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3,000 acres added to Volusia Conservation Corridor

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Another 3,321 acres will be added to the Volusia Conservation Corridor under an agreement approved Tuesday by the St. Johns River Water Management District.

District officials said the property, owned by Daryl Carter, offers potential for long-term storage of storm water that could be used as an alternative water supply. Most of the property is within the boundaries of a 79,612-acre wildlife corridor that stretches between Flagler County and the St. Johns River east of Osteen.

During the past eight years, the district, the state and Volusia County acquired more than 45,000 acres in the corridor, either through outright purchase or buying development rights.

The district agreed to pay \$20,068,230 for the Carter property or an average \$6,042 an acre. The price was based on two appraisals, one for \$20,520,000 and one for \$20,319,000. The appraisal includes a lower value, less than \$3,200 an acre, on 334 acres of the purchase because the district and the county bought development rights in 2003.

The district plans to use money from several sources, including Florida Forever, a fund for water protection and sustainability, and state Department of Transportation mitigation funds.

Volusia County may partner with the district on the purchase of part of the land.

Purchase of the land means the loss of cattle-grazing land in Osteen because the agreement requires the property owner to terminate all cattle leases.

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