

ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST

Gazetteer



LE CONTE'S SPARROW IN ALACHUA COUNTY

"Sparrows of Florida" by Adam Kent- just one of the many ACT programs available this spring, listed on [page 2](#)



SPRING 2012

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ACT: FACTS AT A GLANCE

- Created in 1988 as non-profit land trust
- Nominated for protection over 50,000 acres
- Directly participated in the purchase of 16,000 acres
- Currently owns 1400 acres, 3 historic buildings
- Perpetual conservation easements on more than 2700 acres
- Active land conservation projects in 7 counties of north central Florida
- Successfully led 4 public referenda, 2 for funding \$60 million, and 2 for creating Registry of Protected Public Places
- Over 500 active supporters who contribute at least once every 2 years
- Over 2500 volunteer and community service hrs. in the past 12 months
- 1 of only 3 nationally accredited land trusts in Florida
- Achieved 100% Board membership with Land Trust Alliance (3rd year)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Feb. 12, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- Eliza Gilkyson

Feb. 25, 2012

Six Artists/Six Prairies- Paint Out at Prairie Creek Lodge. *Learn more at right.*

Feb. 29, 2012

"Sparrows of Florida"- Presentation by Adam Kent at Prairie Creek Lodge.

March 2, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- Still On The Hill

March 3, 2012

"What is Permaculture?"- Presentation by Joe Pierce at Prairie Creek Lodge.

March 10, 2012

"Traditional Skills"- Presentation by Willy the Losen at Prairie Creek Lodge.

March 16, 2012

Conservation Stewards Awards- Prairie Creek Lodge. *Learn more at right.*

March 17, 2012

"Florida Ethnobotany"- Walk led by Michael Stevens at Prairie Creek Preserve.

March 21, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- Acoustic Eidolon

March 31, 2012

"Faerie House Building"- Program led by Bonnie Smith at Prairie Creek Lodge.

April 7, 2012

Birdwatching walk led by Ivor Kincaide at Prairie Creek Preserve.

April 13, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- The Relics

April 14, 2012

Hogtown Craft Beer Festival- ACT benefit at Kanapaha Gardens. *Learn more at right.*

April 14, 2012

"Vine Baskets & Wreaths"- Program led by Anna Hutson at Prairie Creek Lodge.

April 15, 2012

"Edible Plants"- Presentation by Susan Marynowski at Prairie Creek Lodge.

April 21, 2012

"Reptiles & Amphibians of Florida"- Walk led by Brian Block at Prairie Creek Lodge.

April 28, 2012

"Birding by Ear"- Walk led by Ivor Kincaide at Prairie Creek Preserve.

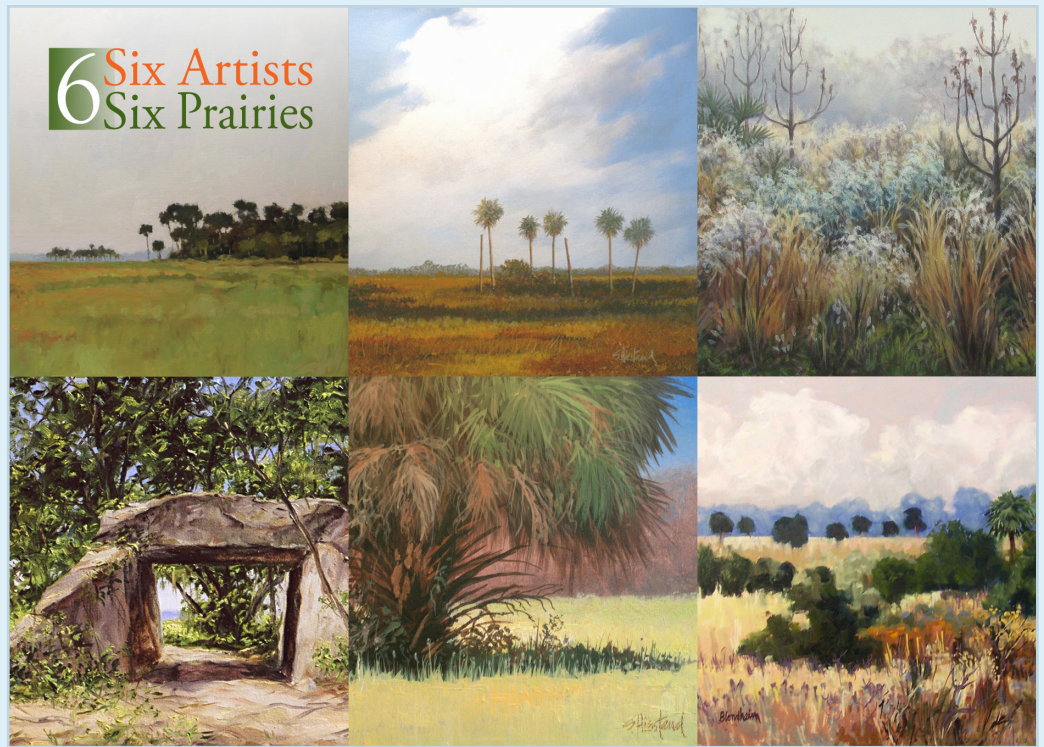
April 29, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- The Gatorbone Band

May 11, 2012

SANDHILL STAGE- Gretchen Peters

Info about these events can be found on ACT's website: www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org



Six Artists-Six Prairies... Re-creating Nature's Masterpieces

Please join ACT and Six Artists-Six Prairies as we celebrate the magnificence of unspoiled Florida with a project-closing event on Saturday, February 25, 2012, at Prairie Creek Lodge. The afternoon will include opportunities to meet the artists as they paint on the grounds from noon until dusk. In the evening, enjoy hors d'vours, cocktails and music as you take a look at the paintings from the year-long project. All the paintings will be available for purchase, and due to the artists' love of native Florida and desire to support local conservation, a portion of each sale will benefit Alachua Conservation Trust.

Artists Mary Jane Volkmann, Linda Blondheim, Steve Andrews, Charles Dickinson and Scott Hiestand have spent the past dozen months memorializing Fish/Tusawilla Prairie, Hopkins Prairie, Kanapaha Prairie, Ledwith Prairie, Paynes Prairie and Putnam Prairie. You can view many of the artists' current works on their blogspot: www.sixartistsixprairies.blogspot.com, and we encourage you to visit the Prairie Creek Lodge any time after February 18th for a preview of and the option to purchase any painting displayed in advance. Call (352)373-1078 for additional information; there is no cost to come out and preview the artworks, nor to attend this event.

Hogtown Craft Beer Festival

ACT is a charity partner for the upcoming Hogtown Craft Beer Festival on Saturday, April 14th! This event, held at Kanapaha Botanical Gardens, will include unlimited craft beer samples from most Florida craft breweries as well as other regional/national breweries. Participating breweries include Cigar City Brewing, Swamp Head, Bold City, Saint Somewhere, Terrapin, Sweetwater, and more. Local Gainesville area restaurants and caterers will also be serving unique craft beer/food pairings. Keep an eye on ACT's website and Facebook page for more information in late February.

CONSERVATION STEWARDS AWARDS

FRIDAY, MARCH 16TH from 5:30 to 9:30PM
PRAIRIE CREEK LODGE



Each year Alachua Conservation Trust celebrates those who have made cultural and environmental protection a priority in their lives. Please join us at Prairie Creek Lodge on Friday, March 16th as we honor the 2012 Conservation Stewards (listed right)!

The festivities get going at 5:30pm with a social hour and band, followed by a chili cook-off and the awards ceremony, and eventually end with more live music. Once again, there will be much to bid for during the silent auction. Tickets are \$60 (children under 12 are free) and must be purchased in advance. For more information, directions to Prairie Creek Lodge, or to buy your tickets online, visit www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org.

2012 CONSERVATION STEWARDS

Dale Crider is Florida's environmental troubador. He's toured the state for four decades performing original songs about Florida's natural history, ecology, and lore. Dale worked for the Florida Game Commission for many years, and lives at Anhinga Roost deep in the swamp around Pithlachocco (aka Newnan's Lake).

Sally Morrison retired after decades as the chief interpreter of two of Alachua County's historic sites, the Marjorie K. Rawlings House and the Dudley Farm. She immersed herself in the knowledge and culture of these places, restoring buildings, growing traditional crops, and keeping alive the way of life of these local pioneers.

Jack Hauptman worked for decades with the National Park Service as park director of places such as Acadia National Park. After retiring to Gainesville, he became chair of the Land Conservation Board, which has recommended which properties to purchase with \$90 million in Alachua County Forever and matching funds.

SANTA FE RIVER PROJECT UPDATE

The Santa Fe River Preserve (96 acres) and sections of the proposed Alachua to Lake Butler Rail Trail are scheduled to be purchased by ACT later this year. There were some expected contamination issues from its former life as a rail line, and the survey has identified a few additional issues. The project is being funded with one of the last grants issued by the Florida Communities Trust before funding for this program was suspended, and by two generous gifts from family foundations.

Once the property is acquired, ACT will be doing some initial trail building, controlling exotic vegetation, and working with adjacent landowners about their concerns. We then hope to enlist a group of volunteers to monitor sections of the trail and report on maintenance, trespass, or dumping issues. Stay tuned!



📷 Santa Fe River Preserve (A)

LITTLE ORANGE CREEK PRESERVE: ANIMAL, VEGETABLE AND MINERALS

From the perspective of the public, what’s cool about land conservation projects are the environmental features they protect or the outdoor recreation opportunities they provide. But in the small circle of folks who “do land deals”, what sets projects apart is how many moving parts they have, or what hurdles have to be overcome, or the unique partnerships that are formed. From that perspective, Little Orange Creek Preserve, destined to close this Spring, will be talked about for quite a while around here.

The 700 acre property, just north of Hawthorne, is being sold by Plum Creek and will be added to the existing Little Orange Creek Conservation and Historic Education Center, a recent park purchase championed by the late Dr. Kathy Cantwell and the Putnam Land Conservancy. Together, the two acquisitions will comprise 1900 acres, with federal, state, local, and private funds all playing a role.

In this phase of the project, The Conservation Fund, a national organization, has negotiated for the initial purchase. Lauren Day (ACT’s former Executive Director) is this area’s representative for The Conservation Fund, and she negotiated the initial transaction and is coordinating the due diligence and multiple closings.

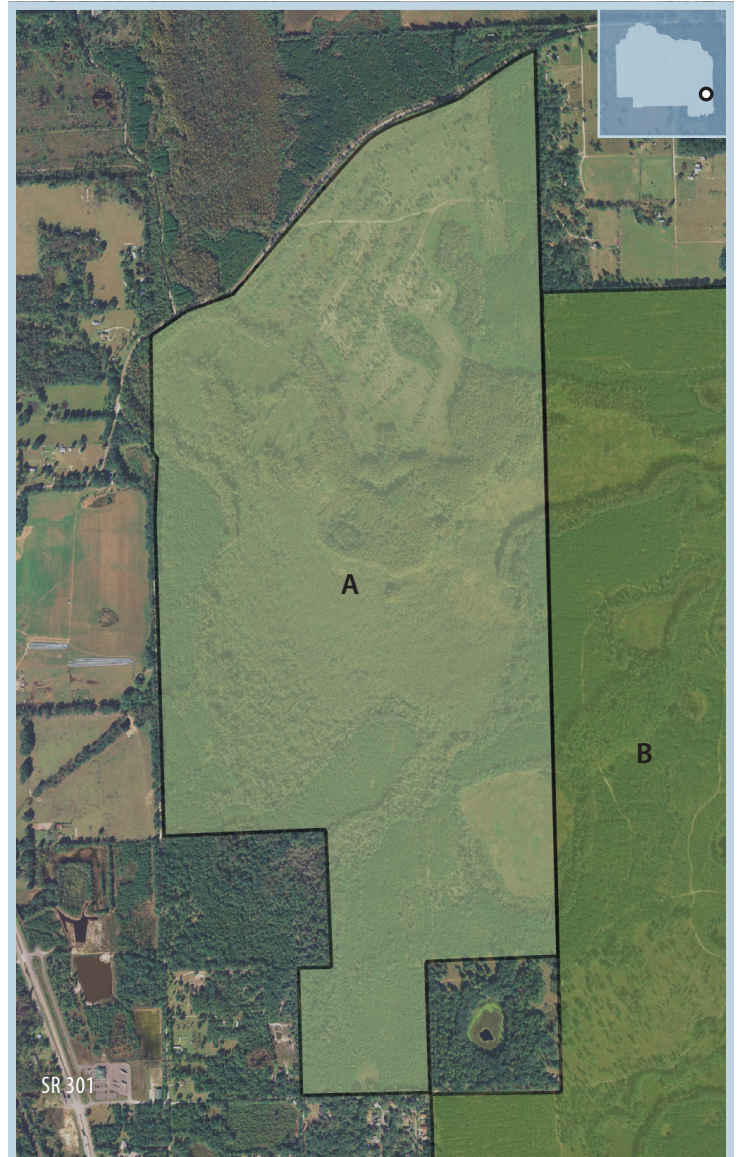
In a few months, The Conservation Fund will then sell the land to Alachua County Forever and Alachua Conservation Trust, Inc., which for the first time, will jointly own a property. ACT received its \$1 million portion of the purchase price from funds associated with the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act- legislation that has helped fund over 1,800 projects on over 24 million acres in all 50 states. The County Commission has unanimously approved contributing about \$800,000 in Wild Spaces – Public Places funds to this project.


An interesting complication is that the property we are purchasing is subject to mineral rights, including oil and natural gas – meaning somebody could theoretically drill or dig on the property, defeating its conservation purpose. There are no valuable minerals under the land, but it is part of an old mineral reservation over 15,000 acres that now shows up as a title cloud on land in Alachua and Putnam Counties. So, as part of the negotiations to clear up the title cloud on this one parcel, ACT has agreed to purchase all 15,000 acres of mineral rights and will extinguish them so that they never become a title issue again for public and private landowners.

Plum Creek and the family trust who owns the mineral rights have made generous donations to ACT to make this possible. This points to one of the unique

benefits of having a local, charitable land trust, as there are virtually no other organizations motivated or capable of solving a sticky real estate problem like this. Just as important, Alachua County has expert real estate attorneys, and ACT is grateful for the work that David Menet, Chic Holden, and Jeffrey Dollinger put into solving complicated legal problems. And without the creativity of Alachua County Forever’s Ramesh Buch, this project would never have been possible.

We hope to have a ribbon-cutting for Little Orange Creek Preserve sometime this Spring. And when we do, if you notice that off to the side is a small group of nerdy land conservation pros and attorneys yukking it up . . . now you know the rest of the story.



 Little Orange Creek Preserve (A) and Little Orange Creek Conservation and Historic Education Center (B-not fully shown)

FLORIDA CRANE & NATURE FEST 2012

The first annual Florida Crane & Nature Fest kicked off this year from Prairie Creek Lodge on Saturday, January 14th, and despite a chilly 7:00am start, everyone was ready for a full day of bird/wildlife tours throughout the county. ACT, along with several other organizations, co-sponsored the event which was organized by the Florida Trail Association (FTA). The event celebrated central Florida's wintering population of Sandhill Cranes which number in the thousands from November to March and form impressive flocks on many of our local prairies, particularly Payne's Prairie. The day's program also included afternoon speakers, a lovely dinner, and a keynote talk on Sandhill Cranes by long-time Payne's Prairie biologist Jim Weimer.

FTA's staff and the volunteer guides (Adam Kent, Bubba Scales, Andrea Christman, Howard Adams, Mike Manetz and Rex Rowan) did an amazing job finding and describing our local fauna – from cranes to bison – to the 100-plus attendees. FTA looks forward to repeating the Florida Crane & Nature Fest next year. Check out their website: www.floridacranefestival.com for additional news on this year's event and to get announcements and information for 2013.



📷 Sandhill Cranes by Jack Rogers

BIRD CAMP FOR KIDS

Well-known wildlife artist and conservationist, Robert Bateman, once asked, "How can we expect to preserve and protect biodiversity if we don't even know the names of the plants and animals that share our neighborhood?" Fortunately, groups like Alachua Audubon are taking steps to teach our community these basics with wonderful programs such as the Bird Camp for Kids.

Last November, Alachua Audubon once again partnered with ACT to run their Bird Camp for Kids at Tusawilla Preserve. This was the second year for the event, and once again, it was well-attended and very much appreciated by all who participated. The half-day event introduced the children to birdwatching by teaching them: 1) how to use a field guide, 2) how to operate binoculars, 3) how to identify birds by their chips and songs, and 4) the key features helpful in distinguishing some of our more common birds.

The program ended with a demonstration on bird rehabilitation by Leslie Straub from Florida Wildlife Care. Live raptors accompanied her talk, and the kids were given a unique opportunity to see Mississippi Kites from a very close range.



📷 Young birdwatcher at BIRD CAMP FOR KIDS



TUSCAWILLA LEARNING CENTER – IT’S A FAMILY AFFAIR

The family work party at Tuscowilla Learning Center (TLC) in January was a big success. Fueled by pizza donations from Micanopy’s own Blue Highway Pizzeria, volunteers constructed child-sized picnic tables from reclaimed wood, refurbished much-needed office equipment for the center, built raised beds for the organic teaching gardens, and continued ongoing exotic plant removal in the woods bordering the Tuscowilla Preserve.

TLC is committed to creating a co-learning environment for adults and their children, and the family work party was a good example of the high level of family involvement. Parents and grandparents of children attending TLC’s program have donated more than 70 volunteer hours of support.

Since its creation in 2010 by three Micanopy nature enthusiasts, TLC’s partnership with ACT does much to enliven both organizations’ commitment to environmental education. Due to high demand, the program expanded in 2011 and is now offering two classes a month.

“Wow, we’ve already filled two GIANT bags of ardisia!” exclaimed six-year-old Mason, pruning shears in hand. Mason, his twin sister Megan and more than 20 other area children participate in monthly TLC adventures

at ACT’s cabin on the Tuscowilla Preserve in Micanopy.

Upcoming TLC program themes are listed on ACT’s website: www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org, for more information, e-mail: TuscowillaLC@gmail.com or call 352-466-0204.



📷 New kid-sized picnic tables for TLC

LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

This winter, we continued the restoration of pine flatwoods habitat at Prairie Creek Preserve where we have now planted over 18,000 longleaf pine seedlings with help from Neutral Gator, the Trilogy School, The Nature Conservancy’s Resource Management Support Team, and many other volunteers. The drought has made prescribed fire and seedling planting a challenge over the last year, but has given us an opportunity to install the first phase of our boardwalk that will provide visitors with better access to view and explore the marshes and swamps of this property during times of high water.

The dry weather has also allowed us to extend a new trail loop along what would normally be a very wet border at Tuscowilla Preserve. Now, there is a mile of hiking trail where one may discover wintering sparrows, marsh rabbits, and various raptors soaring over the prairie looking for prey.

Volunteers have also been instrumental in helping remove over two miles of high fencing in the vicinity of Prairie Creek Lodge, opening up the landscape and enabling wildlife to move more freely. However, much re-

mains to be done, so if you know of service groups looking for a project, send them our way.

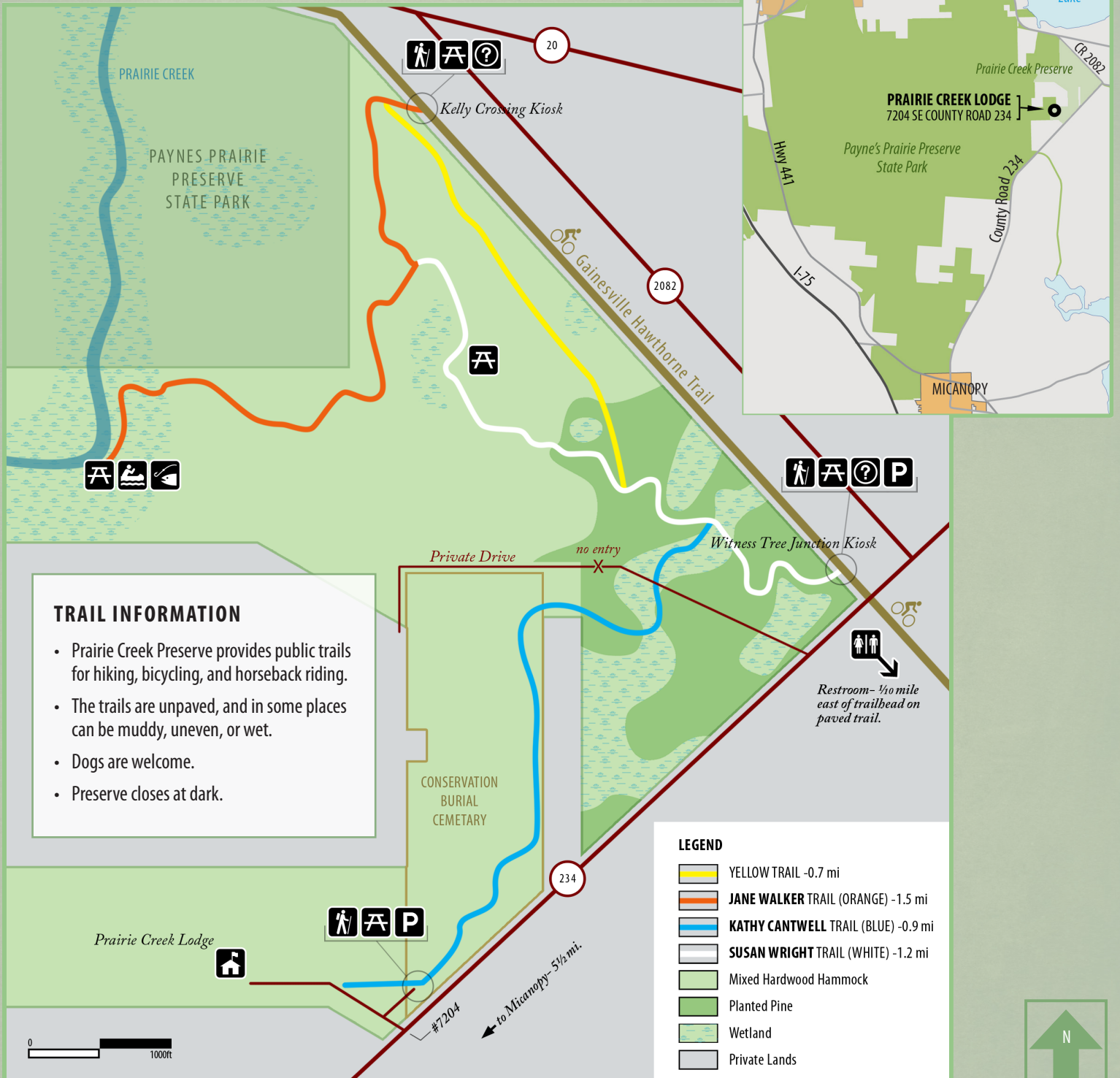


📷 Planted longleaf pine seedling at Prairie Creek Preserve

PRESERVE PROFILE: PRAIRIE CREEK PRESERVE

Prairie Creek Lodge and the surrounding 1150 acres were purchased by Alachua Conservation Trust from 2005 to 2009. Over 500 acres of the property have been added to Paynes Prairie Preserve Park, and another 96 have been added to Alachua County Forever's conservation lands program. The remainder comprises Prairie Creek Preserve, a 500-acre nature preserve that also includes Prairie Creek Conservation Cemetary, a natural burial ground that conserves land while protecting the environment and water quality.

Prairie Creek Preserve has a well-maintained trail network that winds through a wide variety of habitat types. Areas that were previously in planted pine are in the process of being restored, and you may notice signs of prescribed fire within these areas. Bear, fox, bobcat, and over 100 species of birds have been observed on the property.



TRAIL INFORMATION

- Prairie Creek Preserve provides public trails for hiking, bicycling, and horseback riding.
- The trails are unpaved, and in some places can be muddy, uneven, or wet.
- Dogs are welcome.
- Preserve closes at dark.

LEGEND

- YELLOW TRAIL - 0.7 mi
- JANE WALKER TRAIL (ORANGE) - 1.5 mi
- KATHY CANTWELL TRAIL (BLUE) - 0.9 mi
- SUSAN WRIGHT TRAIL (WHITE) - 1.2 mi
- Mixed Hardwood Hammock
- Planted Pine
- Wetland
- Private Lands



ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST

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Gainesville, Florida 32641

ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST: THE NATURAL LEADER

BOARD of DIRECTORS

President- **Trey Greer**, Associate Director, University Writing Program - UF

Secretary- **Alison Blakeslee**, Private Investigator - Fisher & Blakeslee

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Anne Barkdoll, Ph.D., Biologist - Florida Div. of Recreation & Parks

Bill Bryson, Publisher/Business Owner

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Richard Hamann, J.D., Associate in Law, Ctr. for Gov't Responsibility - UF

Pegeen Hanrahan, P.E., Environmental Consultant

Nancy Jackson, Retired - Nationwide Insurance

Howard Jelks, Fish Biologist - U.S. Geological Survey

Laurel Nesbit, Project Manager - Alta Systems

Peter NeSmith, Botanist - Water & Air Research, Inc.

STAFF

Robert Hutchinson, Executive Director

Ivor Kincaide, Land Manager

Lesla Holder, Office Manager

Chris Burney, Project Manager

Laurel Nesbit, Project Manager

Al Hutchinson, Asst. Land Manager

Resident Caretakers: Parker Titus & Erica Hernandez, Seaton & Star Tarrant, Jane "Weed" Roy

Since 1988, the mission of Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) has been to protect the natural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources in and around Alachua County, Florida. ACT protects land through purchase, donation, and conservation easement.

ACT is a 501(c)3 non-profit charity and receives no government grants for general operating support; we rely on contributions from private individuals, corporations, and foundations. Donations may be tax deductible, however ACT does not provide tax advice.

Alachua Conservation Trust's charitable solicitation number is **CH12693**. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800) 435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.

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