

## Buck Bay Flatwoods

**JWC Farms Inc.**

**7/27/2023**

Project Score		Buildings	
6.80 of 10.00		7 on ACPA, 7 on site (home, mobile homes, pole barn, workshop)	
Inspection Date		Just Value (ACPA)	Just Value Per Acre
6/27/2023		\$2,418,601	\$1,426.15
Size (ACPA ac)		Total Value (ACPA-Just, Misc, Bldg)	Total Value Per Acre
1695.89		\$3,277,576	\$1,932.66
Parcel Number	Acreage (ACPA)	Acquisition Type	
07559-000-000	336.3	Conservation Easement	
07539-001-000	20.96	Natural Community	
07539-002-000	242.59	Flatwoods/Prairie Lake	Excellent- Good
07539-000-000	76.91	Basin Marsh	Good
07574-000-000	473.66	Blackwater Stream	Good
07570-000-000	545.47	Seepage Stream	Excellent - Good
07570-002-000	69.31	Basin Swamp	Good
		Hydric hammock	Good - Fair
		Upland hardwood forest	Good - Fair
		Sinkhole	Good
Section-Township-Range		Other	Condition
30-07-20	32-07-20	Pine Plantation w/ native flora	Good - Fair
29-07-20	31-07-20	Improved Pasture (Mowed area)	
		Successional Hardwood Forest	
		Food Plots	
Archaeological Sites			
0 recorded on site, 1 in 1 mile			
Bald Eagle Nests			
0 on site, 1 in one mile			
<b>REPA Score</b>	6.58 of 9.44 (Buck Bay Flatwoods Strategic Ecosystem)		
<b>KBN Score</b>	Ranked 20 of 47 projects (Buck Bay Flatwoods ACF Project Area)		
<b>Outstanding FL Waters</b>	Santa Fe River System - within 200ft		

### Overall Description:

The J.W.C Farms property is located north central Alachua County east of Lacrosse. It is approximately one mile south of the boundary with Bradford County. The 1,695+ acre property consists of seven parcels (ACPA TPN 07559-000-000, 07539-001-000, 07539-002-000, 07539-000-000, 07574-000-000, 07570-000-000, and 07570-002-000) under one ownership, and it has been nominated for consideration as a conservation easement. The property has public roads around the entire perimeter (approximately 7 miles), and it is completely enclosed within an 8-10 ft high fence. The property is

accessed primarily through a gate on the east side near the intersection of CR 231 and CR 235, but there is also a secondary access gate in the northwest off NW 218<sup>th</sup> Ave. While the property is not directly adjacent to existing conservation lands, it is less than a tenth of a mile southwest of the Graham Conservation area along the Santa Fe River which is managed by the Suwannee River Water Management District, and it is less than a mile south of the Alachua County-held Running Over Ranch Conservation Easement. The majority of the property lies within the Buck Bay Flatwoods ACF project area, but the northeast corner is in the Santa Fe River Project Area. The northeast corner of the property is less than half a mile from the Santa Fe River. This connection is nearly functionally protected due to the proximity of the Santa Fe River floodplain forest and the GIS mapped boundary of the Santa Fe River Outstanding FL Water designation, which is less than 200 ft from the nominated property in some places. Approximately 709 acres are within the northernmost extent of the Buck Bay Flatwoods Strategic ecosystem (primarily the area surrounding Sunshine Lake). The property primarily falls within the Sunshine Lake watershed, but it does include smaller portions of the Santa Fe River watershed and the Trout Pond Outlet watershed along the property boundaries, all of which are part of the greater Santa Fe Basin. The natural communities present on the property include, but might not be limited to, flatwoods/prairie lake, basin marsh, basin swamp, blackwater stream, seepage stream, sinkhole, hydric hammock, and upland hardwood forest. The landowner's desire in considering a conservation easement is to be able to preserve the property from sale or development in the future, with a goal of continuing the habitat management practices already in use.

The current landowners purchased the property in 1993. Prior to the current ownership, the land use included hay production and loblolly pine plantation, and much of the land had already been cleared for agricultural use before the late 1930s based on aerial imagery. The majority of the uplands on the property are still being managed as a pine stands with higher groundcover diversity than is often seen in sites with a former pasture or pine plantation history. Overall, the results of the landowners' habitat restoration efforts were impressive in outcome, diversity and commitment. The landowner has planted over half a million pine trees since purchasing the property, gradually replacing the loblolly pine stands with a combination of slash and longleaf pines. Forestry and land management practices follow detailed management plans that were written in consultation with both a professional forester and a professional biologist to maximize benefits for the forestry operation as well as for wildlife, especially white-tailed deer. The property is being very actively managed to benefit deer forage and regulate the on-site deer population in order to maintain a specific average herd size and ratio of bucks to does. To support deer forage, there are approximately 120 acres of food plots on the property, 27 acres of which are irrigated. Food plot forage crops include iron clay peas, joint vetch (*Aeschynomene*), perennial peanuts, and others, which the landowner rotates regularly. Additionally, the property is also actively being prescribe burned, with the goal of burning all pyric acres on the property every three to four years. Burning and other land management practices have significantly benefitted the recovery of groundcover species in the across the site. Although the pine uplands are being managed as plantation, due to current management practices, they are also providing good habitat for a variety of wildlife including bobwhite quails and gopher tortoises, both of which were observed during the site visit. Additional uplands on the property include hardwood forests which occur primarily in the areas surrounding the two lakes or other wetlands described below.

A little over 20% of the property are considered wetlands. The majority of the wetland footprint is in a large flatwoods/prairie lake called Sunshine Lake which spans over 300 acres in the central/southern portion of the property and is fringed with a good quality basin marsh. There is also a smaller lake in the northwest parcel referred to as Ned's Pond, which also appears to be in good condition. The lakes are bordered by hardwood forest including hydric hammock and upland hardwood forest, in good-fair condition. The patches of hydric hammock surrounding Sunshine Lake were dominated by a canopy mature, old live oaks. The property has diverse topography, sloping downward toward Sunshine Lake from multiple directions. The areas of upland hardwood forest were observed primarily on the sloped edges where seepage streams were also observed. Areas of the upland hardwood forest were successional in places, with a mixture of younger or smaller hardwoods, but also supporting a diversity of larger mature trees including basswood, swamp chestnut oak, pignut hickory, maples, live oaks and laurel oaks, as well as a diversity of groundcover plants including ferns, forbs, and grasses.

Other wetland features include a short section the blackwater stream, Rhuda Branch, which flows into Sunshine Lake from south of the property, and at least one basin swamp. Both features appeared to be in good condition. The basin swamp contained a mixture of hardwoods, and the understory was largely fern-dominated in the areas that weren't flooded, including cinnamon fern, which is commercially exploited. Southern lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina* subsp. *asplenioides*), which is listed as state-threatened, was also observed along the seepage streams. At least one other basin swamp is presumed to exist on the southern end of the western boundary based on aerial imagery, but we did not see it during the site visit. There are also at least six shallow sinkholes around Sunshine Lake as well as another sinkhole pond ("Starling Pond") on the east side of the property.

Invasive plants were only found in low density, scattered occurrences throughout the property, though we were not able to thoroughly traverse the site during the visit due to its size. Species observed included tung oil tree, camphor tree, and chinaberry, coral ardisia, water hyacinth, rattlebox, and Japanese climbing fern. The landowner has been actively managing for invasive species throughout his tenure of the property and is doing an excellent job of controlling them. Tung oil tree saplings were the most prevalently observed. The landowner indicated that at least a portion of the property had been a tung oil farm historically. According to the landowner, wildlife sightings on the property include bobcat, sandhill crane, bald eagle, black-bellied whistling duck, bobwhite quail, indigo snake, red and gray fox, striped skunk, timber and diamondback rattlesnake, occasional black bear, and more. The landowner indicated that a radio-collared panther had once been observed on the property many years ago as well. During the site evaluation, staff additionally observed gopher tortoises, fox squirrels, and white-tailed deer. Milkvine, another imperiled plant species was also observed during the site visit. No archaeological sites are recorded on the property, but given the character of Sunshine Lake, it would not be a surprise if evidence of use by historic cultures exists.

There are approximately eight buildings or other structures onsite including a homesite, a couple pole barns, a workshop and maintenance facilities, and a few mobile homes that the landowner would eventually like to replace with single family homes. They are all situated in the mowed area west of Sunshine Lake. The landowner would like to construct one additional building in the maintained area

in the future as a lodge/ gathering space for the family, but there are no plans for buildings elsewhere on the property, aside from hunting structures.

**Development Review:**

*This development analysis is based on a limited desk-top review and is founded upon current County Land Development Regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies. The Development Scenario is oversimplified and is meant only to convey a general sense of the potential of development intensity that could be possible based on land use and zoning conditions.*

The parcels are all owned by JCW Farms INC. The parcels have a Future Land Use of Rural Agricultural. In accordance with the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, Rural Agricultural areas are intended to be protected in a manner consistent with preservation of agriculture, open space, rural character and the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas. Under the current land use and zoning the property may be developed at a maximum intensity of 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

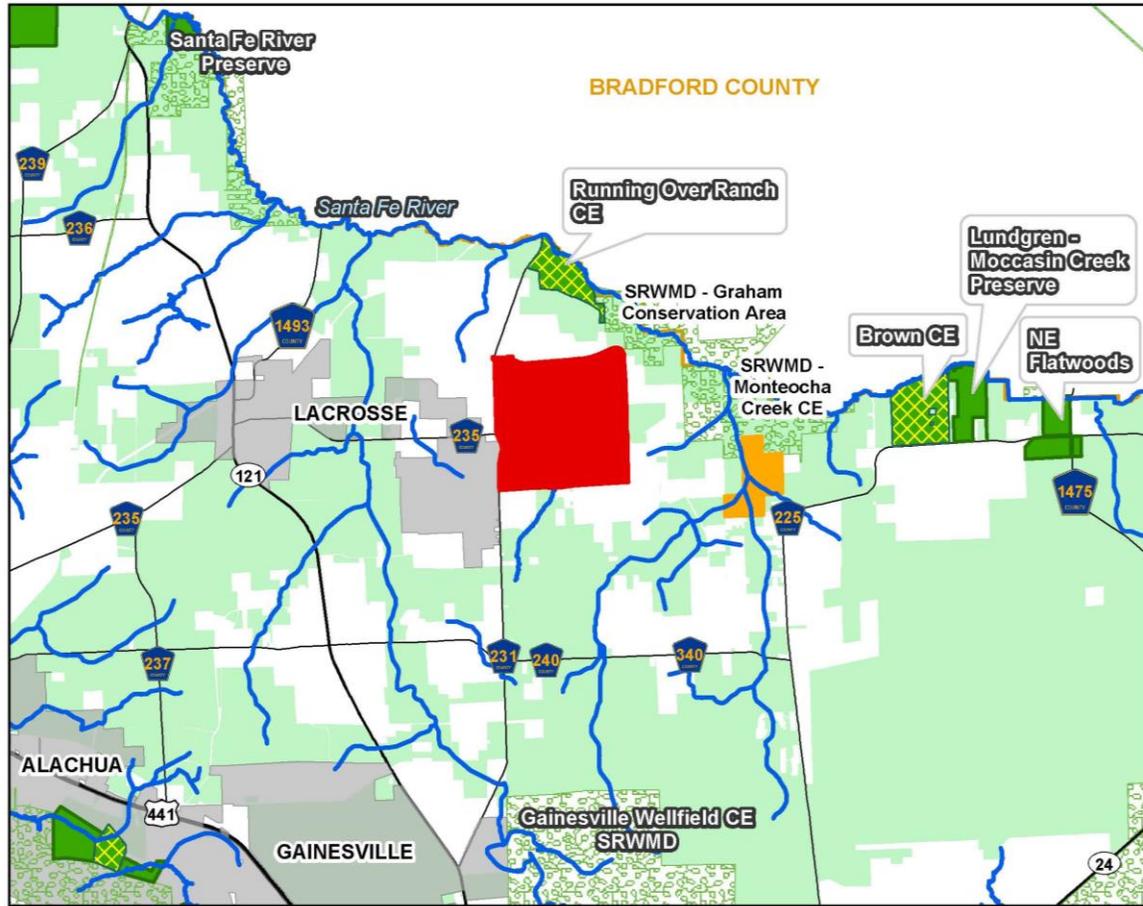
There are approximately 376.89 combined acres of wetlands on the properties and 592.91 acres of the properties are located within a floodplain. As per Alachua County ULDC, the wetlands on site would be protected as well as an upland vegetated buffer surrounding the wetlands. A 50' minimum and 75' average buffer width would be required for these wetlands. The wetlands buffer area comprises 447.38 acres. Five of the six parcels (07559-000-000, 07539-001-000, 07539-002-000, 07539-000-000, 07574-000-000, 07570-000-000) are located within a strategic ecosystem which requires 50% of the upland area to be preserved, inclusive of the wetland buffers. There are 592.91 acres located in Flood zone AO, a special flood hazard area that would require compliance with local, State, and Federal floodplain management regulations. Any structures with mortgages would be required to obtain flood insurance. The wetlands, flood zones, and Strategic Ecosystem areas all overlap in the central and southern portions of the properties leaving well over half of the properties outside of the protected areas with multiple road access options.

Despite the multitude of protected natural resources on these properties, it contains a large developable area. However, the remote location and limited infrastructure and associated higher construction costs will somewhat diminish the prospects and potential for development activities.

Buck Bay Flatwoods - J.W.C Farms - 7/27/2023					
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;		4		
	B. Whether the property serves an important groundwater recharge function;		4		
	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;		2		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		2		
(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;		3		
	C. Whether there is ecological quality in the communities present on the property;		3		
	D. Whether the property is functionally connected to other natural communities;		3		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		1		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		5		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		3		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects.		3		
(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;		5		
	C. Whether the property contains plants or animals that are endemic or near-endemic to Florida or Alachua County;		5		
	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;		1		
	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.		4		
	<b>AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN VALUES</b>			3.30	
	<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>	1.333			4.40
(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;		2		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justifies the potential cost of acquisition;		4		
	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		3		
	<b>AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES</b>			3.60	
	<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>	0.667			2.40
	<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>				<b>6.80</b>
<b>NOTES</b>					
<b>General Criteria Scoring Guidelines</b>					
1 = Least beneficial, 2 = Less Beneficial than Average, 3 = Average, 4 = More Beneficial than Average, 5 = Most Beneficial					

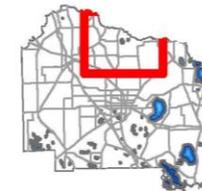


# Buck Bay Flatwoods - J.W.C. Farms, Inc. Location Map



## Legend

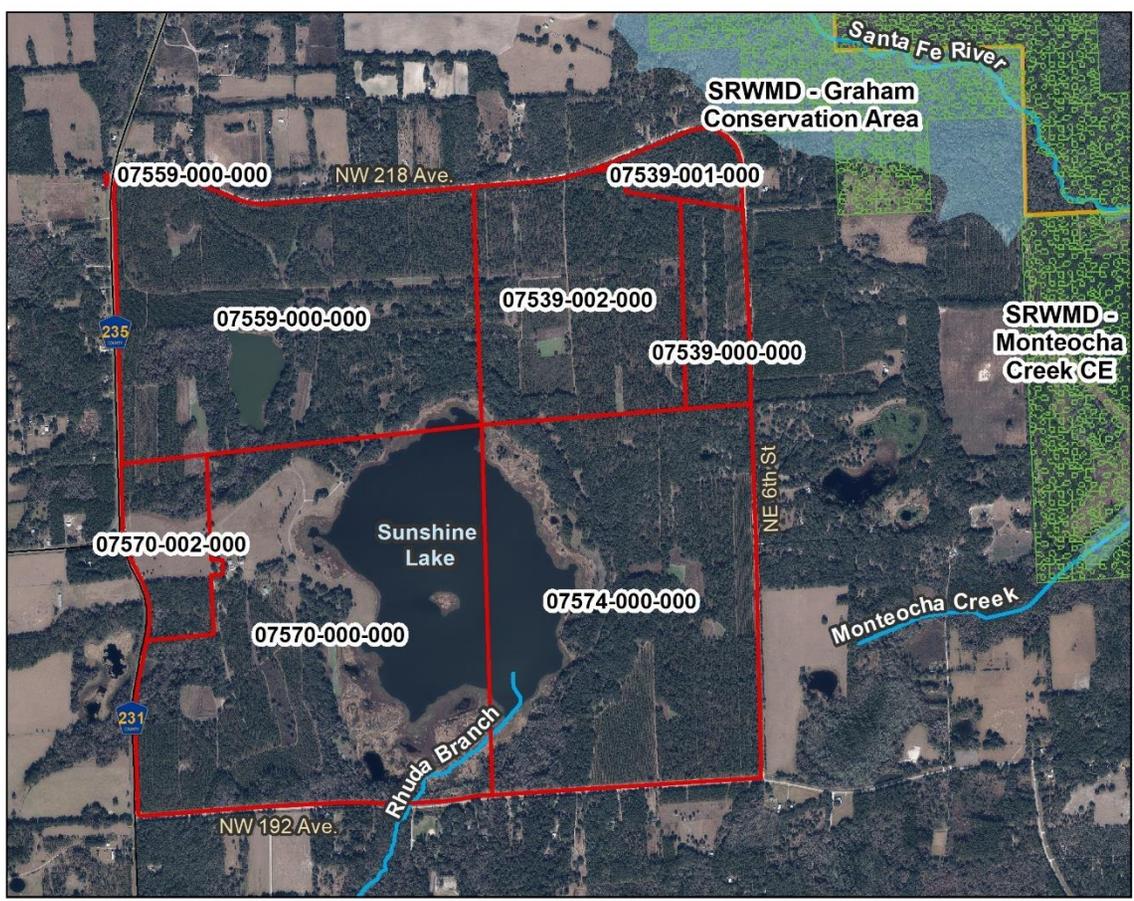
- JWCFarms\_Parcel (1,695.8 ac)
- Burned Nomination (280 ac)
- ACF Preserve
- ACF Conservation Easement
- Conservation Lands 2023
- Alachua County Creeks
- CountyBoundary
- ACF Projects



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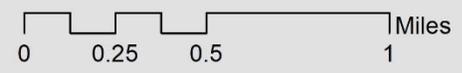


# Buck Bay Flatwoods - J.W.C. Farms, Inc. Parcel Map



### Legend

- JWCFarms\_Parcels (1,695.8 ac)
- Conservation Lands 2023
- Outstanding FL Waters
- Alachua County Creeks
- CountyBoundary



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