



Alachua County

Alachua County Forever's Lochloosa - Higginbotham Ranch Conservation Easement



Purchase Date: August 8, 2014
Seller: Higginbotham Family
Purchase Price: \$765,000 Size: 319 acres Cons. Ease.

- Higginbotham Ranch is located on SE 171st Street, north of State Road 20 and approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Phifer Flatwoods Preserve. The property consists of two parcels managed as a working cattle ranch, which has been in operation since approximately 1967.
- The property owner nominated the land for a conservation easement. Acquisition of a conservation easement on the Higginbotham Ranch parcels would preserve a working cattle ranch, and expand protected lands within the Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods Project.
- The property consists of approximately 255 acres of improved pasture with scattered forested wetlands. Many of the wetlands are interconnected with manmade ditches. Two distinct wetland-ditch systems on the property form drainage features which contribute to Lochloosa Creek. In addition, a manmade ditch flowing across the property near the eastern boundary is part of a third tributary to Lochloosa Creek. Lochloosa Creek, located approximately one mile west of Higginbotham Ranch, flows into Lochloosa Lake, an Outstanding Florida Water, approximately four miles south of the Ranch.
- The Easement allows continued cattle ranching and limited timber management.
- The Higginbotham family donated 25% of the purchase price and the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program, administered by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service contributed 50%. The County provided the remaining 25% and will monitor the easement.
- The Higginbothams also donated a second wrap-around conservation easement to further protect the environmental values.
- This is the fifty-fourth acquisition by the ACF program, the 12th conservation easement, and the twenty-seventh acquisition using the Wild Spaces and Public Places Surtax, approved by the voters in 2008 to extend the ACF Program.



ALACHUA COUNTY FOREVER MISSION

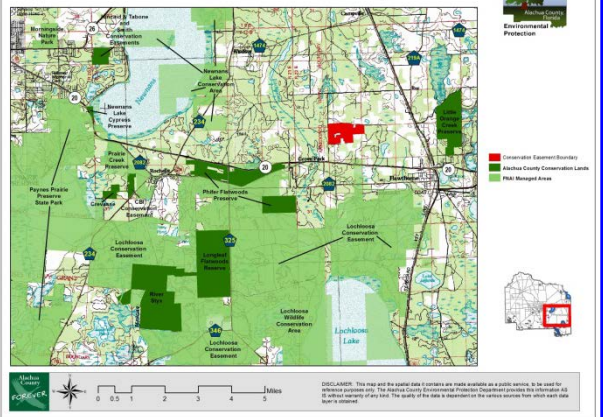
Approved in November 2000 by the voters, to acquire, improve and manage the county's environmentally sensitive lands to protect water resources, wildlife habitats and natural areas suitable for resource-based recreation.

Program Notes

- ✓ Alachua County Forever responds to public nominations.
- ✓ Property owners must be willing. Condemnation of property is not permitted under Alachua County Forever.
- ✓ Projects evaluated by staff and the Land Conservation Board.
- ✓ Criteria include protection of water resources, habitats, species, social value, manageability, and the economics of the acquisition.
- ✓ The County Commission approves acquisition projects.
- ✓ County can acquire property outright or certain rights through less-than-fee mechanisms such as conservation easements.
- ✓ Offers are made based on independent, private appraisals.
- ✓ Program funded by \$29 million in voter-approved bonds and \$15 million in Sales Surtax.
- ✓ Program actively seeks state, federal and private grants.
- ✓ Properties are managed as preserves.
- ✓ Resource-compatible, passive recreation is encouraged on sites where appropriate.



Map 1
Higginbotham Ranch Conservation Easement - Location Map



For more information:
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