

Membership Form

Yes! I support the goals of the *Conservation Trust for Florida* and enclose my tax-deductible membership dues of:

___ Student \$15 ___ Individual \$25 ___ Family \$40 ___ Sustaining \$100

___ Patron \$250 ___ Founder \$500 ___ Other \$ _____

Name(s): _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone #: _____

I have time and talents to contribute as well! Please contact me.

I am a landowner and would like more information on conservation easements.

Please make your check payable to the Conservation Trust for Florida and send to:

P.O. Box 134, Micanopy, FL 32667-0134

www.conserveflorida.org or 352-466-1178 (New Phone Number!)



Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc.
NEWSLETTER
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Micanopy, FL 32667-0134

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The Post

A Newsletter to Update
Members and Friends of the Conservation Trust for Florida.

Issue #4 July 21, 2003

A Message from the President

So much has transpired at the Conservation Trust for Florida since our last newsletter that its hard to know where to begin. Let's start with the fact that while CTF has grown in membership, our Board has been reduced by three. Nancy Meffe, our overworked and under appreciated Treasurer has stepped back from that responsibility to take a breather and appreciate some of what life has to offer. She will continue to support and assist the Board in a less demanding role. Joni Ellis has left to pursue career interests in Tallahassee. Finally, Judy Greenburg has also left the Board for professional reasons. The bright spot in Judy's departure is that she has assumed the role of Executive Director for CTF, replacing Gary Meffe. Judy brings a knowledge of the inner workings of the Board and great people skills to her new position. Gary stepped down in order to spend more time with Nancy. We will miss Gary's attentiveness to detail and his devotion to the cause of conservation at the helm of CTF.

To Nancy, Gary, and Joni: Thank you for your amazing service and sacrifice and best of luck with your new endeavours! To Judy, thanks for your continued commitment and labor!

CTF continues to be involved in several conservation projects around the region. The most exciting in my view is the O2O project that provides an ecological linkage for the *Ocala and the Osceola National Forests*. Recent action on the Levy project stretching from the *Ocala National Forest to Goethe State Forest* has also provided exciting news. In conjunction with the landowner, CTF nominated **1,400 acres of land along the Cross Creek Road** for purchase in 2001 under the Alachua County Forever program. These lands were well maintained long leaf pine/wiregrass and old-growth evergreen hardwood hammock that were an outparcel in an existing Saint John's Water Management District holding. **We're pleased to announce that the County was able to close on the parcel and it will be protected.**

CTF is making strides in pursuing its agricultural land conservation programs too. Several Board members and staff have drafted a proactive strategic plan to protect rural working lands called **The Farmlands Project**. The first phase, called the Shiloh Lands Project, will focus on the Shiloh area of Marion County. It is intended to build on the recent purchase by the Office of Greenways and Trails of Price's Scrub and involves several cooperative, interested agricultural landowners.

Financially, CTF remains strong due in part to our members' contributions, our successful Spring BBQ, and our continued support from both the Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation and the Land Trust Alliance. I want to thank all of you who have provided your financial and spiritual support to us these past months as we grow this organization. Your support helps us to press on! As always, feel free to offer advice and guidance. Its your CTF.

Sincerely,

Michael Campbell
President of the Board

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The Farmlands Project

CTF's mission to protect working rural lands was recently strengthened by the development of a proactive strategic plan called **The Farmlands Project**, which will seek to reduce the conversion of important agricultural lands and will protect the rural character of project areas.

CTF will assist rural landowners in protecting their land with donate conservation easements or less-than-fee acquisitions utilizing state and federal funds.

The project will unfold in three phases as CTF expands organizationally. The first phase is called **The Shiloh Lands Project** and is centered around Price's Scrub; an approximately 1,000-acre parcel located just south of Micanopy that CTF helped acquire through the Office of Greenways and Trails. The area surrounding Price's Scrub is a prime example of rural north Florida. Second or third generation descendants of the area own many of the farms. CTF has already secured one conservation easement on a parcel of land adjacent to Price's Scrub.

Protecting farms around Price's Scrub will also create a buffer to protect the sensitive wildlife habitat. Many rare and endangered species such as fox squirrels, kestrels, sandhill cranes, and gopher tortoises reside there.

The second phase will focus on protecting working rural lands in one of CTF's current projects, the Ocala to Osceola Corridor (O2O) - corridor spanning hundreds of thousands of acres between the Ocala National Forest and the Osceola National Forest corridor. Along with The Forest Management Trust and various state and local agencies, CTF is already working to protect ecologically significant natural areas within the corridor.

The third phase will focus on threatened farmland

in the path of development as recently identified by the American Farmland Trust, the Florida Department of Agriculture, as well as CTF's own analysis.



On Thursday June 27, CTF staff and CTF Board Member Mike Campbell met with Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) staff to tour OGT's recent 1,000 acre acquisition - Price's Scrub.

The purpose of the trip was to meet with different stakeholders and to become more familiar with the property and with management issues. CTF Advisory Board Member and local conservationist Linda Duever guided the tour of the southern parts of the property, which are dominated by a unique sand pine (high & dry)/pond pine (lowland) system with saw palmetto understory.

OGT's plans for the property will be developed and promulgated in a forthcoming management plan, which CTF will be participating in the development of. The major management issue is controlled burning adjacent to I-75 and horse farms. Look for meetings and details in future newsletters.

By CTF Projects Coordinator Erik Lewis

Ocala to Osceola (O2O)



Lake Palestine is part of the Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway.

In conjunction with the Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT), within the Department of Environmental Protection, CTF has submitted an application to the **Florida Forever program to purchase over 150,000 acres of forested timber and wetlands**. The application has been titled the *Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway*.

As many of our members know CTF has been collaborating with OGT, the Forest Management Trust, Florida National Scenic Trail Association and the University of Florida's GEOPLAN Center (Paul Zwick & Peggy Carr) on protecting the ecological corridor/greenway connecting **the Ocala National Forest to the Osceola National Forest** (which is connected to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge). The primary goal of the project is to provide a continuous ecological greenway for umbrella species like the Florida black bear, with the basic premise that if one provides sufficient habitat for black bear one provides enough habitat for many other smaller ranging animals. This collaboration resulted in the identification of the largest areas of ecological and natural resource significance remaining within the corridor, or 'gaps', necessary to maintain connectivity between public conservation lands.

While a number of gaps were identified, the collaborators decided that the most critical gap requiring immediate action was the Camp Blanding to Osceola gap. This decision was in large part due to the major barrier to ecological connectivity that US 301 creates. This major highway is, and will continue to be, a threat to wildlife crossing from the forested lands on either side through the project area. Additionally, the pressure for strip commercial and industrial development along this stretch of road will only continue to mount as Jacksonville continues its outwardly growth. Therefore, it became apparent that permanent connections must be preserved across the US 301 expanse in Northern Clay/Bradford and Southern Baker/Duval counties. Thus, CTF and OGT took the lead to put together an application that was submitted on July 1. The next critical date will be August 15 in Tallahassee, where the Florida Forever Council will decide whether the project should be included on the list of properties that are eligible for Florida Forever funding.

Beginning from the northern portion of Camp Blanding in Clay County the proposed Greenway moves northwest across the Trail Ridge. This portion of the ridge is owned primarily by Dupont, which has been mining heavy minerals such as titanium oxide and starlite from the productive sands of this geologic layer. Like Camp Blanding, the Dupont holdings along the ridge are primarily sand hill with its typical post oak-turkey oak/long-leaf pine dominated community types. It is in this area that the proposed Greenway intersects/overlaps with the Northeast Timberlands Florida Forever Project (A - list project), with portions of that project being crucial for this proposed greenway.

As one progresses west along the proposed greenway and off the ridge, which marks the edge of the Northern Highlands geologic province, the greenway character changes towards a flatwoods/pine plantation dominated system. These lands are fairly ubiquitous all the way to Osceola National Forest, with typical flatwoods community associations - flatwoods, wet flatwoods, riparian/floodplain hardwoods, dome swamps, and basin swamps. Ownership of the properties west of the trail ridge is primarily by two major timber-holding corporations Plum Creek and Wachovia (Wachovia investments for pension and mutual funds). The Wachovia holdings are primarily in Bradford and Baker Counties, while Plum Creek owns all of the proposed lands in Union and the majority in Baker as one approaches Osceola. *By CTF Projects Coordinator Erik Lewis*

Old Florida Forever BBQ a Success

It was a perfect spring day for a BBQ as members of the Conservation Trust for Florida celebrated the land trust's second year last March.

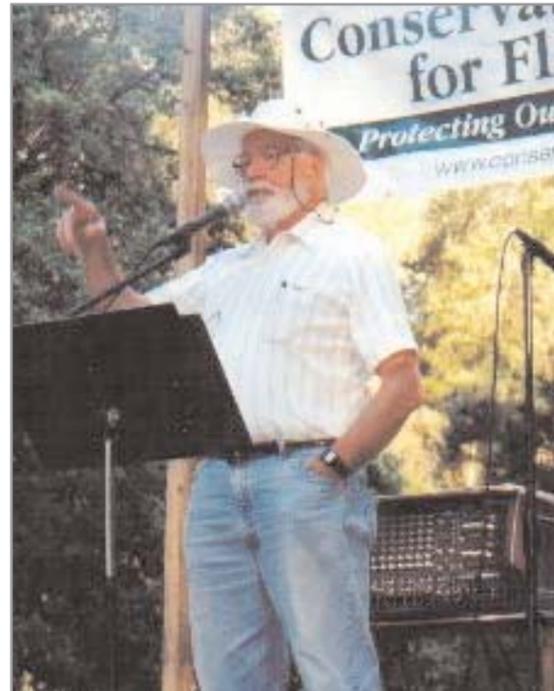
Keynote Speaker Earl Starnes, who has been involved in the land conservation movement since its early beginnings, recalled stories about some of the first land acquisitions by the state. The event's setting, a historic farm owned by the Carr family, emphasized the non-profit organization's mission to preserve family farms and other rural lands. Children and adults got a taste of farm life as an old-fashioned tractor pulled guests on a hayride through the property.

"Family farms and natural areas are being developed at an alarming rate," said former CTF Executive Director Dr. Gary Meffe at the March 22nd event. "The BBQ showcased some of our current projects to reduce the rate of development."

Earl Starnes, former Suwannee River Water Management District Board member who also founded a land trust in Cedar Key, was the keynote speaker. Starnes was instrumental in leading the District's mission to purchase land along the Suwannee River. The District has protected a large portion of the land along the river. CTF's current land protection projects - the Orange Lake Overlook and a wildlife corridor from the Ocala National Forest to Osceola National Forest - were on display as well. CTF Project's Coordinator Erik Lewis manned the tent and answered member's questions.

Thank you to our Sponsors and Auction Donors:

CTF Vice-President David Carr and CTF Advisory Board Member Peggy Carr for allowing CTF to use their farm for the event. Pearl Country Store - slow cooked pork for the BBQ, Florida Heritage Books, Inc., Jean and Ty Tyson of Tyson Trading Co., Glenn and Sherry Firestone of Firestone Sales, Ed Geers and Sally Guthrie, Peter NeSmith and Laura Namm-NeSmith, Ana Varela, David Chiappini of Chiappini Farm Native Nursery, Gail Stern, Steve Nesbitt, Bruce Fraleigh, Susan Trammell, David & Joan Berish, Peter Carolin, Michael Kemp, David T. Warner, John Hintermister, Jeff Ripple, Mark Smith, Sean Dowie, Tobe Terrell of Satori Longevity Foods, Inc., Larry Roberts, CTF President Mike Campbell and Sandy Campbell, CTF Secretary Kathleen Williams, CTF Board Member Judy Greenberg and Gary Greenberg, CTF Project's Coordinator Erik Lewis, and CTF Advisory Board Member Linda Conway Duever.

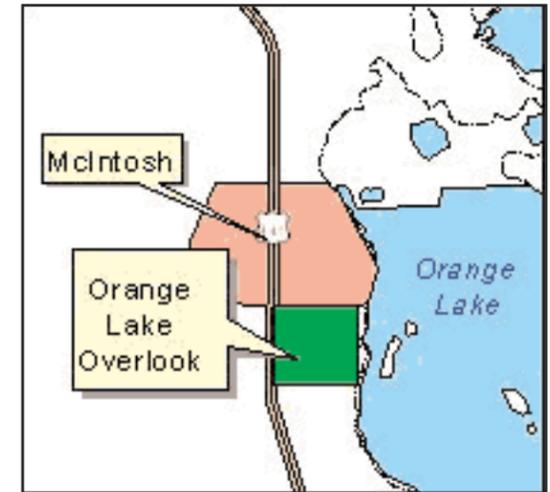


Keynote Speaker Earl Starnes

CTF Secretary Kathleen Williams chaired the fundraising committee for the auction. Silent auction items included Highwaymen prints donated by Tyson Trading Co., a Peter Carolin painting, Alyne Harris paintings, native trees and plants donated by Chiappini Farm Native Nursery, a Jeff Ripple photograph, and other great items.

Organizers of the BBQ say next year's event may be moved back to the fall instead of the spring. We hope to see you next year!

View from the hill at Orange Lake Overlook.



What you can do:

Contact the Marion County Board of Commissioners at: 601 SE 25th Avenue, Ocala, FL 34470

- District 1 Commissioner Andy Kesselring andy.kesselring@marioncountyfl.org
 - District 2 Commissioner Jim Payton jim.payton@marioncountyfl.org
 - District 3 Commissioner Parnell Townley parnell.townley@marioncountyfl.org
 - District 4 Commissioner Randy Harris randy.harris@marioncountyfl.org
 - District 5 Commissioner Steve Henning steve.henning@marioncountyfl.org
- Commissioner's Office Phone: 352-620-3307

(Specify to leave a message for all 5 commissioners.)

Contact members of PELAAC at: 8282 SE HWY 314, Ocala, FL 34470

PELAAC Recording Secretary Gina Peebles 352-236-7111
The request or comment to PELAAC should be in writing.
E-mail: pr612gp@marioncountyfl.org or Snail Mail: 8282 SE Hwy 314, Ocala, FL 34470

Contact the Growth Management Bureau of Marion County.

Bureau Chief Mike May Mike.May@marioncountyfl.org or call 352-620-7422

Write a letter to the editor in support of the Orange Lake Overlook.

The Ocala Star Banner Editorial Page Editor is Brad Rodgers. Phone: 352-867-4101
brad.rodgers@starbanner.com or Snail Mail: P.O. Box 490, Ocala, FL 34478

Gainesville Sun: voice@gvillesun.com 352-338-3128 (fax)

Orange Lake Overlook

To protect the spectacular Orange Lake Overlook from development, the Conservation Trust for Florida submitted a grant application to the Florida Communities Trust (FCT) to purchase 325 acres of the site and to build a passive recreation park.

Out of the 325 acres, the southern 100 acres are slated for development. The property was rezoned by Marion County for five-acre home sites and by December, development could begin. However, the owner is willing to sell the land to conservation interests, but CTF is concerned that the grant may not be awarded due to a lack of support from Marion County.

CTF originally sought a 50% match for the three million dollar project from the Parks and Environmental Lands Acquisition Advisory Committee (PELAAC,) but was turned down. The Marion County Commission also declined to manage the property upon purchase, but they did send a letter to FCT in support of the grant.

But even without the match or a management agreement from Marion County, the grant may still score enough points to be selected for funding.

Just in case the FCT grant for OLO is not funded, CTF submitted a grant application to the Florida Forever program for acquisition. We will know the status of both grants in late fall.

Although Marion County declined to support the project, CTF is still encouraging the County to provide management funds or a match. Along with the support of our members and supporters, we may convince Commissioners and PELAAC to fund the project in the future.

What you can do to help protect one of the most spectacular views in North Central Florida: Write a letter of support for OLO and

explain why it's important to you as a scenic vista. Please send your letter to the Marion County Commissioners, PELAAC, the Ocala Star Banner, and the Gainesville Sun.

The OLO project may also be on an upcoming Marion County Commission Agenda, but the date and time is not known. Look for an update on the CTF website.

CTF had planned to hold a rally in April, but decided to focus on gathering signatures for a petition in support of OLO. So far, we have collected 200 signatures.

Find out how you can help save OLO!
www.conserveflorida.org or 352-466-1178

Meet Judy Greenberg CTF's new Executive Director



Judy is recently retired, after 24 years, from Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Florida, Inc. As a senior analyst, she participated in the development and implementation of public policy positions for state and federal health care issues, medical and investment

policies, physician and provider relations, and with the re-engineering of the company.

Judy is also a Board Member for the Micanopy Area Cooperative School and President for McIntosh Seedlings Garden Club. Other community and volunteer service includes: Treasurer for the Church of the Mediator in Micanopy, founding member and Secretary for Marion Citizens for Responsible Growth, and member of the Public Policy Institute Growth Development Study Group for Marion County.

Membership

CTF added about 25 new members during the spring membership drive and renewed many more memberships. You can help grow CTF's membership by sharing this newsletter with other folks that are part of your sphere of influence. The newsletter includes a membership form and it is also an easy way to educate people about rural land conservation.

As we have grown in membership so have our administrative needs. We are offering you the opportunity to make specific contributions toward building our office. CTF recently purchased a new phone with an answering machine for \$50 as well as a copy/fax machine for \$350. We also plan to purchase the Land Trust Alliance's database management software for \$99.

One of the vital steps in preserving our countryside is educating landowners about land conservation methods. However, many rural landowners do not know about methods to protect their land. If you know of someone who may be interested, let us know.

Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Grant Renewed

For the second year in a row, CTF was awarded a generous grant from the Elizabeth Ordway Dunn Foundation. We are proud to have the endorsement of such a prestigious foundation.

NEW PHONE & FAX NUMBER: 352-466-1178

E-Mail Newsletter Subscription Information

Add Subscription: If you wish to subscribe to the e-mail newsletters, send us an e-mail using this address: newsletter@conserveflorida.org. Please give us your e-mail address, mailing address and phone number. We will add you to our subscription list.

Remove Subscription: If you do not wish to receive e-mail newsletters, send us an e-mail using this address: newsletter@conserveflorida.org. Please indicate you wish to be removed from the list.

Wish List

If you have used equipment or know of ways to obtain these items at reduced cost, we are all ears:

- Digital camera
- Laptop computer
- File cabinet
- Cell phone service
- GPS Unit
- Folding tables

Thanks for your continued support of CTF.