

Construction on second NW park set to begin

Byron Dobson, Tallahassee Democrat *10:54 p.m. EDT April 17, 2015*



(Photo: Leon County Parks and Recreation)

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Residents in northwest Leon County soon will have two more places to enjoy the outdoors.

County Commissioners this week approved a contract for \$435,300 to Gaskin Contractors to transform a large storm water pond into Okeeheepkee Prairie Park. The 26-acre tract is on the eastern end of Fuller Road near the Megginnis Arm Tributary. Construction could begin in the next three or four weeks and be completed by late summer, said Leigh Davis, the county's director of parks and recreation.

Davis said Okeeheepkee Prairie Park will be similar in scope to Pedrick Pond Park in eastern Leon County. It becomes Leon County's newest passive park.

"It's really in a neighborhood next to the water," Davis said.

Leon County bought the property in 1999 in a partnership with Florida Communities Trust and the Northwest Florida Water Management District.

Amenities will include:

- A parking lot
- Walking trails using crushed oyster shells
- A boardwalk crossing the pond
- A kiosk and picnic area

"Anytime we can invest in our parks, greenways and trails, I think it's a good investment," said County Commissioner John Dailey, who represents the area. "It's a passive park that needs some upgrades. Hopefully, we are going to get some great usage out of it."

Meanwhile, construction continues on the Fred George Park-Greenway at Fred George Road and Capital Circle Northwest.

Of the 170-acre available, 10 acres will be used for active facilities, while the rest will be used for passive trails and conservation. The \$2.8 million project awarded to C.W. Roberts is expected to be finished this fall.

It will include:

- A full-sized (60/90) baseball field
- A multi-purpose field
- Parking, concessions and restrooms
- Landscaping, sidewalks and a passive recreation trailhead.

The property was purchased by Leon County, Florida Communities Trust, and Blueprint in 2009.