

CONSERVATION TRUST FOR FLORIDA

THEPOST



April 2013

PROTECTING OUR RURAL LANDS

BARR HAMMOCK

Levy Prairie
grand opening
ribbon cutting
ceremony

[pg. 2]

Dear Friends & Supporters

The entire Barr Hammock Levy Prairie preserve is 5,719 acres and includes a portion of Ledwith Prairie to the south, Levy Prairie to the north and the Barr Hammock land bridge between them. This photo is a view from Barr Hammock looking west towards Ledwith Prairie. In 2002, CTF recognized these magnificent tracts for acquisition to the Alachua County Forever land conservation program. CTF served as co-applicants on the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) grants that helped purchase the property and we also help provide educational programs and hikes at the preserve.

I am excited to announce that CTF has been awarded another year of generous support from The Felburn Foundation to promote land conservation activities and our Greenways Program. With this support, we will focus on protecting critical linkages of the FL Ecological Greenways network in the Silver Springs and Wekiva River Basins.

This spring, CTF, along with our project partner the Alachua Conservation Trust, will be closing on a 380-acre acquisition of freshwater wetland marsh habitat in Western Putnam County with federal funding from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA.) This purchase will be added to over 1,900 acres of protected lands as part of the Little Orange Creek Nature Preserve, which is owned by the City of Hawthorne and ACT. This project also serves as a model for cooperation among three local land trusts, including CTF, Putnam Land Conservancy, and the Alachua Conservation Trust and it protects some of the best remaining freshwater habitat left in Putnam and Alachua Counties.

We are very excited to be working with the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition and the Legacy Institute for Nature and Culture to bring a screening of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition Film to Gainesville. This inspirational documentary tells the story of the critical need to preserve and protect a corridor for wildlife and beautifully conveys the urgency of this task. I urge you to join me to view the film and at a VIP reception to meet the expedition team on Tuesday night April 30 at the Hippodrome cinema.

I want to welcome new Board Member Celeste Shitama for joining the Board as well as CTF's Executive Committee after serving for several years on the Advisory Board.

Many thanks to you all for your continued support and sharing in our success in preserving the best of Florida.

Sincerely, *David Pais*
President



CTF to present at the LTA Rally

Heidi Horak, who presented and facilitated CTF's 8 workshops last summer as part of the USDA grant, will be presenting the topic - Improving Landowner Understanding using Interactive Learning - at the 2013 Land Trust Alliance (LTA) rally in New Orleans! The workshop, which uses interactive learning, focuses on succession planning for landowners, land conservation options, and the tax benefits of conservation easements.

Conservation Easement Workshop

CTF is organizing a conservation easement workshop in mid June (date to be announced) at the Marion County Extension Office, the workshop fee is \$85 and it will run from 9 AM to 3 PM. A box lunch and morning coffee will be served.

CTF is applying for Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits for attorneys.

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CTF is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit land trust. The mission of CTF is to protect the rural landscapes of Florida. We focus on farms, ranches, working forests, and natural areas that provide landscape connectors.



BARR HAMMOCK

Levy Prairie Grand Opening

Cutting the Ribbon! Chris Bird, Alachua Co. Environmental Protection Director; Alachua Co. Commissioner Robert Hutchinson; Alachua Co. Commission Chair Mike Byerly; Alachua Co. Forever Program Manager Ramesh Buch; Alachua Co. Commissioner Lee Pinkoson, NRCS Representative, and Alachua Co. Manager Rick Drummond

On the morning of the Grand Opening on February 2, several excited visitors were already waiting at the gate at 7:30 AM, an hour and a half before the preserve officially opened. By 9 AM, about 200 people had gathered for the ribbon cutting. The community was out in full force to explore their newest hiking trail. Rightfully so. The 6.5-mile Levy Loop Trail encircles a restored marsh with expansive vistas, and opportunities to see everything from songbirds, waterfowl, sandhill cranes, otters and bobcat to mention a few. The north levee provides views and sunshine to warm visitors on cool mornings, and the south levee provides a more shaded experience with a "sneak peeks" of what Barr Hammock, the approximately 2,300-acre southern portion of the preserve, has to offer in the future.

Neighbors and citizens, adults and children, environmentalists and outdoor enthusiasts braved the brisk morning so they could hit the trail. Staff from the Alachua County Forever program and volunteers led several guided walks but many folks struck off on their own. There were hayrides for those who wanted to see the entire loop, but did not have time to make the 3-hour walk. Cyclists tested the trail that morning as well, completing the circuit faster than the hayrides.

The Grand Opening featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony by Commissioners Mike Byerly, Lee Pinkoson, and Robert "Hutch" Hutchinson; County Manager Rick Drummond;

Environmental Protection Department Director Chris Bird; Alachua County Forever Program Manager Ramesh Buch; and representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Conservation Trust for Florida (CTF), and the Florida Trails Association (FTA) assisted with the opening by greeting visitors and leading hikes.

Overall, there are 5,719 acres to the preserve, making it the largest of the county's conservation acquisitions. The majority of the landscape is marsh and wet prairie, which is hydrologically tied to Paynes Prairie, all part of a larger greenway system that connects conservation areas together throughout Florida. The Barr Hammock Levy Prairie Preserve is part of the greenway that connects the Ocala National Forest to the Goethe State Forest. The Conservation Trust was a partner in the grant applications for both the purchase of Barr Hammock and Levy Prairie and has agreed to assist Alachua County with field trips and educational programs at the Preserve.

The Barr Hammock Levy Prairie trailhead provides access to 6.5 miles of trails that are open for both hiking and biking. The trailhead is located at Southeast 11th Drive off Wacahoota Road in Micanopy. An additional trailhead, located off of CR 234 in Micanopy will be open in about a year and a half. This trailhead will provide access to the southern portion of Barr Hammock and will be accessible to equestrians as well as hikers and bikers.

Excerpted from an article by Kelly McPherson, Sr. Environmental Specialist, Alachua County Environmental Protection Department



FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR EXPEDITION



0211 GAINESVILLE FILM SCREENING 1120

"For me, a filmmaker, the Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition was a once in a-life-time opportunity to showcase the landscapes, wildlife habitats, winding waterways and conservation legacies of Florida. "The Wilds of Florida" was like an epic dream come true. I guess it is as Dr. E.O. Wilson says, "[our] love for nature [is an] innate and genetically determined affinity of human beings with the natural world", that piques my continual interest in exploring and experiencing an in-depth connection with nature.

As we traversed Florida's landscape we collected a lot of pictures, video, and interviews. We discovered what brings us together, what we have in common. We all want to preserve the environment for current and future generations. We want to continue to see habitat restoration, endangered species protection, and cross-agency cooperation become a part of Florida's landscape. During our expedition we experienced the real Florida. And this is what we have learned: Our journey is really just beginning. With your continued support we have the opportunity to bring this idea of the Florida Wildlife Corridor into reality. May our decibels increase as we express our concerns in a unified message. Like many journeys this will be one that is into the wind, against the current, and off the beaten trail." -Elam Stoltzfus

THANK YOU

to our generous sponsors!

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Photo by: Genevieve Dimmitt

1,000 miles in 100 days

Please join us on Tuesday, April 30th for TWO Film Screenings and a VIP reception with the Expedition team.

6:00 PM - 1ST SCREENING

7:00 PM - VIP RECEPTION IN ADJACENT ART GALLERY

8:15 PM - 2ND SCREENING

\$10 for film screening only


or

\$25 VIP Ticket
(VIP reception, 1 drink ticket to the Hipp's full bar, and film)

Tickets are limited to 100 people max per screening.

Proceeds will benefit the Conservation Trust for Florida (CTF) and the Legacy Institute for Nature & Culture (LINC).

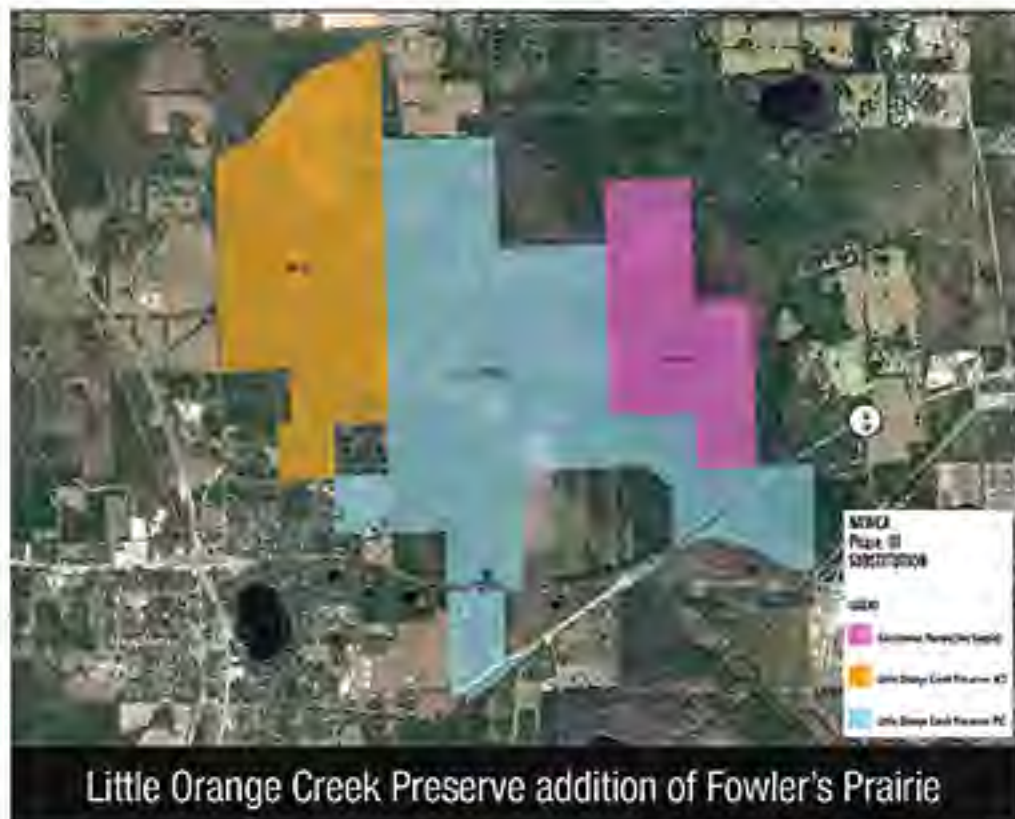
FL Wildlife Corridor Expedition books and DVDs will be available for purchase.

 | www.linc.us

www.floridawildlifecorridor.org



(continued on back)



CTF and Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) with help from other partners associated with the North Florida Wetlands Conservation Project (NFWCP) will soon be closing on an important 380-acre addition to the 1,900-acre complex of conservation lands known as Little Orange Creek Preserve, owned and managed by the City of Hawthorne and ACT. The new acquisition will add high quality freshwater marshes in a core part of Fowler's Prairie to the existing network of protected wetlands and uplands along the Alachua-Putnam county border. The purchase was made possible with federal funds from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA), and represents another successful

Little Orange Creek Preserve addition of Fowler's Prairie

partnership of the NFWCP to apply this funding source in the region. Previous NAWCA projects include Kanapaha Prairie, Tusawilla Preserve, Barr Hammock, and another portion of Little Orange Creek Preserve.

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Photo by: Brian Anderson

O2O GREENWAY

State purchases over 1,500 acres near Camp Blanding

On March 7th, the state approved the purchase of 1,578 acres in Clay County that will provide conservation value and buffering for the military base Camp Blanding as part of the Camp Blanding – Osceola Greenway Forever Florida Project. The Conservation Trust collaborated with the Office of Greenways and Trails, the Forest Management Trust, the Florida National Scenic Trail Association, and the University of Florida to submit the grant application to the Florida Forever program in 2003.

The acquisition was a collaborative effort of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and U.S. Department of Defense. The total cost of the 1,578 acres was \$2.1 million.



The Camp Blanding - Osceola Greenway is part of a larger project to connect the Ocala National Forest to the Osceola National Forest (O2O). Completing the O2O Greenway would protect an ecological network of over 1 million acres that would connect two of the five major populations of the Florida black bear, a state listed species.

The Camp Blanding - Osceola Greenway is also the most critical gap in the O2O, a proposed 200-mile long and 1.5 million acre network of federal and state conservation lands from the Wekiva River basin near Orlando to the Osceola National Forest. Development near US Hwy 301 threatens the corridor.

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The Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust. The mission of CTF is to protect the rural landscape of Florida. We focus on farms, ranches, working forests and natural areas that provide landscape connections.

*Celebrate a successful year of land conservation with the
Conservation Trust for Florida at the*

9th Annual

FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL



At the Santa Fe River Ranch in Alachua, FL on Sunday, October 20th. There will be fun activities like hay rides on a horse and carriage. Special thanks to Alan Hitchcock, owner of the Santa Fe River Ranch, for hosting the event!

Dr. and Mrs. K.C. and Marybeth Nayfield will be honored with a Land Conservation Award for protecting their magnificent property near the Suwannee River. The Nayfield Acres Conservation Easement is nearly adjacent to the Big Shoals Conservation Area, and contains a seepage spring

and creek system that drains into the Suwannee River. The Nayfields have begun to restore the cleared portions of the property by planting long leaf pine.

The Santa Fe River Ranch is a beautiful, natural setting located along the Santa Fe River. The approximately 1750-acre ranch boasts picturesque views in a tranquil environment. The ranch was recently recognized by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Florida Farm Bureau Federation for implementing environmentally sound stewardship practices.

Thank You

www.conserveflorida.org