

ENVIRONMENT

Another gift to help save Miami-Dade's disappearing pine rockland

By **Jenny Staletovich** *WLRN News*

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This file photo shows one of the best preserved local pine rocklands at Larry and Penny Thompson Park in Miami-Dade County on Thursday, April 27, 2017 . Patrick Farrell pfarrell@miamiherald.com

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For the second time in a month, Miami-Dade's disappearing pine rocklands are getting much-needed help.

A nature-loving family is donating five acres in the Redland, valued at \$800,000 and abutting the larger county-owned Quail Roost Preserve.

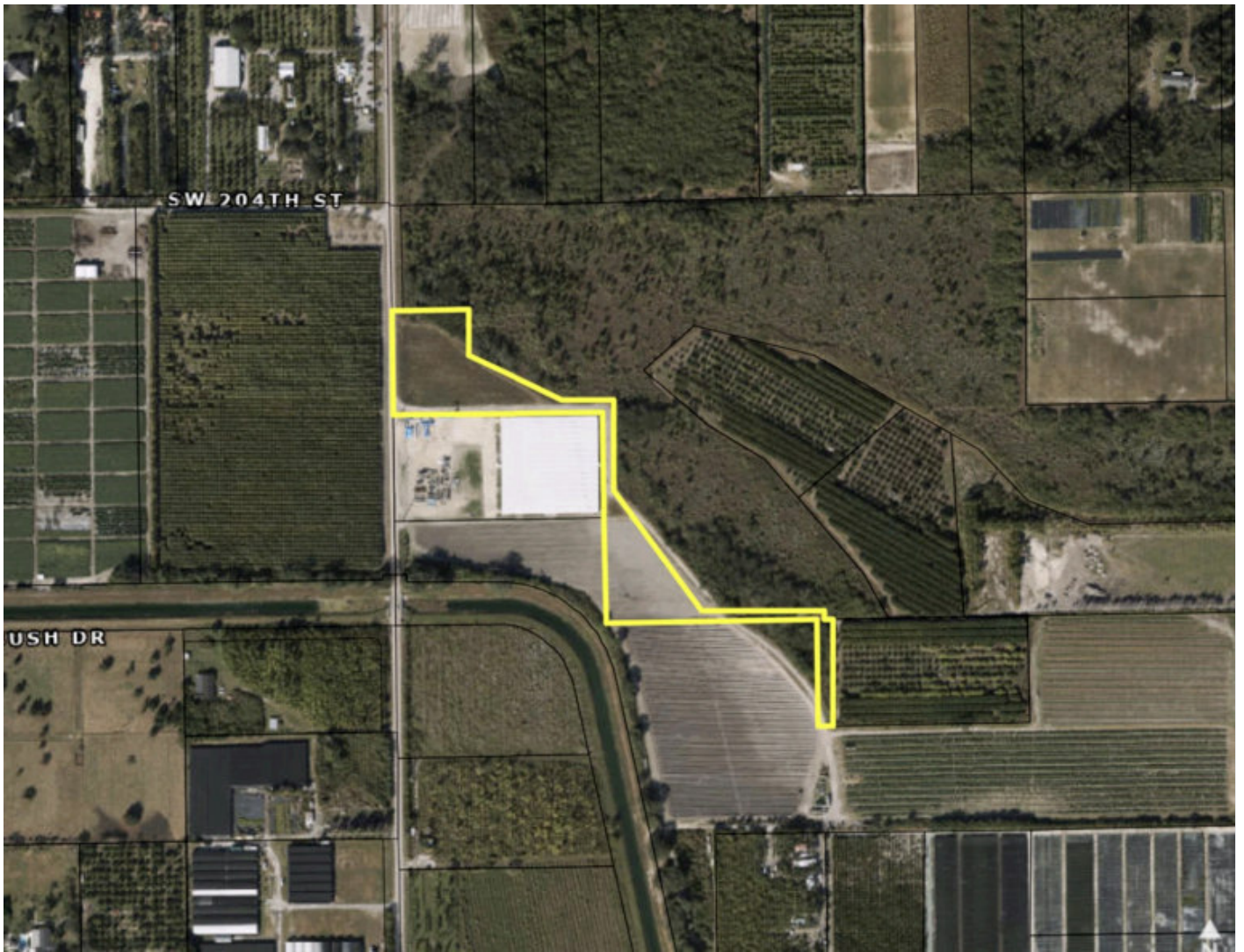
The Andy family, whose patriarch grew up in Miami before moving to New Jersey where the family still runs the popular La Mer Resort, gave the land to the Miami Blue Chapter of the National Butterfly Association. Miami Blue plans on turning it over to the county.

“It’s our hope this butterfly sanctuary serves as a place of beauty, education, and renewal for our community for generations to come,” said Fotini Andy, whose philanthropic late husband also helped start an environmental education program in Greece where he was born.

“As avid nature lovers, donating this land to the Miami Blue Chapter was the perfect match for our family,” she said in a statement.

The irregularly z-shaped property, at Southwest 147th Street and 204th Avenue, contains intact pineland as well as fields previously used for farming. It borders the Quail Roost preserve’s southwest corner, allowing it to buffer the preserve from a neighboring container nursery and farm fields.





Five acres, outlined in yellow in the photo, near Southwest 147th Avenue and 204 Street, is being donated to help preserve endangered pine rockland. *Miami-Dade County Property Appraiser*

“It’s a gift that would essentially expand the boundaries of the existing [county] land,” said Miami Blue Chapter president Dennis Olle.

The land may also contain old wetlands, that could be restored to help attract birds, he said.

“You would have an ephemeral wetland, which would then be very attractive to birds,” he said. “It’s a neat piece of property.”

The land would be managed by the county’s Environmentally Endangered Lands Program. In July, an anonymous donor gave \$925,000 to environmental groups to preserve pine rockland, which they also transferred to EEL.

Pine rockland once covered much of the high ground in Miami-Dade where early pioneers settled. Over the years, about 98 percent were paved over, leaving a host of endangered species found only in South Florida pineland with less space to survive.

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