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Ambitious Land Purchase Initiative Underway to Create Permanent Wildlife Corridor, Protect the Uniqueness of Hobe Sound

*Vision to conserve nearly 70,000 acres of environmentally valuable habitat already
garnering widespread support.*

Hobe Sound, Fla. – Martin County has a statewide reputation for its conservation ethic and disciplined approach to growth and development. Residents are passionate about protecting and preserving the natural environment, including the historic waterways that play a critical role in the quality of life for those who call Martin County home.

Now, a bold plan to create a permanently protected ecological corridor in south county between the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie rivers is underway, with a long-term vision of conserving a landscape spanning nearly 70,000 acres. The newly formed Loxa-Lucie Initiative has launched a multi-year acquisition and conservation campaign to raise funds for strategic land purchases that is already gaining momentum.

Environmental Benefits. Properties to be acquired for conservation will have their potential for future development removed, so they can serve as part of a permanent critical wildlife buffer and ecological corridor connecting Jonathan Dickinson and Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Parks. These lands will improve water quality in the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and aid in restoring the historic sheet-flow of fresh water that once moved from the Atlantic Ridge to the federally designated Loxahatchee Wild and Scenic River to the south.

Protecting Community Character. Just as important, land acquisition efforts will provide a permanent conservation buffer along Bridge Road to protect the character of Hobe Sound and limit development along the corridor. Restoring the hydrology in this area will also help reduce flooding issues that have become more prevalent in the Hobe Sound area.

The Initiative, a collaboration between three non-profit environmental powerhouses including the Guardians of Martin County, the Treasured Lands Foundation and The Conservation Fund, is already receiving widespread support from citizens, community groups, government entities and businesses, including the Town of Jupiter Island, the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, the Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council, Friends of Jonathan Dickinson State Park, the Rivers Coalition, the Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, the Hobe Sound Golf Club, Jupiter Island Residents Association, and landowners along the Bridge Road corridor.

“This initiative serves so many purposes that are important to Martin County - and especially to south county residents. All of us who value the beauty of Hobe Sound, including the natural environment as well as our small-town charm, recognize this as a unique opportunity to limit future development along this area of Bridge Road and protect our community character,” said Barbara Birdsey, a member of the Loxa-Lucie Headwaters Initiative Steering Committee who serves on the boards of both the Guardians of Martin County and the Treasured Lands Foundation.

Historically, this land mass was recognized by the state as indispensable in the preservation of the Loxahatchee Watershed and the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and was part of an acquisition program known as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP), Indian River Lagoon South Project. While the concept is not new, the need to preserve the remaining lands that are part of these important watersheds is greater than ever due to saltwater intrusion issues in the Loxahatchee, higher demand for consumable fresh water, and the increase in development pressure in the area.

“Our long-term vision to create a large-scale permanently protected natural buffer along Bridge Road and beyond will require significant financial resources. Contributions from individuals, businesses, foundations and governmental entities are critical to the on-going success of the overall project,” added Birdsey.

- To make a tax-deductible contribution, click here: [click here](#)
- To schedule a presentation to your group, contact Greg Braun at 561.758.3417 or dgregbraun@aol.com
- For more information, visit www.LoxaLucieHeadwaters.org

About The Guardians of Martin County

The Guardians of Martin County is a 501(c)3 organization committed to helping shape a positive future for Martin County, by educating residents about the value of balancing natural and man-made resources to enrich the quality of life in our communities. For more information go to: www.theguardiansofmartincounty.com

About Treasured Lands Foundation

Martin County's premiere land trust, the Treasured Lands Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and Martin County's premiere land trust, preserving critical lands and waterways, promoting active lifestyles in the great outdoors and educating the next generation of environmental stewards. For more information go to: www.facebook.com/treasuredlands

About The Conservation Fund

America's partner in conservation for thirty years with more than 8 million acres of land and water protected in all fifty states, The Conservation Fund is a nonprofit environmental organization that balances human demand with nature's capacity. The Conservation Fund has completed more than 244 projects and protected over 136,000 acres in Florida, including 56 critical acres within the Hobe Sound National Wildlife Refuge as For more information go to: <https://www.conservationfund.org/projects/conserving-the-loxa-lucie-headwaters-a-mosaic-of-florida-s-critical-wetlands>

Attachments: Location Map; Aerial of Loxa-Lucie Headwaters (*Photo credit: Geoffrey Smith*)

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