

Alachua Conservation Trust *Gazetteer*



SUMMER 2017
"Women in the Woods"

SUMMER 2017 UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE

4 CBI Final Friends Workshop

AUGUST

26 Sandhill Stage - Obscure Brothers & Larry Mangan

OCTOBER

2-20 UF Campaign For Charities
21 Sandhill Stage - New '76ers
27 Halloween Ball

NOVEMBER

5 CBI/PCCC Annual Memorial
17 Sandhill Stage - The Crickets
18 Grand Opening of Santa Fe River Preserve

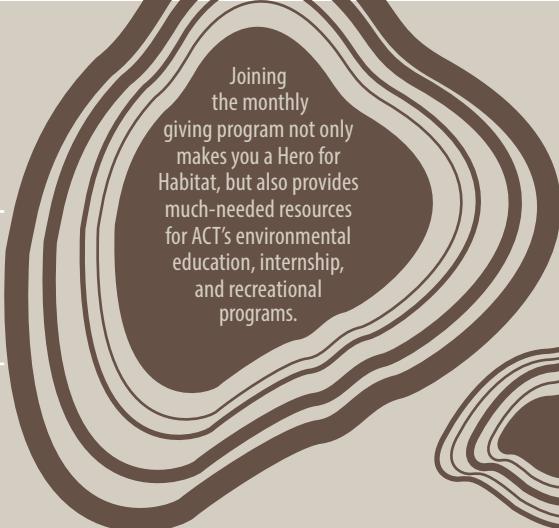
DECEMBER

15 Holiday Mingle

Details for each event will be posted on
ACT's website and via social media:

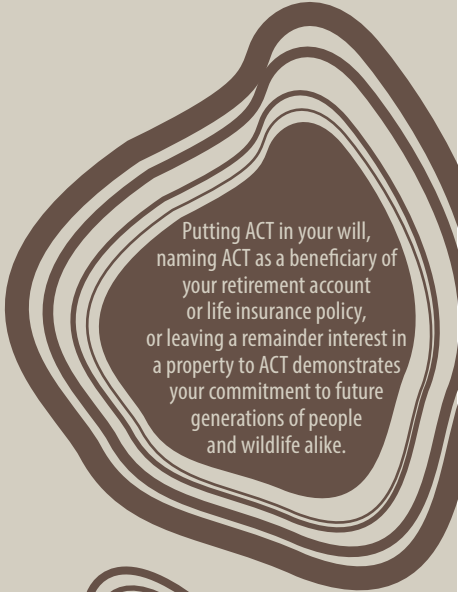
www.AlachuaConservationTrust.org

Get e-notices on upcoming events by joining our
email list on ACT's website, or "liking" us on our
Facebook page.




Joining
the monthly
giving program not only
makes you a Hero for
Habitat, but also provides
much-needed resources
for ACT's environmental
education, internship,
and recreational
programs.

PLANT YOUR CONSERVATION SEEDLINGS



Putting ACT in your will,
naming ACT as a beneficiary of
your retirement account
or life insurance policy,
or leaving a remainder interest in
a property to ACT demonstrates
your commitment to future
generations of people
and wildlife alike.



A major gift this year
allows you to fund
conservation projects in need
of immediate support.

ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST: THE NATURAL LEADER

Board of Directors

President - **Pegeen Hanrahan**, P.E. Environmental Consultant
Vice President - **Trey Greer**, Associate Director, University Writing Program - UF
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Treasurer - **Mike Castine**, AICP, Senior Planner - Alachua County Growth Management
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Bill Bryson, Publisher/Business Owner
Fred Cantrell, University Business Affairs - UF, Retired
Kim Davidson, M.D., Family Practice Doctor
Bruce DeLaney, Asst. VP for Real Estate - UF Foundation, Retired
Richard Hamann, J.D., Associate in Law, Ctr. for Gov't Responsibility - UF, Retired
Howard Jelks, Fish Biologist - U.S. Geological Survey
Muthusami Kumaran, Asst. Professor in Dept. of Family, Youth & Community Science - UF
Laurel Nesbit, Project Manager - Alachua County Crisis Center
Peter NeSmith, Botanist - Water & Air Research, Inc.

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 easements.

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.

STAFF

Tom Kay, Executive Director
Ivor Kincaide, Land Manager
Mark Larson, Assistant Land Manager
Lesa Holder, Office Manager
Chris Burney, Project Manager
Melissa Hill, Project Coordinator
Jen Lomberk, Staff Attorney



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.

CONSERVATION STEWARDS AWARDS 2017

WOMEN IN THE WOODS



This year, Alachua Conservation Trust honored two amazing women whose long history of stewardship – of the actual woods around them and of the natural world at large through political and social action – continues to enrich the lives of all north central Floridians: Meg Niederhofer and Pat Harden. Our 2017 theme – Women In the Woods – is perfectly illustrated by the lives and work of these two honorees.

When people in Gainesville admire trees, they often think of Meg Niederhofer's work as City Arborist. Among her many achievements, Meg made sure that the City of Gainesville had a comprehensive urban forestry program which included the review of development proposals, inspection of construction sites for compliance with regulations to protect and replant trees, and revision of the urban forestry portions of the Land Development Code. She also developed a planting program that established thousands of young trees throughout town and helped lead Gainesville to its thirty-three year designation as a "Tree City, USA" by the Arbor Day Foundation.

In retirement, Meg has returned to her humanitarian roots as a volunteer for Helping Hands Women's Clinic, Caring & Sharing Learning School, and NAMI's upcoming Community Walk for the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) in October 2017 at Depot Park.

A native Floridian, Pat Harden's involvement in conservation efforts spans nearly five decades. She is the Coordinator of the Protect Payne's Prairie Coalition (PPC), an active and vibrant group of representatives from several conservation organizations that deeply care about this unique local treasure. Pat also serves as Vice-President of the Florida Springs Institute, and formerly served eight years on the St. John's River Water Management District Governing Board, including two years as chair. Pat is a founding member of the Friends of the Wekiva River, Inc. and she has served on numerous advisory committees and boards at the federal, state, regional and local government levels, as well as in service to many non-profit conservation organizations. At every level, Pat has worked diligently to keep conservation regulation strong throughout the state of Florida.

With deep gratitude, we acknowledge our honorees not only for their contributions to conservation, but also for their groundbreaking work in the natural world as women. In an arena frequently dominated by men, these women both excelled, and in doing so cut a path for the next generation of women to find their own "deeper, fuller life" in the woods.

Thanks also to the many volunteers and supporters who helped bring this year's event together, as well as to our Corporate Sponsors. Look for the complete listing of sponsors in our Fall/Winter 2017 newsletter, and make sure to save the date for next year's 19th annual Conservation Stewards Awards on Saturday, March 17th!



*"...the doors to the wild Self are few but precious. If you have a deep scar, that is a door, if you have an old, old story, that is a door. If you love the sky and the water so much you almost cannot bear it, that is a door. If you yearn for a deeper life, a full life, a sane life, that is a door."
-Clarissa Pinkola Estes, PhD*

A Decade in the Making

Little Orange Creek Preserve



With perfect weather, and after a decade in the making, Little Orange Creek Preserve officially opened on Saturday, January 23rd. More than a 170 people gathered to listen as each of the partners in the project shared stories about Dr. Kathy Cantwell, the late visionary who lead the conservation project in the early years, about how the 2,873-acre (and counting) Preserve and Nature Park received its start, about strong partnerships and collaboration, about protecting our most important water and land resources, and about the limitless opportunities taking such action will provide in the future.

You made this Preserve possible; your contributions to ACT's Room to Roam campaign, major contributions from private family foundations, a Florida Communities Trust grant from the state's Florida Forever program, local funds from the Alachua County Forever program, and federal funding from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) were all leveraged for the acquisition of these sensitive lands and critical wildlife habitat. A hearty thank you to all of our partners: Alachua County, City of Hawthorne, Conservation Trust for Florida, Friends of Little Orange Creek, and Putnam Land Conservancy!

Mayor Matt Surrency of Hawthorne emceed this beautiful event, and the crowd was kept moving with ballads played by Gainesville's very own Weeds of Eden. There were hayrides, guided hikes along the new 2.5 mile hiking trail, kids' games and a major tree planting. Guests enjoyed pizza from Blue Highway Pizzeria's food truck The Federal, as well as local barbeque. The Hawthorne Chamber of Commerce sponsored a wine and cheese event later in the afternoon, and people continued to visit through the early evening. By the end of the day, more than 400 people had visited Little Orange Creek Preserve and Nature Park for this, its long-anticipated grand opening.

You can explore Little Orange Creek Preserve from sunrise to sunset seven days a week, and remember to look for the Fall/Winter 2017 Gazetteer to find the details and date of the planned Nature Day in the Park. ACT and its partners will be hosting another fun day of guided hikes, another tree planting, plant identification walk, children's activities, live music, food trucks and much more. Hope to see you out at Little Orange Creek Preserve again soon!

Little Orange Creek Preserve in Hawthorne

Expanded & Improved in 2016

Between the fall of 2016 and the spring to 2017, Little Orange Creek Preserve was both "expanding" with the addition of two new small parcels of land that allow for better access and fire management across the property, as well as "growing" since this past winter through early spring we also planted thousands more longleaf pines there with support from Solar Impact & Swamp Head Brewery's annual Tree Fest, The Arbor Day Foundation, and the Hogtown Brewers!

One of our most significant management successes at Little Orange Creek yet includes the planting of 61,000 longleaf pine seedlings across what was once 130 acres of industrial timber lands. This restoration initiative marks the starting point of a new style of forestry and wildlife habitat management at Little Orange Creek whereby species of concern like gopher tortoises, northern bobwhite quail, and giant orchids are encouraged to thrive with the application of frequent controlled fire in order to facilitate open grassy habitat along with sweeping stands of pine trees. To that end, our non-profit land management partners Wildland Restoration International (WRI), a highly specialized fire team operating in the north central Florida region, are assisting us in the preparation of fire lines and other burn readiness activities so that, when the time comes, ACT can get started right away with much-needed fire management activities at several locations around the Preserve.

THIS IS THE CREEK



Learning about wetlands at Little Orange Creek Nature Park

This spring, Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) partnered with The Friends of Little Orange Creek to deliver environmental education programming at the new Little Orange Creek Nature Park near Hawthorne. Over a two-week period, three hundred K-5th grade students from Shell and Williams Elementary Schools explored the park, and participated in various hands-on activities based on the “Project Learning Tree” and “Project Wild” curricula. ACT led the “Wetlands Station” where kids learned the basics and importance of wetland ecosystems.

fully appreciate, especially with a dense tangle of pond weed cluttering the surface, but just below, a busy and fantastic community brims with denizens both big and small. Equipped with minnow traps, dip nets and seines, ACT staff and interns waded in to sample this biodiversity and fill the display tanks arranged at the “Wetlands Station”.

While frogs, fish, and “bugs” get dumped temporarily into aquaria, the class receives a quick introduction on wetlands with an occasional pause to point out a bobwhite quail or red-headed woodpecker singing nearby. Once the traps are all collected, everyone huddles around the tanks to get a clear and closer look at the catch. The show and tell part of the program is exciting for everyone as we slowly go through and identify everything, and the kids are encouraged to use their observation skills as we explain the features and behaviors that enable these animals to thrive in wetlands.

The finale is a few quick passes with the 10-foot seine in some of the deeper remaining pools. The kids watch from the shoreline and cheer us on, and laugh a little, as we sink and slip on the muddy bottom. As we pull our trawl up on the banks for closer inspection, there is usually a collective OOH!!! when a large bowfin or gar flops out of the folds of the net – compared to the inch-long mosquitofish which make up 99% of the catch, these are true leviathans. Lastly, the kids help release everything and we all exchange thank-yous for sharing in the fun.



ACT would like to recognize the Huisking Foundation and the Colverson family for providing funding to make these fieldtrips possible; many thanks also to our interns for their invaluable assistance, and to The Friends of Little Orange Creek for including Alachua Conservation Trust in this wonderful opportunity to bring so many of our area school children closer to their natural world.



FOND FAREWELLS

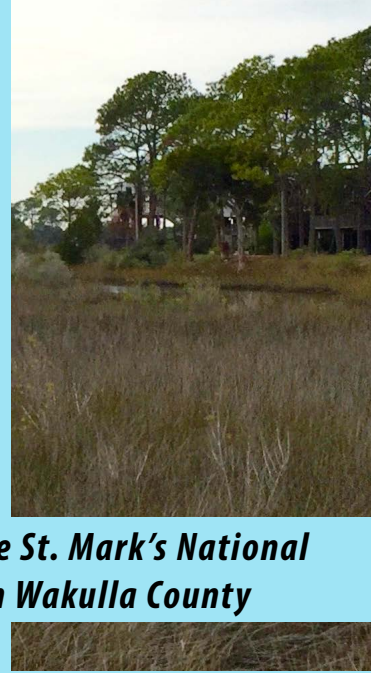
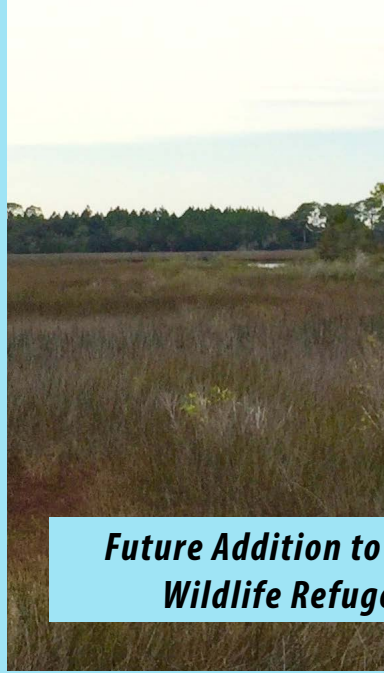
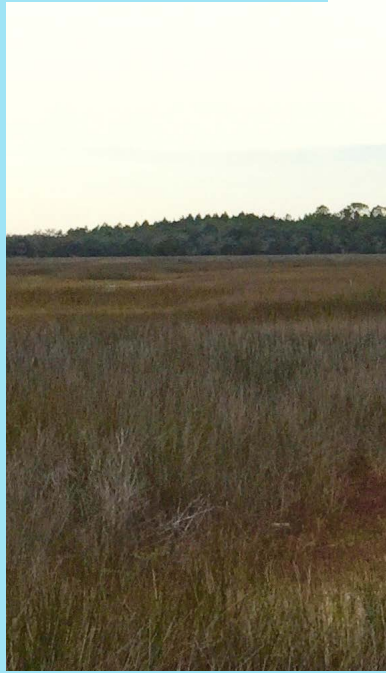
It is with sweet sadness that ACT bids farewell to Charlie Houder, ACT Board member since 2014. Charlie recently accepted the position of Alachua County Director of Parks & Conservation Lands, and while we look forward to working with him on future local conservation initiatives close to home, his new status necessitated his resignation from our Board. We extend our heartiest congratulations to Charlie, and wish him the very best of luck in his new post!

We are equally sad to say goodbye to our six-year Tuscawilla Cabin caretakers Star and Seaton Tarrant, and to their two young sons Linden and Banyan. The family is off to Oregon this summer, where Seaton has accepted a post with the Oregon Extension, an education and sustainability non-profit in the Cascades. Star, Seaton and the boys were familiar volunteer faces at most ACT events, and Star was the founding program director of ACT’s Tuscawilla Learning Center youth environmental education series. We congratulate them as well, and hope that they will come back and visit us whenever they return to Florida.

Lastly, we wish to recognize the years of excellent service and ultimate departure last fall of Parker Titus, ACT’s Prairie Creek Lodge and Sanders House caretaker from 2012 to 2016. Parker was our first Lodge caretaker, and was a key player in establishing ACT’s ongoing land management relationship with Wildland Restoration International (WRI). Parker returned to his native Colorado in September 2016 to accept a position with The Nature Conservancy, and he is sorely missed (as was his super-secret tempeh recipe at this year’s Conservation Stewards Awards).



Live Oak Island



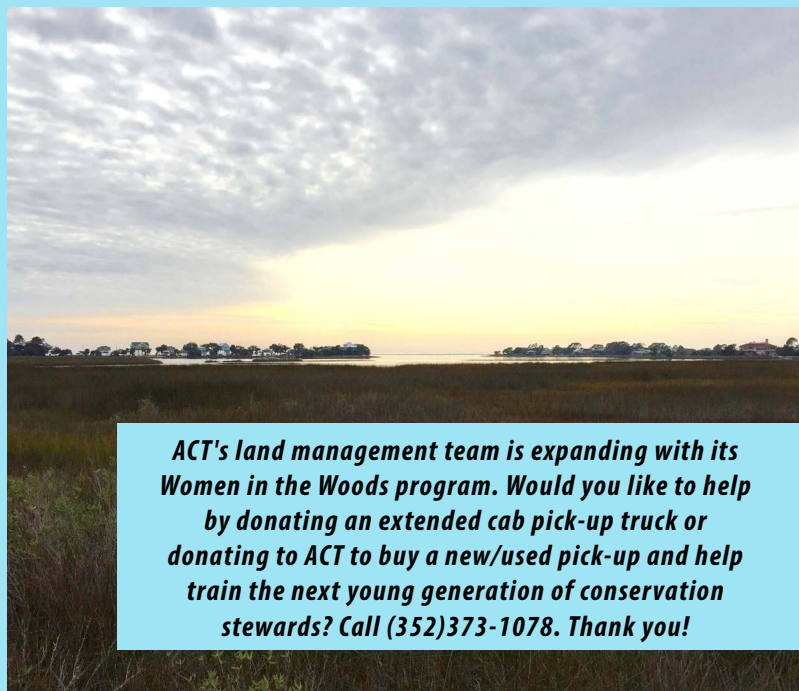
Future Addition to the St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge in Wakulla County

This past December, Kyle and Dr. Lela Ward donated 6.5 waterfront acres on the Gulf of Mexico in Wakulla County to Alachua Conservation Trust. This beautiful, predominately salt marsh property known as Live Oak Island was at one time slated for a housing development. The Wards, who live in Georgia, once considered building a waterfront home there themselves, but ultimately decided they would rather see their beautiful land conserved. ACT will retain the property initially, with the intention of transferring ownership to the property's nearby neighbor, the St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge, within two to three years.

St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge encompasses over 70,000 acres and is managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. It was established in 1931 to provide wintering habitat for migratory birds with a rich diversity of habitats including coastal marshes, islands, tidal creeks and estuaries of seven north Florida rivers. This mecca for migratory birds and monarch butterflies has abundant aquatic and terrestrial wildlife throughout the refuge and its waters. Live Oak Island will offer additional protected lands to forage, rest and call home.

At a time when federal funding for conservation acquisitions is being severely slashed or cut completely, gifts like the Wards' are more important than ever to the protection of important coastal habitat and preservation of the natural beauty of our Gulf Coast, the very personification of what is so alluring to both residents and visitors of Florida alike. ACT is incredibly grateful to the Wards for this wonderful gift which will benefit both wildlife and Floridians forever. If you have a property that you'd like to see conserved, please contact us to talk about your options.

Every October, St. Mark's National Wildlife Refuge hosts the Monarch Butterfly Festival.



ACT's land management team is expanding with its Women in the Woods program. Would you like to help by donating an extended cab pick-up truck or donating to ACT to buy a new/used pick-up and help train the next young generation of conservation stewards? Call (352)373-1078. Thank you!



The Third Annual TREE FEST

APRIL 2017

The free event, held at Swamp Head Brewery, was a family friendly event with live music, craft beer, beginner-friendly yoga, food trucks, and even "human foosball."

On Saturday April 15th, more than 1,100 people celebrated at the third annual Tree Fest event, presented by Solar Impact and Swamp Head Brewery.

Tree Fest's "drink one beer, plant five trees" model raised enough money in its first two years to plant 73,533 trees. This year, event organizers and sponsors have an ambitious goal to fund 75,000 trees.

During Tree Fest, proceeds from every beer purchased and all t-shirt sales directly funded the longleaf pine restoration efforts taking place each winter at the Little Orange Creek Preserve in Hawthorne, FL. Local environmental nonprofits and organizations had informational booths set up on the lawn in front of the brewery.

*"Drink one beer,
plant five trees."*

Through this partnership with Swamp-head Brewery and Solar Impact, our goal is to build the largest Earth Day party in the entire state of Florida and, through sponsorship and food, t-shirt, and beer sales, create a dependable source of funding for the forest and wildlife habitat restoration efforts at Alachua Conservation Trust preserves.

At ACT, we have ambitious goals for restoring old agricultural lands and pine plantations to longleaf pine forests, but this process is expensive. We are exceptionally grateful to Swamphead, Solar Impact, and all of the event's sponsors for their support for this major conservation effort.



Celebrating Local Craft Brewing HOGTOWN CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL



According to its website, "the Hogtown Brewers, established in 1985, is an American Homebrew Association sanctioned homebrew club...dedicated to promoting a better understanding of the art of brewing and also to the appreciation of the many and varied styles of beer from around the world." The club, however, means so much more than that to our community, as evidenced by their seminal relationship to several of our local craft brewing establishments, and particularly, in the creation of Gainesville's annual Hogtown Craft Brew Fest. Each year, the Brewers donate a portion of the proceeds from that wildly popular event to Alachua Conservation Trust and several other local charities. ACT is immensely grateful for the significant funding it has received from the club for the last six years running.

The 2017 Hogtown Craft Beer Festival was held on April 22nd at the Tioga Town Center and was attended by nearly 2000 beer enthusiasts from all over the area. Funds from the event will be used for land acquisition projects at the Santa Fe River Preserve in northern Alachua County, as well as the Little Orange Creek Preserve in Hawthorne. Proceeds from the first five annual Hogtown Craft Beer Festivals have specifically been used to help fund the 443-acre parcel purchased on the Santa Fe River in 2015, as well as multiple parcels at the Little Orange Creek Preserve in 2013, 2014, and 2016 totaling over 500 acres. The Brewers' generous support from this event has helped Little Orange Creek expand to its present size of 2,873 acres, and is helping to protect habitat for black bears, gopher tortoises, waterfowl, and a wide array of other species.

The Hogtown Brewers have been tremendous partners in furthering ACT's conservation mission. A special thanks to Hogtown Brewers Ron and Kris Minkoff, P.J. and Gina Van Blokland, and Matt Neilson for all their hard work making this year's festival happen and for their leadership in the club's continuing dedication to land conservation. For more information or to join in the fun, check out the Brewers on their website: <http://www.hogtownbrewers.org/>

CHANCE CHIRPORACTIC

Working for the Cause

As a new presidential administration was poised to take office in Washington D.C. in January, Gainesville chiropractor Mike Chance and his wife, Sandi, were concerned that causes important to them would not get the attention or funding they need.

"As government plans to do less, we need to do more," Chance said, and resolved to help six worthy community nonprofits that focus on the environment, women's rights, health care and food and shelter for those less fortunate.

Chance announced to the patients of Chance Chiropractic Center that during inauguration week in January he would match donations given to one of six local nonprofits, including Alachua Conservation Trust's Springs Eternal Project, Habitat for Humanity, Acorn Clinic, Bread of the Mighty Food Bank, Backpack Food for Kids Program and Peaceful Paths.

"The outpouring of support was amazing," Chance said. Fifty three of his patients donated from \$4 to \$200 with an average gift of \$50. With the match, more than \$8000 was raised. "This was not meant to be a Democrat vs. Republican event," Chance said. "Even with a best case scenario, a Republican administration is for smaller government and less government spending. With less support there are causes we all care about that need our help."

ACT wishes to thank Mike, Sandi and the staff at Chance Chiropractic for their innovative approach to funding the causes near and dear to their collective heart – including ACT's Springs Eternal Project. Yours is an example worth following!

Pictured above are: Dr. Mike Chance, lower left, and clockwise from left, Reisa George of Backpack Food for Kids, John Moran of the Springs Eternal Project, Scott Winzeler of Habitat for Humanity, John Thomas of Peaceful Paths, and Lesley Gamble of the Springs Eternal Project.



A Community, A County That CARES

On November 8th, 2016 more than 60% of Alachua County voters cast a ballot for the Wild Spaces & Public Places ballot initiative. This one-half percent local sales tax is expected to generate \$16 million annually - \$130 million over eight years – starting on January 1, 2017. While the legislature in Tallahassee continues to ignore the will of the people in Florida and the intent of Amendment 1 – the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative, which passed statewide in 2014 by more than 75% - here in Alachua County both our elected officials and our citizens are saying “yes” to protecting the water and wildlife habitat in our community. With the assault on environmental protections and conservation lands by the current White House administration and its accomplices in the federal legislature, the need to protect what we do have control over has never been more important.

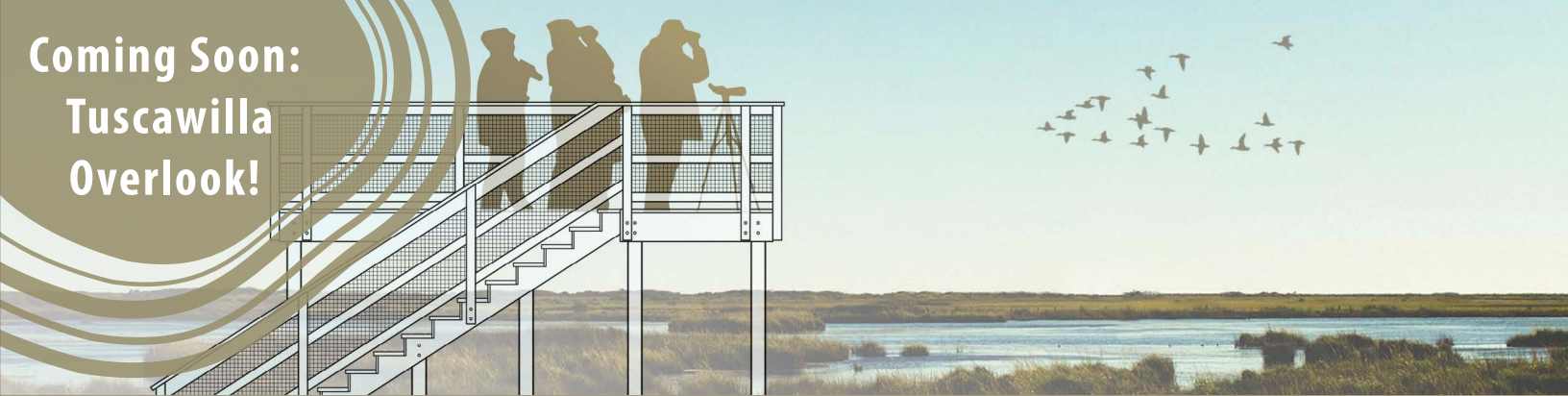
The overwhelming passage of Wild Spaces & Public Places last November represents what we already knew so well about our community and county: that we care. Our community cares about clear air and clean water, about public health, about safe drinking water, about parks and conservation lands where children and adults alike can recreate and commune with nature, about protecting wildlife habitat, about an outstanding quality of life, about responsible economic growth, about protecting local farms and forests that feed and nourish us, and about keeping Alachua County unique while so much of Florida continues to be paved over and developed in cookie cutter fashion. Thank you to everyone who donated their time and money to the campaign.

A special thanks to the Alachua County Board of County Commissioners for voting to place the initiative on the ballot for the voters to decide, and to all of the elected officials and community leaders who endorsed the campaign. Alachua Conservation Trust is honored to have run the campaign with Pegeen Hanrahan as its campaign manager along with support from many partners and donors including the Trust for Public Land and the Land Trust Alliance. With this new infusion of funding, Alachua County will once again become the leader in Florida for land conservation, and in doing so, maintain the character that has drawn so many of us to make this community our home.



Wild Spaces & Public Places was passed with 60.4% of the vote!

Coming Soon: Tuscawilla Overlook!



Many thanks to Alachua Audubon for partnering with us this year to build a new wildlife viewing platform at ACT's Tuscawilla Preserve in Micanopy. The overlook will be built at Thrasher Park on the northern edge of the preserve, and it promises to provide exceptional views of birds and other wildlife in the marsh once completed.

Similar in size and height to the towers at Bolen Bluff and the La Chua Trail on Paynes Prairie, the overlook will be ADA accessible and, we hope, provide a much wider audience the ability to enjoy this scenic treasure. At just over 600 acres, Tuscawilla Preserve is but one of several local, public conservation lands that were purchased in part with a Florida Communities Trust (FCT) grant, which receives its proceeds from the state's Florida Forever land acquisition program. We remain truly grateful for the support of the FCT program and to the North American Wetlands Act (NAWCA) grant program in helping us create the Tuscawilla Preserve, and to the Board and membership of Alachua Audubon for providing financial support for the installation of this new overlook, which will be completed by the end of summer.

The Shores of Newnans Lake

Even with a clear vision, sometimes it takes a little while to get around to finally doing what you planned on doing. For nearly six decades, Herschel Elliott has lived on the shores of Newnans Lake with an eye on permanently protecting the natural resources of his land with the priceless view.

Herschel Elliott is a retired philosophy professor who taught at American University in Beirut, Lebanon and at the University of Florida. These days, when he's not writing about environmental philosophy and the importance of considering morality and ethics in sustainability, he's tending to his citrus trees and garden on the shores of Newnans Lake or feeding the wild turkeys that come to visit him there every day. Age has neither dampened his humor nor his intellectual drive to continue exploring philosophical dilemmas - he's even picked up blogging in the last couple of years and enjoys a healthy debate on economic systems with anyone who will engage in the topic. A published author, Elliott's book *Ethics for a Finite World: an Essay Concerning a Sustainable Future* is a well-regarded read. While protecting the natural beauty of our region, especially around Newnans Lake, is vitally important, Elliott also recognizes the value of people enjoying the land and all that it has to offer.

This past winter, Elliott finally realized a long-planned goal - he donated a conservation easement on his Newnans Lake property to Alachua Conservation Trust. This ensures that his stretch of shoreline will forever be protected. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and ACT that permanently limits the use of the land to protect its conservation values. It allows the owner to continue owning and using his or her land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. Generally, if an easement meets specific criteria defined by the I.R.S., donating an easement can result in reduced income and estate taxes and possibly reduce one's property taxes as well, though in Herschel Elliott's case, it was really all about saving the land.

Elliott's gift is another important piece in protecting the lands around Newnans Lake, a signature feature in Alachua County's magnificent landscape. Elliott took his gift one step further by also donating a life estate on his property to ACT. A "life estate" allows you to make a substantial gift to charity by donating your home, farm, or vacation property without having to vacate the property or give up any benefits you currently enjoy there. By making such a gift, you will receive a charitable tax deduction up front for the donation to ACT, but the gift's benefits and responsibilities remain yours until the time of your choosing, which is often upon one's passing.

With a life estate, ownership of the real property is immediately transferred to ACT, but with the caveat that the donor may continue living on and using the property up to the time of the donor's death. Thereafter, ACT takes full ownership and responsibility of the property. Such an agreement can also be structured so that the property passes to the charity upon the death of another person or multiple people (i.e. the donor and his/her spouse) or after a specifically designated period of time.

If you are interested in leaving land, a home, or other asset to Alachua Conservation Trust or naming ACT as a beneficiary of a retirement account, life insurance policy, or pension, contact ACT's executive director Tom Kay at (352) 373-1078 or act.tkay@gmail.com. Tom will help you find out how you can meet your conservation goals through such a gift, as well as about the many benefits making a gift like this may have for you. Until then, we can all deeply thank Herschel Elliott for his vision and desire to keep the shores of Newnans Lake looking much as they did hundreds of years ago.

DELTA 4: NATIONAL CIVILIAN COMMUNITY CORPS 2016



ACT was fortunate again last year to be selected for partnership with Americorps as a host site for one of its National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) teams in the late Fall of 2016.

The NCCC is modeled after the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, and its teams work nationwide to help meet local community needs that would otherwise be unattainable while also investing in young adults with job training and work experience and simultaneously instilling in them the importance of community service and civic responsibility.

ACT's team, "Delta 4", was comprised of nine members aged 18-24 from diverse backgrounds and all corners of the country.

During their five-week project assignment with ACT, the team completed preserve infrastructure and restoration work that included wetland overlooks, boardwalks, the creation of five new miles of hiking trail, installation of preserve entrance and parking infrastructure, fire line creation, and invasive species removal.

During their time with ACT, Delta 4 learned tree identification skills, native habitat restoration techniques, invasive exotic species identification and removal, chainsaw training, and even gained a little prescribed fire experience.

With the team's assistance, we were able to open Little Orange Creek Preserve in January of 2017, and their work also helped facilitate the planned opening of the Sante Fe River Preserve in Fall of 2017. Overall, the NCCC Delta 4 team contributed nearly 2,600 hours of service to Alachua Conservation Trust and our north central Florida community of nature and recreation lovers.

Thank you to Quay, Rachel, Trey, Patrick, Noah, Brianna, A.J., Ari, Rebecca, Dominick and the Americorps NCCC program!

GOING COASTAL

COASTAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS: A NOVEL APPROACH TO SAVING SEA TURTLES

Florida's beaches contain 95% of the sea turtle nesting habitat in the United States and all five species of sea turtles that nest here are federally listed as endangered or threatened. The majority of this nesting habitat is located on privately owned coastal property. This means that private property owners are essential partners in protecting our coast for sea turtles.

Alachua Conservation Trust has partnered with the University of Florida Levin College of Law Conservation Clinic, The Sea Turtle Conservancy, and the University of Florida School of Natural Resources and Environment on a project funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Sea Turtle Grants Program, and the Archie Carr Center for Sea Turtle Research to determine the feasibility of a statewide conservation easement program to protect sea turtle nesting habitat.

The adage that has traditionally been associated with conservation easements is "big, wild, and connected."

This project will determine the feasibility of the novel approach of placing conservation easements on relatively small, developed, and isolated coastal properties for the purpose of protecting the nesting beaches that our sea turtles depend on.

Since August of 2016, Staff Attorney Jen Lomberk has been researching the legal implications of coastal conservation easements and creating a model easement for use as a template to draft the coastal conservation easements that will be implemented pursuant to this project.

Similarly, Project Coordinator Melissa Hill has conducted a biophysical analysis of Florida's coastal properties to identify target areas for the project and, at the end of April, closed her Coastal Property Owners Survey which will help the team to identify knowledge gaps such owners may have with regard to both sea turtle nesting and conservation easements, as well as gauge property owners' interest in this program.

Continued team involvement in outreach and education events, including a presentation to over 400 stakeholders at the Marine Turtle Permit Holders meeting in February, has garnered noteworthy interest in this project. As a result, landowners from across the state have expressed strong interest in coastal conservation easements, and the first easement under this project is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2017.



THIS PROJECT WAS FUNDED IN PART BY A GRANT AWARDED FROM THE SEA TURTLE GRANTS PROGRAM. THE SEA TURTLE GRANTS PROGRAM IS FUNDED WITH PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THE FLORIDA SEA TURTLE LICENSE PLATE. LEARN MORE AT: WWW.HELPINGSEATURTLES.ORG.

Targeted Resource Management Internship Program Begins in 2017

Over the last ten years, ACT's internship program has grown exponentially, beginning with just one intern in 2007, and increasing to twenty interns in calendar year 2016 who contributed over 2000 hours of service to the organization while simultaneously garnering real-world skills in almost every facet of land trust operations.

In the summer semester of 2017, ACT will effectively double the size of its existing program with its inaugural Women in the Woods (WITW) internship that will endeavor to provide a skills-based, women-only program for students and recent graduates seeking experience in the natural resource sector. Recent statistics on the status of women and girls in our region indicate that the number of females employed in the natural resource sector is extremely low – the lowest of all sectors surveyed. ACT's goal is to offer a solution to this under-representation through its Women in the Woods program by equipping women with practical, hands-on land management and conservation skills so that they may wield this experience with confidence and utilize their internship as a highly beneficial reference tool for acquiring employment in the conservation and natural resource management fields.

The WITW program anticipates serving a total of between 32-36 interns over a two and a half year pilot period, and will ultimately contribute 6,000 hours of substantive land management work on public preserves in Alachua, Bradford, Columbia and Putnam Counties while simultaneously training participants to create and maintain recreational areas, teaching forests, and trail systems, and improve and maintain conservation lands that are vital habitat for wildlife which contain biologically sensitive species, function as important wildlife corridors and nesting habitat, and which serve a critical role in maintaining groundwater quality.

Alachua Conservation Trust is particularly excited to forge this new Women in the Woods program specifically for women in order to both meet an identified local community need and provide a skills-based internship experience like no other in an effort to help remedy the disparity in training and employing female natural resource managers that exists nationwide. If you are interested in becoming a Women in the Woods intern in the 2017-2018 cycle, or would like to know how you can support this innovative program, please contact us by telephone at (352)373-1078 or by email at Info@AlachuaConservationTrust.org.

Young, Muddy, and Ready to Learn

ACT's Land Management Internship program had yet another strong year in 2016, helping us complete a wide variety of projects on six of ACT's preserves over the course of three semesters with a total of fifteen interns, each of whom in turn worked closely with our land management staff as they built skills and expanded their knowledge of the natural resource management field. We're so grateful to have this program in place – its existence has helped us approach and in some cases even reach our management objectives at a far more accelerated pace than we'd be able to do without it, while simultaneously creating the opportunity for aspiring resource managers to get valuable "hands on" experience applying their coursework in the field.

This year, students were exposed to exotic species removal techniques, conservation forestry, longleaf pine planting, prescribed fire, gopher tortoise surveys, and creating recreational infrastructure such as boardwalks, overlooks, and kiosks. To date, many of our interns have gone on to find work in the resource management field at such other non-profit and governmental entities as Wildland Restoration International, Hillsborough County ELAPP program, Water Management Districts, and The Nature Conservancy.

In 2017, we hope to keep up the momentum with a new crew of interns, inauguration of the Women In the Woods program, and the ambitious goal of improving at least 200 acres on Alachua Conservation Trust's Santa Fe River Preserve by its planned opening date of November 18th!





ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST

7204 SE County Road 234
Gainesville, Florida 32641

SAVE THE DATE

MARCH 17, 2018

CONSERVATION STEWARDS AWARDS

ACT: FACTS AT A GLANCE

- 1 ESTABLISHED IN **1988** AS NON-PROFIT LAND TRUST
- 2 DIRECTLY PARTICIPATED IN THE PURCHASE OF **18,896** ACRES
- 3 CURRENTLY OWNS **3747** ACRES, AND 2 HISTORIC STRUCTURES
- 4 PERPETUAL CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON MORE THAN **3213** ACRES
- 5 HUNDREDS OF ACRES BURNED ANNUALLY
- 6 SUCCESSFULLY LED 5 PUBLIC REFERENDA, 3 FOR FUNDING **\$120 MILLION**, AND 2 FOR CREATING REGISTRY OF PROTECTED PUBLIC PLACES
- 7 OVER **500** ACTIVE SUPPORTERS WHO DONATE AT LEAST ONCE EVERY TWO YEARS
- 8 OVER **6700** VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS
- 9 **77,000** LONGLEAF PINES PLANTED
- 10 1 OF ONLY 4 NATIONALLY ACCREDITED LAND TRUSTS IN FLORIDA
- 11 **4,000** WIREGRASS SEEDLINGS PLANTED
- 12 ACTIVE LAND CONSERVATION PROJECTS IN 12 COUNTIES OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA



A NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LAND TRUST

Out of 1700 land trusts across the country, Alachua Conservation Trust received the 2013 National Land Trust Excellence Award from the Land Trust Alliance. The award represents the highest single recognition that a land trust can receive in the United States.



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