

Alachua County Commission

Dear Commissioners,

I would like to share with you my ideas concerning the County-owned property known as Camp McConnell.

In my humble opinion, it would make a great property on which to locate an Arts and Crafts Education Center.

Such a facility would promote the vision of world-class heritage, culture, and contemporary arts and crafts, right here in Alachua County, as well as provide a destination for Tourism, provide jobs, attract artisans from other parts of the state and nation, as well as keep local artisans here at home.

I feel such a facility could be an enhancement to the property, rather than a detriment, by giving artisans and visitors an environment in which to enjoy the nature and natural surroundings that this property provides.

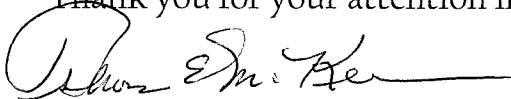
Additionally, this property is in a convenient location to the cities of Gainesville, Micanopy, Trenton, Hawthorne, Alachua, Waldo, Archer, Williston, and Ocala, as well as to travelers along I-75 and U.S. Hwy 441.

Total impact to the camp could be minimized by keeping the development at less than 10% of the total property, and by locating the Center where it would have the least amount of detrimental environmental effect.

There are Schools or Centers of this type that include: Penland School of Craft, Tryon Arts and Craft School, Haystack, and Arrowmont, among others, that could serve to help inform you about this type of project.

Prior to disposing of this property, I ask that the Commission consider this suggestion. I understand that this would not be an overnight solution to the question of the future status of this property, but I feel that as an investment in the future of our community, our children, and the Arts in Alachua County, this could be a viable option.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas E. McKercher", with a stylized, flowing script.

Thomas E. McKercher