

Presented by:
Alachua Conservation
Trust

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FY23 FDEP SPRINGS FUNDING APPLICATION LAND ACQUISITION

Perpetual Conservation Easement GHC FARMS, INC. 197 acres Levy County to benefit Rainbow Springs

Overview

- Who is Alachua Conservation Trust?
- What does the Conservation Easement do?
- Landscape Context
- GHC Farms, Inc. Property
- Partnership with NRCS
- Project Budget
- Why is acquisition of GHC Farms, Inc. a good investment?



ACT Stewardship Director, Ivor Kincaide, instructs local high schoolers on longleaf pine planting at Prairie Creek Preserve.

GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Who is ACT?



Alachua Conservation Trust

- Certified 501(c)3 non-profit land trust established in 1988
- Facilitated the permanent protection of over 54,000 acres; owns and manages 6,000 acres of public preserves
- Awarded 5 separate DEP Springs Grants for acquisitions in Columbia, Suwannee and Gilchrist Counties



Since 1988, Alachua Conservation Trust has worked to protect land in 16 counties throughout North Central Florida.

We protect land through purchase, donation, and conservation easements in Alachua, Marion, Gilchrist, Putnam, Levy, Columbia, Madison, Hamilton, Union, Bradford, Clay, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Sumter, and Lake County.





GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: What does the Conservation Easement Do?

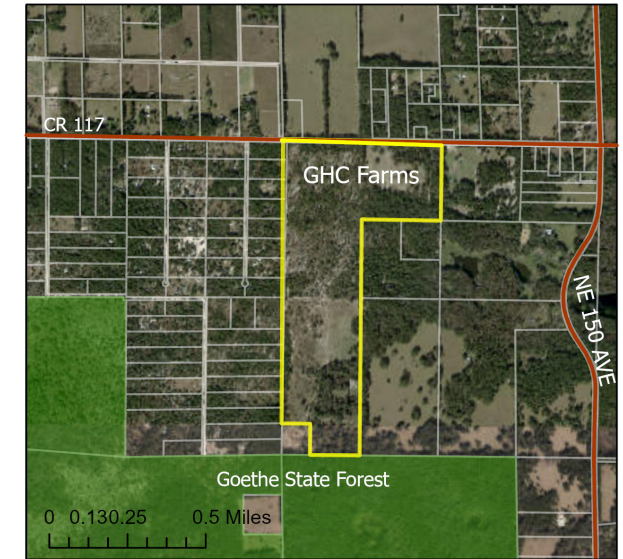
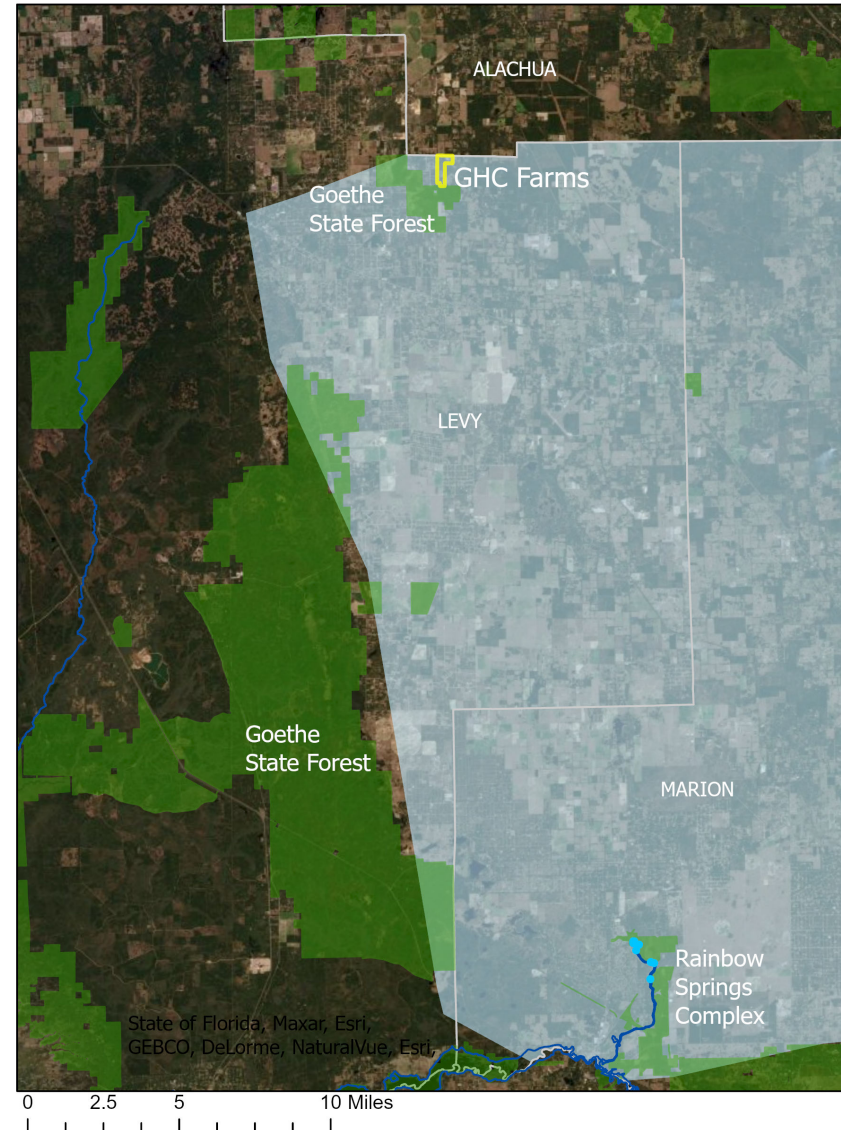
- Conservation Easements (CEs) protect private land in perpetuity for Conservation Value
- Alachua Conservation Trust has statutory authority to hold conservation easements under section 704.06, Florida Statutes
- The CE restricts the property deed to PROHIBIT subdivision, increased impervious surfaces, intensification of land use, any activities that are in conflict with the purpose of the easement
- The CE is monitored and enforced by Alachua Conservation Trust, the U.S. government also has right of enforcement



State Listed *Garberia heterophylla* grows on G.H.C. Farms Inc.
Photo Credit: Shirley Denton

GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Rainbow Springs Context


- “Maintaining land at lower intensity uses through land purchases or easements for conservation is one strategy that can reduce water quality impacts in the basin.” Rainbow Springs BMAP
- Karst features
- High recharge value
- Acquisition will permanently protect ground water



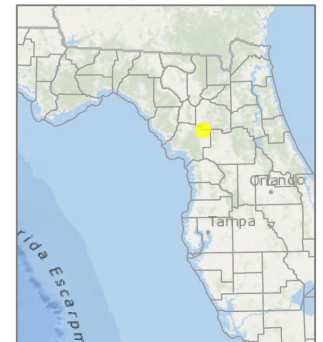
GHC Farms, Inc.

Levy County, FL

197 +/- Acres

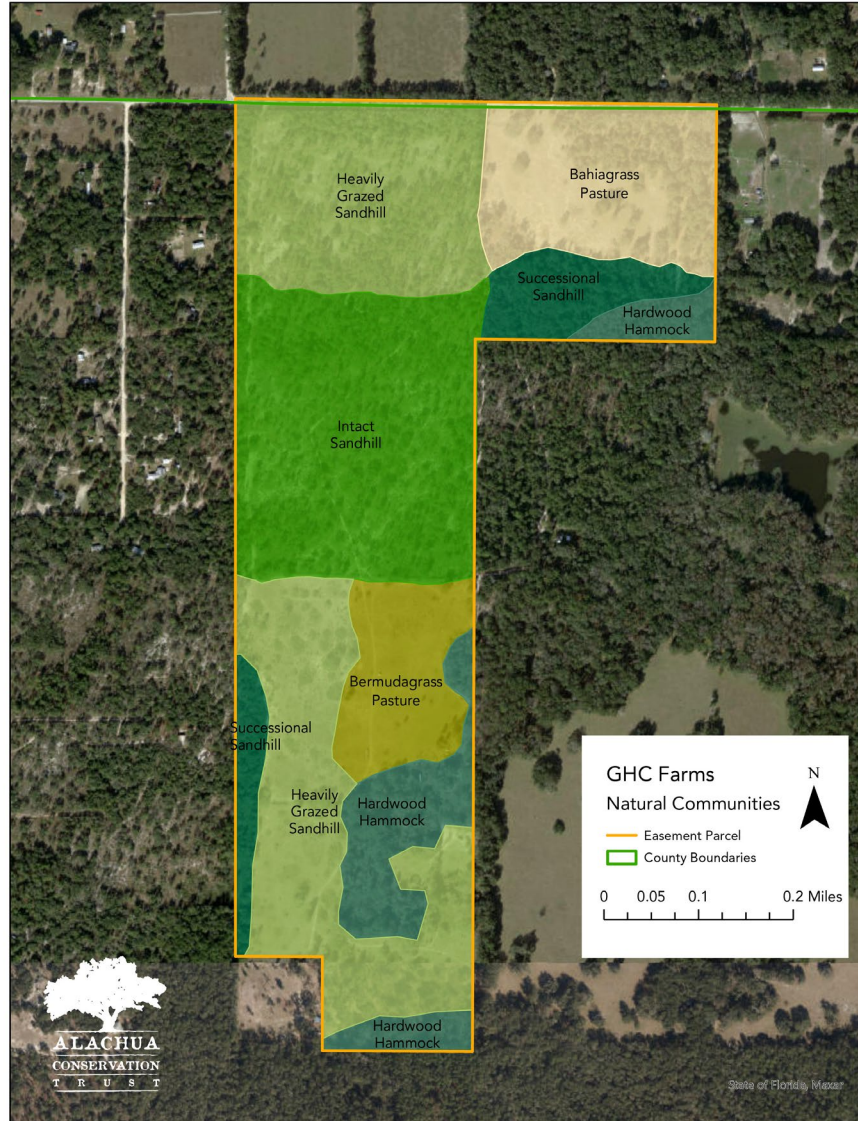


- GHC Farms, Inc.
- Rainbow Springs BMAP
- Rainbow Springs Complex
- Rivers
- Conservation Lands
- Parcel Boundaries
- County Boundaries
- Roads



GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Property Overview

Karst feature on G.H.C. Farm



Landowner Peggi Young with her favorite longleaf pine on the property



GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Goethe State Forest and Habitat Value



Protect T&E species, rare sandhill habitat and buffers existing public lands

Documented T&E species on G.H.C. Farm include: Eastern Indigo Snake, FL Pine Snake, Gopher Tortoise, Sherman Fox Squirrel and Gopher Frog





GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Partnership with NRCS

- Awarded USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) competitive Agricultural Conservation Easement Program grant
- NRCS grant provides 50% of conservation easement (CE) value to the landowner
- Expected closing on CE summer/fall 2022





GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Project Budget

Partners	Cash Match	Explanation of Cost
<i>FDEP Springs Funding Request</i>	\$ 173,288*	Half of the value of CE and acquisition due diligence costs. *requested
Natural Resources Conservation Service	\$ 156,000	Half of the value of the CE
Alachua Conservation Trust	\$ 17,907	Acquisition and due diligence costs
	In Kind Match	
NRCS and Florida Fish and Wildlife	\$ 40,000	FWC and NRCS landowner assistance program, grazing plan, forest management plan, EQIP contracts
Alachua Conservation Trust project mgmt	\$ 10,000	ACT staff time for facilitating project, drafting CE and management plan
	\$ 397,195	TOTAL PROJECT COSTS



GHC Farms, Inc. FDEP Springs Funding Application: Land Protection is a Good Investment

Reinforces BMAP Guidance

Prevention of Water Quality Degradation

Aquifer Recharge

T&E Habitat Protection

Buffers Public Land

Federal, State and Local Partner Buy In

Long Term Management Plans

Cornerstone Property



Thank you!

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