCE OF THE MEETING AT 407-665-7941.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING THIS NOTICE, PLEASE CONTACT THE COUNTY MANAGER'S OFFICE, AT 407-665-7224. PERSONS ARE ADVISED THAT, IF THEY DECIDE TO APPEAL DECISIONS MADE AT THESE MEETINGS / HEARINGS, THEY WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE, THEY MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED, PER SECTION 286.0105, FLORIDA STATUTES.

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Cindy Kelley

Administrative Assistant

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SEMINOLE FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM
NOMINATION FORM

Program Overview:

The Seminole Forever Land Acquisition Program established a dedicated funding source for the acquisition and management of public lands for ecological protection, preservation, and recreation for the enjoyment of present and future citizens. Seminole Forever aims to identify and acquire lands to protect its water resources, natural communities, and wildlife and to provide additional greenspace and recreational opportunities as defined in the County's Park System Master Plan, whether through the addition of parks, community gardens, sustainable agriculture, or other lands for resource-based passive recreation. Properties eligible to be considered for acquisition and management under Seminole Forever shall only be natural lands, preservation-only lands, environmentally sensitive lands, resource-based passive recreation lands, and buffer lands. At the discretion of ARC, and upon approval of the Board, acquisition may also include less-than-fee simple conservation easements, and properties available under a joint acquisition process, allowing the County to share the cost and title ownership to these lands. Definitions can be found in Chapter 190, Part 6, Section 190.202 of the Seminole County Municipal Code.

Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition

Seminole Forever's funding must be spent only on acquisitions that qualify for the program. In evaluating whether a particular parcel of land qualifies for the program, The Seminole Forever Acquisition and Restoration Committee ("ARC") may consider the following criteria:

- (1) Vulnerability to development;
- (2) Diversity of species and habitats;
- (3) Connectedness to other conservation lands;
- (4) Potential uses for passive recreation or environmental education;
- (5) Existence of important water resources, including whether the property protects or recharges groundwater, enhances the water quality, provides flood protection, protects the aquifer, or has high functioning wetlands; and
- (6) Special considerations including strong public interest.

Note that increased priority will be given to those items listed under Section 190.210.

Application Cycle

ARC accepts applications anytime throughout the year for evaluation during one annual review. Qualifying applications not received by the deadline for the annual review will be considered in the next scheduled review. Seminole Forever is a willing seller program. Property owners or their representatives who wish to nominate their property for review and potential acquisition should complete the attached application. ARC will use the information submitted as part of the evaluation to make recommendations for acquisition to the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) who will give final approval. Applications and supplemental materials received as part of any submission will become the property of Seminole County and will not be returned.

Instructions & Application Requirements:

For a property to be considered by ARC, the following items must be completed:

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SEMINOLE FOREVER LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM
NOMINATION FORM

1. Willing Seller Form
2. Nomination Form
3. Permission to Enter Property Form

Applications should not exceed 10 pages of text, maps, surveys, photographs, letters, or other documentation provided for consideration at the time of nomination. For questions about the application form or land acquisition process contact:

Sherry Williams
Special Projects Program Manager
Parks and Recreation | Business Office
O: (407) 665-2170 | C: (407) 840-0556 | F: (407) 665-2179
100 E. 1st Street, 4th Floor
Sanford, FL 32771
swilliams02@seminolecountyfl.gov

Please use this form to nominate properties for consideration for acquisition in accordance with the terms set forth in the Seminole Forever program and associated criteria.

A. PROPERTY OWNER OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT INFORMATION:

Name: **Name**

Address: **Address**

City: **City** **State:** **State** **Zip:** **Zip**

Phone: **Phone Number** **Email:** **Email Address**

B. PROPERTY INFORMATION

Parcel Address/Location *(if available):* **Parcel address or location**

Full Parcel Identification Number(s)¹: **Full parcel number(s)**

Size of parcel (in acres): **Size of parcel**

Asking Price: **Asking Price**

C. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe the character of the parcel(s) (e.g., wetlands, swamps, scrub, pine forest, property configuration, topography, etc.) and approximate acreage of the individual land characteristics.

¹ List all parcel identification numbers you wish to have Seminole Forever consider for acquisition or easement. Parcel numbers are available at the Seminole County Property Appraiser's website <https://www.scpafl.org/>

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Briefly explain why this parcel(s) should be considered as eligible for purchase in the Seminole Forever Land Acquisition Program (*Please review and consider the Chapter 190 Seminole Forever Land Acquisition Program Ordinance: Part 6. Seminole County Code*).

List any known property encumbrances or encroachments. (Liens, leases, easements, deed restrictions, or boundary line encroachments from neighboring properties).

Please list known historical uses of the property. (Farm and crop type, cattle, manufacturing, timber production, mining, residential, or undeveloped)

D. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ATTACHMENTS (*supplemental documents to be submitted with the nomination form*)

- A vicinity map with sufficient information to locate the property in the field (i.e., roads, waterbodies, landmarks, etc.)
- A legal description, survey or map showing the boundaries of the property, existing streets, buildings, watercourses, easements, section lines and any deed restrictions or encumbrances.
- A copy of the existing designations on the applicable future land use and zoning maps (if available)².
- A map with designation of the property on a topographic/elevation map (if available)².
- Photographs representing the characteristics of the property.
- Any additional information that may be beneficial for ARC consideration.
- A completed Permission to Enter Property form for the ARC and county staff to conduct site visits.

² Maps may be generated by visiting [Seminole County GIS Webpage](#)

Draft Criteria for Selecting Properties for Acquisition

(1) Vulnerability to development

Underlying Zoning and land use

- i. The property is zoned and/or has a Future Land Use that allows development of at least 1 dwelling unit per acre. **1 point.**
- ii. The property is zoned for office, commercial or industrial. **1 point.**
- iii. The property is part of a Planned Unit Development or Planned Commercial Development. **2 points.**
- iv. The property is in the East Rural Area. **0 points.**
- v. The property has a Future Land Use of Conservation, is in the Wekiva River Protection Area, the Econlockhatchee River Protection Overlay, or a Wellfield Protection Area. **-1 point.**

Adjacent Development Pressure (only for sites covered in i., ii., and iii. above)

- i. Existing infrastructure including roads, sewer, and utilities are available for development of the property. **1 point.**

(2) Diversity of species and habitats

Listed Species

- i. The property is not conducive for federal or state-listed Threatened, Endangered, or Species of Special Concern. **0 points.**
- ii. The property has potential for listed species, including after restoration, but the value of the habitat is low. **1 point.**
- iii. The property has moderate potential for listed species, including after restoration. **2 points.**
- iv. The property has high potential for listed species, without the need for restoration. **3 points.**
- v. The property has excellent habitat for several listed species, or ideal habitat for a few listed species, without the need for restoration. **4 points.**

Community Rarity

- i. The property contains natural communities ranked by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) as S4. **1 point.**
- ii. The property contains natural communities ranked by the FNAI as S3. **2 points**
- iii. The property contains natural communities ranked by the FNAI as S2. **3 points.**

Native Plant Cover

- i. FNAI native plant communities comprise < 25% of the property. **0 points.**
- ii. FNAI native plant communities comprise 25% to 50% of the property. **1 point.**
- iii. FNAI native plant communities comprise 50% to 75% of the property. **2 points.**
- iv. FNAI native plant communities exceed 75 % of the property. **3 points.**

Biological Diversity: FNAI Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHCA)

- i. The property predominantly consists of Priority 5 SHCA. **1 point.**
- ii. The property predominantly consists of Priority 4 SHCA. **2 points.**
- iii. The property includes some Priority 3 SHCA. **3 points.**
- iv. The property includes some Priority 2 SHCA or lies adjacent to a Priority 1 SHCA. **4 points.**

(3) Connectedness to other conservation lands

- i. The property is isolated from other natural communities or working landscapes, such as agriculture or silviculture. **0 points.**
- ii. The property is functionally connected to other natural communities or working landscapes, such as agriculture or silviculture in private or public ownership. **1 point.**
- iii. The property includes Florida Ecological Greenway Network (FEGN) Priority 5 habitats. **2 points.**
- iv. The property includes FEGN Priority 4 habitats. **4 points.**
- v. The property is included in the FNAI Florida Wildlife Corridor (FEGN Priority 1 – 3). **6 points.**

(4) Potential uses for passive recreation or environmental education

- i. Because of issues related to access, sensitive natural communities, or wildlife affected by disturbance, the site offers limited opportunities for resource-based recreation. **1 point.**
- ii. Though the site will require the development of infrastructure to accommodate public needs, the site can be used by the public for compatible resource-based recreation. **2 points.**
- iii. The property has access for or lies adjacent to other lands that can provide access for 2 -3 compatible, resource-based recreation types to be used by the public. **3 points.**
- iv. The property has access for or lies adjacent to other lands that can provide access for multiple types of compatible, resource-based recreation such as paddling sports, fishing, hiking, equestrian, photography, nature study, and environmental education about native plants and animals and archaeological resources. **4 points.**

(5) Existence of important water resources, including whether the property protects or recharges groundwater, enhances the water quality, provides flood protection, protects the aquifer, or has high functioning wetlands

Groundwater Recharge and Unique Ecological Features

- i. The property includes or is adjacent to a lake, creek, river, spring, sinkhole, or wetland and/or is within the 100-year floodplain. **1 point.**
- ii. The property contains a significant area of medium or high groundwater recharge as depicted by the St. Johns River Water Management District Upper Floridan Aquifer Groundwater Recharge Map. **2 points.**
- iii. The property contains seepage slopes, springs, sinkholes or other unique geological features. **2 points.**

Wetlands

- i. On-site wetlands are degraded due to changes in vegetation or hydrology and cannot be effectively restored. **0 points.**
- ii. On-site wetlands are degraded due to changes in vegetation or hydrology, but they can be effectively restored. **1 point.**
- iii. On-site wetlands have intact hydrology and vegetation consistent with their historical characteristics. **2 points**

(6) Special considerations including strong public interest.

Cultural Resources

- i. The property contains an archeological site or historical resources. **3 points.**

Partnerships

- i. There is a reasonable expectation of matching funds from other sources to assist in the acquisition of the property. **5 points.**
- ii. A partner agency will be responsible for natural resource management in the long-term. **3 points.**

Management Difficulties

- i. Removal and maintenance of Florida Invasive Species Council Category I exotic species will require significant costs and effort to resolve. **-1 point.**
- ii. The size, access, and location of the property make it difficult to maintain or reestablish normal ecosystem processes, such as annual, hydrological fluctuations of wetlands; periodic burning; or flooding. **-3 points.**
- iii. There are likely problems with trespassing that may complicate managing the property, controlling access or preventing vandalism. **-1 point.**

ATTACHMENT B

SEMINOLE COUNTY NATURAL LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SITE EVALUATION CRITERIA AND RANKING PROCEDURES

PURPOSE

The attached procedures establish criteria and standards to be followed by the Seminole County Natural Lands Advisory Committee during the selection, review and ranking of properties to be recommended for acquisition within the Natural Lands Acquisition Program. These procedures will eventually become part of a Natural Lands Report to be developed by the Committee upon completion of the inventory and ranking of sites.

CRITERIA DEVELOPMENT

The selection criteria was developed following a review by the Committee of existing environmental lands acquisition and inventory programs including the State programs, the St. Johns River Water Management District programs and other applicable County and Agency programs. It is the intent of the Natural Lands Advisory Committee that the Committee's inventory and ranking process closely resemble State and Agency programs such that opportunities for joint acquisition and cooperation may be enhanced.

These criteria are intended to be general guidelines, which assign points for use only as a relative comparison of sites. Sufficient scientific data are not available to attempt to quantify a site's specific value.

SITE RANKING PROCESS

Upon Board approval, the Committee will conduct site visits and review available data to assess the following: (See attached for specific details).

- A site's **vulnerability** to development and the willingness of a seller, (if known);
- The diversity of species, and the **completeness** and condition of habitat;
- The **rarity** or abundance of a given habitat or identification of significant animal or plant species;

- The long range **manageability** of a site. In other words can the habitat be maintained or restored to its natural state;
- The degree to which a site is **connected** to existing natural systems and may provide a habitat corridor; and
- The **use potential** for passive recreation or education.

Each site will be evaluated based on the degree to which these criteria are met and assigned a relative ranking point (see attached). All site points will then be entered in a spreadsheet (see Attachment C) which weigh criteria and provides a total site ranking of all properties.

To overcome shortcomings in other ranking systems reviewed by the Committee, a category of **Special Considerations** (see Attachment B) was developed to ensure that specific local goals and other criteria which provide particular significance to a site could be accounted for in the ranking process by the Committee. Where Special Considerations are used, an accompanying narrative will be provided which specifies the considerations and the degree to which the ranking of sites will be changed.

Sites selected for inventory and ranking include areas identified on the County's Potential Acquisition Area Map, parcels which have been received from individual property owners through an application process and other sites known to be significant based on review of available data by the Committee.

**NATURAL LANDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SITE RANKING CRITERIA**

RANKING PTS.

VULNERABILITY

1. Preservation guaranteed by deed restriction, easement, or established regulatory authority.
2. Respected by conservation-minded landowner. Some regulatory protection. Very low development potential.
3. Owner has no sale or development plans. Heirs may be inclined to sell. Borderline case as to regulatory protection. Located in low-growth area. Marginal development site.
4. Owner likely to sell or develop, but action not imminent. No significant regulatory protection. Located in high-growth area. Good development site.
5. Slated for development or prime real estate currently up for sale. No significant regulatory protection.

RANKING PTS.

COMPLETENESS

1. Poor habitat. Low species and community diversity. Seriously degraded. Too tiny and/or isolated to maintain normal flora and fauna.
2. Fair habitat. Moderate species and community diversity. Degraded, but restorable. Might be capable of supporting populations of relatively tolerant species.
3. Good habitat. Good diversity of species or communities. Slight degradation. Probably capable of maintaining populations of most typical species.
4. Excellent habitat. Diverse species, communities and successional stages. Practically all appropriate species except rarities present and thriving. Excellent potential for reintroduction of most missing species.
5. Outstanding habitat. Diverse species, communities, and natural successional stages, including a number of rarities. Large enough to maintain long-term disturbance/succession matrix. Sizeable gene pools due to size and or links to similar habitat areas. Potential for retention or reintroduction of full normal flora and fauna.

RANKING PTS.

RARITY

1. Common community types in poor to average condition. Habitat types widespread throughout county. No rare animals or plants. No significant occurrences of anything ranked higher than 4 on FNAI's state scale. No significant geological features, wildlife, archaeological or historical sites. No trees of extraordinary size or age.
2. Typical community types still represented by extensive acreages in Seminole County. A few uncommon species, but no significant occurrences of anything ranked higher than 3 on FNAI's state scale. No major geological features, wildlife, archaeological or historical sites. No mature forests or outstanding examples of natural communities.
3. Good examples of natural communities. Habitat types well represented statewide, but scarce in Seminole County. A few rare species, but not many ranked 2 on FNAI's state scales and none ranked higher. Geological features, wildlife, archaeological or historical sites of moderate value. Some old growth, but no large tracts or stands of "living museum" quality.
4. Excellent examples of natural communities, some of them scarce. A number of rare species, but none dependent upon this site for survival. Several species FNAI ranks 1 or 2 on state scale. No significant occurrence for a globally endangered (GI) species or community. Important geological feature, wildlife, archaeological or historical site. Extensive tract of old growth. One of the best sites of its kind in Seminole County.
5. Rare community type. Extraordinary example of a natural community. Diverse array of superb habitats, several of them scarce. Many rare species, including a number FNAI ranks 1 or 2 on state and/or global scales. Critical habitat for a globally endangered species (GI). Unique geological feature, wildlife, archaeological or historical site. Nationally significant.

RANKING PTS.

MANAGEABILITY

1. Too small and/or degraded for maintenance or reestablishment of normal ecosystem processes, such as periodic burning or flooding. Highly vulnerable to uncontrollable external impacts. Probably beyond hope.
2. Location and/or extent of degradation would make management difficult and expensive. Questionable whether protection/restoration programs would be fully successful.
3. Could be maintained in or restored to good condition, but would require vigilant management. Location and/or historic use suggest chronic problems with trespassers and/or neighbors. Special programs such as exotic plant removal or hydrological restoration required. Difficult location for management.
4. Habitats in good condition, but requiring regular attention such as prescribed burning. Effective buffering from most external impacts possible. Location and surrounding land uses reasonably convenient for management.
5. Low-maintenance habitat types in excellent condition. Inherently well buffered from most external impacts. Location minimizes problems with trespassers and neighbors and facilitates management access.

RANKING PTS.

CONNECTEDNESS

1. Isolated from natural habitats of significant size by a large expanse of unsuitable habitat or a virtually impenetrable barrier (from standpoint of organisms inhabiting site). No significant connecting corridors. Not situated strategically for interconnection of natural areas or trail systems.
2. Isolated from natural habitats of significant size by a moderate expanse of unsuitable habitat. No significant connecting corridors. Not situated strategically for interconnection of natural areas or trail systems.
3. Isolated from natural habitats of significant size by an expanse of marginally suitable habitat. Narrow connecting corridors. Useful situation for interconnection of natural areas or trail systems.
4. Not broadly joined to large areas of natural habitat, but close or connected by significant existing or potentially restorable habitat corridors. Good situation for connection of natural areas of trail systems.
5. Directly contiguous with large areas of natural habitat along extensive boundaries. Critical situation for interconnecting natural areas or trail systems.

RANKING PTS.

NATURE-ORIENTED HUMAN USE POTENTIAL

1. Unsuitable for passive recreation. Aesthetically unappealing. Little scientific or educational value.
2. Suitable for limited passive recreation, but special management might be necessary to prevent adverse impacts. Pleasant setting. Useful site for school or nature center field trips or student research.
3. Suitable for limited passive recreation. Attractive environment. Ecologically interesting enough to be a good outing destination for local groups like Audubon, Sierra, etc. Useful site for scientific research.
4. Good for several types of passive recreation. Scenic. Suitable for nature trails and/or environmental center. Valuable site for scientific research. Special enough to be a popular regional passive recreation destination.
5. Outstanding site for a variety of passive recreational uses. Excellent for nature trails and/or environmental center. Extraordinarily scenic. Important well-documented scientific study site. The features of this site are so exceptional site that it could attract national/international visitors.

Source: Adopted from Alachua County: Comprehensive Inventory of Natural Ecological Communities in Alachua County

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Other factors which lend particular importance to a project which are unanticipated or not appropriately considered by the above criteria including the following:

- A site that demonstrates public interest.
- A site that demonstrates an opportunity for acquisition at a very low cost; immediate acquisition an/or availability of a grant or matching funds.
- A site that demonstrates an unusually strong potential for unique human use opportunity.
- A site that demonstrates an unusually strong potential for recharge or other water resource potential.
- A site that demonstrates an exceptional opportunity for species protection.
- A site that demonstrates connectedness through location within or adjacent to a state project, St. Johns River Water Management District plan or a private protection organization plan. A site that provides opportunity for local match opportunities.

These special considerations will be incorporated into the overall final site where appropriate including an explanation of the rationale for any special considerations included.

TIMELINE FOR ARC DELIVERABLES

1. For this year, call for nominations would open June 15 through August 15
2. Criteria would have to be finalized at the June 26 ARC meeting – and go on the consent agenda in late July or early August. That way we can begin using the criteria to review applications as they come in.
3. Staff would present the applications that have met the criteria to ARC at their meeting on August 24. They would have two months to do site visits (if necessary) and score the properties.
4. The public meeting would be held on October 23. (Another option, if needed, would be to hold the public meeting in the first two weeks of December, which would give us nearly 4 months for site visits and scoring).
5. Present list to BCC for approval in January.
6. 5-Year Acquisition Plan developed with approved list and brought back to BCC in April.