

SUBJECT

Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Advisory Committee (CLASAC) recommends pursuing acquisition of EL-137-25 and EL-138-25 and to recommend staff to proceed with pursuing the acquisition process. CLASAC recommends to not pursue acquisition of EL-135-25 and EL-136-25. (no fiscal impact)

DESCRIPTION

The Polk County Board of County Commissioners ("Board") adopted Polk County Ordinance No. 22-050 ("Ordinance") calling for a bond referendum on November 8, 2022 to finance capital projects related to the acquisition, preservation, protection, management, operation and restoration of environmental lands, water resources and important fish and wildlife habitat ("Bond Referendum")

A majority of voters of Polk County approved the Bond Referendum. The Ordinance provides that upon passing of the Bond Referendum, the Board shall create the Polk County Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Advisory Committee ("CLASAC") by resolution; and the Board adopted Resolution No. 2023-009 on February 7, 2023, creating the CLASAC to assist the Board in determining the acquisition of land in accordance with the Ordinance.

The Ordinance provides that each proposed site will undergo a preliminary site assessment by the County to ensure the lands meet the basic criteria of environmental lands; and provides the criteria which will be considered in evaluating lands include (A) Water Resources, (B) Natural Communities and Landscape, (C) Plants and Animals, (D) Human Values, and (E) Management.

Resolution No. 2023-009 authorizes CLASAC to create subcommittees consisting of members and non-members of the CLASAC. CLASAC created a technical advisory group (TAG) to assist CLASAC in the technical fact-finding that is necessary in evaluating lands in accordance with the criteria provided in the Ordinance.

The following sites have been evaluated by TAG and recommendations made by CLASAC. These sites are now presented to Board, for Board to determine if staff should pursue acquisition or not pursue acquisition.

<u>EL-135-25 Peace River Ranch</u>	<u>CLASAC = NO to Pursue Acquisition</u>
<u>EL-136-25 Smokey Groves</u>	<u>CLASAC = NO to Pursue Acquisition</u>
<u>EL-137-25 G-3 Ranch</u>	<u>CLASAC = YES to Pursue Acquisition</u>
<u>EL-138-25 DH Crews Ranch</u>	<u>CLASAC = YES to Pursue Acquisition</u>

If the Board approves staff to pursue acquisition, staff will enter discussions with the property owners, seek partners and conduct due diligence. Then any agreement drafted will be brought back to the Board for consideration of approval for acquisition.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve the Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Advisory Committee (CLASAC) recommendation of the following:

- 1) Pursue acquisition under the Environmental Lands Program for EL-137-25 and EL-138-25 and instruct staff to proceed with the pursuing acquisition process.
- 2) Do not pursue acquisition of EL-135-25 and EL-136-25 under the Environmental Lands Program.

FISCAL IMPACT

No Fiscal Impact

CONTACT INFORMATION

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