



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2023

Another Milestone Achieved in Ambitious Plan to Create Permanent Wildlife Corridor, Protect Hobe Sound & Martin County Character

Hobe Sound, Fla. – An innovative and ambitious plan to create a permanently protected ecological corridor in south Martin County between the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie rivers is poised to grow with a second land acquisition along Bridge Road in Hobe Sound.

The Loxa-Lucie Headwaters Initiative has identified a 20-acre parcel and a willing seller for what is being called Loxa-Lucie Headwaters Acquisition #2. This piece of land is another key to the Loxa-Lucie vision for conserving the character of the landscape spanning nearly 70,000 acres between Jonathan Dickinson State Park and the Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park.

The first parcel, a two-mile long stretch along the north side of Bridge Road was acquired in 2021. Acquisition #2, is on the south side of Bridge Rd adjacent to county-owned lands, it will further the Loxa-Lucie Initiative's vision to bring undeveloped properties along the Bridge Road corridor into permanent conservation stewardship. Acquisition #2 will protect another property on Bridge Road, help restore previously existing wetlands, and help re-establish the natural hydrological connection to the Loxahatchee River. It will also help connect a corridor for the wildlife that depend on these connected ecosystems of the Atlantic Ridge Preserve State Park and Jonathan Dickinson State Park.

Historically, this land mass, called the Atlantic Ridge Ecosystem, was recognized by the state as the critical component in the preservation of the Loxahatchee Watershed and the South Fork of the St. Lucie River and was included in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program's (CERP) Indian River Lagoon South Project. The need to preserve the remaining lands that are part of these

important watersheds is greater than ever. Saltwater intrusion issues in the Loxahatchee, higher demand for potable fresh water, increase in development pressure and rising real estate values are all driving this urgency.

As the Steering Committee for the Loxa-Lucie Initiative continues its campaign to generate funds from private donors for additional land acquisition, it has also taken its message to Tallahassee. “We’re raising awareness about the project to garner funding through Florida Forever, a well-established state-wide program to buy land for conservation and recreation,” explained Matt Sexton, Senior Vice President and Southeast Regional Director for Conservation Acquisition for The Conservation Fund and Loxa-Lucie Steering Committee member. “We have an opportunity to preserve this precious ecosystem for future generations, and we need to take it.”

The [Loxa-Lucie Headwaters Initiative](#) is a collaboration among three non-profit 501(c)(3) environmental powerhouses, specifically the [Guardians of Martin County](#), the [Treasured Lands Foundation](#) and [The Conservation Fund](#). The Initiative has generated widespread and growing support among citizens, community groups, businesses and government entities, including the Town of Jupiter Island and the Martin County Board of County Commissioners.

Additionally, 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 have all expressed their support.

The Steering Committee urges all who care deeply about the Loxa-Lucie Initiative and its noble objectives to contribute generously to its on-going efforts to purchase adjacent and related properties in Martin County. To make a tax-deductible contribution, [click here](#). Education and outreach is critical to this initiative. To schedule a presentation to your group, contact Greg Braun at 561.758.3417 or execdirector@theguardiansofmartincounty.com. For more information about this initiative, visit www.LoxaLucieHeadwaters.org