
VICTOR SMITH LAW GROUP, P.A.

November 6, 2017

Acquisition and Restoration Council Members
The Office of Environmental Services
Division of State Lands
Department of Environmental Protection
3900 Commonwealth Blvd., Mail Station 140
Tallahassee, FL 32399-3000

RE: Hardee Flatwoods Florida Forever Project

Dear Members:

Thank you for very much for the support you have shown, to date, of the Hardee Flatwoods Florida Forever project. As you head into your deliberations regarding rankings, I thought it would be helpful if I summarized, as the representative of the property owner, why we believe this project should rank high on the list.

The maxim "location, location, location" applies in a conservation setting for real estate just as it does in a commercial setting, and Hardee Flatwoods fits most any criterion for the kind of property that policymakers intended to protect with state conservation programs, specifically:

1. Much of the property is high priority conservation habitat (see Attachment 1);
2. Most of the property is high priority surface water resource land (see Attachment 2);
3. All of the land lies within a high priority ecological greenways network (see Attachment 3);
4. The property is adjacent to another conservation parcel (Sun N' Lakes) and lies within an emerging conservation mosaic from a regional perspective (see Attachment 4); and
5. The land is projected to be developed by the year 2070 if not protected (see Attachment 5).

It is important to note that the property is still in a very natural state. While it is very clean from an invasive plant standpoint, cogon grass does exist in some areas but the owner is willing to embark on an aggressive effort to eradicate it.

Also, there is a large citrus planting with young trees adjacent to the land on the north and there is other citrus in the area. While the owner of the ranch, Walt Johnson, has no current intention of planting citrus, it should be noted that citrus is a crop that would do well on much of

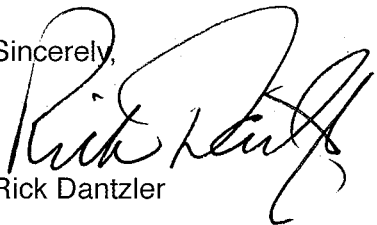
the ranch so it seems prudent, from a conservation standpoint, to lock in an agricultural use no more intensive than the current agricultural use of low intensity cattle ranching.

Mr. Johnson is 79 years old, and as we have seen, changes in land use often happen when properties pass from one generation to the next. Mr. Johnson's children have not expressed a desire to develop the property or sell it to developers, but it is smart to protect the land in perpetuity now, while the owner is amenable.

Finally, the project has been endorsed by several persons and organizations, to wit: Defenders of Wildlife; the Florida Wildlife Federation; and Kevin Main who is, upon information and belief, with Archbold Biological Station, so there is public support and no known opposition.

Respectfully, I submit that Hardee Flatwoods is an outstanding property and deserving of being ranked high on the Florida Forever list of properties to be protected. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Dantzler", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Rick Dantzler

Cc: Paula Allen; Hank Vinson
Walter Johnson
Sean Paul