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Alico moving ahead with plans for two new villages in Southwest Florida



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In the eastern stretches of Collier County, [Alico Inc.](#) [has picked the last of its oranges on thousands of acres](#) now marked for development.

On the land, traditionally used for agriculture, the Fort Myers-based company plans to build [two new 1,500-acre villages](#): Corkscrew Grove East and Corkscrew Grove West.

The villages would include a mix of residential and commercial development, intertwined with thousands of acres of protected conservation land.

Each village will include about 4,500 homes, with 280,000 square feet of commercial uses, along with 70,000 square feet of civic spaces, which could be used for schools, churches and emergency services.

The planned development is still making its way through the review and approval process, involving multiple agencies. In January, Alico, a public company, announced it was getting out of the citrus business for good after its trees failed to recover from the blow of Hurricane Ian in 2022.

"Unfortunately, production declined over the last several years, due to disease, which is greening. That was really exacerbated by recent hurricanes," said John Kiernan, Alico's president and CEO.

Greening is a fatal disease to citrus trees, without a known cure, and it's spread to groves across the state.

Alico owns and manages about 54,000 acres of land in Florida.

The land chosen for the twin villages is located in a corner of Collier County, bordering Lee and Hendry counties, off Corkscrew Road, close to State Road 82.

The development still needs approvals and permits from Collier County, the South Florida Water Management District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



"We do recognize these are thorough reviews. Each one has its own characteristics, and we're committed to doing it the right way and taking the time necessary to demonstrate that we've met all of those requirements," said Mitch Hutchcraft, Alico's executive vice president of real estate.

The development will also require the creation of the Corkscrew Grove Stewardship District. A state bill approved by both the House and Senate this legislative session would do just that.

The independent district would focus on long-term community development and management, including infrastructure, such as roads and utilities. It would be similar to those created for other large master-planned communities in Florida, such as Ave Maria and Lakewood Ranch.

Parts of the land targeted for development will continue to be used for agricultural production, temporarily, but not by Alico. Active crops will include watermelon and sod, grown by others with land leases, Hutchcraft said.

Villages planned in an area reserved for development

The land is located in the Rural Lands Stewardship Area, or RLSA.

The RLSA encompasses 185,000 acres around Immokalee east of Golden Gate Estates with the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge to the south and the Okaloacoochee Slough State Forest to the north. The stewardship overlay allows developers to build towns and villages on property with lower conservation value, in exchange for preserving the most environmentally sensitive land through a credit system.

The development will create new sending and receiving areas. In sending areas, land is preserved, creating the credits needed to build more compact and concentrated developments in the receiving areas.

Along with the development itself, the Collier County commission will have to approve the new sending and receiving areas. In the sending areas, more than 6,000 acres of environmentally sensitive land will be preserved.

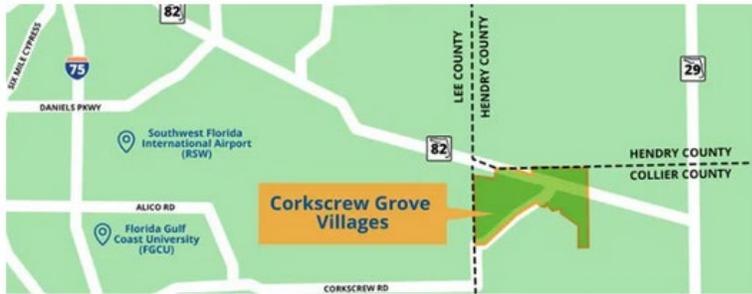
Ultimately, there will be some restoration within those protected areas, with "perpetual maintenance," at no cost to taxpayers, Hutchcraft said.

Within the 3,000 acres for the villages, there would be additional open space and recreational areas incorporated, he said.

Alico expects to have all of the necessary approvals to start building the first village by the mid part of 2028.



Alico Inc. plans two 1,500-acre villages of about 4,500 residential units in each along with commercial areas on what is now citrus groves near the intersection of Collier, Lee, and Hendry counties. It also will integrate 6,000 acres of protected conservation land. *Provided By Collier County Growth Management Website.*



Location for pair of villages planned by Alico Inc. in Collier County. Provided By Alico Inc.

"We have a lot of work between here and there to demonstrate that we are doing all the things that are necessary and important and that Alico relies upon to have the project come out of the ground," Hutchcraft said.

At this point, the development application submitted to Collier County only includes one village.

Early on, Alico reached out to neighbors and other stakeholders, including environmentalists, about its proposed villages, and the conversations have been "very productive," Hutchcraft said. The company has already incorporated some of the feedback it's received in its plans.

There are always going to be those who don't want to see change, Hutchcraft said.

"We recognize that," he said.

Multiple developments planned on former citrus groves

Since making the decision to get out of the citrus business, Alico has identified four properties with development potential over the next five years, with project approvals running on parallel tracks, in other parts of the state.

The other projects are in Highlands, Polk and Hendry counties, each with their own approval processes, and unique characteristics.

The RLSA overlay is unique to Collier, and it requires the inclusion of affordable housing to help meet a dire need for it in the county.

"We are looking at about 375 units for affordable housing, within this project," Kiernan said.



John Kiernan, Alico Inc. Provided By Alico Inc.

Alico has 31 properties in all, across eight counties in Florida, but it remains committed to keeping about 75% of its land in agriculture for the foreseeable future, he said.

"We have been consistent with that since January, when we made our transition announcement," Kiernan said.

Still, Alico is kicking around other ideas for some of its land.

"We are working behind the scenes on several other ideas and proposals," Kiernan said.

Investors taking a 'wait-and-see' attitude

While investors have taken a bit of a wait-and-see approach since the announcement of Alico's transition out of citrus, its stock price has risen, Kiernan said.

"We need to continue to demonstrate that we can deliver value for shareholders," he said.

After the stock market closed May 13, Alico released its [latest financial results](#).

In the second quarter of its fiscal year, the company saw a wider-than-expected loss, and lower revenues than anticipated by Wall Street.



Alico recorded a net loss of nearly \$111.4 million, up from a loss of \$15.8 million a year ago. In a press release, the company attributed the sharp increase primarily to the depreciation of its citrus trees because of its decision to get out of the citrus business.

In the quarter, losses rose to \$14.58 a share, from \$2.07 a share last year.

Revenue declined to \$17.98 million, down from more than \$18.1 million last year. On average, analysts expected losses of 36 cents a share on revenue of \$22.2 million.

With the earnings announcement, Kiernan explained the company completed its last major citrus harvest in April.

A final harvest of the majority of its remaining 3,783 acres of operational citrus groves will happen next year.

"We have negotiated agreements to lease another 5,250 acres of different groves to third-party citrus growers next season," Kiernan said. "We are also in discussions or under contract with other vegetable and fruit growers who are clearing as many as 1,000 acres for us this season in lieu of lease payments."

Alico has been growing citrus in Florida since the 1960s. It had delivered most of its fruit to orange juice producers, including Tropicana.

In the three months ending in March, Alico harvested about 4.7 million pound solids of fruit, compared to 5.8 million a year ago. One pound of solids equates to about a gallon of juice.

The company attributed the decline in production to fruit drop caused by Hurricane Milton, which hit in October, making landfall near Siesta Key, as a Category 3 hurricane. The storm also impacted production in the first quarter.

"We are disappointed but not surprised that orange production this current season declined at Alico and across Florida," Kiernan said. "The continued challenges facing the citrus industry reinforce our recent strategic decision to wind down Alico's citrus operations as it was not economically viable for us. By winding down our capital-intensive citrus production, we have strengthened our financial position."

<https://www.naplesnews.com/story/money/business/2025/05/14/twin-villages-planned-at-intersection-of-lee-collier-hendry-fl-by-alico-getting-out-of-citrus/83604578007/>