



Interoffice Memorandum

February 6, 2023

TO: Mayor Jerry L. Demings
–AND–
County Commissioners

FROM: Tim Boldig, Interim Director 
Planning, Environmental, and Development
Services Department

**CONTACT PERSON: David D. Jones, P.E., CEP, Manager
Environmental Protection Division
407-836-1406**

SUBJECT: March 7, 2023 – Discussion Item
Environmentally Sensitive Lands Acquisition Annual Report

Orange County has been acquiring Environmentally Sensitive Lands (ESL) through its Green PLACE Program since the mid-1990s. Since the program's inception, over 28,000 acres of ESL have been acquired. The importance of continuing to acquire additional ESL is supported by the Mayor's Transition Team Report and the Sustainable Operations & Resilience Action Plan, which includes a goal to preserve an additional 23,000 acres of ESL and increase County natural land assets by 2030. Acquisition of ESL will ensure that Orange County remains an ecologically, economically, and socially resilient community, and is a key element of the County's smart growth vision.

Administrative Regulation 11.07.01, paragraph II.A.4 indicates that a report on the status of the ESL acquisition program will be prepared for the Board on an annual basis. This discussion will include an overview of the Green PLACE Program; an update on the recently activated Green PLACE Advisory Board; an overview of the process for identifying and acquiring ESL; and a summary of the ESL lands evaluated, appraised, and purchased since the Board approved \$100 million in funding for ESL acquisition in the fiscal year 2021/2022 budget.

This item is for informational purposes only; no action is required.

DDJ/JVW:jk/js

Attachment

2022

Annual Report



 Orange County
Green PLACE Program



MESSAGE FROM THE Mayor

Greetings!

Welcome to the 2022 Orange County Green PLACE Annual Report.

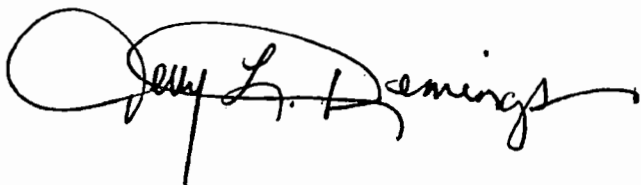
Since assuming office as Mayor, I've heard from many of you who support taking bold action to build a more vibrant and sustainable community. I believe that protecting our natural resources benefits us today with cleaner air, lakes, and rivers and leaves a legacy for future generations.

To that end, I am delighted to share with you the progress of the Green PLACE Program, one of the County's most impactful conservation initiatives. In 2021, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) committed to an ambitious goal of acquiring an additional 23,000 acres of environmentally sensitive lands by 2030. In addition, the Board approved an impressive 100 million dollars to be set aside for preserving our natural resources and protecting the diverse flora and fauna that call Orange County home.

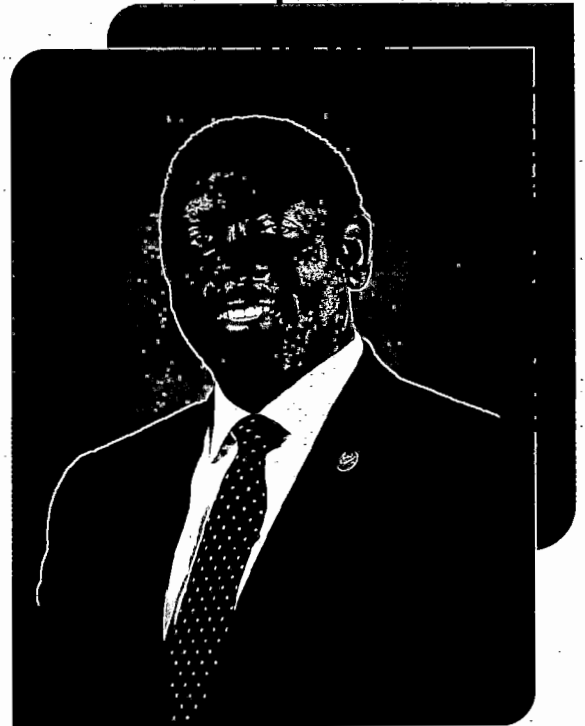
The accomplishments of the Green PLACE Program are primarily due to the support of partner organizations and the dedicated staff at the Orange County Environmental Protection Division. They manage the complexities of land identification, evaluation, acquisition, planning, restoration, and management with professionalism and conviction. Their hard work helps ensure a better future for all of us.

I am proud of the progress this initiative has made for our community. However, I know the best is yet to come, and the steps we are taking now will have lasting positive impacts on Orange County.

Sincerely,



Jerry L. Demings
Orange County Mayor



INTRODUCTION

Among Central Florida's many attractions is its diverse natural beauty. Decades ago, Orange County leaders and community partners had the vision to create the Green PLACE Program to help preserve this beauty and sustain the natural systems that make the county a stronger and more resilient place to live.

This annual report contains graphics and narratives that give the reader both a high-level perspective on the Green PLACE Program's current goals, organization, funding and progress, as well as the opportunity to dive deeper into its specific processes, sites and activities.

The report mentions regulatory amendments made by the Board of County Commissioners to ensure that all acquisitions of environmentally sensitive lands are carried out in strict alignment with the intent of the program.

Detailed tables and aerial photos describe the criteria that were used to evaluate the newly acquired Bagshaw-Hampton and Jean Dell parcels, including their ecological value, proximity to other conservation lands, and the potential for education and nature-based recreation activities.

After reading this report we hope you feel inspired to explore and enjoy Orange County's natural lands for yourself. There are many ways to learn more and get involved in the protection and management of these beautiful areas by visiting www.ocfl.net/epd, or by contacting GreenPLACE@ocfl.net.

OVERVIEW OF THE GREEN PLACE PROGRAM

Green PLACE (Park Land Acquisition for Conservation and Environmental Protection) is an initiative to preserve, enhance, and restore environmentally sensitive lands. This program encourages the establishment of regional corridors, greenways, and blueways. Preservation of environmentally sensitive lands is an important tool used by federal, state, local, and private organizations to preserve natural resources, to protect imperiled wildlife and plant species, provide nature-based recreational opportunities, and to provide wildlife corridors for species that require a large geographic distribution such as the Florida Black Bear and the Florida Panther.

ANNUAL REPORT BY THE NUMBERS



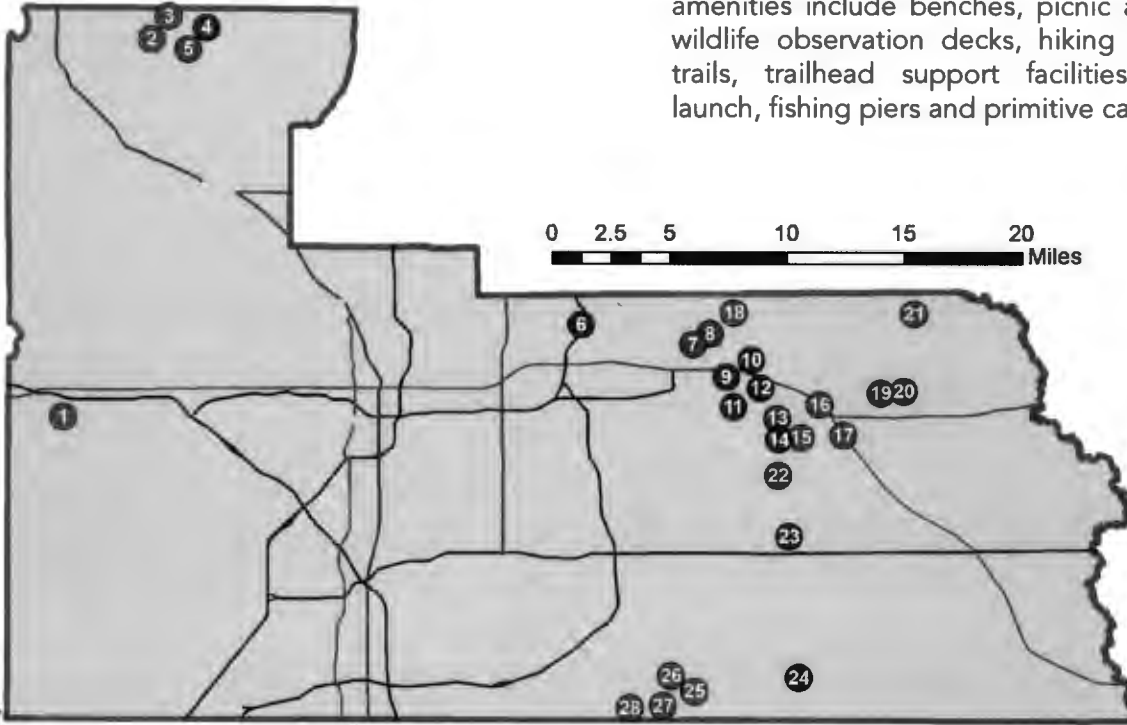
Green PLACE Property Locations 2022



2022 SNAPSHOT

Orange County has preserved approximately 23,354 acres of natural lands in partnership with other agencies or on its own. The Green PLACE Program manages approximately 5,101 acres with the remaining acreage managed by our partners. Fourteen Green PLACE properties are open to the public for nature-based recreation.

The county and our partners offer a variety of nature-based recreation related amenities for the enjoyment of our residents and visitors. These amenities include benches, picnic areas, pergolas, wildlife observation decks, hiking and equestrian trails, trailhead support facilities, kayak/canoe launch, fishing piers and primitive camping.



LEGEND



**OPEN
PROPERTY**

**PRESERVATION
ONLY SITES**

**PRESERVATION
SITES TO BE OPEN
IN THE FUTURE**

- 1 Johns Lake Conservation Area
- 2 Sandhill Preserve
- 3 Lake Lucie Conservation Area
- 4 Neighborhood Lakes
- 5 Pine Plantation
- 6 University Parcel
- 7 Bagshaw-Hampton Property
- 8 Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve
- 9 Nunnally

- 10 Evans
- 11 Vienna Drive
- 12 Sunflower Property
- 13 JEL Property
- 14 New York Avenue Parcel
- 15 Pine Lily Preserve - Long Branch
- 16 Pine Lily Preserve
- 17 Hidden Pond Preserve
- 18 Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area
- 19 Savage Christmas Creek Preserve

- 20 Dell Property
- 21 Charles H Bronson State Forest
- 22 Hal Scott Preserve and Park
- 23 Ranger Property
- 24 TM Econ Mitigation Bank Phase 4
- 25 Isle of Pine Preserve
- 26 Crosby Island Marsh Preserve
- 27 Split Oak Forest
- 28 Eagles Roost



ACTIVITIES: LAND MANAGEMENT, VOLUNTEERISM, OUTREACH, FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Land Management:

The Green PLACE Program acquires, conserves and manages natural lands throughout Orange County. The program actively manages approximately 5,101 acres. Land management activities implemented on these lands include prescribed fire, invasive species management, restoration, forestry management, and wildlife and vegetation monitoring. These activities are accomplished through contractors that have expertise in the various land management activities. Land management activities are an integral component in the restoration, enhancement, and maintenance of our unique natural ecosystems to support our native and threatened flora and fauna species. Land management also allows for the maintenance and creation of larger wildlife corridors to ensure the future viability and genetic diversity of our species that call Orange County home.

Volunteerism and Outreach:

Orange County hosts various outreach and volunteer-driven events aimed at educating the community and enhancing the environmentally sensitive land (ESL) of Green PLACE properties. These events are one of the ways the Green PLACE Program introduces the public to our Green PLACE properties, increases public awareness regarding the importance of the preservation and management of our natural resources and exposes the public to a variety of nature-based recreational opportunities these properties offer. The types of events utilized to accomplish the goal of increasing public awareness include: guided hikes, planting native vegetation, educational outreach and invasive species and debris removal. Through the efforts of our volunteers, Orange County is ensuring a quality user experience for our visitors. Another benefit of hosting these events is that volunteers and participants become ambassadors of the Green PLACE Program as they share their experience with their family, friends and colleagues.



Green PLACE Property Uses Information

Property Name	Acreage	Trailhead	Bench	Picnic Area	Observation Platform	Kayak/ Canoe Launch	Fishing Pier	Equestrian	Florida National Scenic Trail	Primitive Camping
Charles H Bronson State Forest	4,547.64	X		X				X	X	X
Crosby Island Marsh Preserve	272.22	X	X	X					X	
Eagles Roost	231.31	X	X	X	X					
Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area	706.81	X						X		
Hal Scott Preserve and Park	5,302.94	X		X				X	X	X
Hidden Pond Preserve	111.54	X	X	X						
Isle of Pine Preserve	534.49	X	X	X						
Johns Lake Conservation Area	138.62	X	X	X		X	X			
Lake Lucie Conservation Area	163.38	X	X	X				X		
Long Branch	163.53	X		X						
Pine Lily Preserve	402.98	X	X	X					X	
Sandhill Preserve	83.03	X	X	X						
Savage Christmas Creek Preserve	904	X		X					X	
Split Oak Forest	2,461.89	X			X				X	



Organization Chart

In FY 2021-2022, the Green PLACE Program had three (3) full-time Staff members, one Senior On-Call Technician, one On-Call Professional and a student intern. One (1) additional full-time position was approved in the FY 2022-2023 budget, which went into effect on October 1, 2022.



Funding

The Green PLACE Program utilizes several funding sources to accomplish its programmatic goals. The Conservation Trust Fund is used to fund the program’s annual land management activities and has an annual budget of approximately \$1M. There are three means for generating revenue for the Conservation Trust Fund which include the purchase of mitigation credits from the County’s TM-Econ Mitigation Bank Phase IV, the payment of penalties to resolve enforcement actions for natural resources code violations and the payment of mitigation associated with natural resource permits. The Green PLACE Program utilizes Capital Improvement Program funding for the design and construction of support amenities necessary to open the properties for nature-based recreational activities, including but not limited to trailhead facilities, observation piers and kayak/canoe launches. Finally, the Board of County Commissioners approved a total of \$100M for the acquisition of ESL as part of the FY 2021-2022 budget in September 2021. Prior to that, the BCC approved \$7M for ESL acquisition as part of the annual budget amendment process, which represents the estimated annual amount needed to pay back a bond of \$100M over 20 years.

Achievements

It has been an exciting year of accomplishments for the Green PLACE Program! Some of the highlights include: the program was successful in obtaining financial support in the amount of \$100M from the BCC for the acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, amended the Administrative Regulation 11.07.01 that delineates the criteria for the evaluation of ESL lands, and developed an evaluation matrix and companion guide of resources for the evaluation of those lands. Last year, these resources were used to evaluate 372 parcels and the county was able to acquire 39.67 acres while also evaluating hundreds of additional properties for consideration for acquisition in the coming year. The BCC approved a resolution for the reestablishment of the Green PLACE Advisory Board. The Green PLACE Program successfully managed the Green PLACE properties and met its annual goal of burning 980 acres, maintained over 70 miles of fire lines and more than 30 miles of trails. The program also managed the invasive species on its properties and continues to collaborate with Capital Projects on the design and construction of amenities that will enhance the visitor experience on Green PLACE properties. Lastly, the Green PLACE Program outreach

activities included a collaboration to film two virtual hikes, partnering with Ideas For Us in the planting of 70 trees on Johns Lake Conservation Area, as well as hosting an Earth Day event on Eagles Roost and this year's National Public Lands Day event on the newly acquired Bagshaw-Hampton Property.

of beautiful and unique areas for their enjoyment while also improving wildlife corridor connectivity, improving water and air quality, reducing flooding and helping prevent wildfires.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND ACQUISITION

Goals

Orange County's Sustainable Operations & Resilience Action Plan includes a goal to preserve an additional 23,000 acres by 2030. With the support of Mayor Jerry L. Demings and the County Commissioners, \$100 million was approved to preserve this additional acreage. The Green PLACE Program's goal is to create wildlife and ecological corridors by acquiring properties that connect to existing publicly and privately protected ESL. Preservation of these conservation lands will provide Orange County residents and visitors a variety

ESL Acquisition Process

Potential ESL parcels to be evaluated are selected based on identified corridors by the previous Green PLACE Advisory Board and/or submitted through the Parcel Nomination Application process. The parcel(s) are then evaluated using criteria outlined in County Administrative regulation 11.07.01. If the evaluated parcel ranks high or is identified as a potential corridor parcel, the Green PLACE Program works with Orange County Real Estate Management Division to contact parcel owner(s) to determine their willingness to sell, conduct the necessary due diligence investigations (appraisal, survey, title, phase I environmental assessment, etc.) and generate contracts for purchase for the approval of the BCC.



2021/2022 Acquisitions BAGSHAW-HAMPTON: Green PLACE Criteria Met

Administrative Regulation 11.07.01 Evaluation Criteria Summary

PID #	Ecosystem Diversity	Rare Habitat	Current Regulations/Threat of Degrading Events	Presence/likelihood of non-imperiled and imperiled species	Manageability	Water Resource Protection	Contiguity to other conservation Lands	Enhances Wildlife Corridor	Nature-Based Recreation	Ecotourism Opportunities
12-22-31-0000-00-075	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
12-22-31-0000-00-069		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
12-22-31-0000-00-084		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	



BAGSHAW-HAMPTON AERIAL



Size: 24.08 acres

Key Features: The Econlockhatchee River forms the parcel's western boundary, and the parcels expand an existing ecological corridor including the Econlockhatchee Sandhills Conservation Area, Ken Bosserman Econlockhatchee River Preserve and privately preserved environmentally sensitive lands. The Acquisition of the Bagshaw-Hampton parcels preserved the Mixed Hardwood Coniferous Swamp associated with the Econlockhatchee River and Wet Prairie.

District: 5

Purchase price: \$1,000,000

LEGEND

0 0.075 0.15 Miles




-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-075 [17.75 ac]
-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-069 [1.01 ac]
-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-084 [5.32 ac]



BAGSHAW-HAMPTON LOCATION



LEGEND

-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-075 [17.75 ac]
-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-069 [1.01 ac]
-  Bagshaw-Hampton 12-22-31-0000-00-084 [5.32 ac]

 Preservation Lands

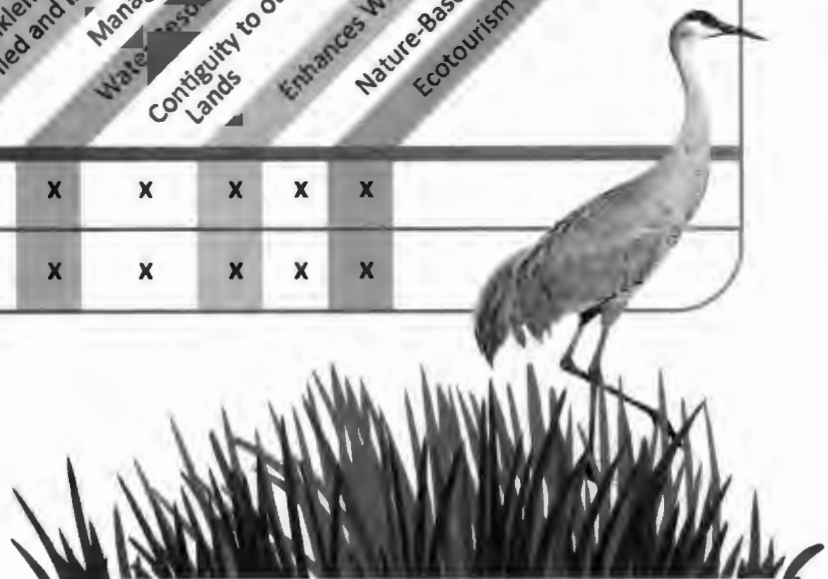
0 0.175 0.35 0.7 Miles



2021/2022 Acquisitions
JEAN DELL:
 Green PLACE Criteria Met

Administrative Regulation 11.07.01 Evaluation Criteria Summary

PID #	Ecosystem Diversity	Rare Habitat	Current Regulations / Threat of Degrading Events	Presence/likelihood of non-imperiled and imperiled species	Water Resource Management	Contiguity to other conservation Lands	Enhances Wildlife Corridor	Nature-Based Recreation	Ecotourism Opportunities
28-22-33-0000-00-035	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
28-22-33-0000-00-011	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



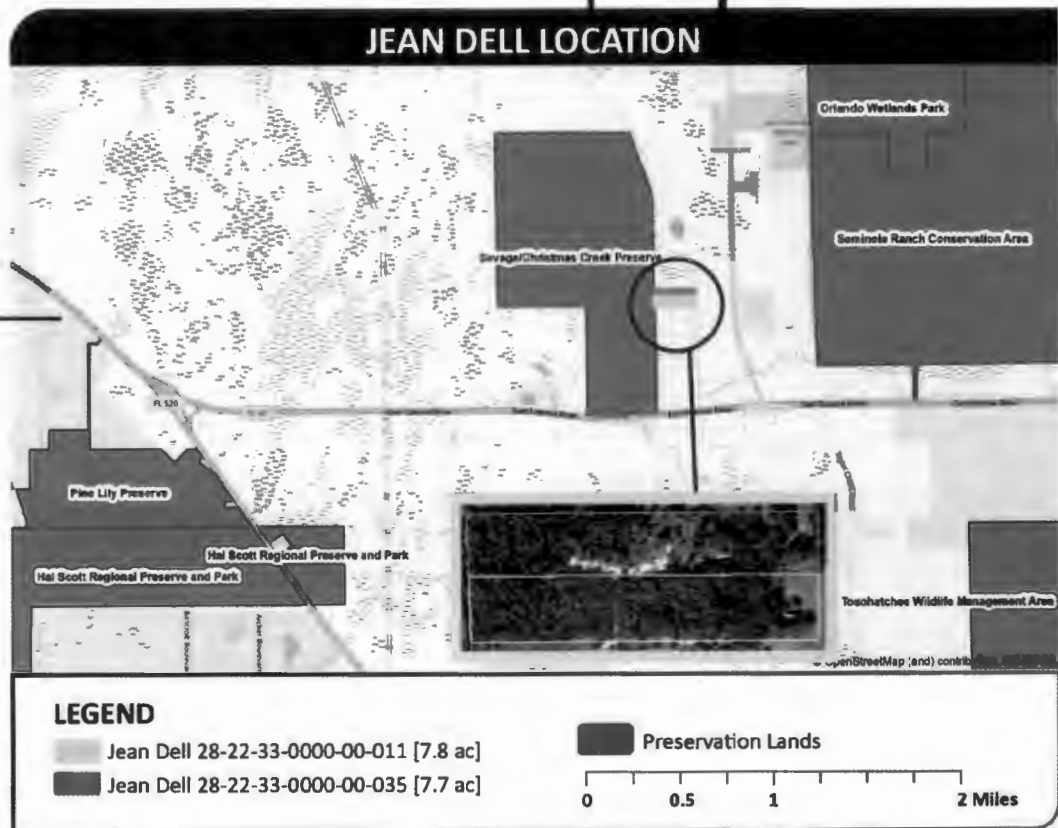


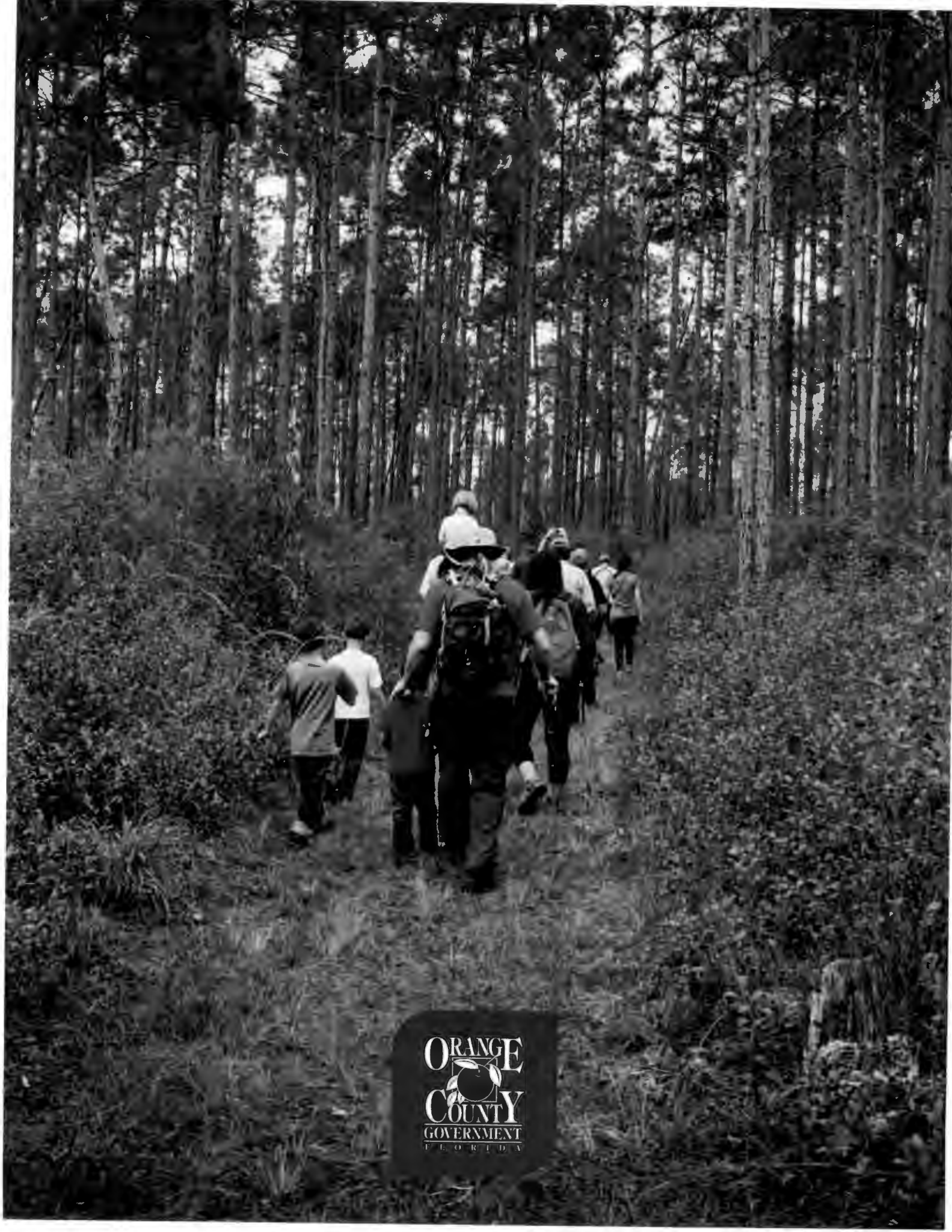
Size: 15.59 acres

Key Features: These parcels are expanding the existing Savage Christmas Creek Preserve Green PLACE property and aid in closing the gaps between corridors. The Dell property provides additional opportunities to expand the trail system on Savage Christmas Creek Preserve. The acquisition of the Dell property preserved Mesic and Wet flatwoods.

District: 5

Purchase price: \$550,000





ORANGE
COUNTY
GOVERNMENT
FLORIDA