

**James  
Mill Creek  
12/7/05**

**Inspection Date:** November 22, 2005  
**Parcel Numbers:** 02829-000-000 (80 ac); 02829-001-000 (80 ac);  
02843-000-000 (25.01 ac); 02843-001-000 (20.04 ac)  
**Size:** 205.05 acres  
**S-T-R:** 11-7-18, 14-7-18  
**Buildings:** 0  
**Just Value:** \$358,600 or \$1,748.84/acre  
**Total Value:** \$360,500 or \$1,758.11/acre  
**Project Score:** 7.53 of 10  
**REPA Score:** 7.40 of 9.44

**Overall Description:**

The 205.05-acre James property lies within the Mill Creek (MLL) Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project. It is located in northwest Alachua County, north of the City of Alachua, and shares a border with the northeast corner of Mill Creek Preserve (Map 1). Mill Creek Preserve was the first property acquired through the Alachua County Forever Program.

The Mill Creek (MLL) project scored 7.40 of 9.44 on the Alachua County Forever Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA), and is the ninth highest scoring project to date. Although the James property is adjacent to the Mill Creek and Beech Valley Alachua County Ecological Inventory Projects (KBN Study), it is not located within either project boundary.

Acquisition of the James property would increase the size of Mill Creek Preserve by over 200 acres, provide a buffer from neighboring properties, protect high quality natural communities and water resources including creeks, sinkholes and seepage areas. An un-named creek flows from Mill Creek Preserve, through the James property, and eventually into the Santa Fe River. Approximately 38% (78 acres) of the James property is composed natural communities; the remaining 62% (127 acres) is slash and long leaf pine plantation, farm pond, and a borrow pit.

**Natural Communities:**

Seepage Stream	Excellent
Bog	Excellent
Floodplain Swamp	Excellent
Blackwater Stream	Excellent - Good
Basin Swamp	Very Good
Seepage Slope	Very Good
Cypress Head	Very Good
Upland Mixed Forest	Very Good - Fair
Sinkhole Lake	Good - Fair
Remnant Sinkhole	Good - Fair

**Other:**

Pine Plantation  
Farm Pond  
Borrow Pit  
Low impact development

**Key Species:**

The James property contains habitats that were deemed potentially significant for nine animal species modeled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), four of which were endemic: black bear, Central Florida crowned snake, short tailed snake, and turkey. There are no eagle nests listed in the FWC eagle nest registry within one mile of the property. Listed species observed on the site include cinnamon fern and southern lady fern.

**Key Features:**

Acquisition of the James property would increase the size of Mill Creek Preserve by 205.05 acres, provide a buffer from the neighboring properties, protect high quality natural communities, a riparian corridor and water resources. The James property contains a creek with tributaries that connect to Mill Creek Preserve and eventually drain into the Santa Fe River, as well as numerous sinkholes and seepage areas.

Approximately 38% (78 acres) of the James property consists of natural communities in excellent to fair condition. The un-named blackwater creek on the James property flows from Mill Creek Preserve, through the James property, and eventually into the Santa Fe River. There are many seepage areas in very good condition scattered throughout the property.

The James property features several high quality wetland areas including floodplain swamp along the main channel of the creek and a bog on the north property line. Staff observed a cypress head and a basin swamp in very good condition, despite evidence of previous logging. Substantially large cypress stumps were observed in the basin swamp with cypress trees growing out of them. Mr. James told staff that much of the cypress on the property was logged just before he purchased the property in 1973.

The James property has many sinkholes and potential direct connections to the aquifer. There are several sinkhole lakes in good to fair condition on the property; water hyacinth was observed in one of these lakes. The James property also has several remnant sinkholes in good to fair condition; staff observed an old car in one of the large dry sinkholes.

The remaining approximately 62% (127 acres) of the James property is predominantly pine plantation with slight bedding and little to no understory. In some areas pasture grass is the only understory species. Nine acres of the pine plantation are planted in long leaf; 110 acres are planted in slash pine. There is an old borrow pit vegetated with species indicative of disturbance, dirt roads, sheds, and a farm pond surrounded with pasture grass. Mr. James informed staff that the farm pond used to be a wet area with springs that was dug out to make the pond.

**Management:**

If acquired, the James property will be managed as part of Mill Creek Preserve. English Ivy, Begonia, Japanese climbing fern, tropical soda apple, water hyacinth, pasture grass and hairy indigo were observed on the property by staff. These infestations were for the most part localized; at the time of the site visit, control of these species would present an easy to moderate management challenge (with the exception of bahia grass). Regular exotic monitoring and treatment needs to be implemented on this property. Staff observed an old propane tank, pump, and a car on the property that need to be removed.

**Recreation:**

The property is appropriate for low impact nature based recreation, such as hiking and nature study, and would add to the recreation opportunities available at Mill Creek Preserve.

**Parcel Data:**

Parcel	Acres	Just Value
02829-000-000	80	\$120,000
02829-001-000	80	\$120,000
02843-000-000	25.01	\$62,500
02843-001-000	20.04	\$56,100

The 2005 Alachua County Property Appraisers (ACPA) just or land value for the subject property is \$358,600 or \$1,748.84 per acre, and the total value is \$360,500 or \$1,758.11/acre. There are no buildings on the property.

Currently, the supply of available land and housing meets or exceeds demand for single-family residential use, but this area is experiencing increasing development pressure. Within approximately one mile of this site there are numerous smaller residential parcels, and at least two rural large-lot subdivisions.

The four parcels have high development potential for single-family detached (including manufactured or mobile home) residential use. Approximately 30% of the overall project lies within the 100-year flood plain (FEMA), wetlands, or contains significant habitat. These natural features do not appear to significantly constrain development potential on the property. Based on current zoning, the property has the potential to be subdivided at a density as high as 1 unit per 5 acres, as a rural agriculture subdivision totaling up to 40 - 53 units for the project area depending on infrastructure and clustering options. The site has indirect access to County Road 236.

The development review is based on a limited desk-top review and relates to only the current Land Development Regulations, as well as policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan, which went into effect May 2005.

**Other:**

There is one Division of Historic Resources Florida Master Site File location of a ceramic scatter within one mile of the property. The owner, Mr. James, notified staff that he has found fossilized bone fragments in the creeks on his property.

**Literature Cited:**

KBN, a Golder Associates Company. 1996. Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project.

Prepared for Alachua County Department of Growth Management, Gainesville, Florida.