

Fourth Quarter FY11 Environmental Protection Department
LAND CONSERVATION DIVISION

Mission Statement: To acquire, manage and improve environmentally significant lands to protect water resources, wildlife habitat, and to provide natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

Summary: During the fourth quarter of 2011, staff were able to reach agreements on three tracts totalling 842 acres. We expect these to close December 2011 and January 2012.

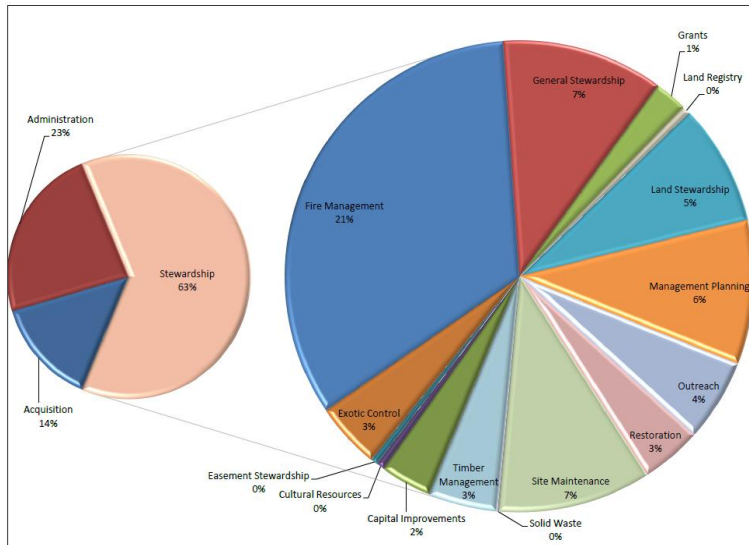
Accomplishments

	Acres	Price	Acquisition Price Leveraged	Stewardship Leveraged (ac)	Unencumbered Balance (est)
To date	19,744	\$91,317,497	63%	51%	\$4,501,297
Under Contract	842	\$2,592,563	8%	33%	\$1,908,734



The percent of staff time devoted to Stewardship continues to hover between 65 and 75 percent, illustrating the shift away from land acquisition. There has been a lot of staff time spent during the last quarter developing the Cattle Grazing Business Plan. This is being routed through several advisory boards for comment and will be presented to the BoCC in January for adoption.

Two cowboys wearing handguns- Gainesville, Florida. *Rough and Ready, two cowboys wearing handguns and boots, are two Gainesville residents. Archie L. Jackson, left, was the son of a Confederate veteran and grandfather of an Alachua County rancher. Thomas McDonald, right, had a son, Harrison H. McDonald, who was a county judge for many years. This photo was taken in the 1890s, after the two men had driven a herd of cattle from Old Town, forded the Suwannee River, and brought the herd close to Gainesville for grazing. This shot is taken about one block west of the courthouse, behind Steenberg's Hardware Store, later Thomas Hardware. (Florida Memory. Florida Department of State, Div. of Library & information Services <http://www.floridamemory.com>)*



Ranching and ACF



Ranching remains an important part of the landscape and economy in Alachua County. Alachua County currently ranks 8th in the state in the numbers of beef cattle with 26,000 head. In 2007, there were 172,843 acres in farmland -- 38% in pasture, and 20,975 acres in forage -- 3rd in the state. In 2007, livestock revenues generated \$27 million in the County, averaging \$60,000 per ranch (USDA 2007 Census of Agriculture). But how did we get here.

Florida's cattle industry, one of the oldest and largest in the nation, is vital to the state's well-being. Ranching, considered an iconic American tradition, was practiced for the first time in North America here in Florida. Ranching in Florida has evolved from many different cultural traditions, though the most important sources were the marshy coastal areas of Andalusia, Spain, and the hill regions of Britain and Ireland. The Spanish and British colonialists took their cattle ranching traditions to the West Indies, where they were adapted to the tropical climate and combined to create ranching systems used throughout the Americas. Some scholars believe that Florida's cattle brought by the expeditions of Ponce de Leon in 1521 and Don Diego de Maldonado in 1540 escaped and survived in the wild.

Organized ranching began with the founding of St. Augustine in 1565, when cattle from Spain and Cuba formed the basis of herds that fed the garrison and surrounding communities. In early Florida, Europeans, Americans, and Indians stole cattle from each other. Rustling became particularly widespread by the second half of the 18th century, and was one of the elements that led to the Seminole Wars. Continued aggressions between the Seminoles and European-American settlers over cattle and grazing lands contributed significantly to starting the Second (1835-1842) and Third Seminole Wars (1855-1858). When the U.S. took possession of Florida in 1821, it was described as a "vast, untamed wilderness, plentifully stocked with wild cattle." Florida "scrub" or Cracker cattle were descended from the mix of Spanish and British breeds. These hardy creatures survived on native forage, tolerated severe heat, insect pests, and acquired immunity to many diseases. Early Florida cowmen survived in difficult conditions. They fought off panthers, wolves, bears, and cattle rustlers. From central Florida, they sometimes drove cattle as far as Jacksonville, Savannah, and Charleston. The new era of Seminole cattle ranching began in the 1930s, when the Dania and Brighton Seminoles acquired starter herds. The Seminole Tribe established the Indian Livestock Association in 1939. Today, the Seminole Tribe is one of Florida's leading beef producers.

In January 2008, there were over 1.7 million cattle in Florida, including nearly 1 million head of beef cows. Florida was 12th in the nation for beef cattle and 18th for total cattle and calves. Industry officials assess the annual economic impact of beef cattle ranches at nearly \$4 billion.

