



Alachua County

Watermelon Pond – Metzger Tract



ALACHUA COUNTY FOREVER MISSION

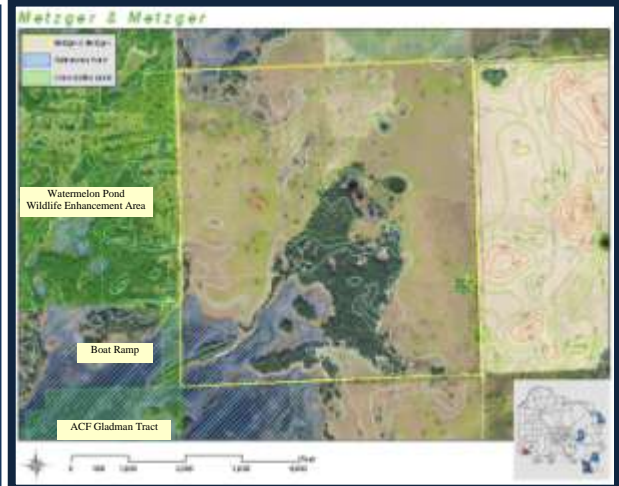
Approved in November 2000 by the voters, to acquire, improve and manage the county's environmentally sensitive lands to protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

Program Notes

- ✓ Alachua County Forever responds to public nominations.
- ✓ Property owners must be willing. Condemnation of property is not permitted under Alachua County Forever.
- ✓ Projects evaluated by staff and the Land Conservation Board.
- ✓ Criteria include protection of water resources, habitats, species, social value, manageability, and the economics of the acquisition.
- ✓ The County Commission approves acquisition projects.
- ✓ County can acquire property outright or certain rights through less-than-fee mechanisms such as conservation easements.
- ✓ Offers are made based on independent, private appraisals.
- ✓ Program funded by \$29 million in voter-approved bonds and \$15 million in Sales Surtax.
- ✓ Program actively seeks state, federal and private grants.
- ✓ Properties are managed as preserves.
- ✓ Resource-compatible, passive recreation is encouraged on sites where appropriate.

Purchase Date: April 11, 2012
Seller: Metzger Family **Size:** 640 ac
Purchase Price: \$2,142,700

- The property is located at the terminus of SW 250th Street, across from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Watermelon Pond Wildlife and Environmental Area and the Alachua County Watermelon Pond Boat Ramp Park.
- Acquisition of this property would improve the connection between existing conservation lands in the Watermelon Pond project area.
- The majority of the Metzger property consists of improved pasture. Active gopher tortoise burrows occur within the pasture areas. Sherman's fox squirrels were noted during the site evaluation. Burrowing owls inhabited portions of the pasture but were absent recently.
- The central portion of the property consists of xeric hammock, mesic flatwoods, remnant sandhill, and a series of sinkhole ponds, most of which are currently dry. One always contains water as a review of historic aerials showed. The flatwoods and remnant sandhill areas contain some remaining mature longleaf pine, as well as patches of persistent native groundcover including wiregrass, lupine, and Adam's needle. Active gopher tortoise burrows are scattered throughout the remnant sandhill. The southern portion of the Metzger property contains part of Watermelon Pond, a sandhill upland lake with widely fluctuating water levels.
- The property will be grazed by a Licensee as restoration plans are developed and implemented.
- This is the 42nd acquisition by the ACF Program and the 14th using the Wild Spaces and Public Places Surtax, approved by the voters in 2008 to extend the ACF Program.



For more information:
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Alachua County Commission

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