

Agricultural Strategy Goals & Values: Acquire conservation easements on agriculturally significant lands in order "to protect water resources, rural economy, contribute to local food security, and promote open, scenic space."

Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods*
Frog Song Organics (Bitter and Van Scoik)
9/3/2025

Project Score	Range	Site Visit Date	
7.43 of 10.00	Excellent (7-8 points)	7/10/2025	
Size (ACPA Acres)		Just (Market) Value (Land + Improvements, tax assessed value)	Just Value Per Acre
65.9		521,305.00	7,910.55
Parcel Number	Acreage (ACPA)	Land + Ag Market Value	Land Value Per Acre
18827-001-000	59.9	311,600.00	4,728.38
18825-001-000	6	Primary Operation(s)	
		Fruit and Vegetable Production, Pastured Pork, Eggs; Agritourism, Education	
USDA Land Capability Classification	Primary Characteristic	GIS Ag Suitability Model Assessment	
Class 2	Moderate to high productivity	Medium Suitability	
Predominant Soil Series	Major Uses & Features	In a Springs Priority Focus Area?	
Bonneau Fine Sand, Lochloosa Fine Sand	Crops; Well-drained, loamy	No	
National Commodity Crop Productivity Index	Significance	Archaeological Sites	
Average of 0.40	Good value for Alachua County	0 recorded on site, 0 in 1 mile	
Zoning	Future Land Use	Other/Natural Communities	Condition
Agricultural (A)	Rural/Agriculture	N/A	
ACF Project Area Score (REPA)	*Not in an ACF Project Area; Adjacent to parcels in Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods		
Strategic Ecosystem Score (KBN)	N/A - Not in a Strategic Ecosystem		
Outstanding Florida Waters	No Outstanding FL Waters within 1 mile		

Overall Description:

Frog Song Organics is 65.9-acre property consisting of two parcels (18827-001-000 and 18825-001-000) and has been nominated for an agricultural conservation easement. Frog Song Organics is a first-generation farm established in 2011 by Amy Van Scoik and John Bitter. Their mission is to "provide nutritious foods to our local community." The farm has been certified organic since 2012 by Quality Certification Services and follows Best Management Practices. Located in eastern Alachua County on US 301N, the farm is 30 minutes by car from the University of Florida in Gainesville. Though the farm is not adjacent to existing conservation lands, within a strategic ecosystem, or in an Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project Area, it is adjacent to parcels in the Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods Project Area. The farm is also in the Florida Wildlife Corridor, a statewide corridor of priority land protection established by the

legislature, and one of ACF's top three county-level priority corridors. While the property does not hold any classified natural communities, existing land management practices support a variety of amphibians and insect species, which in turn support pollination and resident and migratory birds. The farmers are also working with entomologists at the University of Florida to provide educational opportunities for students to catalogue biodiversity on-site. A tour of the farm revealed well-managed grounds, no visible solid waste on-site, and structures that serve the farmers as well as visitors including a central pole barn.

The farmers raise laying hens for eggs, pastured pork, and produce specialty items such as jams, kimchi, syrups, and pickles. They grow a diverse range of specialty vegetable crops, fruit from more than 1,200 fruit trees, including citrus, persimmons, and stone fruit. They also grow flowers, strawberries, melons, and root crops as well as medicinal herbs including ginger, turmeric, holy basil, and moringa. Sugar cane, from which the farmers make cane syrup, doubles as a windbreak to protect other crops during storms. Their local sales outlets include a CSA and three to four weekly farmers' markets. The farm also hosts a variety of events and festivals, with agritourism and educational activities serving as major contributors to the farm's community-oriented ethos.

With almost 15 years of data on the land and their most profitable crops, the farmers have expanded their business model to play a key role in the local and regional agricultural economy and serve as an aggregator for other farms. In making pickups at regional farms, their goal is typically to fill up a six- or eight-pallet truck to meet demand from their distribution channels, which allows them to focus on growing what they produce best and sourcing crops that are more difficult for them to grow from other farms in the region. The farmers also do home deliveries three days a week in Gainesville as well as two days that are drop-offs for donations. They offer customer pickups three days a week at their farm gate.

During their peak season, the farm employs between 30 and 40 full- and part-time employees. The landowners also mentor beginning farmers and lease small plots on their farm to allow newer farmers space to grow and learn. Their long-term goal for the land is to serve as an agricultural education hub, to maintain healthy, productive soils through organic and regenerative practices, and to teach people techniques that will enable them to farm the land sustainably and in perpetuity.

A critical resource that contributes to the land's environmental significance for conservation and to the farm's productivity are its soils, of which a majority are Bonneau Series Class 2. According to the USDA Land Capability Classification, Class 2 soils are considered moderately high to high in productivity for a wide variety of common field crops. An ACF staff visit to the farm gathered the following statement from one of the landowners and farmers, John Bitter:

"It's very hard to find good agricultural soils in the state, so this is about as good as it gets in Florida. There are maybe a few soils better than this one. But not very many. If you're looking at where to start a farm, it really does pay to start in Class 2. Every bit of resources you invest will be potentially that much more that much more productive because you're having to deal that much less with irrigation. Frog Song Organics has 2W, which means it's wet. The good thing about 2W here is that the wet soil is on the top, a very interesting characteristic. That means the texture of the soil is the reason it's wet, or maybe the subsoil. We have a topsoil, an A horizon, of fine sand. It's about 80% fine sand, 10% loam, and 10% clay. It's a really good mix for farming. It holds a lot of water, even for topsoil. That means that when you talk about a non-irrigated class, you can grow crops most of the year without irrigation. Just as importantly, it means that irrigation is much less costly, and when you do need to irrigate, it lasts a lot longer."

The farm, which is in the Morans Prairie Basin watershed, strives to ensure that “nothing leaves the property with nutrients in it,” as John emphasized. “Even in a drought we only have to irrigate each block every four or five days, and that's with overhead. We use almost all overhead here, no drip tape. We're able to use water reels for most of our irrigation. This is probably 80% of our irrigation. In the orchards, we use mini-wobblers, basically a micro-sprinkler. They're really efficient and really good for the soil, not causing erosion and watering the trees that we want to water.”

“What is so special about this area, is not just the topsoil, not just water availability, but the B horizon. The B horizon here is a solid layer of clay. They call it the gumbo layer. It's high-quality clay, and it means that very little water moves down here. It helps us hold moisture in our soil. Being on the top of the hill, it's up to us to get it to run off or to follow the paths that we want it to follow. We've been working for 14 years to level out the fields, get drainage ditches cut, and get silt basins made. Then everything that would erode from our cultivation goes into a silt basin and can be recaptured. It can be scooped up on top of the next field or taken to the orchard. Nothing goes into Lochloosa Creek, nothing into our neighbor's property, or into Morans Prairie Basin. We have good filtration in each way,” John said.

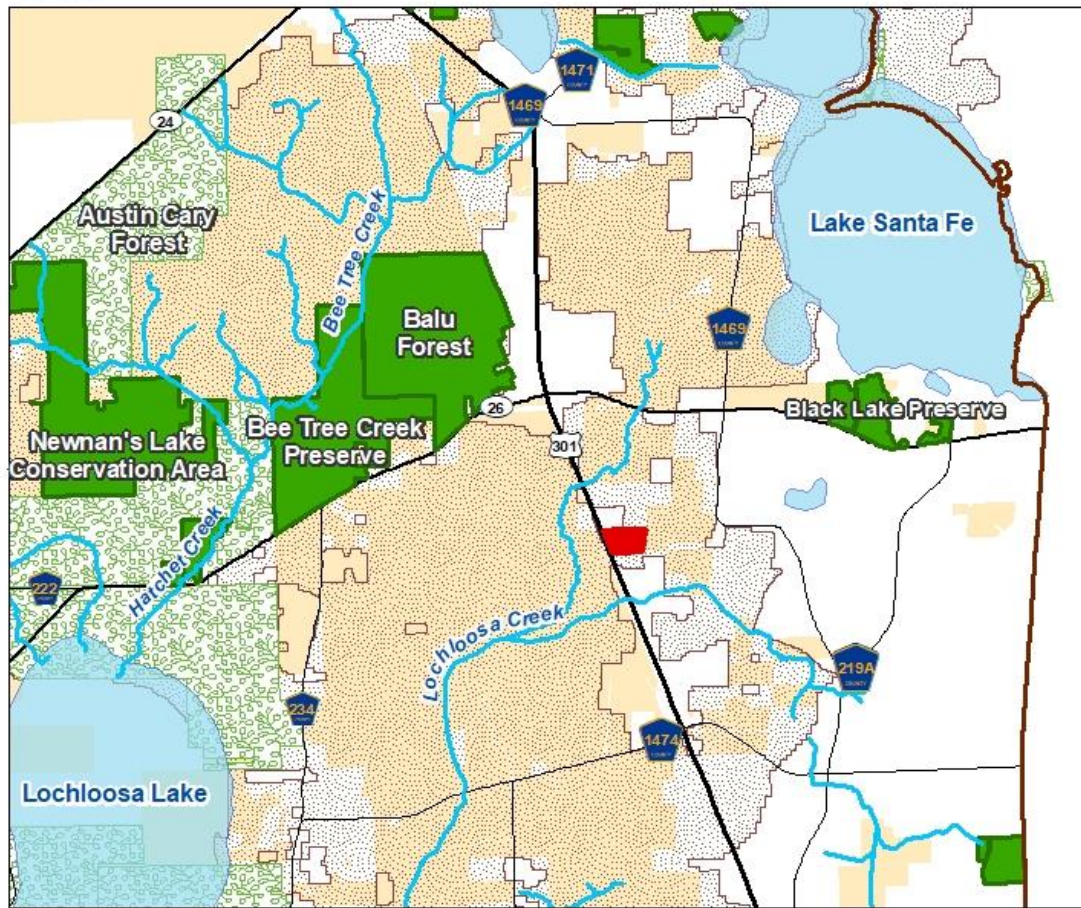
“The goal is to teach people how to use this land indefinitely. That's our goal, how to make this work for people to continue their jobs, continue the education, and ultimately 100 years from now and beyond, all this area will still be in farming.”

Based on this assessment and the landowners' long-term vision, ACF Program staff have determined that Frog Song Organics aligns with the Agricultural Strategy's goals and values.

REPA - Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods* - Frog Song Organics (Bitter and Van Scoik) - 07/10/2025					
Category	Criterion (Resolution Values) Guidance for 0-5 Point Scale: 0 = No points, 1 = Least beneficial, 2 = Less beneficial than average, 3 = Average, 4 = More beneficial than average, 5 = Most beneficial	Weight	Criteria Value Based on Site Inspection	Average Criteria Score	Average Criteria Score Multiplied by Relative Importance
(1) ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES - PROTECTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES	A. Whether the property serves an important aquifer and groundwater recharge function;		4		
	B. Whether the property is in Santa Fe River or Watermelon Pond watershed, or watershed with existing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) area;		5		
	C. Whether the property serves an important flood management or mitigation function;		1		
	D. Whether the property enhances wildlife and open space corridors through proximity of other conservation lands; is in a Springs Priority Focus Area;		1		
	E. Whether the property serves as documented or potential habitat for wildlife; state or federally listed species;		2		
	F. Whether the property contains productive soils as determined through crop productivity indices;		5		
	G. Whether the property contains important, Florida-specific geologic features such as caves, sinkholes or springs, ravines, lime rock outcrops, etc.;		1		
(2) SOCIAL AND HUMAN VALUES	A. Whether the owner(s) of property qualify as historically underserved or limited resource;		4		
	B. Whether the owner(s) of property are open to succession planning, land transfer, or land access;		5		
	D. Whether the property contributes to open green space, provides a municipal defining greenbelt, provides scenic vistas, or has other value from an urban and regional planning perspective;		2		
	E. Whether there is imminent threat of losing the social, historical 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 market conditions);		3		
(3) FARM AND RANCH OPERATION / MANAGEMENT VALUES	A. Whether the type of agricultural operation/s on the property forward the strategy mission and goals;		5		
	B. Whether the farm sells products that are consumed within Alachua or neighboring counties;		5		
	C. Whether the landowner purchases feed, equipment, repair services, etc. for farm operation locally?		4		
	D. Whether the landowner is offering a significant portion of the farm for inclusion in the easement;		5		
	E. Whether the landowner of the property is involved in day-to-day management of the operation;		5		
	F. Whether the property is enrolled in the FDACS BMP program or similar EQIP or CSP programs. If not, does the landowner agree to enroll in an applicable BMP program designed to reduce nutrient and water inputs prior to closing on an agricultural conservation easement with Alachua County;		5		
	G. Whether the property is engaged in management practices aimed at reducing nutrient and water inputs or practice regenerative agriculture principles? i.e. cover cropping, reduced tillage, soil testing, etc.;		5		
	H. Whether the landowner is willing to write or contract, or already has a farm management plan in place addressing wildlife habitat value, water, soil and nutrient conservation;		5		
AVERAGE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND HUMAN, AND FARM AND RANCH OPERATION / MANAGEMENT VALUES				3.79	
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA SET IN THE OVERALL SCORE		1.5			5.68
(4) PARTNER EASEMENT ACQUISITION / COST SHARE VALUES	A. Whether there is potential for purchasing the property with matching funds from municipal state, federal, or private contributions;		3		
	B. Whether the overall resource values justify the potential cost of acquisition;		4		
AVERAGE FOR PARTNER EASEMENT ACQUISITION / COST-SHARE VALUES				3.50	
RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF THIS CRITERIA IN SCORE		0.5			1.75
TOTAL SCORE					7.43



Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods* Frog Song Organics, Bitter & Van Scoik Location Map



Legend

- Frog Song Parcels (65.9 ac)
- ACF Preserve
- Partner Conservation Lands
- Alachua County Creeks
- Lakes
- Florida Wildlife Corridor
- County Boundary
- ACF Project Areas



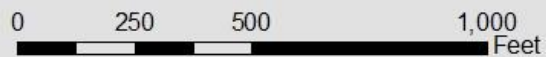
* Property is adjacent to parcels within the project area boundary



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Lochloosa Creek Flatwoods* Frog Song Organics, Bitter, & Van Scoik, Parcel Map



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