

CARES Recipient Profile



THIS FARM
CARES

Farm: Buck Island Ranch

Location: Lake Placid, Highlands County

Date of Origination: early 1900's

Commodities: Cattle

Encompassing over 10,500 acres southeast of Lake Placid in Highlands County, Buck Island Ranch is a full-scale working ranch that doubles as a living laboratory for scientists studying how agriculture and the environment interact over time. Buck Island Ranch is on a 30-year lease from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to Archbold Biological Station, a not-for-profit ecological research and conservation organization.



The research at Buck Island Ranch aims at improving the environmental and economic sustainability of ranching, rather than simply improving production. Since Buck Island is not only an ecological research center but a full-scale commercial operation -- staff members must make the same kinds of practical day-to-day decisions that other ranchers make, decisions that affect both the environment and financial returns. Buck Island is among the top 20 commercial cow-calf producers in Florida and a model of environmental stewardship. Its success demonstrates that agriculture and natural resource conservation are not opposed to one another, but instead go hand in hand.

The ranch implements a comprehensive, innovative program of environmental stewardship that enhances wildlife protection and habitat conservation, minimizes pesticide use, fertilizes pastures at rates that reduce risk of environmental contamination, protects and improves water quality, and contributes toward better understanding of soil and water conservation. Buck Island Ranch provides important leadership on environmental issues in the ranching community and influences policies and practices through its strong collaborative partnerships, respected research program, and extensive outreach and education activities.

The staff at Buck Island Ranch is committed to raising public awareness about the environmental values provided by ranches and the economic pressures facing ranchers. Outreach efforts include guided eco-tours of the property and agro-ecology research internships for college students. Buck Island Ranch partners with major universities, state and federal agencies, producers, and environmental groups to contribute to a better understanding and broader awareness of the ecological, economic, and cultural value of Florida's cattle ranches.

Source: FreshFromFlorida.com – 2007