

# Analysis of how the City's Proposed Reserve Area Change Meets the Criteria for Designation of Reserve Areas Established under the Alachua County Boundary Adjustment Act

Submitted by City of Gainesville Staff, July 21, 2011

**Criteria for designating reserve areas. - Reserve areas designated for a municipality shall comply with the following criteria:**

**(1)** Reserve areas designated for a municipality shall:

**(a)** Be adjacent to the municipality.

The area to be included in Gainesville's Urban Reserve Area is adjacent to the existing reserve area, which itself is adjacent to the municipal city limits.

**(b)** Be urban in character or likely to become urban in character within the next 10 years.

The area proposed for inclusion in the urban reserve area will include the Sweetwater Branch / Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project. The project will restore over 1,300 acres of impacted wetlands, provide protection of the Floridan aquifer, and offer outstanding wildlife habitat and opportunities for public recreation. The area proposed for inclusion in the reserve area meets the "urban in character" criteria as described in the Boundary Adjustment Act below:

*"Urban in character" means an area used for residential, urban recreational or conservation parklands, commercial, industrial, institutional, or governmental purposes or an area undergoing development for any of these purposes including any parcels of land retained in their natural state or kept free of development as greenbelt areas.*

In addition, the project is intended to:

1. Cost effectively attain regulatory water quality requirements for the City of Gainesville and the Florida Department of Transportation;
2. Create about 125 acres of high-quality wetland wildlife habitat and a public use area for bird-watching and nature study within the Sweetwater Branch Wetland Park;
3. Naturally assimilate nutrients, sediments and other pollutants in Sweetwater Branch in order to protect Paynes Prairie, Alachua Sink, and the Floridan Aquifer; and
4. Restore part of the overall water balance to Paynes Prairie, which has been impacted by diversion of water from the Prairie at Prairie Creek.

**(c)** Be areas in which population growth should be directed so as to promote efficient delivery of urban services, including police, fire protection, solid waste disposal, potable water, sanitary sewer, drainage or flood control, parks and recreation, housing, street lighting, transportation and other services, and to encourage more concentrated urban development.

The public use area of the Sweetwater Branch / Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project will be served by GRU potable water. On-site residence is planned to provide a GPD law enforcement presence and after hours surveillance. The project will provide additional park and recreation facilities for existing and future residents and visitors to the area.

**(2)** Reserve areas designated for a municipality shall not:

**(a)** Contain areas outside the county in which the municipality lies, contain areas within the corporate limits of another municipality, or contain areas within another municipality's reserve area.

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The proposed area is within Alachua County and is not within the corporate limits or urban reserve of another municipality.

- (b)** Contain areas which could be provided with urban services more efficiently by the county or other municipality.

The project represents a significant investment by GRU and General Government; therefore it is preferable for service delivery and future land use decisions to be under the purview of City government.

- (c)** Contain areas which cannot reasonably be foreseen to be provided with the urban services provided by the municipality within the next 10 years

The conceptual project plan, approved by Alachua County, outlines the only improvements that will take place. These improvements will be carried out within the next ten years.

- (d)** Contain areas which the municipality cannot reasonably have the capacity or capital facilities within the next 10 years to provide, at a minimum, the level of services provided by the county to the reserve areas.

The Sweetwater Branch / Paynes Prairie Sheetflow Restoration Project will be developed over the next ten years through capital investments by the City of Gainesville. There are sufficient resources to provide the minimum level of services to these future facilities.