

**Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector**  
**Rimes**  
**04/07/06**

**Inspection Date:** March 10, 2006  
**Parcel Numbers:** 18354-038-045  
**Size:** 239.12 acres  
**S-T-R:** 36, 11 S, 21 E  
**Buildings:** 1  
**Just Value:** \$167,500 or \$700.49 / acre  
**Total Value:** \$204,700 or \$856.49 / acre  
**Project Score:** 7.47 of 10  
**REPA Score:** 8.18 of 9.44

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**Overall Description:**

The 239 acre Rimes property lies within the Lochloosa Forest-Levy Prairie Connector (LOC) project, and is adjacent to Cross Creek (the water body) , which abuts the property on the west. The Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area (LWCA) abuts the property to its north and east. This property also fronts Little Lochloosa Lake (Map 1).

The Lochloosa Forest-Levy Prairie Connector (LOC) project was nominated by the Conservation Trust for Florida and scored 8.18 of 9.44 on the Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA). It is the second-highest scoring project to date.

The Rimes property is easily accessible as it is bisected by a limestone road, SE 148<sup>th</sup> St. The portion to the west of the road is mostly wetland adjacent to Cross Creek consisting of lake shore swamp, basin marsh and canals. A small upland fringe along the roadway consists of mesic hammock used as rough pasture. The larger portion on the east side of the limestone road has a large wetland (approximately 53 acres) roughly in the center of the property that is surrounded by mesic hammock. The mesic hammock is utilized as rough pasture. The large wetland at the center of the eastern portion of the property is fringed by lake shore swamp, while the center is dominated by herbaceous vegetation and is basin marsh. At some time between 1979 and 1995, a canal was dug around the edge of the wetland, connecting it to Little Lochloosa Lake. A fringe of lake shore swamp lies along the roughly 2,800 feet of lake shore and beyond the lake shore swamp is either open water or basin marsh vegetation. At the northeast corner of the large wetland in the eastern part of the parcel is small deforested area of what was formerly lake shore swamp and or mesic hammock (almost 5 acres). This disturbed area is revegetating with various weedy shrubs (saltbush, wax myrtle). The disturbed area is bisected by and adjacent to several canals. According to the Alachua County Property Appraiser's information, there is only one dwelling on the property, however, Mr. Rimes informed staff that the parcel has three dwellings. Staff observed two dwellings on the property, one concrete block structure and one mobile home, though it was not clear if there were other structures within the property boundary beyond the structures observed.

Additionally the Rimes property is within the Cross Creek Special Area Study. The purpose of this study is to establish general policies and development guidelines for future development in this area so that future land development is designed to place the environmental integrity of this area in the forefront of all development proposals.

Little Lochloosa Lake is both an Outstanding Florida Water and on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's list of impaired water bodies. It is also a part of the Orange Creek Basin Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plan. The SWIM designation calls for Water Management Districts to prioritize water bodies for protection and restoration, and to develop and implement plans and programs for the improvement and management of surface waters in cooperation with state and local governments.

**Natural Communities:**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Quality</u>
Lake Shore Swamp	Excellent
Mesic Hammock	Fair
Basin Marsh	Excellent – Good
Marsh Lake	Excellent

**Other:**

Ditches and Canals  
Disturbed areas  
Homesites

**Key Species:**

The Rimes property contains habitats that were deemed potentially significant for 24 animal species as modeled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), including black bears, a variety of wading birds, indigo snakes, and striped newts.

FWC 2002 data indicate 28 bald eagle nests within a 5-mile radius of the Rimes Property and eight nests within a 1 mile radius, though no known nests occur on the Rimes property. The cluster of bald eagle nests around Orange, Newnan's, and Lochloosa Lakes has been apparent for the last twenty years and is one of the densest populations in the State of Florida, personal communication Steve Nesbitt, FWC.

During the site visit staff observed numerous wild turkey, one rough green snake, and sign of wild hogs.

**Key Features:**

The Rimes property is located on the south shore of Lochloosa Lake in the portion of the lake called Little Lochloosa Lake where Cross Creek joins Little Lochloosa Lake. It is part of the vegetated area surrounding Little Lochloosa Lake that serves as a natural filter to trap nutrients and sediments prior to discharge into the lake. Preservation of this property would protect wildlife habitat and maintain the scenic value along Cross Creek and from Little Lochloosa Lake.

According to lidar data, a significant portion of the Rimes property lies below the ordinary high water line, which the State of Florida has established through legal proceedings. Based on lidar data, approximately 175 acres of the 239 acre property, or 75% of the property lies below the ordinary high water line and may therefore be considered Sovereign Submerged Lands. All waters within the property are classified as Outstanding Florida Waters.

The upland portions of the property are dominated by mesic hammock utilized as rough pasture and are in fair condition. Large live oaks and stately palms occupy the canopy. Species richness of mesic hammock is lower on the Rimes property, where there has been a recent

history of grazing, than in mesic hammock on the adjacent Lochloosa Wildlife Management area. The mesic hammock has scattered pasture grasses and native grasses in the understory among other native plants. In places the invasive Chinese tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*) is prevalent among midstory plants. Along the southern boundary of the property, also within mesic hammock, several other exotics are beginning to invade the property including air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*). Other exotics observed include Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*) and Ceasar weed (*Urena lobata*).

In general the wetlands on the property appear to be in Excellent to Good condition. Canals have been dug in various locations on the property, on both the west side of the limestone road – joining Cross Creek and on the east side. It is likely that the canals have had some effect on natural hydrology, but it appears, at least in times of higher water that they may function more to provide a deep water access to the property, rather than to perform a drainage function.

### **Management:**

Management of the Rimes property would include removing grazing from the mesic hammock to allow the hammock to recover its species richness. Control of invasive exotic plants and removal of feral hogs are necessary for natural community recovery. Long-term management goals may include examination of the canal system to determine ecological effects and taking remedial actions to correct hydrologic problems as needed.

### **Recreation:**

Preservation of the Rimes property would provide opportunities for nature-based recreation such as nature study or hiking trails. Preservation of the Rimes Property would also protect the view shed from Cross Creek (the water body) and from Little Lochloosa Lake. Access to the property is excellent and preservation of this property could provide low-impact water access for recreation.

### **Parcel Data:**

The 2006 Alachua County Property Appraiser's (ACPA) just or land value for the property is \$167,500 or \$700.49 / acre. According to ACPA data there is one duplex on the property. The total value is \$419,700 or \$804.59 / acre. These figures are for comparative purposes between nominated properties and are not necessarily an accurate reflection of the true cost of the property if acquired by the ACF program. As of the time that the property was nominated, the listing price of the property was \$2.34 million or \$9,800 / acre.

Currently, this area is showing some development pressure associated with the town of Cross Creek. Within approximately one mile of this site there are numerous small residential parcels and rural large-lot subdivisions. Based on a desktop review, the parcel currently contains a two-story duplex residential building on septic tank. The natural features (flood prone area and wetlands associated with Little Lochloosa Lake) appear to significantly constrain development potential for a large portion of the parcel. Approximately 175 acres (approximately 75%) of the project area are wetlands associated with Little Lochloosa Lake, an Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), and county regulations require that an average buffer of 150 feet be maintained landward of the OFW boundary. The remaining upland portion of the property is designated as Hammock under the Cross Creek Special Area Study (see Section 405.15.3 Alachua County ULDC for more details).

The parcel could be subdivided, and a maximum residential density of one dwelling unit per five acres may be permitted based on the zoning and Cross Creek Special Area Study regulations. However, in order to preserve the character of the hammock habitat, building impact areas would be limited to a maximum of one acre and the development would be clustered to preserve the most sensitive or unique areas of the property. Based on Land use regulations, if the parcel was developed and environmental constraints are considered, this parcel could potentially be subdivided into roughly 11-22 units. The parcel has indirect access to CR 325.

**Other:**

There is one site recorded with the Florida Master Site File, Division of Historic Resources, Department of State on the Rimes property. According to Site File maps, only a portion of the site lies on the Rimes property.

**Literature Cited:**

KBN, a Golder Associates Company. 1996. Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project.  
Prepared for Alachua County Department of Growth Management, Gainesville, Florida.

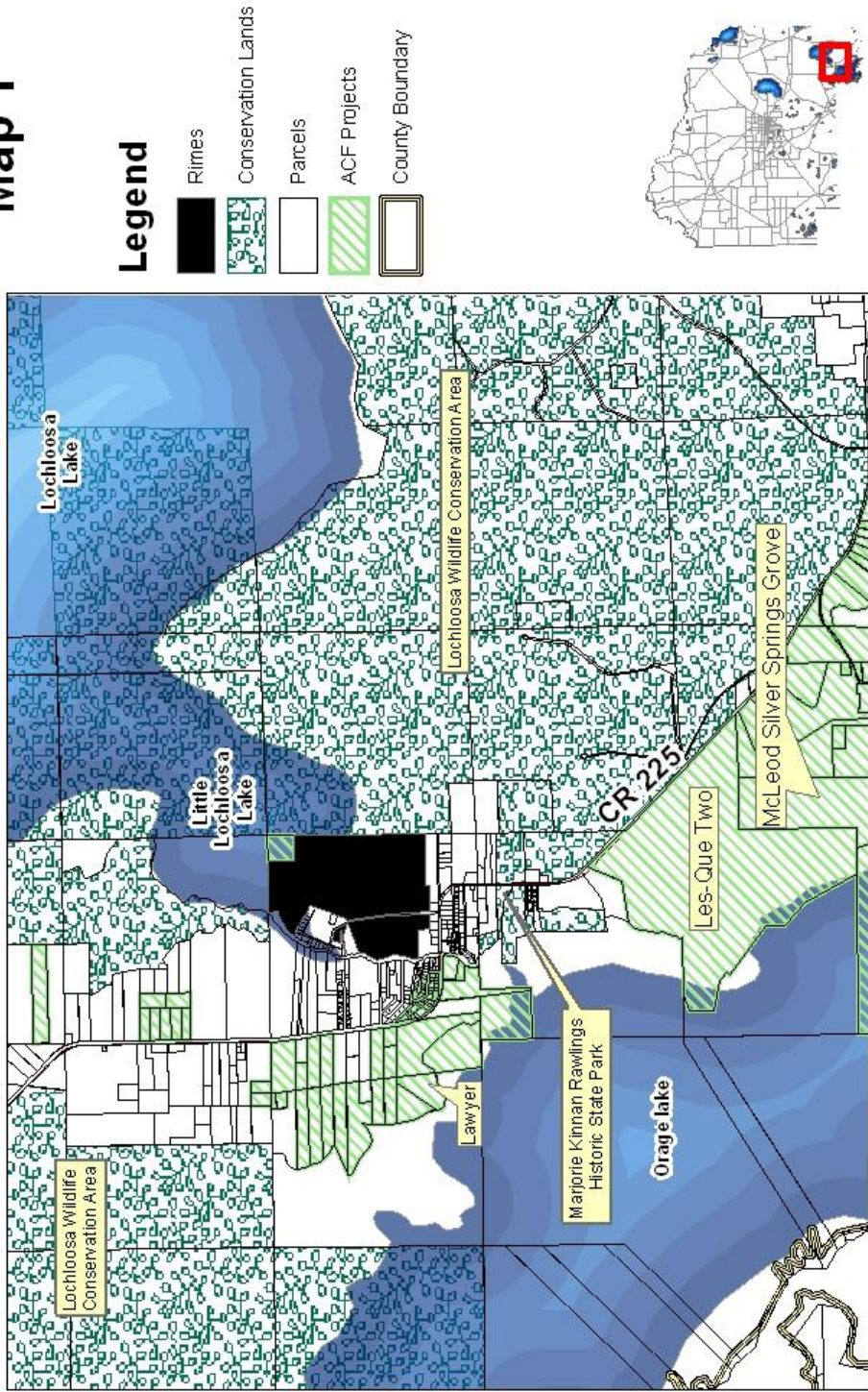
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April 7, 2006

CATEGORY	Criterion	WEIGHTING	Enter Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
<b>(I-1) PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES</b>	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;		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;		4		
	D. Whether the property serves an important flood management function.		4		
	A. Whether the property contains a diversity of natural communities;		2		
	B. Whether the natural communities present on the property are rare;		2		
	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;		4		
	E. Whether the property is adjacent to properties that are in public ownership or have other environmental protections such as conservation easements;		4		
	F. Whether the property is large enough to contribute substantially to conservation efforts;		4		
<b>(I-2) PROTECTION OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES AND LANDSCAPES</b>	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves or springs;		2		
	H. Whether the property is relatively free from internal fragmentation from roads, power lines, and other features that create barriers and edge effects		3		
	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;		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;		3		
	F. Whether the property has low incidence of non-native invasive species		4		
	A. Whether the property offers opportunities for compatible resource-based recreation, if appropriate;		4		
	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>					
<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>					
		1.3333333		3.60	4.80
<b>(II-1) MANAGEMENT ISSUES</b>	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);		3		
	B. Whether this management can be completed in a cost-effective manner		4		
	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal, state, federal, or private contributions;		4		
<b>(II-2) ECONOMIC AND ACQUISITION ISSUES</b>	E. 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		5		
			4		
<b>AVERAGE FOR ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT VALUES</b>					
<b>RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE</b>					
		0.6666667		4.00	2.67
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>					
					<b>7.47</b>

# Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector Rimes

## Map 1



Alachua County  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
FORGEMER

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles




DISCLAIMER: This map and its geographic information are made available as open data to be used for reference purposes only. The Alachua County Planning and Development Department is not responsible for any errors or omissions. The quality of the data depends on the source from which the data were obtained.

# Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector Rimes

Map 2



## Legend

-  ACF Projects
-  Parcels
-  Conservation Lands
-  Rimes\_boundary











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