

**Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences**

IFAS Communications

Building 116

P.O. Box 110810

Gainesville, FL 32611-0810

352-392-2411

<http://news.ifas.ufl.edu>

Escambia 4-H task force makes progress in fact-finding about land needs for local 4-H program

April 24, 2013

By Mickie Anderson, 352-273-3566, [mickiea@ufl.edu](mailto:mickiea@ufl.edu)

Contact: Nick Place, 352-392-1761, [nplace@ufl.edu](mailto:nplace@ufl.edu)

GAINESVILLE, Fla. --- A task force working to find facts about UF/IFAS Extension Escambia County 4-H future land needs is just weeks away from issuing a preliminary report to the University of Florida dean for extension.

After reviewing the report, UF/IFAS Extension Dean Nick Place could choose to act on the task force's findings or ask the group to continue its fact-finding research. The task force meets next at 5:30 p.m. CST on May 2 and its initial report is expected to be sent to Place soon after that meeting.

"I look forward to studying the task force report and reviewing some well researched options that will serve 4-H needs," Place said.

The task force was created following the sale of a 240-acre tract of land by Escambia County 4-H to Navy Federal Credit Union for \$3.6 million. The Escambia County 4-H Council, made up of 4-H members, was required to vote on the sale of the land and the Escambia County Commission was required to vote on the council's decision, as well.

The 4-H Council voted 21-16 in favor of the land sale, and the county commission, trustee of the land, approved the sale in May 2012.

Following the sale, \$2 million was placed in a fund with the Escambia County 4-H Foundation, with the interest earnings set aside for 4-H program support in Escambia County. Escambia County 4-H functions largely with support from interest income, and did so before the sale.

Under the agreement signed by UF/IFAS Extension, Escambia County Board of County Commissioners and the Escambia County 4-H Foundation, another \$1.6 million is available for Escambia County 4-H to use to pay for facilities construction, projects or purchases to support local 4-H programs. The 4-H task force has been looking at options related to additional land that could be used to support 4-H animal science, outdoor and natural resource education programs.

Escambia County commissioners also agreed to spend \$1.5 million in local option sales tax money to build a new 4-H center on Stefani Road.

Escambia County Extension Director Pamela Allen said there will be a casual open house this Friday at the Extension office on Stefani Road to showcase plans for the new 4-H facility. The meeting is set for 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. and interested parties are welcome to attend.

Earlier this month, Navy Federal Credit Union officials announced a long-range expansion plan, enabled by the purchase of the land formerly occupied by the Langley Bell 4-H Center, that they said will create a \$1 billion campus that would house some 10,000 workers by 2020.