

CONSERVATION TRUST FOR FLORIDA

THEPOST

PROTECTING OUR RURAL LANDS



We continue to be on the forefront of landscape-scale conservation in Florida. Our current projects encompass over 100,000 acres in eight counties that connect public lands and preserve water resources for both wildlife and people.

– J. David Pais,
President of the Board

Photo by Sean M. Dowrie





CTF Past President Terry L. Zinn and CTF President David Pais at the 2013 Farm to Fork Gala.

President's Message

The Conservation Trust for Florida anticipates that 2014 will be a pivotal year for land and water resource protection. The citizens of Florida will have the opportunity this fall to ensure a dedicated funding source for conservation by passing the Water and Land Conservation Amendment. Please remember to vote November 4th and encourage your friends to support Florida's future. For more information about this constitutional amendment, visit www.Voteyeson1fl.org.

We continue to be on the forefront of landscape-scale conservation in Florida. Our current projects encompass over 100,000 acres in eight counties that connect public lands and preserve water resources for both wildlife and people. The Conservation Trust for Florida operates efficiently and effectively working with landowners to preserve working rural landscapes. We recognize that, through rural lands protection, livelihoods are sustained while water resources and critical wildlife corridors are protected.

The Conservation Trust is proud to have received support from the Felburn Foundation again this year. *Through their \$50,000 grant (with \$25,000 as a challenge grant), the Felburn Foundation has underscored its unwavering dedication to ensuring that Florida's future is rooted in an abundance of healthy natural areas, clean water and a vibrant economy.*

We are counting on you to help us meet this challenge - give some leverage to your gift and donate today!

Please join us in continuing the effort to maintain and strengthen the connections between working landscapes, the people whose lives and livelihoods are dedicated to sustaining them, and the natural lands and resources that, together, create a healthy environment to sustain Florida's future. Please renew your membership or make a contribution today.

Sincerely,

President



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Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
1731 NW 6th Street, Suite F
Gainesville, FL
Phone: 352-376-4770
www.conserveflorida.org

CTF is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit land trust. The mission of the Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc. is to protect the rural landscapes of Florida by preserving the farms, ranches, working forests, and natural areas that provide landscape connections.

WEKIVA-OCALA GREENWAY

PROPERTY IN BLACK BEAR CORRIDOR TO BE PRESERVED.

This summer, Florida's Governor and Cabinet approved a contract to purchase 156 acres on the St. Johns River that protects critical habitat for Florida black bears to travel between the public lands of the Wekiva River and the Ocala National Forest. The Conservation Trust for Florida facilitated the landowner's engagement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and assisted with the initiation of the acquisition process.

The property is one of only two unprotected tracts in the eastern corridor of the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway Florida Forever project that could create a contiguous protected corridor. The property was threatened by development as this environmentally sensitive region is only three miles from the planned DeLand station of Central Florida's new SunRail commuter train that serves downtown Orlando and suburbs.

This property was saved from development in 2012 by Scott Taylor and Garry Jones, local conservationists and nonprofit board members who purchased the property at auction by outbidding potential development interests. After their purchase, the Conservation Trust began working with Mr. Taylor and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission biologists to devise a strategy for perpetual protection of this important bear habitat. Ultimately, the Conservation Trust teamed with local staff of the

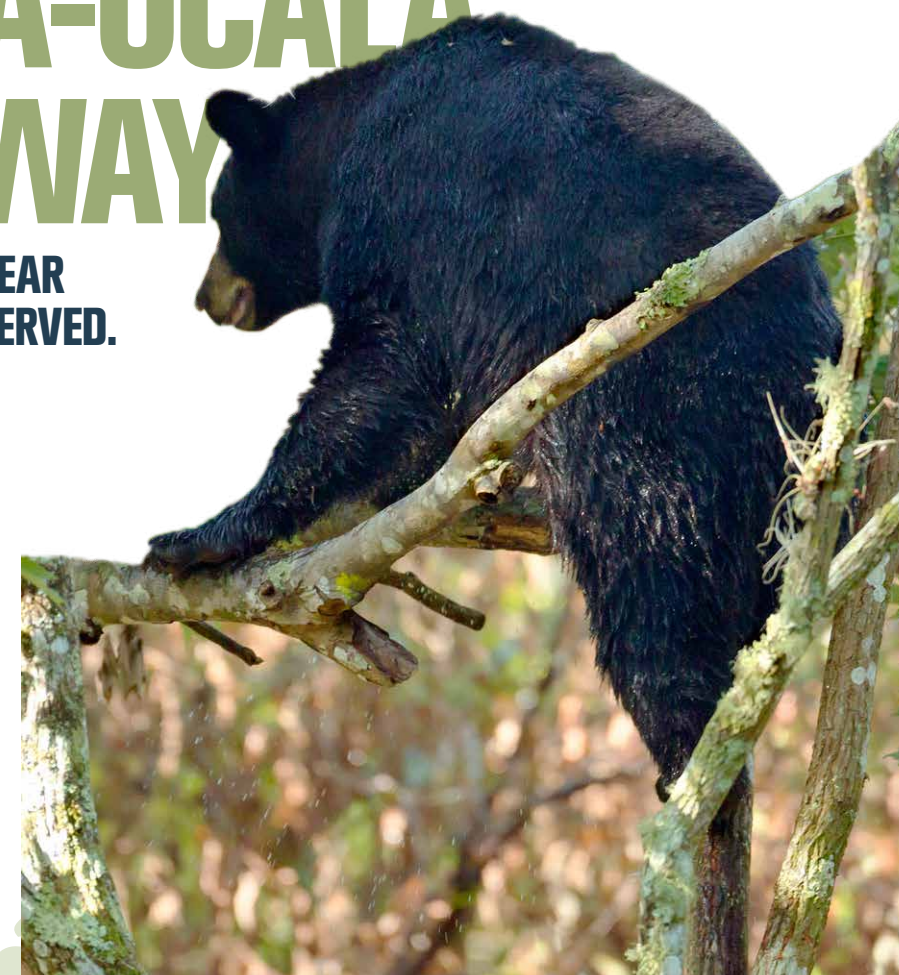


Photo by John Moran/Photo.com

Wekiva River Aquatic Preserve and Florida Audubon to successfully present the case to the FDEP Division of State Lands for acquisition using limited Florida Forever funds.

For the Conservation Trust, the engagement over several years in the design of the Wekiva-Ocala Greenway to accommodate bear movement and other species will pay off with FDEP's purchase. "This purchase will place the conservation community only one property away from realizing the vision of a continuous protected corridor for bears from Wekiwa Springs State Park to the Ocala National Forest," according to David Pais, President of the Conservation Trust for Florida. The property also serves as a recharge area for nearby springs and protects the water quality of the St. Johns River.

Conservation Vision Becoming

Reality

This spring, the Conservation Trust for Florida presented to stakeholders in north Florida a conceptual framework for a network of protected lands that would join the Ocala National Forest to the Matanzas River. This new project contains water resources vital to local communities, timberlands important to the economy, and habitat critical to Florida black bears and other native wildlife.

Both the St. Johns and the Flagler county commissions have endorsed the concept, and several landowners that own over 26,000 acres in the region have also expressed interest in seeing it realized. Though the final project boundaries are still being defined, the potential benefits for this region and for the future of conservation in northeast Florida are likely to be historic in their size and significance.

To secure the funding that a project this size and scope will require, our staff and board members have begun

work on an application to the state's Florida Forever program. Though Florida Forever funding has been severely curtailed in recent years, there is still money available for projects of regional significance like this one. Additional state funding for this project and for others like it may become available if Amendment 1 is passed in November.

The timberlands of Flagler and St. Johns counties are critical to water resources, whether it is the water flowing into the Lower St. Johns River Basin that is critical to all of northeast Florida, or the freshwater that feeds the productivity of the Matanzas River estuary. For Putnam and St. Johns counties, the timber cut from these managed forests are an important part of the rural economy. These forests also provide habitat for the Florida black bears inhabiting Flagler and St. Johns counties that, when linked with the bears roaming the Ocala National Forest

through this project, form the largest bear population in Florida.

But before the project can be submitted for state funding, we need additional financial support to hire biologists and other professionals to prepare the necessary reports and data to complete the project. You can help the Conservation Trust for Florida secure this wildlife corridor and habitat for black bears to ensure a brighter future for Florida's natural treasures.

Since its founding 15 years ago, the Conservation Trust has been propelled by a vision to support the Florida Ecological Greenways Network and, more recently, the

Florida Wildlife Corridor by protecting lands across Florida that protect water resources and connect public lands for wildlife and people. With projects like these, we are moving much more quickly toward realizing our goals. We invite you to make conservation history with us. **Please give to the Conservation Trust today.**

Photo by Sean M. Dowrie



Photo by Sean M. Dowrie



Photo by Sean M. Dowrie

ABC

Families Learn the
ABC's of Nature
at Barr Hammock

Gainesville Ecotours led a Family Nature Club "Alphabet Hike" for children at the Barr Hammock Levy Prairie Preserve on Saturday, February 15, 2014. The event was sponsored by the Conservation Trust for Florida.

On the Alphabet Hike, children looked for nature items that began with the alphabet letters. The children were given the freedom to explore the preserve at their own pace. They were allowed to stop for anything they saw or even sprint ahead to the next animal or plant they wanted to see.

The families enjoyed their hike. In honor of Valentine's day, each child was given a bag of nature-inspired treats including stickers, wildflower seeds, instructions for creating a backyard bird feeder, and, of course, chocolates.

The preserve is owned by Alachua County, but the Conservation Trust for Florida and Alachua County partner to provide outreach activities like this one throughout the year. Watch the Conservation Trust for Florida website for upcoming hikes at Barr Hammock Preserve.



Children climbing on the snake shaped bike rack at Barr Hammock Levy Prairie Preserve.

Children reading their nature alphabet guides on the levee trail at Barr Hammock Levy Prairie Preserve.

Children riding in a wagon on the levee trail at Barr Hammock Levy Prairie Preserve.

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Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
1731 NW 6th Street, Suite F
Gainesville, FL 32609

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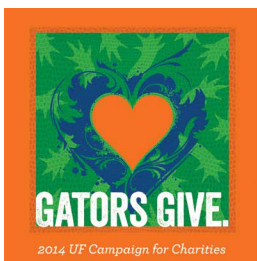


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SUMMER 2014



2014 UF Campaign for Charities

The Conservation Trust for Florida is honored to have been among the six new charitable organizations chosen for the 2014 University of Florida Charities Campaign (UFCC). The UFCC provides an opportunity for UF employees to give to the local charity of their choice through payroll deduction. More than \$1 million in donations have been given to area agencies over the last seven years.

The 2014 General Campaign will run from October 6th - October 24th. During the October campaign, UF employees will receive e-mails from the UFCC with links to the online contribution site. If you are part of the UF faculty or staff, please consider donating to us through the UF Campaign for Charities.

For additional information go to:
www.UFCC.ufl.edu

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YES
ON 1**

November 4, 2014

DANCING WITH THE BEARS

at the
Shambles Rock and Roll Dance Party

To benefit the Conservation Trust
for Florida and the Water & Land
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www.voteyeson1fl.org

**Sunday Sept. 14th
6-10 pm**

Akira Wood
619 S Main St Gainesville, FL 32601
(corner of Main and Depot)

\$20 Suggested Donation



Featured Photographer

Sean M. Dowie

For over 22 years Sean M. Dowie has photographed Florida's well-known and not-so-well known places. He's often found, camera in hand, searching the back roads for hidden treasures. This issue features Sean's documentation of areas between the Ocala National Forest and the Matanzas River (see the article Conservation Vision Becoming Reality, p. 4-5 for more information on our Ocala to Matanzas project).

For more information contact
smdphoto@msn.com
352-219-3021

THANK YOU TO OUR GATOR SUPPORTERS!