



**ADAMS  
RANCH  
STEWARDSHIP**

# Adams Ranch Stewardship Sending Area Application



## Summary

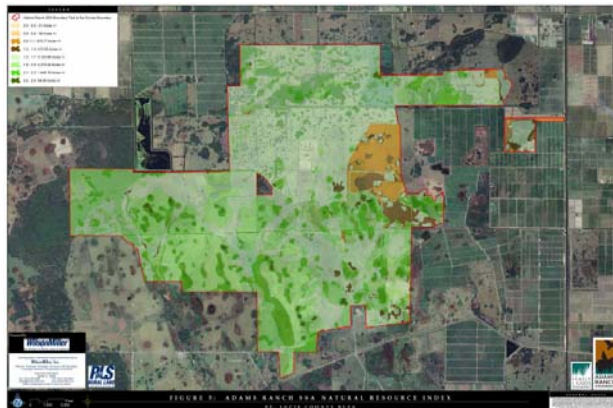
In September 2006, the Rural Lands Stewardship Area (Stewardship Overlay) was adopted by St. Lucie County, covering approximately 22,000 acres of rural lands, as an innovative program designed to protect and conserve natural resources and agricultural lands and to direct growth away from important ecological areas to more suitable areas.



*Roseate Spoonbills and other wading birds at Adams Ranch*



*Adams Ranch Braford cattle among the palmetto hammocks*



*Adams Ranch's Stewardship Sending Area Natural Resource Index map*

The main principles of the program rely on incentives to promote the protection of natural resource areas, cultural heritage values and viable agriculture in a sustainable, rural environment.

The Stewardship Overlay encourages landowners to provide a significant public benefit -- voluntarily protecting and conserving environmentally valuable land and continuing the private stewardship of those natural resources -- without the use of public funding. As an example, public dollars will not be used for land acquisition or ongoing management of the Adams Ranch Stewardship Sending Area.

The means to achieve these public benefits is through the voluntary designation of Stewardship Sending Areas (SSAs) from which Stewardship Credits can be generated and sold. The application submitted in April 2007 by Adams Ranch, Inc., ARCCO of St. Lucie, Inc., and Alto "Bud" Adams, Jr. seeks to permanently protect approximately 12,000 acres of the best remaining environmental and ranching lands in St. Lucie County and the Treasure Coast region.

Approval of the SSA application will create a perpetual Stewardship Easement on approximately 12,000 acres and documents the creation of the Stewardship Credits, ensuring that these lands will never be developed into subdivisions and strip centers. Stewardship Easements differ from Conservation Easements in that Conservation Easements are used primarily for environmental land preservation. Stewardship Easements, however, permanently remove particular land uses in exchange for credits. The landowner retains certain land uses that were not removed and agrees to perpetual management obligations as set forth in the Stewardship Easement.

As detailed in the application, the proposed Stewardship Easement will enable Adams Ranch to conduct economically viable agriculture on the SSA lands, so that it may continue to operate, protect, and conserve the agricultural and environmental benefits associated with the SSA lands. In addition, Adams Ranch will continue to manage the SSA lands at no cost to the public.

More...

## Adams Ranch Stewardship Sending Area Application

One of the key components of the SSA designation application is the Natural Resource Index (NRI) Assessment Report. The NRI Assessment Report details the environmental conditions and credit generation for the Adams Ranch SSA – the first to go through the application process in St. Lucie County

If approved by the County, this SSA application will result in significant land conservation, with the designation of 11,891 acres of the most beautiful and environmentally valuable land in St. Lucie County. This area is nearly twice as large as all of the lands that have been acquired with taxpayer dollars through the County's environmental lands program.

Residential development, general and conditional uses (such as manufacturing and retail trade) and earth mining and processing uses will be permanently removed from all of the 11,891 acres within the Adams Ranch SSA. More intensive agricultural uses such as citrus, row crops and forestry will also be removed from over 70% of the SSA. Citrus, forestry and permanent row crops will be removed from an additional 20% of the SSA lands, allowing only rotational row crops in these areas. The remaining 10% of the SSA will allow potential citrus, row crops and forestry. All of the SSA lands will be managed in perpetuity by the owners, through the continuation of the cattle ranching operation.

The Adams Ranch SSA application describes the number of Stewardship Credits to be generated in the SSA through the use of the credit formulas that were established in the St. Lucie County RLSA Overlay. Through the designation of 11,891 acres within the Adams Ranch SSA, a total of 35,044 Stewardship Credits are proposed to be generated. These credits are a result of the elimination of the most intensive Land Use Layers and the granting of Agricultural Incentive Credits and Cultural Heritage Incentive Credits.

Upon approval by the BOCC of the Adams Ranch SSA, and the recording of the Stewardship Easements, the 35,044 Stewardship Credits will be transferred to the Cloud Grove property. A separate Stewardship Receiving Area (SRA) application will soon be filed for the Cloud Grove property, seeking approval of a 5,000 acre, mixed-use Town SRA, in accordance with the requirements of the Stewardship Overlay.

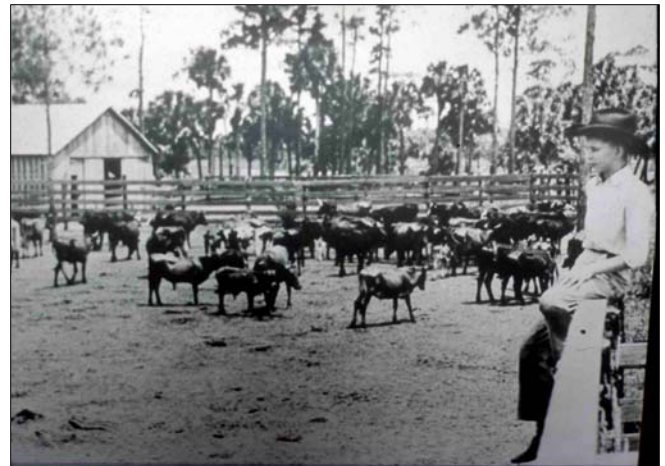
The SSA and the SRA are part of the implementation phase of St. Lucie County's RLSA program. After more than two years of work by the County, the applicants and the many citizens who participated in workshops, meeting and public hearings, protecting 12,000 acres of the Adams Ranch and creating a sustainable community on Cloud Grove is moving closer to reality. The upcoming reviews and public hearings will ensure that these applications meet all requirements of the St. Lucie County Stewardship Overlay.



*"Working" cattle at Adams Ranch*



*The men who run Adams Ranch*



*Year 1937: Bud Adams in cowpens on Orange Avenue. These are still in use today.*



**ADAMS  
RANCH  
STEWARDSHIP**

# Florida's Rural Land Stewardship Program

---



## *Overview*

Florida's Rural Land Stewardship program provides an opportunity for landowners, developers, governments and environmental advocates to work together in a cooperative, collaborative process, whereby natural resources are protected, viable agriculture is promoted and where sustainable development provides the economic engine to drive environmental protection and conservation objectives.

Rural Land Stewardship is an incentive-based system that encourages the voluntary preservation and private stewardship of natural resources, retention of rural uses and agriculture, and accommodates economic growth and diversification in a sustainable rural character.

Stated another way, it provides a mechanism to recognize public values of resources such as the environment, listed species and their habitat, agriculture, Florida culture, open space, etc., and creates a "currency" where those values can be exchanged for increased development in a sustainable fashion on lands not having the same values. Through stewardship, growth is directed away from important natural resources to areas having lower natural resource values.

## *Background*

The Florida State Legislature created the Rural Land Stewardship Program (Chapter 163.3177(11)(d), F.S.) in 2001 to encourage local governments to further the following broad principles of rural sustainability:

- ☞ Restoration and maintenance of the economic value of rural land
- ☞ Control of urban sprawl
- ☞ Identification and protection of ecosystems, habitats and natural resources
- ☞ Promotion of rural economic activity
- ☞ Maintenance of the viability of Florida's agricultural economy
- ☞ Protection of the character of rural areas of Florida

Some of the key components of the Rural Land Stewardship program include:

- ☞ Consideration of stewardship areas of not less than 10,000 acres as a whole
- ☞ Development of criteria for designating 'receiving areas' "in which innovative planning and development strategies may be applied." Minimum criteria include:
  - ☞ suitability to avoid conflict with environmentally sensitive areas, resources, and habitats;
  - ☞ compatibility between and transition from higher density uses to lower intensity rural uses
  - ☞ connection of receiving areas with the rest of the rural land stewardship area using rural design and rural road corridors.
- ☞ Establishment of a system for calculating 'credits' that can be earned by creating stewardship 'sending areas' to enable specific types of development in stewardship 'receiving areas' – "with the highest number of credits per acre assigned to the most environmentally valuable land or, in locations where the retention of open space and agricultural land is a priority, to such lands."
- ☞ Assurance that 'sending areas' will be preserved in perpetuity
- ☞ Provision for the "control of sprawl through the use of innovative strategies and creative land use techniques"



*For more information go to [www.familylandsremembered.com](http://www.familylandsremembered.com)*