

**Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector  
Halback  
7/27/05**

**Inspection Date:** July 5, 2005  
**Parcel Numbers:** 18299-001-000  
**Size:** 22.56 acres  
**S-T-R:** 29-11-21  
**ACPA Buildings:** 1  
**Observed Structures:** 3  
**Just Value:** \$31,900 or \$1,414 an acre  
**Project Score:** 6.71 of 10  
**REPA Score:** 8.18 of 9.44

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**Overall Description:**

The 22.56-acre Halback project lies within the Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector (LOC) Alachua County Forever (ACF) Project area. It is located in the southeast portion of Alachua County, on the northwest shore of Orange Lake off of County Road 225. On two sides the Halback property borders the ACF Richardson and Richardson project, a property on the Active Acquisition list which is currently being pursued. The Halback property is located ¼ of a mile from the Lochloosa Wildlife Conservation Area (Map 1). The property is east of the City of Micanopy, and located in the unincorporated area of Alachua County.

The Lochloosa Forest – Levy Prairie Connector (LOC) Project was nominated by the Conservation Trust for Florida and scored 8.18 out of 9.44 on the Rapid Ecological Project Assessment (REPA). It is the second highest scoring project to date. The Halback property was not evaluated as part of the Alachua County Ecological Inventory Project (KBN Study).

The natural communities on the Halback property consist of marsh lake, shrub swamp, lakeshore swamp, basin swamp, baygall, mesic flatwoods, and xeric hammock, and overall are in very good condition. The remainder of the property consists of a driveway, the Halback temporary residence, a house under construction, a small cleared yard, and a barn. The Halbacks are interested in a conservation easement; recreation will most likely not be appropriate on this site.

Orange Lake is both an Outstanding Florida Water and on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's list of impaired water bodies. The Halback property is included in 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 implement plans for meeting these goals. The SWIM report states, "Most of the major urban streams and lakes in central and southern Alachua County are listed on the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's 2002 list of impaired water bodies. These include... Orange Lake." It continues, "Monitoring data... shows continual declines in water quality in Gainesville urban streams, their receiving water bodies, and the large lakes in the basin." Preservation of the Halback property would assist in meeting the goals of the Orange Creek Basin SWIM plan by protecting Orange Lake from further impacts by protecting its surrounding wetlands.

**Natural Communities:**

Baygall	good
Basin Swamp	excellent
Lakeshore Swamp	excellent
Shrub Swamp	excellent
Marsh Lake	good - excellent
Mesic Flatwoods	poor – good
Xeric Hammock	fair – good

**Quality**Other:

Road

Low impact development

**Key Species:**

The Halback project contains habitats that were deemed potentially significant for sixteen animal species modeled by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), including muskrat, spotted turtle, white ibis, and wood stork.

There are no eagle nests on the property according to the FWC GIS eagle nest coverage, but there are eight nests located within three miles of the site. The cluster of bald eagle nests around Orange, Newnan's, and Lochloosa Lakes has been apparent for the last 20 years and is one of the densest populations in the state of Florida (personal communication Steve Nesbitt, FWC).

Within one mile of the site there are FNAI element occurrences for eastern indigo snake, Florida sandhill crane, mud sunfish, and eastern mudminnow. According to the Florida Natural Area Inventory Element Occurrence data, there is also a wading bird rookery located half a mile from the property.

Staff observed royal fern, cinnamon fern, and a pileated woodpecker on the property.

**Key Features:**

The Halback property is located on the edge of Orange Lake. The eastern part of property consists of marsh lake in excellent condition. The marsh lake community grades into shrub swamp in excellent condition. This community transitions into lakeshore swamp also in excellent condition.

The property is bisected by an east/west driveway that in places is at grade, and in other places is filled. There are several very small borrow pits near the filled portion of the road.

South of the driveway and the residence, the lakeshore swamp transitions into a basin swamp in excellent condition. Towards the south west property line this community grades into fire excluded mesic flatwoods in good condition.

North of the Halback residence the lakeshore swamp transitions into baygall in good condition. In this part of the property, staff observed a small area where processed wood debris has been dumped in the past. Along the western property line, the baygall grades into mesic flatwoods in fair to poor condition.

In the western part of the property along the road near the barn there is a small upland area of xeric hammock in fair to good condition. This community has sandy soils and a fairly open canopy; Mr. Halback expressed to staff his interest in planting longleaf pine seedlings here.

**Management:**

If acquired as a conservation easement, this property would be managed by the owner. Mr. Halback has demonstrated his ability and desire to manage his property in a way that fits the goals of the ACF program. He has been replanting seedlings from other parts of his property to restore cleared areas

near the driveway, and is interested in planting long leaf pine seedlings in the small patch of cleared uplands. He clearly understands the threat of invasive exotics, and is willing to take action to remove them from his property. The only exotic species observed by staff on the property was one camphor tree.

**Recreation:**

The owner is interested in a conservation easement, and as this is the owner's residence public access and recreation would not be likely. However, protection of this property would help preserve the scenic vista of the Orange Lake shore line for Lake users.

**Parcel Data:**

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Just Value</u>
18299-001-000	22.56	\$31,900

The 2005 Alachua County Property Appraiser's (ACPA) just or land value for the property is \$31,900 or \$1,414 an 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. There is one building and a barn listed by the Alachua County Property Appraiser on the parcel. A residence is also under construction.

Currently, this area is showing some development pressure associated with Micanopy and Orange Lake. Within approximately one mile of this site there are numerous small residential parcels and rural large-lot subdivisions.

This lake front property currently has a residential structure on it. The land use and the agriculture zoning allow for residential development at a rate of 1 unit per 5 acres; however, based on a desk top review, there may not be additional upland buildable area left on the property for additional development. The majority of the property is wetland, floodplain and/or part of Orange Lake. All wetlands or open water areas associated (directly connected) with Orange Lake are classified as Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) by the State, and County regulations require an average buffer of 150 feet from the edge of an OFW. The property fronts County Road 225.

The development review is based on a limited desk-top review and relates to only the current Land Development Regulations, as well as policies in the updated Comprehensive Plan, which went into effect May 2005.

**Other:**

There are seven Division of Historic Resources Florida Master Site File locations within one mile of the property, including artifact scatters.

**Literature Cited:**

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