

**Santa Fe River  
Shepherd & Walls  
11/18/03**

**Inspection Date:** November 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
**Parcel Numbers:** 05368-000-000 125 acres Shepherd & Walls  
05356-000-000 35.97 acres Shepherd & Walls  
05371-201-000 10.08 acres Shepherd & Walls  
05371-199-000 31.4 acres Shepherd  
**Size:** 202.45 acres  
**Buildings:** 0

**Overall Description:**

The 202.45 acre Shepherd & Walls property lies within the Santa Fe River Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project. It is composed of 4 tax parcels, 3 of which are owned by Shepherd & Walls and the other by Shepherd alone, see attached map. The property representative is Jed Merrill, of Merrill Management, Inc. He represents a group of owners along this stretch of the Santa Fe River, and a conservation buyer who is interested in purchasing these properties and then selling a conservation easement to the county. However, if this sale does not go through, the current owners are willing to work with the county on a fee simple sale of the property.

The Santa Fe River project scored 8.96 of 9.44 on the Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA), and is the highest scoring project to date. The Shepherd & Walls property is within the number 1 ranked Santa Fe River project of the Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project (KBN Study). It is also on the Suwannee River Water Management District's 5 year Florida Forever Plan.

The Shepherd & Walls property has approximately 1 mile of Santa Fe River frontage, in addition to a mosaic of forest types that transition to the river. Overall these communities are in very good condition with high species diversity and only isolated areas of invasive plants. The property provides good wildlife habitat, with dense cover, large old trees and available mast.

**Natural Communities:**

Major River	excellent
Blackwater Stream	good-excellent
Floodplain Swamp	good-excellent
Bottomland Forest	good-excellent
Floodplain Forest	excellent
Hydric Hammock	excellent
Basin Swamp	fair
Upland Mixed Forest	fair-good
Mesic Flatwoods	fair

**Key Species:**

Listed species observed on the site include southern lady fern, *matelea* spp., *Rhododendron canescens*, cinnamon fern, and royal fern. Additional species of interest include river birch, American beech, and climbing hydrangea.

**Key Features:**

The site has approximately 1 mile of vegetated Santa Fe River shoreline and the associated forest. Preservation of the site and associated forest would protect the river from

erosion, improve the quality of water entering the Santa Fe River, and provide water storage for the area.

The forested wetlands are in good to excellent condition and have a high species diversity with little disturbance. Species in the forested wetlands include swamp laurel oak, cypress, Nissa, muscle wood, Sebastian bush, titi, American elm, river birch, and *Rhododendron canescens*.

There is an area in the floodplain swamp, approximately 1 acre in size near one of the property entrances that has a moderately dense population of Japanese climbing fern. Additionally there has been some soil subsidence and tree falls throughout the floodplain swamp. This appears to be a result of soil oxidation during the recent drought, followed by flooding of the area after the drought. Increased light levels in the tree fall gaps have promoted blackberry and false nettle.

The basin swamp has a light infestation of Japanese climbing fern, along with some taro and begonia.

Upland mixed forest is found in several small areas of the site and is mostly in good condition. Typical species include swamp chestnut oak, sweet gum, pignut hickory, live oak, laurel oak, woods grass, American olive and sparkleberry.

The mesic flatwoods have been cut over in the past and are of fair quality. Representative species include loblolly pines, laurel oak, sweetgum, gallberry, and dwarf huckleberry. A dirt road runs through this area.

### **Management:**

Necessary management activities include invasive plant control and some prescribed fire in the mesic flatwoods. Should the property be protected through a conservation easement, there must be a provision for invasive plant control. Invasive species observed on the site include Japanese climbing fern, taro and begonia.

### **Recreation:**

The recreation potential of the property is dependent on how the property is protected. If it is acquired through a conservation easement there will probably not be any public recreation. However, if it is acquired fee simple, it would be appropriate for low impact nature based recreation, i.e., nature study and hiking trails.

### **Parcel Data:**

Parcel	Acres	Owner	ACPA Land Value
05368-000-000	125	Shepherd & Walls	\$75,000
05356-000-000	35.97	“ ”	\$71,900
05371-201-000	10.08	“ ”	\$18,900
05371-199-000	31.4	Shepherd	\$19,100

The total 2003 Alachua County Property Appraisers (ACPA) just or land value for the subject property is \$184,900 or \$913.31 per acre. There are no permanent buildings on the property. However a small camper trailer is present. The future land use and zoning are both agriculture.

### **Other:**

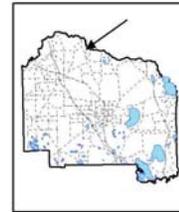
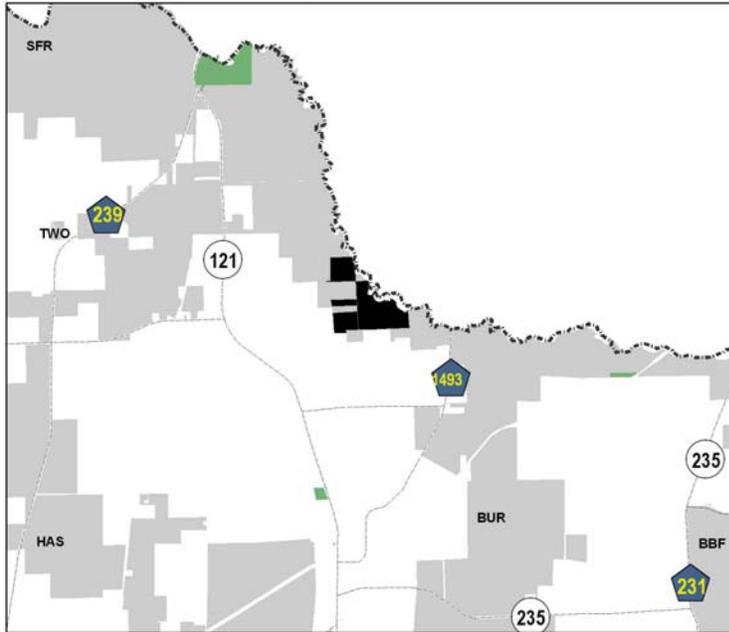
While there were no Florida Division of Historical Resources Master Site File listings for the subject property, staff did observe a pitch pine pot.

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**January 20, 2004**

CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(I-1) PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES	A. Whether the property has geologic/hydrologic conditions that would easily enable contamination of vulnerable aquifers that have value as drinking water sources;		3		
	B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;		3		
	C. Whether the property contains or has direct connections to lakes, creeks, rivers, springs, sinkholes, or wetlands for which conservation of the property will protect or improve surface water quality;		5		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		5		
(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES	A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;		3		
	B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;		5		
	C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;		4		
	D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;		4		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		2		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		4		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		5		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		4		
(I-3) PROTECTION OF PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES	A. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for rare, threatened, or endangered species or species of special concern;		4		
	B. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for species with large home ranges;		4		
	C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;		4		
	D. Whether the property serves as a special wildlife migration or aggregation site for activities such as breeding, roosting, colonial nesting, or over-wintering;		4		
	E. Whether the property offers high vegetation quality and species diversity;		4		
	F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species.		3		
(I-4) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;		5		
	B. Whether the property contributes to urban green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective.		5		
	<b>AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES</b>			4.0	
	<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>	1.3333			5.33
(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES	A. Whether it will be practical to manage the property to protect its environmental, social and other values (examples include controlled burning, exotics removal, maintaining hydro-period, and so on);		4		
	B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner.		5		
(II-2) ECONOMIC AND ACQUISITION ISSUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions;		5		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;		5		
	C. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the environmental, social or other values of the property through development and/or lack of sufficient legislative protections (this requires analysis of current land use, zoning, owner intent, location and		2		
	D. Whether there is an opportunity to protect the environmental, social or other values of the property through an economically attractive less-than-fee mechanism such as a conservation easement.		1		
	<b>AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES</b>			3.7	
	<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>	0.6667			2.44
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>				<b>7.78</b>

### Shepherd & Walls and Shepherd Properties Santa Fe River



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