

Item Title: Acquisition of the Fowler Property through the County's Open Space Preservation Program

Specific Action Requested:
That the Board of Commissioners:

- 1. Authorizes the County Manager to execute contracts (along with any other supporting documentation) to purchase the Fowler property at 1556 Pleasants Road in Wendell subject to terms and conditions acceptable to the County Attorney; and**
- 2. Appropriates \$95,636 of NCDOT 540 Settlement funding for the open space purchase.**

Item Summary:

Purpose: The Board of Commissioners approves all County real estate transactions and appropriates all expenditures.

Background: One goal of the 2018 Parks Greenways Recreation & Open Space bond was to continue the County's efforts toward open space preservation. Land that preserves natural resources, wildlife habitat, and historical and cultural properties; protects forest and farmland, scenic landscapes, riparian corridors, and water quality; and provides venues for outdoor recreation.

The approximately 11-acre Fowler property is in the Marks Creek watershed and surrounded on three sides by existing Wake County open space.

The owner of the property has agreed to sell the property for \$730,000 which is the 4.3% above the appraised value of the property.

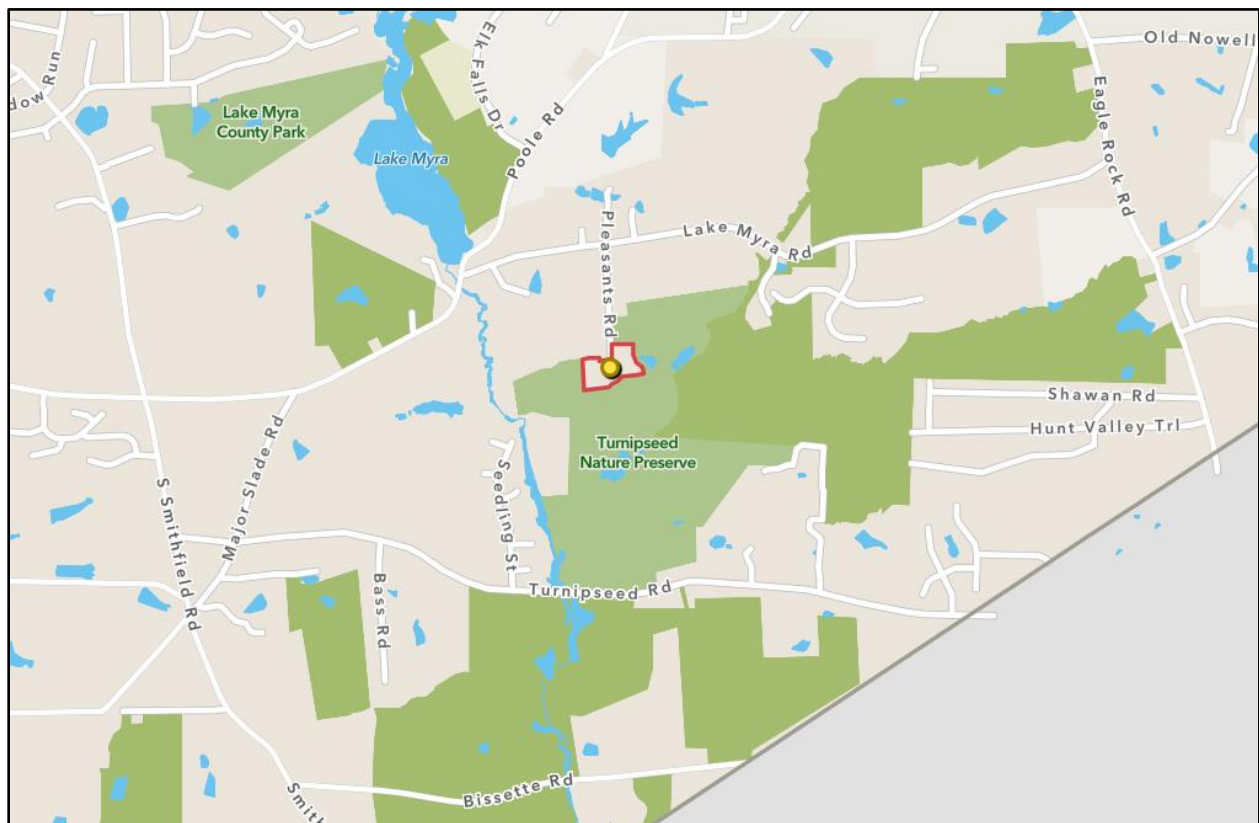
Strategic Plan: This action supports Growth, Land Use and Environment Goal 3: Protect 1,000 acres of green space, including open space, parks, greenways, farmland, and forests by 2029.

Fiscal Impact: The total project cost, including acquisition and due diligence is \$750,000; of this amount, \$644,210 will be reallocated from the PGROS bonds set aside for Future Open Space, \$10,154 will be reallocated from previously appropriated NCDOT I-540 settlement funds, and \$95,636 will be appropriated from the NCDOT I-540 settlement funds.

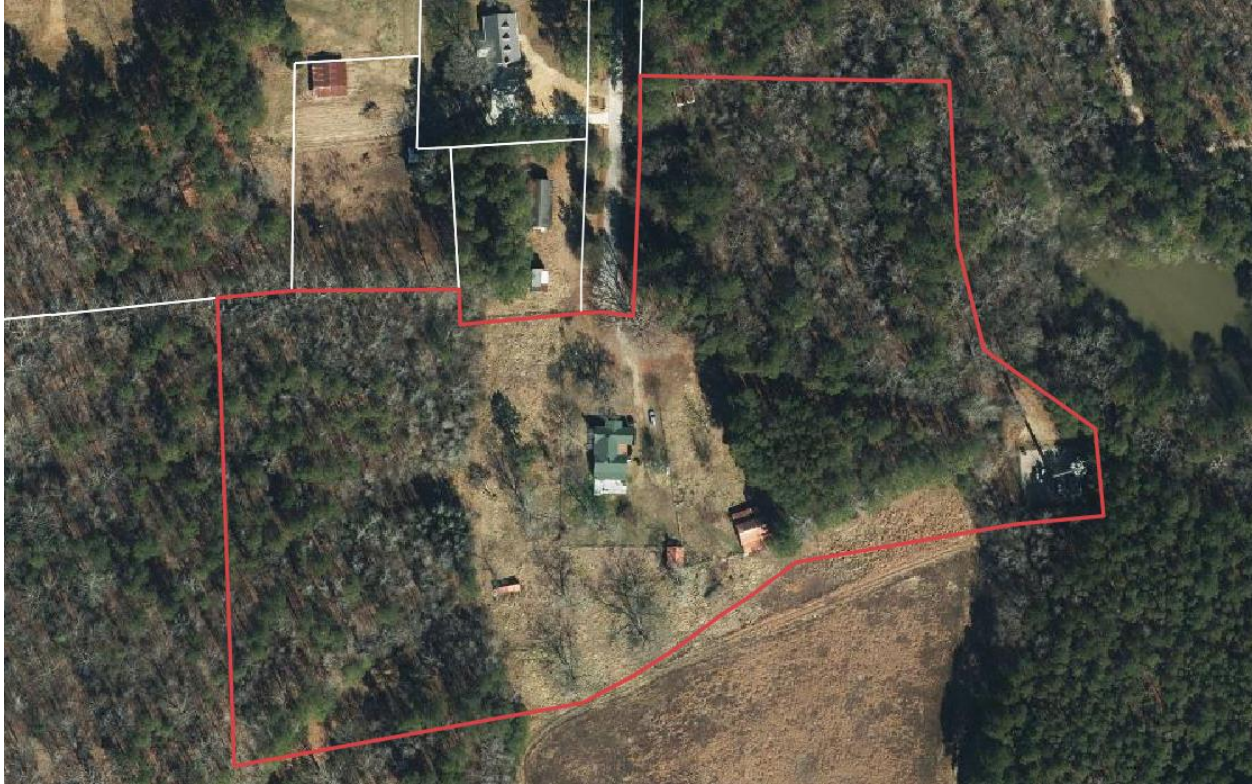
Additional Information:

The successful 2018 Parks Greenways Recreation & Open Space bond reserved approximately \$20 million to continue the County's efforts toward open space preservation. In 2019, County staff put forward an open space Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit responses from landowners interested in preserving their property. Staff received over two hundred responses which were prioritized by staff; an initial list of the top 40 target acquisitions was presented to the Board of Commissioners at their October 26, 2020, work session. Many of the original target acquisitions have been acquired, while others are no longer available; staff continues to pull projects forward for consideration from the list of respondents.

The approximately 11-acre Fowler property is in the Marks Creek watershed and surrounded on three sides by existing Wake County open space operated as the Turnipseed Nature Preserve.



The property is mostly wooded, with a residence and out-buildings. If a use cannot be found for the structures, they will be sold or demolished. There is a cell tower on the property operated by SBA Towers; the lease was a one-time payout to the previous owner thus there is no revenue potential at this time.



The owner of the property has the property listed with Coldwell Banker Advantage for \$750,000. The County's appraisal, performed by Art Dec, MIA, indicated a total value of \$700,000. The landowner has offered to sell at \$730,000. Due to strategic location of the property with road access, staff recommends the acquisition of the property at \$730,000. Notably, due to the lack of comparable properties in this area, the appraiser had to use slightly inferior parcels zoned R-40 to determine the median land sale value of the 10.01 acres appraised, separately from the single-family home located on the site.

The total project cost, including acquisition and due diligence is \$750,000; of this amount, \$644,210 will be reallocated from the PGROS bonds set aside for Future Open Space, \$10,154 will be reallocated from previously appropriated NCDOT I-540 settlement funds, and the remaining \$95,636 will be appropriated from the NCDOT I-540 settlement funds.

A Phase 1 Environmental Assessment was completed for the site and no issues were identified.

The Open Space and Parks Advisory Committee reviewed the acquisition of this property at its May 28, 2025, meeting and voted unanimously to recommend the acquisition to the Board of Commissioners. Staff also recommends the County proceed with the acquisition.

Attachments:

1. CIP Budget Memo – PGROS
2. OS Bond and NC DOT Funding Tracker