

**Paynes Prairie Additions
Sweetwater LTD
Revised 10/5/04**

Inspection Date: May 10, 2004
Parcel Numbers: 15970-000-000, 16246-003-000
Size: 121.27 acres
S-T-R: 16-10-20
Buildings: 0
Just Value: \$491,100 or \$4,049.64/ac, Asking price \$6,000,000 or \$49,476.38/ac
Project Score: 7.64 of 10

Overall Description:

The 121 acre Sweetwater LTD property lies within the Paynes Prairie Additions Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project area. It is located off of Williston Road and a portion of the property falls within the Gainesville city limits. The Paynes Prairie Additions project scored 6.98 of 9.44 on the Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA), and is the 15th ranked project to date. The Sweetwater LTD property is adjacent to Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, the City of Gainesville Boulware Springs Park and the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail State Park. The property is included in the Division of State Land Additions and Inholdings List as part of the Optimum Park Boundary for Paynes Prairie. Additionally, these properties are part of an Acquisition Agreement between the State and the County that provides a mechanism for the County to negotiate purchase of Additions and Inholdings properties with the State funding the acquisition and management of the properties. All of these properties, including the Sweetwater LTD property, were moved into the Eligibility Pool in April 2004. The Sweetwater LTD property was not evaluated as part of the Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project (KBN Study). The key features of the property are its connectivity to adjacent conservation areas, its protection of water resources including Sweetwater Branch that transverses the property and high quality seepage wetlands and floodplain forest. The landowner is interested in a fee simple sale of the property, and the property is currently for sale with an asking price of \$6,000,000.

Natural Communities:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Quality</u>
Baygall	Excellent
Floodplain Forest	Excellent
Scrubby Flatwoods (cleared)	Fair
Seepage Slope	Excellent
Seepage Stream	Fair
Sinkhole Lake	Good
Upland Mixed Forest	Good
Xeric Hammock	Good

Other:

Low Impact Development (Powerline)
Old Field

Key Species:

Although the Sweetwater LTD property is relatively small and is adjacent to an urban area, it is connected to other conservation areas and high quality natural communities that provide suitable habitat for endemic and listed species. An American alligator (SSC) and a snowy egret (SSC) were observed on the property and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have delineated a portion of the site as a wading bird Strategic Habitat Conservation Area. Royal fern was also abundant in the wetland portions of the property.

Key Features:

The key features of the Sweetwater LTD property is its connectivity to other conservation areas (Paynes Prairie to the south, Boulware Springs and Gainesville-Hawthorne Rail Trail State Park to the east), its high quality natural areas, and protection of water resources. It protects over 2000 feet of Sweetwater Branch before the creek flows onto Paynes Prairie. According to the Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Unit Management Plan (2001), "Sweetwater Branch has for thirty years been recognized as the most significant threat to Paynes Prairie." A combination of stormwater inputs that bring trash and sediments onto the Prairie, wastewater discharge resulting in high nutrient levels and elevated base flow, and exotic plant infestations has severely impaired a significant portion of the prairie. Protection of the Sweetwater LTD property could help to mitigate these problems.

The natural communities on the property range from fair to excellent. Sweetwater Branch has been dredged at some time in the past and now is a wide channel with a berm along the banks. Mexican petunia and Japanese climbing fern, both of which are invasive plants, were found along the creek banks. The creek has a dense canopy of box elder, cedar, pignut hickory and blue beech. Trash is found in the creek as well as in adjacent areas.

The surrounding upland mixed forest is of high quality; however it also is impacted by non-native, invasive plants. Overstory species include blue beech, sweetgum, box elder, laurel oak, cedar, cabbage palm, sugarberry, loblolly pine, winged elm, southern magnolia, live oak, and hophornbeam. Understory and groundcover species include white flowered wandering jew (invasive), laurel cherry, coral ardisia (invasive), ebony spleenwort, English Ivy (invasive), spiderwort, yaupon holly, grapevine, and basket grass.

The property contains high quality seepage areas (seepage slope and baygall) that grade into floodplain forest associated with the creek. These natural communities are dominated by a diverse array of wetland plants that include loblolly bay, black gum, sweet bay, swamp chestnut oak, sweet gum, pop ash, cabbage palm, sour gum, water oak, pignut hickory, and red maple overstory and an understory that includes swamp doghobble, large gallberry, Virginia chain fern, netted chain fern, cinnamon fern, fetterbush, pink azalea, arrow arum, royal fern, woodoats, southern shield fern, beaksedge, southern lady fern, lizards tail, and Jack-in-the-pulpit.

The eastern portion of the property is xeric in nature and includes xeric hammock and what appears to have once been scrubby flatwoods which have been impacted through clearing. The species composition of the xeric hammock includes sand live oak, pignut hickory, yaupon holly, chapman's oak, rusty lyonia, bracken fern, red bay, winged sumac, goldenrod, and saw palmetto. The scrubby flatwoods area, although disturbed, had a fairly diverse groundcover of lichens, milkweed, sky blue lupine, slimleaf pawpaw, woolly pawpaw, bigflower pawpaw, gopher apple, and frostweed. Scattered turkey oaks, sand live oaks and longleaf pines occur in this area, and the longleaf pines are regenerating. Invasive plants that occur in the xeric areas of the property include Chinese tallow and Chinese wisteria.

A small sinkhole pond is present on the southern boundary dominated by buttonbush, maidencane and dogfennel.

Management:

Invasive non-native plants and unauthorized human usage are the greatest management challenges on the property. A heavy infestation of invasive plants was found along Sweetwater Branch and associated forested areas. These species include white-flowered wandering jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*), coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*), glossy privet (*Ligustrum lucidum*), Chinese wisteria (*Wisteria sinensis*), Mexican petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana*), Chinese tallow tree (*Sapium sebiferum*), Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), and wild taro (*Colocasia esculenta*). These areas would need frequent treatment and monitoring.

The other management issue is the prevalence of unauthorized human use of the property. At the time of the site visit, there were many homeless tent camps established on the property, and according to the landowner, this problem has existed for some time.

The eastern portion of the property appears to have once been scrubby flatwoods, but has been partially cleared. This area is succeeding into xeric hammock; however it is still very open, has good groundcover and regenerating longleaf pines. It would benefit from prescribed fire.

This property, if acquired, would likely be managed as part of Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, and the State would assume management responsibility.

Recreation:

The Sweetwater LTD property is well suited to passive recreational activities such as hiking and nature viewing. It is readily accessible from Williston Road and from the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail State Park. Recreational opportunities on the site could easily be developed from adjacent conservation areas. Additionally the property is proposed to be incorporated into the Boulware Springs Greenway as part of the Plan East Gainesville Project which extends from the intersection of Archer Road and SW 13th Street to the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail State Park and Boulware Springs Park.

Parcel Data:

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Just</u>
16246-003-000	115.27	\$461,100
15970-000-000	6	\$30,000

The total 2004 Alachua County Property Appraisers (ACPA) just or land value for the subject property is \$491,100 or \$4,049 per acre. The total value (just, building & miscellaneous) is the same. There are no buildings on the property. The property is currently for sale with an asking price of \$6,000,000 or \$49,476.38/ac. According to the landowner, there currently is an offer on the southern half of the property to develop 400 multi-family residential units.

There is an increasing demand for housing and other types of development in this area which is leading to increased development pressure. Except for Paynes Prairie to the south, there are several single-family residential subdivisions, town homes, apartments, and commercial areas within a two-mile radius.

The 6-acre northern parcel (parcel # 15970-000-000) is located within the City of Gainesville and the larger 115-acre parcel (#16246-003-000) is currently located within unincorporated Alachua County. Because of its location and its current zoning (Industrial for the 6 acre parcel and PUD for the 115 acre parcel) there is a high probability that this site will be developed. Approximately 35 to 40 acres of the project site contains the Sweetwater Branch (creek) and associated wetlands with additional 10 acres within the 100-year flood plain (FEMA). These wetlands may constrain development on portions of the site.

The Future Land Use designation of the property is still shown as Preservation; however the Planned Unit Development approved in 1982 was determined by an administrative law judge to be vested from the 1991 comprehensive plan designation of Preservation.

The County has a dedicated right of way through the property; however the alignment is not yet defined. Additionally the City of Gainesville is interested in purchasing 15-30 acres in the northeast portion of the property to expand Evergreen Cemetery.

Other:

There are no Florida Division of Historical Resources Master Site File listings for the subject property. However there are documented sites located south of the property and staff had seen pieces of flint and evidence of excavation by amateur archaeologists/looters.

Literature Citations:

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

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

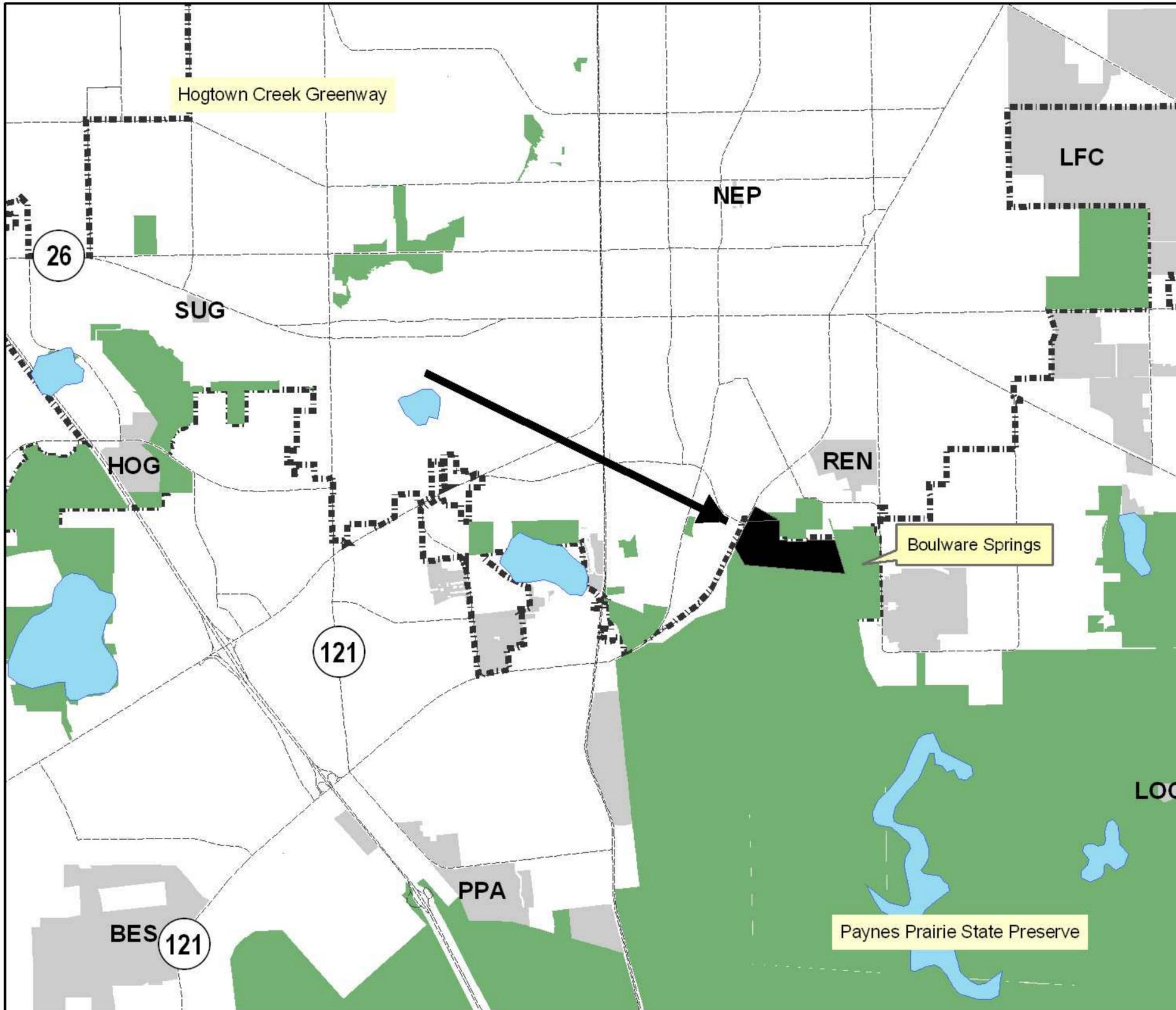
State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection. 2001. Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Unit Management Plan.

Payne's Prairie Additions-Sweetwater LTD

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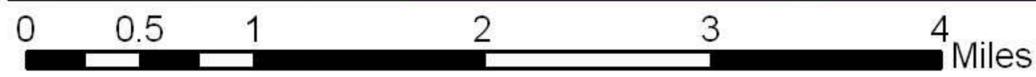
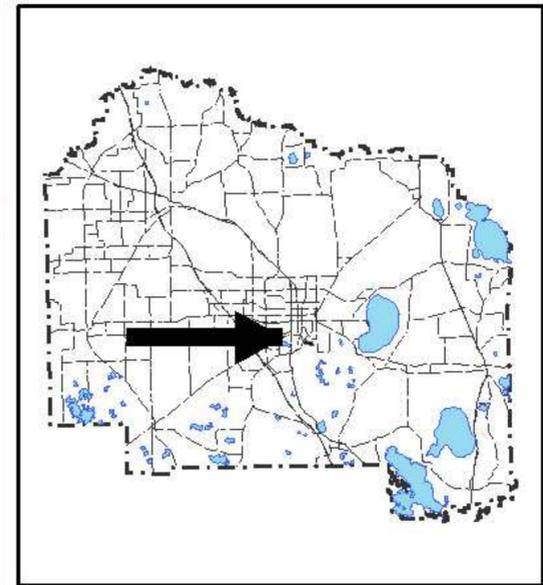
CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(I-1) PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES	A. Whether the property has geologic/hydrologic conditions that would easily enable contamination of vulnerable aquifers that have value as drinking water sources;		4		
	B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;		4		
	C. Whether the property contains or has direct connections to lakes, creeks, rivers, springs, sinkholes, or wetlands for which conservation of the property will protect or improve surface water quality;		3		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		4		
(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES	A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;		3		
	B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;		4		
	C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;		3		
	D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;		5		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		4		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		4		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		4		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		3		
(I-3) PROTECTION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES	A. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species or species of special concern;		4		
	B. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for species with large home ranges;		4		
	C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;		4		
	D. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering;		4		
	E. Whether the property offers high vegetation quality and species diversity;		4		
	F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species.		3		
(I-4) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;		5		
	B. Whether the property contributes to urban green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective.		5		
	AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES			3.9	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	1.3333			5.2
(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES	A. Whether it will be practical to manage the property to protect its environmental, social and other values (examples include controlled burning, exotics removal, maintaining hydro-period, and so on);		3		
	B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.		5		
(II-2) ECONOMIC AND ACQUISITION ISSUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions;		5		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;		3		
	C. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the environmental, social or other values of the property through development and/or lack of sufficient legislative protections (this requires analysis of current land use, zoning, owner intent, location and		5		
	D. Whether there is an opportunity to protect the environmental, social or other values of the property through an economically attractive less-than-fee mechanism such as a conservation easement.		1		
	AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES			3.7	
	RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE	0.6667			2.4
	TOTAL SCORE				7.64

Sweetwater LTD Paynes Prairie Additions

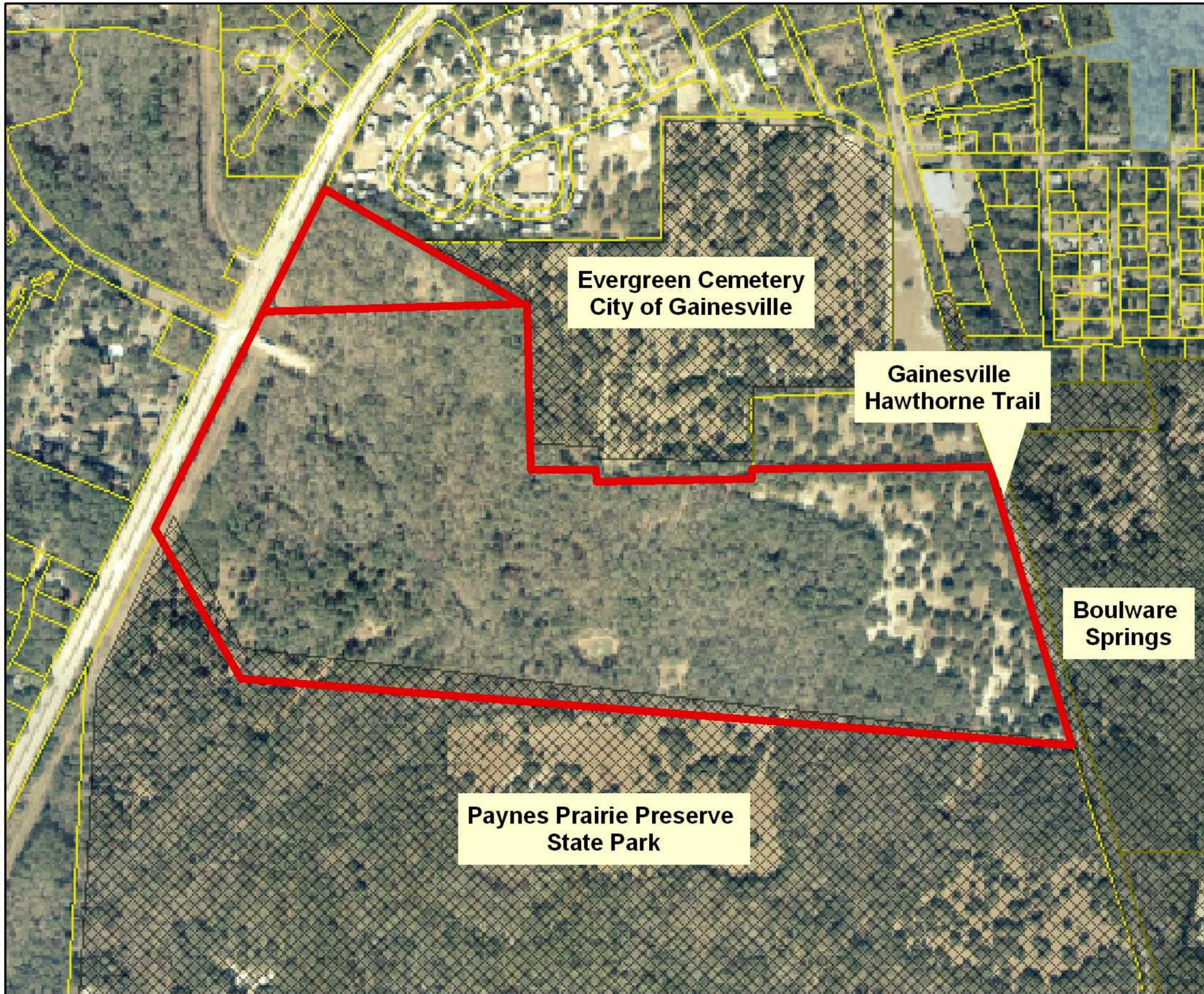


Legend

- Sweetwater LTD
- ACF Projects
- Conservation Lands
- Lakes
- Roads
- City of Gainesville



Sweetwater LTD-Aerial



-  Sweetwater LTD
-  Conservation Lands
-  Parcels

