



"Protecting Our Rural Lands"

The Post

Evinston Historic Preservation Project

The Farmlands Project - Evinston Historic Preservation Project

The Greenways Program - Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway Update

The Farmlands Project - protecting HORSE COUNTRY

Land Trust Alliance Update

Board Member Spotlight

Drive through the rural town of Evinston and you will be transported back in time. It looks much as it did nearly a century ago, and one building in particular has stood the test of time. The Wood & Swink Old Store and Post Office, built in 1884, is one of the few remaining country store post offices. Though not originally located in the Wood and Swink, the post office has been in continuous operation since 1882. The store has been in the Wood family since 1906, and family members have served as Evinston's Postmaster since 1913. However, Wilma Sue Wood plans to retire soon, after 27 years of service as the Postmaster and the fate of the post office is a concern for the entire community.

In order to ensure that the U.S. Postal Service will not move the post office from the Wood & Swink once Mrs. Wood retires, CTF has been working with Freddie and Wilma Sue Wood to protect the store with a historic preservation easement, and upgrade the building with a central heat and air condi-

The Wood & Swink Old Store and Post Office in Evinston was built in 1884 and the Wood family has owned the store since 1906. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

tioning system, bathroom, some basic repairs, and a wheelchair access ramp. Without these "modern" amenities, the Postal Service could relocate the post

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protecting HORSE COUNTRY

CTF has a new focus area of The Farmlands Project titled *protecting* **HORSE COUNTRY**, which is focused on protecting horse farms in Marion County. The area is one of only four major Thoroughbred breeding and training centers in the world. However, with each farm that succumbs to development pressure this coveted designation could be removed. Along with the loss of horse farms, the network of equine

services that supports the industry and employs nearly 29,000 people will also disappear. According to the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association's website, Florida is home to some 600 Thoroughbred farms and training centers, with more than 75 percent of these located in Marion County.

One reason the Marion County area attracts horse owners is because of the calcium rich soils.

Instead of clay or sand beneath the top soil, much of Marion County's soils are underlain with limestone.

CTF's goal is to protect horse farms, the network that supports horse farms and the horse farm lifestyle for future generations by informing landowners about land conservation methods and by assisting them in protecting their land. A workshop is planned

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Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Our focus over the last quarter has been on moving our Farmlands Project forward, increasing the size and diversity of our board of directors, and pursuing additional corridor protection projects.

Staff have been creating a power point presentation to inform landowners about the advantages and benefits of conservation easements. They will make presentations at a workshop series sponsored by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Department, Forest Stewardship Program this summer. If you know of a group that would be interested in hearing about conservation easements, please let us know.

We are sorry to lose Kathleen Williams from the Board of Directors, as she has been the spark and drive for The Farmlands Project. She has been the shepherd for the project, but she has agreed to stay on as an advisory board member. We are currently evaluating several potential board members and we will keep you posted as they and we get to know each other. We are looking for an estate or tax attorney to become a board member so if you know of one who has a strong conservation interest, please contact us.

We have tasked our staff with a new corridor project, which we believe will enhance the connection between the Suwannee River and San Pedro Bay. Our staff, in conjunction with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Greenways and Trails, is fostering a meeting to coordinate the efforts of private groups and public agencies interested in protecting the wildlife corridor that stretches from the Ocala National Forest to Osceola National Forest. We will keep you posted on our progress.

CTF would like to thank the Thomas H. Maren Foundation for their generous support of The Greenways Program and The Farmlands Project. Thank you also to Progress Energy, who have generously supported The Farmlands Project for the second year with a grant to match a portion of the Thomas H. Maren Foundation grant. Thank you to the Quail Roost Foundation for their support of the *protecting* HORSE COUNTRY project and to Linda Barrett, owner of the Herlong Mansion, for generously donating the meeting room for the estate planning workshop.

Lastly, we are in our membership renewal drive and you will be receiving notices in the mail. Please introduce us to someone you think has an interest in preserving working rural lands.

Sincerely,



Terry L. Zinn
President of the Board

CTF has successfully protected approximately 2,700 acres of rural landscapes through publicly funded land conservation programs and conservation easements. CTF has also helped begin the acquisition of a 153,000-acre project, the Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway.

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The Wood & Swink Old Store and Post Office still uses its original post office boxes.

office to a different facility, as they have done in similar instances around the country involving historic buildings. True to its history, the building is still cooled with a simple ceiling fan, and heated with a wood burning stove. Mrs. Wood has described the store in summer similar to "being in a sauna."

CTF and Alachua County applied for a TEA-21 grant, which is administered by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), to purchase the easement and upgrade the store. A funding match is required for the grant, but since the store is privately owned by the Woods (the post office just leases the space,) the match must be raised from the community. An "Evinston to Cross Creek Paint Out" sponsored by the Artists Alliance of North Florida and CTF is tentatively planned for April 7 through April 15, 2006. CTF will also host a fundraiser in conjunction with its own annual fundraiser & awards ceremony on November 6 at The Yearling Restaurant in Cross Creek (more on that in the next newsletter.)

FDOT has determined that the Wood & Swink is technically eligible for a TEA-21 grant, and visited the store on June 22 to assess the project. The next step is to determine the cost and Alan McKellips, an architect with Hunter/McKellips, Associates Architects, which specialize in historic preservation, is working on the estimate for the upgrades and restoration. CTF would like to thank those organizations that wrote letters of support for the TEA-21 grant application, including the Alachua Co. Historic Trust: Matheson Museum, Alachua Co. Historical Commission, Micanopy Historical Society, and the Old FL Heritage Scenic Highway. Thank you to John Sabatella of Alachua Co. Public Works for his assistance on the grant. *Kate Barnes contributed information for this story.* ∞

Estate Planning Workshops with Jerry Cosgrove of the American Farmland Trust



Jerry Cosgrove speaks to landowners at the workshop on estate planning held at the Herlong Mansion in Micanopy.

CTF hosted two estate planning workshops with Jerry Cosgrove, an estate planning expert with the American Farmland Trust (AFT), on February 26 and 27. The Saturday workshop focused on the process of estate planning issues for rural landowners and was geared for professionals. The Sunday workshop, geared toward landowners, focused on the economic benefits of conservation easements and ways to reduce property, federal income, and estate taxes through sound estate planning. The workshop series was a great success! There was standing room only at the landowner workshop on Sunday.

Ron Howard from the Natural Resource Conservation Service presented information during lunch about two programs from the 2002 Farm Bill, the Farm and Ranchland Protection

Program and the Wetlands Conservation Program on both days. Copies of the AFT book *Your Land is Your Legacy, A Guide to Planning for the Future of Your Farm* was offered free to landowners.

The workshop series is part of **The Farmlands Project**, an educational and outreach project initiated by the Conservation Trust for Florida to address the high conversion rate of working rural lands to urban uses. In 2003, according to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida's 44,000 farmers and ranchers contributed \$62 billion to the state's economy and provided approximately 648,550 jobs. However, the state loses more than 150,000 acres of rural land to urban development every year.

The goal of The Farmlands Project is to slow this trend. By providing landowners with information about methods to protect their farm and ranch lands and in some instances receive a cash payment for protecting their land, there is a better chance of maintaining family lands and passing them on to future generations. The financial assistance, estate tax savings, and/or possibly a reduction in property taxes will help sustain Florida's farm and ranch families.

CTF partnered with the Alachua Conservation Trust on the workshop series and Saturday's workshop was held in conjunction with the Public Interest Environmental Conference, hosted by the UF Law School. The estate planning workshop series was made possible through the generous support of The AEC Trust, Mickey Singer, the Land Trust Alliance, Southeast Program, & Linda Barrett, owner of the Herlong Mansion. ∞

CAMP BLANDING TO OSCEOLA NATIONAL FOREST ECOLOGICAL GREENWAY PROJECT UPDATE

Acquisition Efforts Focused on Road Frontage

CTF is focusing protection efforts for the Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway (Greenway) on acquiring the critical road frontage along U.S. Hwy 301, which is threatened by sprawling commercial development in Duval and Clay Counties. It is imperative that land within the areas most threatened by development be protected soon while parcel sizes are still large and before formal development plans are proposed.

Dr. Tom Hctor is developing grant proposals to secure matching funds for the Greenway which is currently listed as a top priority project on the state's land acquisition program, Florida Forever. The most recent grant proposal received the support of Eva Armstrong, Director of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of State Lands, which administers the Florida Forever program. Thank you to everyone who wrote letters of support for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant proposal. A planning meeting is scheduled for mid-July with key stakeholders to discuss the acquisition strategy.

The Greenway aims to protect the conservation land gap between the Camp Blanding Military Site and Osceola National Forest in north Florida and it is also the most critical gap in a proposed 200-mile long and 1.5 million acre network of federal and state conservation lands from the Wekiva River basin and Ocala National Forest near Orlando to Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in north Florida and southeast Georgia. The Greenway is included within several conservation plans: it is a Critical Linkage within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network, which is

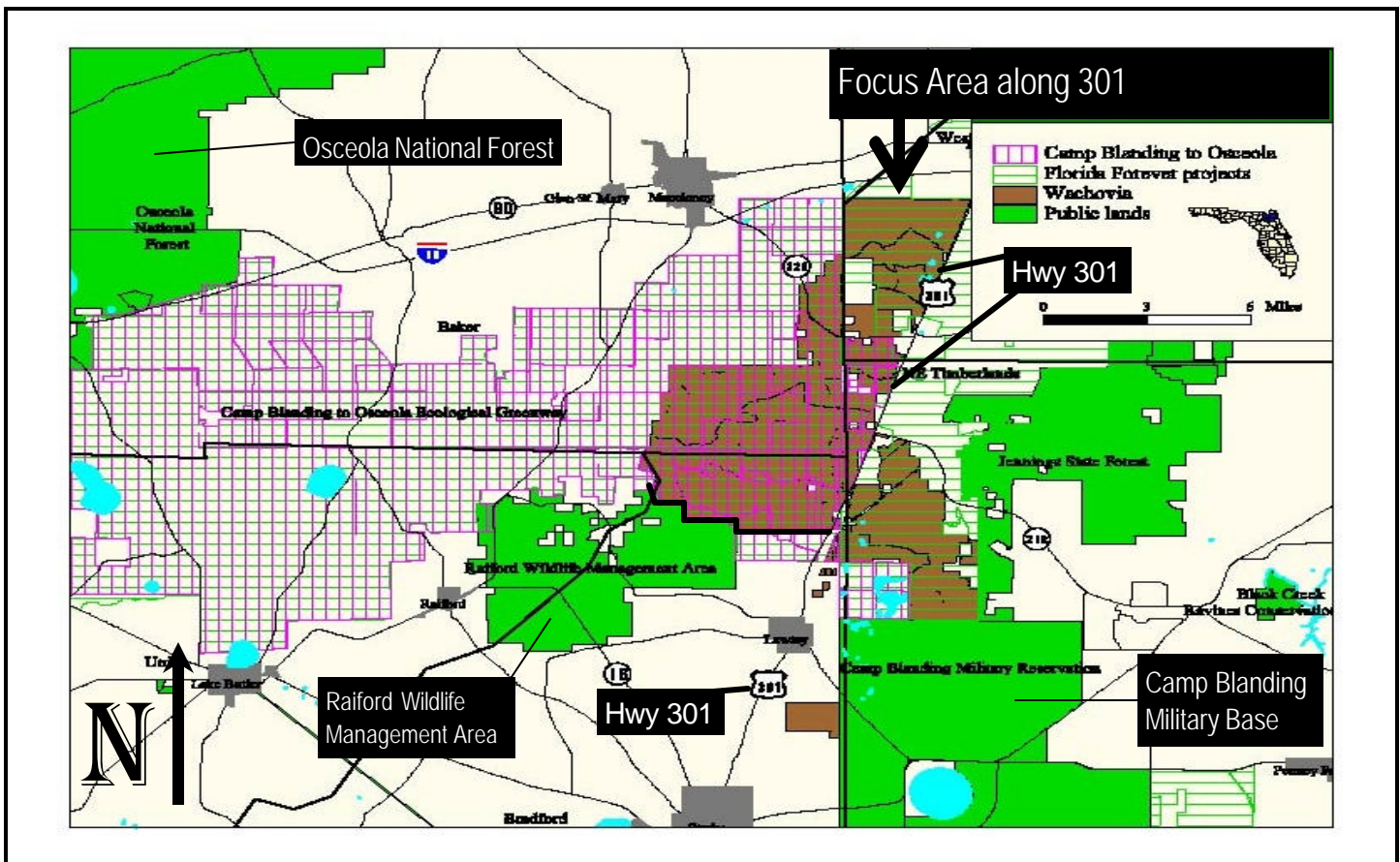
a state adopted plan to protect large-connected landscapes and it contains Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas for several species identified by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Completing the 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. Other species that would benefit include the red-cockaded woodpecker, wood stork, and eastern indigo snake, which are all federal listed species, and other species of conservation interest including gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel, swallow-tailed kite, and various Neotropical migrant bird species. In addition, this area was also host to a reintroduction potential study for the Florida panther conducted in the early 1990s, and the Greenway could help secure a large conservation landscape suitable for panther reintroduction in the future. ∞

Background info

The Greenway aims to protect the conservation land gap between the Camp Blanding Military Site and Osceola National Forest in north Florida and it is also the most critical gap in a proposed 200-mile long and 1.5 million acre network of federal and state conservation lands from the Wekiva River basin and Ocala National Forest near Orlando to Osceola National Forest and Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge in north Florida and southeast Georgia. The Greenway is included within several conservation plans: it is a Critical Linkage within the Florida Ecological Greenways Network, which is

The Camp Blanding to Osceola National Forest Ecological Greenway is highlighted in the checkerboard pattern. The area CTF is focusing acquisition efforts on is the southern portion of the shaded areas that are adjacent to the west side of U.S. Hwy 301.



THE FARMLANDS PROJECT UPDATE

Conservation Easement Workshops

Forest Stewardship Workshops:

Estate Planning and Timber Taxes for Forestland Owners and Cover Your A\$\$ets II

Drew Melville, Farmlands Project Coordinator for CTF, made the first of three planned presentations on conservation easements at an estate planning workshop in Chipley, FL on June 20. Drew will be making future presentations on June 30 in Clay County and July 14 in Osceola County. The workshops are part of the Forest Stewardship Program, sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

The June 30 workshop will provide an overview of estate planning and timber taxation, and familiarize landowners with their options and obligations. Dr. Josephine Turner of UF-IFAS's Family and Consumer Sciences, Larry Bishop of the USDA's Forest Service, and CTF's Drew Melville will discuss issues such as the current status of federal tax laws, conservation easements, and the importance of planning for the smooth transition of assets to heirs. This knowledge will enable landowners to more effectively communicate with planning advisors and accountants.

The July 14 workshop in south Florida will cover strategies for cutting costs and increasing profits, and adapting to rapidly changing land use patterns and economics, with a

focus on examples from south Florida's Deseret Ranch and Adams Ranch. Speakers include Dr. Josephine Turner, Drew Melville, Dr. Bill Giuliano, Dr. Mitch Flinchum, Mark Asleson, Ernest Cox, Mike Adams, Brigham Mason, Dr. Taylor Stein, Eleanor Foerste, and Chris Demers.

Estate Planning and Timber Taxes for Forestland Owners **June 30 from 9:00 am – 2:15 pm:**

UF-IFAS Clay Co. Cooperative Extension Office in Green Cove Springs. Call the Clay Co. Extension Office at 904-284-6355 to register. Cost is \$7; collected at door. Drew presents at 11:00 am. Continuing Education Credits are offered for Society of American Foresters.

Cover Your A\$\$ets II

July 14 from 1:00 pm – 7:30 pm:

UF-IFAS Osceola Co. Cooperative Extension Office in Kissimmee. Call the Osceola Co. Extension Office at 321-697-3000 to register. Cost is \$12, collected at door, and includes dinner and a resource book. Drew presents at about 2:00 pm.

Printable announcements with program agendas and directions can be found at the FL Forestry Information Bulletin Board: www.sfrc.ufl.edu/Extension/ffws/bul.htm or by contacting Chris Demers at 352-846-2375 or cdemers@ifas.ufl.edu . ☺

THE CTF EXPERIENCE

Get-Aways for CTF Members and Friends

CTF is teaming up with local travel agencies and tour guides in an effort to increase awareness of land conservation and to raise funds for our operating expenses. Some trips are being offered to CTF at a group rate and an additional fee is added as a donation to CTF. Please inquire with us on the availability and dates.

ADVENTURE OUTPOST – LARS ANDERSON

Canoe Trips on Cross Creek and Hikes on Paynes Prairie

CLUB FLORIDA – VIRGINIA SEACRIST

Stay in a Tree Top Yurt on the Santa Fe River

LAZY RIVER CRUISES – CAPTAIN MIKE

Pontoon Boat Rides down the Withlacoochee River

WILD FL ADVENTURES – BRACK BARKER

Kayak Tours of the Cedar Key Area

WORLD CLASS TRAVEL – BOB TODD

World Class Travel pledges to donate 10% of the gross sales for any of the Peru packages generated by sales to CTF members, which will be donated to CTF in their name.

www.peruperu.com/peru-travel/conservedflorida.htm

Second Grant from Progress Energy

For the second year, CTF has received a very generous grant from Progress Energy to support The Farmlands Project. These funds will help implement the third phase of the project, "Landowner Education and Outreach." The first two phases were also funded by a grant from Progress Energy.

The purpose of the project is to educate and inform landowners in a six-county area in north Florida about land conservation options, such as conservation easements and tax and estate planning methods.

CTF will use the funds to develop and purchase educa-

tional materials, which will be mailed to landowners and presented in a series of workshops. CTF will also schedule meetings with individual landowners, area farm organization directors, elected officials, and the media.

CTF hosted two estate planning workshops this past February in Alachua County, with Jerry Cosgrove of the American Farmland Trust. CTF's Land Protection Committee would like to focus next on Marion County.

If you know of any landowners who may be interested, please contact CTF at 352-466-1178 or info@conservedflorida.org . ☺

Sunflowers and The Birds They Attract Help Control Insect Pests On Crops And Reduce Pesticide Use

Board Member and Secretary Dr. Kathryn Sieving and Dr. Gregory Jones, a former graduate student of Dr. Sieving's who is a Biology Professor at SFCC and a volunteer for CTF, worked with several farmers in north central Florida to study the effects of planting sunflowers near vegetable crops on insect-eating birds visitation to the crops. The findings were part of (now Dr.) Jones' dissertation when he was a student at UF, and established that not only do north central FL farms support a high diversity of native birds species, but also that many of those species can be attracted into vegetable crops where they eat pest insects. Dr. Sieving is planning a new project to study the effects of the birds on the pests. The project is titled Sunflower Intercropping for Insect-eating Birds in Sustainable and Organic Agro-ecosystems and is contingent on receiving funding. The press release on the previous work was written by Patti Bartlett, who is a News Writer for IFAS Communications and is used with her permission.



When it comes to controlling insect pests on crops, some farmers are saying hello to birds.

"We have found an environmentally friendly way that may help control insects that feed on crops, and it's literally for the birds," said Kathryn Sieving, an associate professor with the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. "By planting sunflowers near valuable crops, we can attract birds that feed on insects."

While many growers believe that birds themselves could be a source of major crop damage, that's not always the case, Sieving said.

"In fact, most of the birds we've observed on north central Florida farms feed on insects," she said. "More than 200 species of nongame birds are found on farmlands in the United States, and only about 10 of them cause major crop damage, which leaves 190 species that are potentially very helpful."

Moreover, concerns that the sunflowers themselves would attract damaging insects are unfounded, Sieving said. Most of the insects associated with sunflowers are beneficial, ranging from those that pollinate crops to predators such as bees, wasps and assassin bugs that may help control insect pests. Greg Jones, a graduate student working with Sieving in UF's wildlife ecology and conservation department, said sunflowers can also be a cash crop for farmers. "The sunflower species in our research are the types that can be sold as cut flowers in retail outlets and farmers' markets," Jones said. "In addition to harvesting the flower stalks, growers can harvest the seed for bird food or market the seed to others who want to grow sunflowers."

Another plus is the seasonal nature of the sunflowers, Jones said. Sunflowers grow quickly, and they create a hedgerow that can be taken down or replanted easily. The habitat they provide is used by migratory birds and year-round bird populations. "Sunflowers may make it easier for migrating birds to find shelter, especially when they have a critical need for a safe place to rest and feed before going on," Jones said.

The potential value of birds on farms was first documented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1885, and many of these early findings are still useful on modern farms, he said. Federal ornithologists found that the majority of birds on farms benefit growers by eating insects and weed seeds.

"Our data suggest that encouraging the presence of insect-eating birds should help rather than hinder farm production," Jones said. "While we have not yet demonstrated scientifically that the sunflower-bird connection can reduce insect damage to crops, we hope we will find this to be the case in the future. Then bird-friendly farms may not need to rely so heavily on pesticide applications.

"Of course, sunflowers won't rid a farm of injurious insects, but they might enable a farmer to use less pesticide, becoming an important part of an overall integrated pest management plan," he said. ☺

Some of the Participating Growers who worked with Dr. Sieving and Dr. Jones on the previous study:

Lois Milton & Tommy Simmons, Bellevue Gardens Organic Farm, Archer, FL
Bill Ogle and Bill Allen, Govinda's Garden Organic Farm, Alachua, FL
Charles Andrews, Hammock Hollow Organic Herb Farm, Island Grove, FL
Joe Durando, Possum Hollow Organic Farm, Alachua, FL
Rosalie Koenig, Rosie's Organics, Gainesville, FL

LAND TRUST ALLIANCE - Update

In February's newsletter, CTF ran a story from the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) about a proposal by the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) to drastically cut back tax benefits for conservation donations -- donations of land, donations of conservation easements, and bargain sales. On June 8, the Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on "The Tax Code and Land Conservation: Report on Investigations and Proposals for Reform." Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance, presented testimony on the good work of land trusts across the country, calling for reasonable reforms that target abusers without preventing good conservation.

This hearing was a major turning point in the consideration of the proposals

made by the Joint Committee on Taxation, at least in the Senate. The hearing was attended by eleven Senators, nearly all of whom made strong statements on the value of conservation in their state. But we still face major challenges. The Finance committee staff clearly intends to change the law in a number of areas. Their report is at www.senate.gov/%7Eefinance/sitepages/TNC%20Report.htm and it contains a number of recommendations of interest to land trusts. You can also find more information about the report at www.lta.org.

The details of these proposals are still unclear, and LTA is working hard to make sure that Congressional reforms allow good conservation work to continue. We will need your continued action and

involvement. You can help us by:

Engaging the press. Every positive story and op-ed on the value of conservation easements and the work of land trusts is important. Email ProtectPrivateConservation@lta.org for assistance.

Communicating with your Senators and Representatives about the good work that you do! LTA has a list of the most important senators and representatives to contact and if you have connections with any of them, please contact them soon. Representatives from Florida include E. Clay Shaw and Mark Foley of the Ways and Means Committee. Go to: www.lta.org/publicpolicy/ ☞

ALLIANCE OF FLORIDA LAND TRUSTS

Florida Land Trusts form Informal Association

Representatives from seven Florida land trusts met in February at a meeting in Gainesville hosted by CTF and the Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) and reached consensus to form the Alliance of Florida Land Trusts (AFLT.) The mission of AFLT is to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of AFLT members in protecting land and water resources in Florida.

An Executive Committee was elected with the following officers: Albert Joerger, Chair (Sarasota Conservation Foundation); William Lorenzen, Vice-Chair (Tampa Bay Conservancy); Busy Kislig-Shires Byerly, Secretary; and Kevin McGorty, Treasurer (Tall Timbers Research Station, Red Hills Conservation Program.) Lauren Day (ACT) and a representative of the North Florida Land Trust will serve on two at-large seats. The next AFLT meeting is on November 16 at the P.L.A.M. conference. ☞

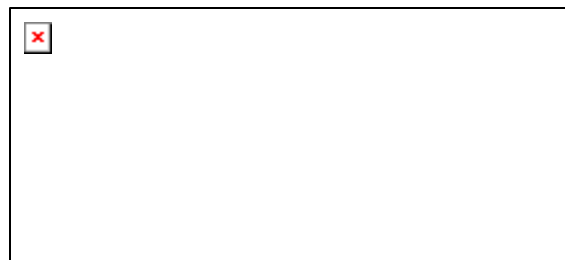
(continued from page 1) protecting HORSE COUNTRY

for late August and a brochure with information about land conservation options will be mailed to all horse farm owners in Marion County.

In 2003, according to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida's 44,000 farmers and ranchers contributed \$62 billion and 648,550 jobs to the state's economy. However, the state loses more than 150,000 acres of rural land to urban development every year. The state trend is similar to what is occurring in Marion County. For example, the number of farms in Marion County increased to 2,930 in 2002 from 2,370 in 1997, according to the USDA Census of Agriculture, but the total acreage decreased from 281,798 in 1997 to 270,562 in 2002; a loss of 11,236 acres of farmland. The average size of each farm also decreased by 27 acres; down to a 92-acre average in 2002.

The Quail Roost Foundation, founded in honor of Elmer and Harriet Heubeck, has contributed a generous grant to initiate the project. Thank you to DeLene Beeland for editing the horse farm brochure and to Kerry Heubeck and Sean Dowie for providing photographs for the brochure. ☞

Herlong Mansion Bed & Breakfast



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The mission of the Conservation Trust for Florida is to protect the rural landscapes of Florida. We focus on farms, ranches, working forests, and natural areas that provide landscape connections.

Florida loses 150,000 acres of rural land to development every year.
 Your support will help CTF work to slow this trend.

WISH LIST: Color and B&W toner cartridges (HP Office Jet All in One), GPS Unit, fire proof storage box, and a digital camera.

COMMITTEES: CTF has two working committees that need your help! If you would like to volunteer your time to serve on the Development and Outreach or the Land Protection committees, please contact us.

POSSUM CREEK FESTIVAL: CTF will be selling several varieties of native wildflower seeds at the Possum Creek Festival on September 24 and 25. Please stop by the booth and show your support! If you would like to help out in the booth, please contact us.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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

- \$15 Student
- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$100 Sustaining
- \$250 Patron
- \$500 Founder
- \$1,000 Benefactor

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

I am a landowner and would like information about conservation easements.

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

ART BENEFITS CTF (correction from Feb. newsletter)

- ∞ Artist Susan Trammell will generously donate \$250 of the proceeds from the sale of the framed original water color titled Flame Azalea - *Rhododendron austrinum* to CTF. (12" x 16" Price \$500.)
- ∞ Susan will donate all of the proceeds of the framed photograph giclee titled Chain Fern - *Woodwardia virginica* to CTF. (10.5" x 13.5" Price \$50)
- ∞ Flame Azalea is on display at Harvest Thyme Café on Main Street in Gainesville and Chain Fern is on display at the Pearl Country Store in Micanopy.

Thank you

To all the volunteers who helped sell packets of native wildflower seeds at the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival & at Earth Day. (An extra special thank you to Terry Zinn who donated the seeds.) Peggy and her son Adam Carr, Sally Dickinson, Betty Haeseker, Phyllis Hansen, Nancy Peterson, Liz Pooley, Virginia Seacrist, Sura Seliger, Jennifer Springfield, and Terry Zinn.