

**Austin Cary Flatwoods
Altomare
1/21/05**

Inspection Date: January 7, 2005
Parcel Numbers: 17699-001-003 (1.87 ac), 17699-001-004 (99.89 ac)
Size: 101.76 acres
S-T-R: 22-9-21
Buildings: 0
Just Value: \$97,700 or \$960/acre
Asking Price: \$496,000 or \$4,874/acre
Project Score: 7.24 of 10

Overall Description:

The 101.76 acre Altomare property lies within the Austin Cary Flatwoods Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project area which scored 7.36 of 9.44 on the Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA) and is the 10th ranked project to date. It is located off of SR 26 north of Newnan's Lake and is surrounded on three sides by the Newnan's Lake Conservation area, owned and managed by the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD).

The Altomare property is also included in the Austin Cary Flatwoods Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project (KBN Study), and was the 15th ranked project overall and classified as slightly above average in priority. The KBN Study summarizes the Austin Cary Flatwoods project as, "This is a large site of mostly pine flatwoods habitat used for commercial forestry. The flatwoods have been converted to slash pine plantation and the sites have been bedded. It varies from fairly poor habitat to fairly good habitat. The wetland sites of creek bottoms, cypress domes, and basin swamps that are scattered throughout the flatwoods are mostly in good condition. A significant part of the Hatchet Creek and its watershed is here, making this a significant surface water resource area" (KBN 1996).

The key features of the property are its connectivity to the adjacent Newnan's Lake Conservation Area and its protection of water resources which include Hatchet Creek and the associated floodplain. Portions of the upland areas have been converted to pine plantation, with the remainder in mesic flatwoods natural community. If the property is acquired, SJRWMD would be willing to manage the property.

Natural Communities:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Quality</u>
Floodplain Forest	Good
Mesic Flatwoods	Fair-Good
Dome Swamp	Good
Blackwater Stream	Good

Other:

Pine Plantation
Old Field

Key Species:

The Altomare property contains habitats that were deemed potentially significant for eight animal species modeled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), including bald eagles, black bears and indigo snakes. FWC 2002 data indicate two bald eagle nests within a two-mile radius of the property. There were no Florida Natural Inventory Species Occurrences listed for the property.

With its location adjacent to other conservation areas, the site has potential for supporting other listed species. Game species (i.e. white-tailed deer and turkey) were common on the site as evident by tracks and discussions with hunters on the property.

Key Features:

The Altomare property is adjacent to the Newnan's Lake Conservation Area on three sides. Acquisition of this property would fill in a small gap amongst the conservation area. In addition, acquisition of the site would aid in protection of the Hatchet Creek watershed, as the creek flows along the eastern boundary of the site and eventually into Newnan's Lake to the south.

The Altomare property contains approximately 73 wetland acres associated with the Hatchet Creek floodplain. This habitat had moderate to high species diversity. Species associated with this community include laurel oak, water oak, red bay, southern magnolia, black gum, cypress, sweetgum, live oak, saw palmetto, wood oats, St. John's Wort, sparkleberry, titi, bluebeech, hazel alder, American holly, sebastian bush, rusty lyonia, smartweed, wax myrtle and gallberry.

The floodplain grades into a mesic flatwoods natural community. It appears that this area may have once been rough pasture, but has succeeded into a flatwoods community with good understory diversity. Species include saw palmetto, slash pine, longleaf pine, water oak, wax myrtle, wiregrass, chalky bluestem, bracken fern, fetterbush, white topped goldenrod and St. John's Wort. This community would benefit from application of prescribed fire. Portions of the uplands may be better described as old field, and lack the understory diversity of the flatwoods.

Two dome swamps were observed on the property. They contain an overstory of black gum, cypress, and sweet bay and an understory of primarily fetterbush.

Approximately 20 acres of the site are in planted slash and longleaf pines. The planted pines were not bedded and still retain characteristic understory species such as hairy panicum, broomsedge, bluestem, wiregrass, saw palmetto, beakrush and gallberry.

Management:

The upland portions of the site are in fair to good condition. Although portions of the uplands are in pine plantation, there remains good groundcover throughout much of the site. A combination of timber thinning and prescribed burns will be necessary to restore the pine plantations and old field communities. No invasive plants were observed during the staff visit.

The floodplain is not in need of active management, with the exception of invasive plant monitoring and treatment as necessary. Portions of the existing roads have been eroded due to recent storm events. Repair of these roads may aid in preventing siltation into Hatchet Creek.

As this property is a small outparcel within the larger Newnan's Lake Conservation Area, SJRWMD has agreed to manage the property if it is acquired.

Recreation:

The Altomare property is well suited to passive recreational activities such as hiking and nature viewing. It shares boundaries with existing conservation areas and recreational opportunities on the site could easily be developed in conjunction with these adjacent conservation lands. The property is accessible from SR 26, although a bridge over Hatchet Creek would need to be constructed to provide access to the majority of the property via this route.

Parcel Data:

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Size (acres)</u>	<u>Just</u>
17699-001-003	1.87	\$5,600
17699-001-004	99.89	\$92,100

The total 2004 Alachua County Property Appraisers (ACPA) just or land value for the subject property is \$97,700 or \$960 per acre. The total value (just, building & miscellaneous) is the same. 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. The property is currently for sale with an asking price of \$496,000 or \$4,874/acre. There are no buildings on the property. The future land use and zoning is Rural/Agriculture.

The parcels have development potential for single-family detached (including manufactured or mobile home) residential use, however, as much as 2/3 may lie within the 100-year flood plain (FEMA) or in wetlands. The natural features (flood prone area, forested wetlands, and creek) appear to significantly constrain development potential for the parcels. The property owner would have to cross a significant amount of wetlands and floodplains, including a creek, to reach the buildable upland area on the parcels. The site is accessible from the south by SR 26. Currently, the supply of available land and housing meets or exceeds demand for single-family residential use, but this area is experiencing some development pressure due to its proximity to Gainesville. Within approximately two miles of this site there are several smaller residential parcels and rural large-lot subdivisions.

This development review is based on a limited desk-top review and relates to the current regulations (1991 Comp Plan and LDR) as well as policies in the new updated 2002 Comp plan, which is expected to take effect in January or February, 2005.

There is an interested buyer in the property that would be willing to enter into a conservation easement with the county. He would like to retain hunting and timber rights to the site. A conservation easement option would increase the project element score from 7.24 to 7.69 of 10.

Other:

There is one Florida Division of Historical Resources Master Site File listings for the subject property. It contains low density artifact scatter from the Weedon Island period.

Literature Citations:

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

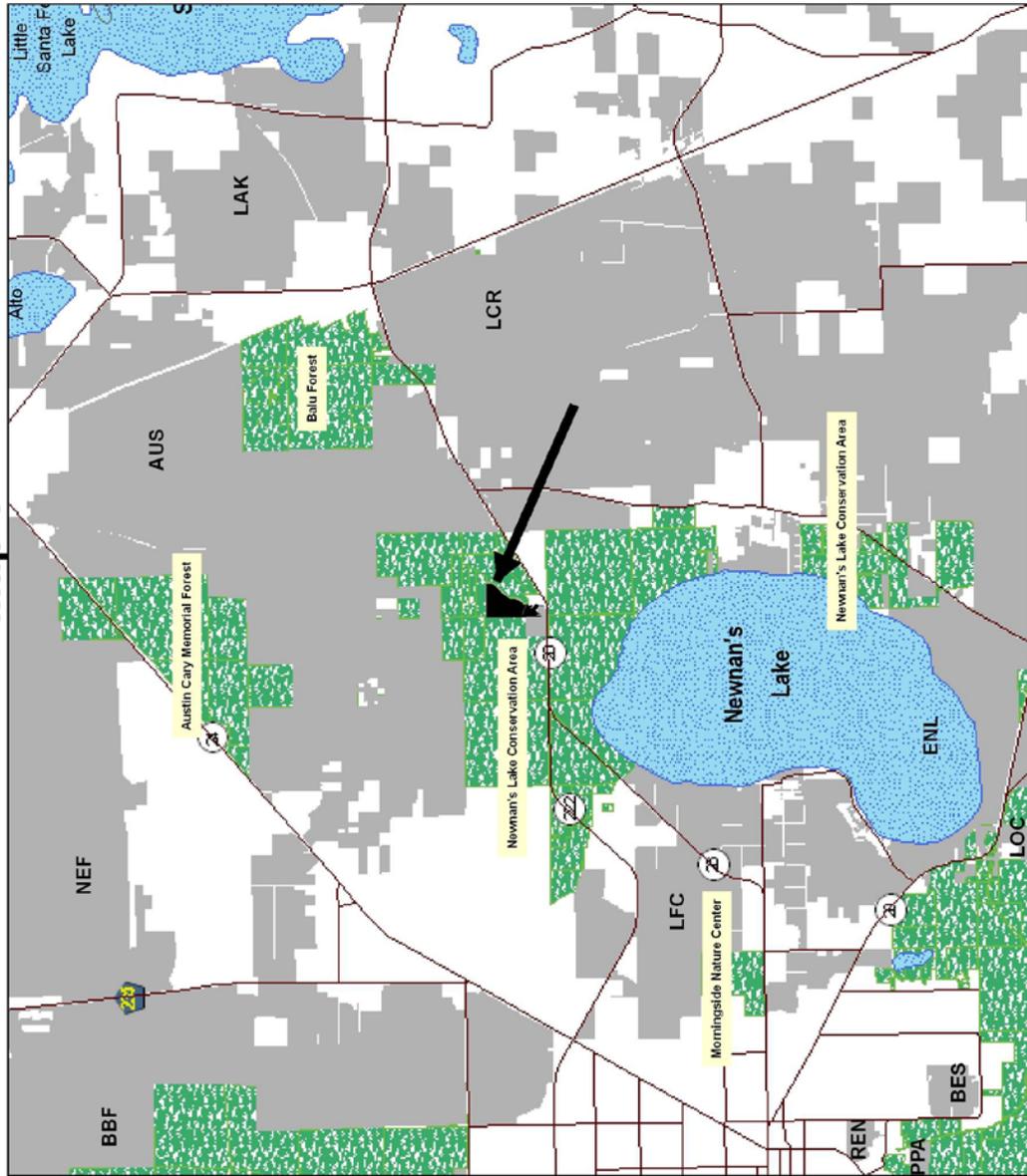
Austin Cary Flatwoods- Altomare Map 1



Legend

- Altomare
- ACF Projects
- Conservation Lands
- Major Roads
- Lakes

Section 22
Township 9
Range 21



Austin Cary Flatwoods - Altomare Map 2



Legend

- Altomare
- Conservation Lands
- Streams
- Major Roads

Section 22
Township 9
Range 21

