

2008 Annual Report

Connecting People to the Land

Education, and Involvement



Northeast Florida Connectivity Summit
April 2008, University of North Florida
NFLT organized over 150 community members including conservationists, developers, citizens, municipalities, and public officials to share ideas and think regionally about land conservation.

North Florida
Land Trust .ORG

Message from Board Chairperson

North Florida Land Trust has made considerable strides this year in its efforts to solidify its donor base and public outreach. While we are facing a tighter economy, North Florida Land Trust is experiencing growth and an increased workload, filled with opportunities to conserve special places in North Florida.

We started the year by partnering with the North Florida Hunter-Jumper Association, who brought in Chuck Leavell of the Rolling Stones to express his support for conserving lands.



Melissa Gross-Arnold



Bonnie Barnes, NFLT, Busy Spires-Byerly from Conservation Trust for Florida, and Chuck Leavell from the Rolling Stones

We offered many more events to our donors and members of North Florida Land Trust throughout the year, many of those complimentary, such as the VIP dinner at the Horse Show and our Annual Legacy Luncheon, where we recognize our Legacy Society members and the community that supports our work. This year, we were fortunate to have two excellent voices promoting our cause: Evie Skinner, from Girl Scout Troop 102, and Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton, accepting our partnership to work on

the St. Johns River Accord.

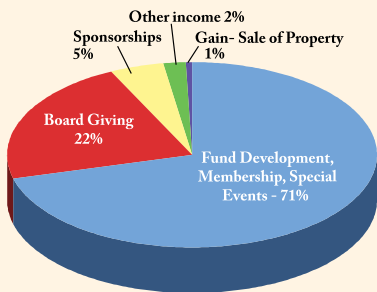
This partnership with the city supports our mission of strategically concentrating fundraising efforts toward lands adjacent to ecologically important watersheds to our area.

NFLT has been strategic this year in organizing committees, strengthening our board and seeking out new opportunities so that we can take advantage of this soft market. I look forward to my year as Chairperson, helping to bring these projects to completion.

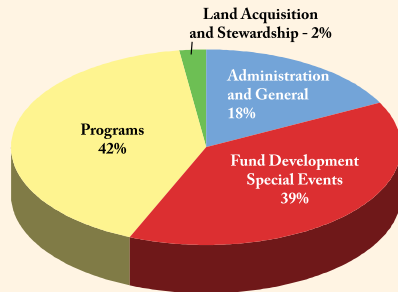


Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton and Evie Skinner, speakers at Legacy Luncheon 2008

Financial Position for 2008 (unaudited)



Total Income \$88,579.33



Total Expenditures \$99,083.24

Message from Executive Director

2008 was a year of education and involvement. North Florida Land Trust co-sponsored two regional seminars in 2008: 1) Northeast Florida Connectivity Summit—over 150 people from seven counties, including non-profits, private sector, and municipalities presenting and sharing plans for existing, planned, and future needs regarding conservation lands within their counties. 2) Moneymaking Options for Your Land—An Agricultural Symposium presented in combination with University of Florida IFAS with over 70 farmers and landowners in attendance learning ways to profit from their land, i.e. conservation easements, eco-tourism, organics, community gardening, etc.



Bonnie Barnes

North Florida Land Trust has a dedicated board and committees that are incredibly motivated to make a difference in our community. At a time when the economy is sluggish, land conservation could be at its greatest, given the resources to scoop up some of the treasures we've been aspiring to conserve for water resource protection and to maintain the balance between agriculture, preservation and economic development. It's a great time to be working on our mission and helping this organization complete the many projects underway.



Moneymaking Options for Your Land Conference, Sept. 2008

This year could be labeled the "preparation and education phase" for projects to be completed in 2009. Several new conservation easements are in various phases of completion; landowner donations are underway; and while we are actively working on fund raising for two parcels we have right of first refusals on in the Pumpkin Hill area of Duval County, we are also looking at an incredible opportunity to conserve three critical acres in Ponte Vedra in St. Johns County.

Much of my time as an Executive Director is spent speaking to the public, networking, working with landowners, providing operational support and fund raising. It's an empowering experience to be out on the land, walking alongside passionate landowners,



Researching Gopher Tortoise relocation with Dr. Ragland and Pat and Ray Ashton of the Ashton Biodiversity Research and Preservation Institute, Newberry, Florida



Site assessment on 160 acre/St. Mary's River future conservation easement, Nov. 2008

working to conserve their lands. It takes considerable research and personal education to visualize and capitalize on recognizing opportunities to present as conservation options to landowners. There are so many tools available to help someone preserve their special place, it's a matter of finding them and working to make the ideas a reality.

A community of concerned citizens working together to “SAVE OUR LANDS!”

Photo series compliments of Terry Brown
at TCB Photography, www.terryandcherbrown.com



Laura Young and Sue Spencer

Long before North Florida Land Trust was formed, **Sue Spencer** had a conservationist vision. Upon moving to Jacksonville with her husband, a mining executive, she pictured their new home to raise their five children as a place alive with outdoor adventures.

“I told my husband it should have plenty of woods and trees and water for the children to play in, and it did,” she said.

Despite travels all over the world, the Spencers kept North Florida as their permanent home, and they call it by only one name: *Bugtussle*. The named derived from Spencer’s great grandfather, known for his work as a pastor, or *circuit rider*, who traveled from church to church in rural areas. One of his regular stops was in a sparsely populated area somewhere known as Bugtussle.

“Our home here reminded me of the stories about his circuit,” Spencer said, “and we were so far in the boondocks, it stuck.”

Today, Spencer remains connected to the land. She and her sister, **Laura Young**, still live on the northwest Jacksonville property, where they receive frequent visits from family and friends. The family sold the 4.2 acre peninsula to the North Florida Land Trust, which has the right of first refusal to acquire their remaining 67 acres in the future.

“Everyone in our family has a connection to the earth,” Spencer said. “We’ve been all over the world and seen what terrible things happen when you do not protect the land, so that’s why we made it a priority to take care of ours.”

Sustainability is part of **Cara Connolly’s** life.

As the Jacksonville Operations Manager for Environmental Services, Inc. (ESI), working with landscapes is part of her daily routine. So when Connolly was asked to join the North Florida Land Trust’s Board of Directors in 2006, it was a natural extension of the professional work she does everyday.

Almost immediately her expertise was put to use. When the Land Trust was evaluating a 160-acre parcel in Nassau County in fall of 2008, they turned to Connolly for a site assessment.

She arranged for ESI biologists and a GIS mapping analyst to visit the property and document its unique characteristics.

“Basically, the goal of our report was to determine what was special about this property and why it would be important for conservation,” Connolly said.

In addition to maintaining the natural resources we need to survive, Connolly believes that preserving land makes North Florida a more desirable place to live.

“Part of North Florida Land Trust’s mission is to compliment government agencies and other non-profit organizations by filling a niche that they cannot,” she said. “By doing that, we create long-standing value.”



Cara Connolly



Jay and Paula McGarvey

Development and land preservation are seldom seen as allies. But for developer **Jay McGarvey**, establishing a conservation-oriented business was a natural way to contribute to an area where he works and lives.

He and his wife, **Paula** first became involved with preservation while living in Colorado, where they worked with local agencies to create a conservation easement on their land that also created a wildlife corridor.

“That project was a win-win for both sides, because it saved some pristine lands and it was a good solution to a number of development-related issues,” McGarvey said. Since relocating to Florida, he has continued to count conservation among his business themes.

“We try to take an environmentally-sensitive approach to all our jobs,” McGarvey said, explaining it is part of his larger philosophy of “giving back to communities where we build.”

While his company has developed numerous projects in North Florida, one of his biggest contributions to the area had nothing to do with maps or floor plans. The McGarveys donated a 40-acre wetland site in Ponte Vedra Beach in 2005 for preservation, with the only stipulation being that North Florida Land Trust pay the property taxes needed to complete the acquisition. Today, the parcel serves as a unspoiled scenic wildlife refuge accessible only by small boats.

“To stall any development in the area, we donated that land,” McGarvey said. “It was a space to be preserved and enjoyed, and it was something that would really enhance the community.”

When **Sally Ann Freeman** was growing up in the tiny town of Ocean Springs, Mississippi, she never imagined she would join a group like the North Florida Land Trust.

“Nobody was looking to teach me anything about the environment,” said Freeman, who often raced home to pick dewberries after school. “But it was a place that always felt safe and happy.”

Over time, she realized that early exposure to the outdoors influenced her to become a lifelong nature lover and master gardener.

She later saw her grandchildren develop a similar affinity for the outdoors through family horticultural projects, and it reinforced her belief that greenery can affect a community’s quality of life. Today, Freeman belongs to the Legacy Society—a special group of community supporters that makes it possible for North Florida Land Trust to keep preservation alive in our region.

“To grow something takes a whole lot of faith and a whole lot of patience, but the rewards are just incredible,” she said. “I am convinced that land is the most important asset we have.”



Sally Ann Freeman

Land conservation involves people



Robert and Thelma Nied

It was a series of events that led **Thelma and Robert Nied** to the North Florida Land Trust more than three years ago.

The couple first heard of the organization during a Sierra Club presentation, and they learned of it again during an auction at the Cummer Museum of Art. A portion of the event proceeds were to benefit the Land Trust and, after bidding on several items, the Niefs decided they wanted to become more involved.

Since 2005, the couple has belonged to the Legacy Society, a special group of supporters who

aim to strengthen the community's connection with local lands. On one memorable adventure of their own, the Niefs went canoeing on Land Trust property that is part of the Timucuan Trail partnership.

"It was really interesting and enjoyable, and going on these kinds of outings can strengthen someone's interest in preserving the land," said Robert, noting that he would like to see more people participate in canoe and kayak excursions.

In addition to recruiting newcomers to the Land Trust, the trips also provide opportunities for socialization, Thelma said. "It allows people to meet others like themselves who have similar goals and interests," she said. "It brings them together."

Angela Valu was already volunteering throughout the community when she was tapped for the North Florida Land Trust.

Despite her busy schedule, the cause was too interesting and important to turn down.

Now serving as the volunteer coordinator, she connects area residents with projects like planning committees for special events or blazing hiking trails on acquired properties.

In addition to participating in a unique volunteer experience, Valu says many people help because they identify with the Land Trust's effectiveness.

"I feel good that everything we raise is used directly and efficiently for the cause it is solicited for," said Valu, adding, "and donors appreciate that it all goes back to land conservation." She is a member of the Land Trust's communications committee, which strategizes about how to get more people involved in preservation. She is also webmaster for Painting the RegionSM: The Bartram Trail, a plein air art event planned for October 2009 (www.paintingtheregion.com).

Angela would like to help people understand what the Land Trust does. "Conservation easements are a wonderful idea," she said. "They are a way to keep a property natural but also accessible enough so the public can enjoy it."



Angela Valu

Opportunities create partnerships

Before **Sandra Brooks** learned about the North Florida Land Trust in 2007, she already believed in its cause.

"I come from a long line of people who love special places," said Brooks, a sailing and travel enthusiast who counts lookouts along the St. Johns River among her favorite local spots.

Over the past two years as a Legacy Society member, she has dedicated her full-service marketing agency's resources to help the Land Trust achieve greater visibility and community support. At the ground level, that means more citizens are coming together to take ownership of local lands.

"People whose *backyards* are affected are working together to make preservation happen," Brooks said. "We have an implied obligation in balancing everything but we need to make sure that the flora and fauna that are unique to this area can survive in the face of progress."



Sandra Brooks

Legacy Society Members

Save a Forest

Jean and Tom Dodson
Ronald and Sally Evens
Jay and Paula McGarvey
Robert & Thelma Nied

Save a Stand

Sandra Brooks/BROOKSLACAYO
Cheryl Cummer
Newman Family Foundation
Sally Ann Freeman
Chuck and Diane Newman
David Strickland

Save a Tree

Aerostar Environmental Services
Cynthia S. Akre
Zimm Boulos
William and Mary Lou Coate
Martin & Sharon Connor
Andrea Conover
Myrtice Craig and Robert Broward
William Dresser
Bill and Kristen Ely
Environmental Services, Inc.
Karl Estes Foundation Trust
Lee and Mindy Hanna
Ray and Jody Hetchka
Charlene Johnson
Bruce and Holly Kern
Michael and Laura Langton
Joanne Martin
Daniel and Jeanne MacDonald
William and Suzanne McQuilkin
Betsy Mills
Doug Milne
Ted Pappas
Robert Spencer
Stop At Nothing, Inc.
Richard Suddath
William Tierney
Pat Vail

North Florida Land Trust Directors 2009

The North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) is governed by a Board of Directors and an Advisory Board. Our Directors include representatives from communities throughout the seven-county service area, each of whom brings years of experience in local conservation, leadership and planning. Bi-monthly board of director meetings are held, with additional regularly scheduled committee meetings conducted throughout the year.

Board of Directors

Melissa Gross-Arnold, President
Michael Langton, Vice President
Veronica Maybury, Secretary
Linda D. Walker, Treasurer
Jane Akre
Cara Connolly
Philip Elson
Alexa Graf
Brian Hershorn
Marcy Silkebaken
Myrna Strain
David Strickland
Joan D. Willis
James T. Wolverton

Advisory Board

Mark Allen
Warren Anderson
Sarah Bailey
Aimee Boggs
Cheryl Cummer
William Dresser
Ronald P. Evens, Pharm.D.
Tom Fallin
Art Graham
N. Joel Harris
Ray Hetchka
Marcia Ladendorf
Alyson Lee
Walter Lee
Mark Middlebrook
Bill McQuilkin, Founder
Lisa Mills
Allison Watson
Dr. Quinton White

Every effort has been made to recognize all Legacy Society members. Please notify us with any corrections.

Connecting people to the land...

Creating events to educate, maintain trails and engage



Tour of Pumpkin Hill, Duval County

In the past 12 months, public relations efforts have resulted in an increase of North Florida Land Trust's donor base by over 25 percent and a subscribed digital outreach growth of 1,000 percent.

NFLT generates interest in the organization and its mission



VIP Horseback Rides, Princess Place, Flagler County

by speaking publicly at civic, religious, community organizations, and schools. Booths are utilized at trade shows and events to promote the organization. Clean-ups, trail rides, walking tours, and educational seminars are held to engage and empower the community to support NFLT.



Trailblazing, Pescatello Island Timucuan Preserve, Duval County



Kayaking Tour of Goelz Preserve Ponte Vedra Beach, St. Johns County



Tour of Legacy School with landowner and public officials, Princess Place, Flagler County



Boat tour of Timucuan Preserve Landscape architects' tour

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