

Barr Hammock Ledwith Prairie

An application to
Florida Communities Trust
Submitted by
Alachua County



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"Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents. It was loaned to you by your children."

- Kenyan Proverb



Cover Photo: Caroline Barr and John William Barr, children of citrus grower J.J. Barr after whom Barr Hammock is named; ca. 1907.
Courtesy Micanopy Historical Society

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Project Summary

- *The purpose of the Barr Hammock Ledwith Prairie Project (BHLPP) is to protect, preserve and enhance the unique natural and cultural resources found on the property, and provide an enjoyable and educational passive recreation experience.*
- *If acquired, the site will be managed as a nature preserve with opportunities provided for natural and cultural resource-compatible passive recreation, with an interpretative and educational component. The physical improvements will include a parking area, trail head, potentially 8 miles of hiking trails, interpretive exhibits, and an overlook with multiple access points to the shoreline.*
- *The sites long cultural history of settlement and use will be brought to life once again through re-use of the existing improvements on the property. These include a hunt camp, forestry roads, fire breaks, historic foundations and even a long-abandoned Cattle Dip Vat.*
- *The 2,861-acre BHLPP is comprised of some of the keystone parcels of the 12,000-acre Barr Hammock Levy Lake Project under consideration by Alachua County Forever (ACF). ACF is a voter-approved, local initiative to conserve and manage environmentally sensitive lands and provide passive recreation and educational opportunities on its portfolio of lands.*
- *Outstanding biotic features include access to the 1,800-acre Ledwith Prairie, the 3,100-acre Levy Prairie to the north and the majestic Barr Hammock land bridge between them. The mosaic of natural communities found on the site make it valuable habitat for Florida sandhill cranes, Sherman's fox squirrels and Southern bald eagles. Consistent with Alachua County's land conservation philosophy, the BHLPP will be managed to restore and enhance native plant communities through invasive species control, prescribed burning, encouraging natural succession and revegetation.*
- *Acquisition of the project site will protect and enhance the quality of the Floridan aquifer by removing potential agricultural sources of contamination to the Floridan aquifer - including the cattle dip vat, and permitting only those low-impact recreational uses which will ensure long-term public health and safety, potable water supplies, and the ecological integrity of natural resources.*
- *The BHLPP, if acquired, would be part of the Emerald Necklace Land Conservation Initiative - "A publicly accessible, connected, and protected network of trails, greenways, open space, and waterfronts surrounding the Gainesville urban area".*
- *The BHLPP links and buffers Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, the (WRP) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program Conservation Easement and the Florida Forever/Office of Greenways and Trails Price's Scrub/Carr Farm projects. The project area is on a spur of the Scenic Highway U.S. 441 and the designated "preferred route" for recreational bicyclists.*
- *The project links two of the largest wetlands in Alachua County and would protect a prairie wetland that offers scenic and habitat values comparable to Payne Prairie Preserve S.P.*
- *The Project contains significant prehistoric, Archaic, Middle Archaic and pre-Columbian archaeological sites. There is high potential for it to contain a portion of William Bartram's 1774 route from his camp at Cuscowilla (now the Town of Micanopy) to his destination at St. Marks and Apalachee Bay.*
- *With such incredible natural and cultural features and Alachua County's commitment to protecting and interpreting these features, this Project will be the crown jewel in Alachua County's "Emerald Necklace" and a valuable example of State and local conservation partnership.*