

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Governing Board  
FROM: Stephen Schroeder, Chief, Office of Administration  
THRU: Tim Alexander, Deputy Executive Director, Business and Community Services  
DATE: February 28, 2023  
RE: Camp & Abel Tract, Hamilton County

**RECOMMENDATION**

Authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract for the acquisition of the Camp & Abel Tract in Hamilton County.

**BACKGROUND**

In December 2020, the Board approved the staff recommendation to enter into detailed assessments and negotiations for the acquisition of three parcels located in Hamilton County comprising a total of 266.16 acres +/- . Due to budgeting, COVID restrictions, and an inability for contractors to access the property due to water levels, the detailed assessment was delayed until 2021-2022. After obtaining an appraisal and a satisfactory Phase 1, Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), the District entered into negotiations with the sellers to acquire the property. The property was appraised with a value of \$959,000. During negotiations, staff has discussed the possibility of acquiring a conservation easement, in lieu of a fee acquisition, and has explored options to acquire only one of the parcels (Jerry Branch), however, the sellers are not amenable to these options.

After negotiations, the District and the sellers have reached an agreement for the District to acquire the property for \$870,000, subject to approval by the Governing Board. To date, the District has expended \$18,200 for pre-acquisition costs, including the appraisal and Phase 1, Environmental Site Assessment. Closing costs will be shared between the parties. The sellers will be required to provide clear and marketable title to the District subject only to approved exceptions.

The sellers have also requested, as part of the transaction, that the parcels be identified in District maps, literature and any signage which may be erected, as the "Camp Family Tract" to recognize the family for their conservation interests in this property.

Staff is aware of the letter of support for the acquisition submitted by the Florida Trail Association.

Staff is recommending that the Board authorize the Executive Director to enter into a contract for sale on the above terms.

A copy of the Property Offer Sheet, triage, and summary maps of the property are attached.

SCS/tm  
File # 2020-012  
Attachments