



Position Statement
Ocala Meadows Farm Request

Horse Farms Forever strongly opposes the request by Ocala Meadows Farm to encroach into the Farmland Preservation Area with an adjacent development. The proposed encroachment into the Farmland Preservation Area would be on approximately 8 parcels of land totaling about 327 acres owned by Ocala Meadows Farm.

After inspecting the parcels in question it was clear to the HFF Board of Directors that this property is rural farmland and should remain rural farmland. It was also clear that the need for intense residential and commercial development of these parcels does not exist.

This type of assault on the Farmland Preservation Area is exactly why Horse Farms Forever exists. Urban growth becomes urban sprawl when the Urban Growth Boundary is subject to change with every developer request. There is a reason the County creates a Comprehensive Plan.

The county's Farmland Preservation Area must be respected and protected. The Farmland Preservation Area serves as major recharge area for rainwater entering the county's primary springs, Rainbow Springs and Silver Springs. The parcels in question are located within the primary protection zone for Silver Springs.

We have respectfully advised the developer that should they pursue a future expansion into the Farmland Preservation Area, Horse Farms Forever will use the full extent of its resources and relationships to stop it.

The mission of Horse Farms Forever is to inspire conservation of horse farms through education, awareness and idea exchange so as to preserve the character and culture that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area make unique to Marion County. We are watchful of government and others to preserve horse farms and farmland for future generations, especially in the Farmland Preservation Area. We are neither anti-growth nor anti-development, rather encouraging urban growth to remain inside the Urban Growth Boundary.

Horse Farms Forever is registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services as a charitable organization and approved as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) corporation by the Internal Revenue Service. Horse Farms Forever does not have a political mission. Our status as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization does not allow us to participate or intervene in political activities. The organization will neither advocate on behalf of political candidates nor advocate for the passage of legislation.