

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Lands Committee

FROM: Katelyn Potter, Director, Division of Outreach and Operations

THRU: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director

DATE: February 18, 2025

RE: Negotiations for the Ellaville Tract - Riverview Farms Exchange, Madison County

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize negotiations with Lee Peanut Farms, LLC for the exchange of the District's Ellaville Tract for Riverview Farms in Madison County, in whole or in part to equalize values.

BACKGROUND

In February 2025, received an offer from Lee Peanut Farms, LLC for the exchange of 696 +/- acres of the District's Ellaville Tract in Madison County for 548 +/- acres of Riverview Farms in Madison County.

Riverview Farms is located along the Withlacoochee River, with 1.3 miles of river frontage, 263 acres in the floodway, and 434 within the 10-year floodplain. The property is adjacent to the District's Westwood West Tract (to the north) and Withlacoochee Quail Farms Tract (to the south). The property contains a third-magnitude spring known as Stuart Spring. Portions of the exchange property contain mature longleaf pine stands with well-established wiregrass communities. The property is included in the District's Five-Year Land Acquisition Workplan and Florida Forever Plan, valued for its extensive floodplain, connectivity to existing District lands, and natural communities.

The District's Ellaville parcels were purchased on December 01, 1988, using Water Management Land Trust funds. The property is part of Twin Rivers State Forest and managed by the Florida Forest Service. The tract suffered significant damage from Hurricane Idalia and all merchantable slash pine timber has been harvested, leaving only 306 acres of merchantable longleaf pine. In 2012, the property was identified and declared surplus by the Governing Board in Resolution 2012-69. The property was removed from monthly reports to the Governing Board but has retained its surplus designation.

The parcels for exchange include portions of 22-1S-11-1551 and 15-1S-11-1529 of District property and portions of 24-2N-10-3027 and 19-2N-11-6241 of the Riverview Farms. Final acreage for the exchange will be determined by the appraised value and used to equalize values on each property, as permitted by 373.089(4), Florida Statutes.

The proposed exchange was reviewed by Land Acquisition and Surplus Team and formally recommended to proceed on February 13, 2025.

Staff requests the Lands Committee authorize negotiations with Lee Peanut Farms, LLC for the exchange of the District's Ellaville property and Riverview Farms in Madison County.

Copies of a triage and summary map of both properties is included.

KCP/ao
Attachments