

A No-Cost Proposal for the Preservation and Management of Chinsegut Hill Manor, Retreat, and Conference Center

Proposed Operational Stewardship by Florida A&M
University Under State Lease No. 4715

Presented by: G. Dale Wesson, Ph.D., PE
Dean and Director of Land Grant Programs
College of Agriculture and Food Sciences



Florida A&M University: A Public Land-Grant Partner Serving Florida

1890 Land-Grant Institutions

- Established under the Second Morrill Act of 1890
- Comprise Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) designated as land-grant institutions
- The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service in the United States.
- The Evans-Allen Act of 1977 provides ongoing funding for agricultural and food research at 1890 land-grant universities



Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!

Florida A&M University (FAMU)

- Founded in 1887; one of America's top HBCUs and a 1890 land-grant institution
- Mission: *Excellence with Caring*, advancing education, research, and service
- Focused on student success, innovation, and community impact across Florida



BAERS: A Living Laboratory Serving Hernando County and Florida

3,800 Acres of Working Lands Advancing Research, Education, and Community Impact

- Research, Extension & Education
- Climate-Smart Agriculture
- Emerging & Specialty Crops
- Livestock & Forage Systems
- Environmental Stewardship
- Producer & Industry Partnerships
- Student Training & Workforce Development
- Youth & Community Engagement

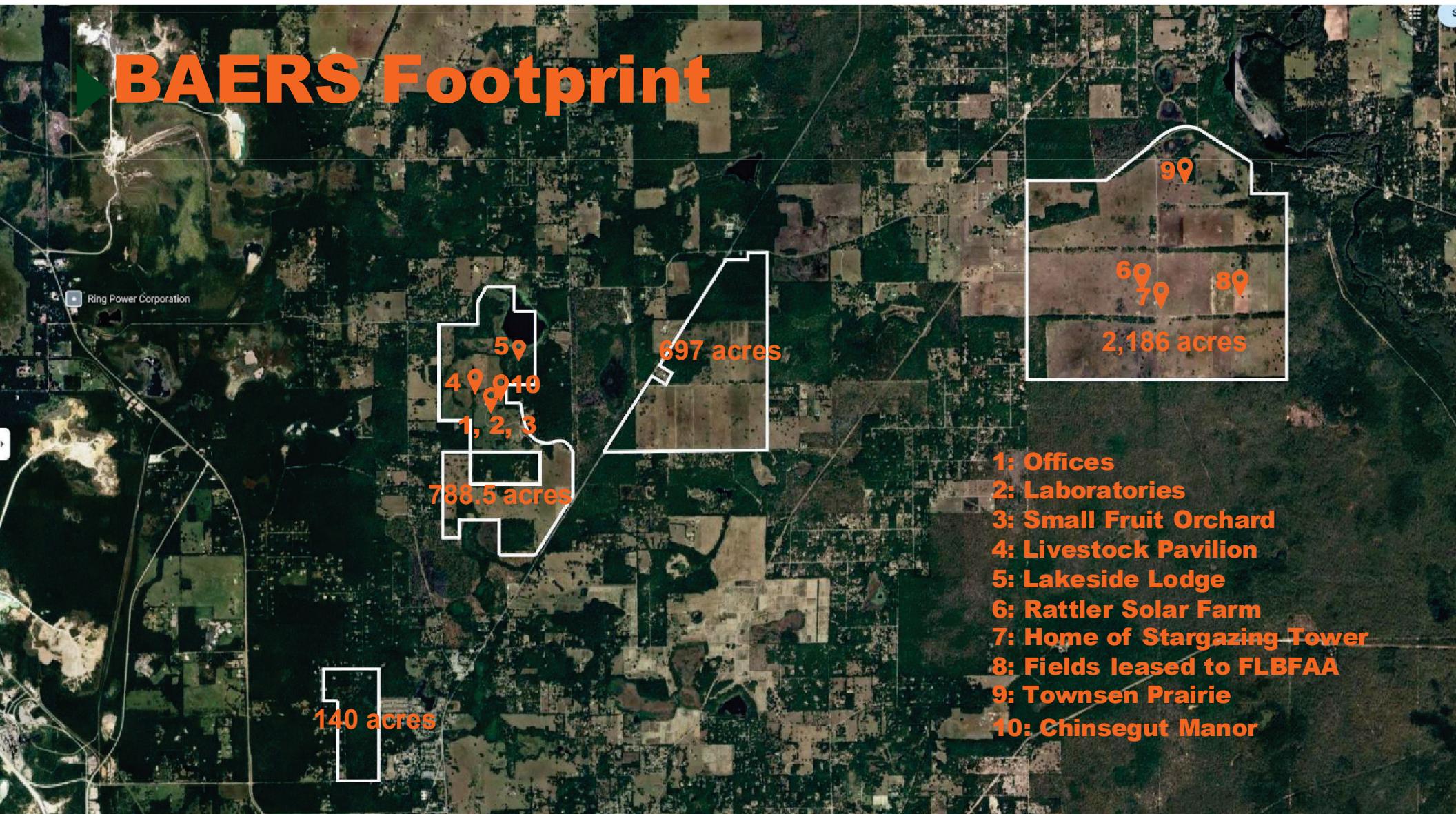


Credit: Charles Collins

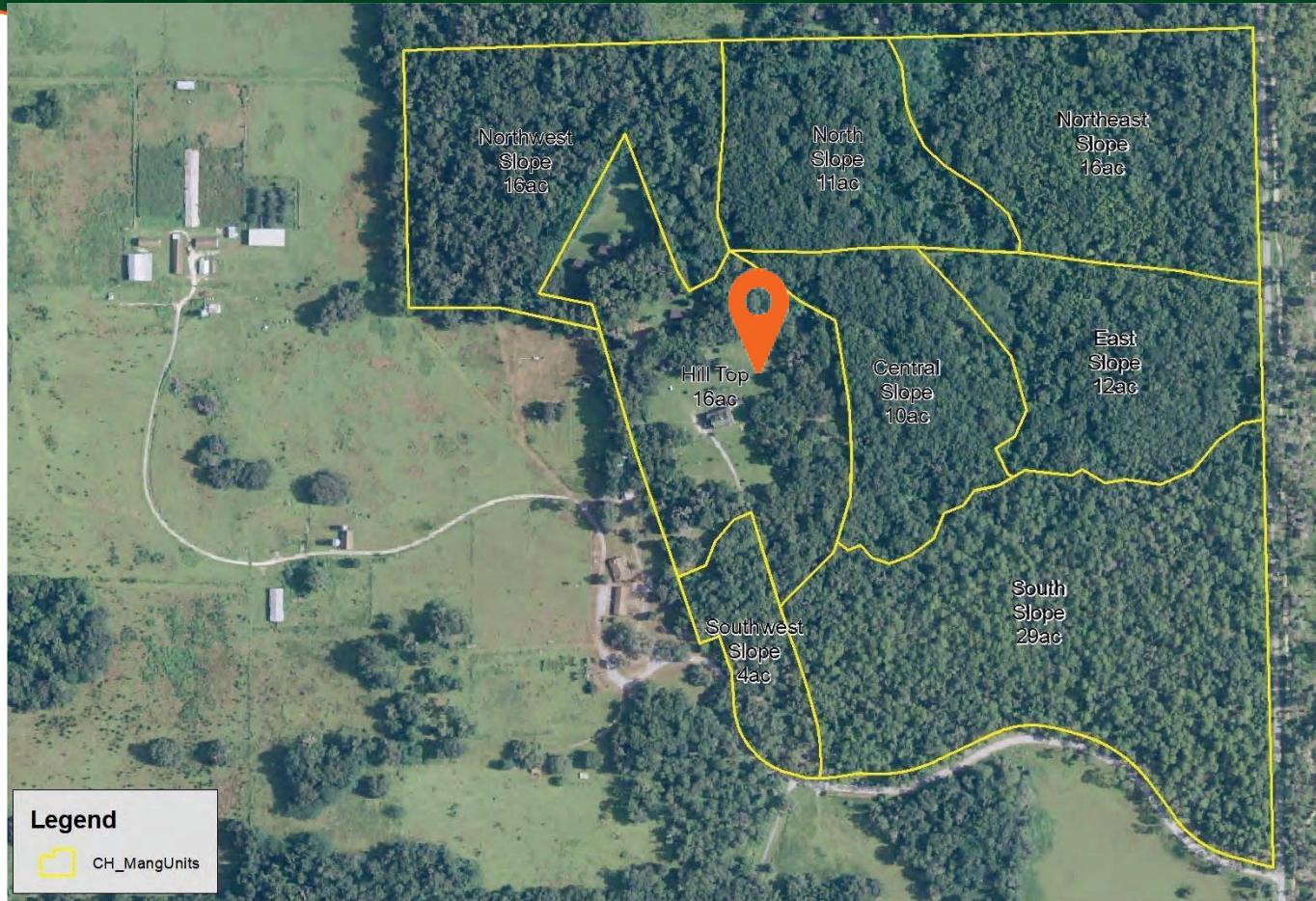
- Rattler Solar Center generate ~74.9 megawatts capable of powering approximately 23,000 homes
- Leases land to the Florida Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association and provides pasture-based training to support herd improvement and forage management.
- Stargazing for the community

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!





Hill Top Area: 16-Acre Operational Responsibility



- The 16-acre Hill Top area includes the Chinsegut Hill Manor, Retreat, and Conference Center
- FAMU responsible for day-to-day operations, stewardship, and programming
- County ownership and State lease remain unchanged
- Activities conducted consistent with public access, safety, and preservation goals

No-Cost Operational Proposal

- FAMU assumes day-to-day operations: scheduling, programming, routine maintenance
- Operate within existing lease terms and legal requirements
- County retains ownership and policy authority
- County retains the ability to review and raise concerns at any time
- County oversight remains unchanged



Credit: Charles Collins

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!



Reducing County Operating Burden at No Cost

What “No Cost” Means for Hernando County

- No rent paid by FAMU
- No management or operating fees
- No County operating subsidy or reimbursement
- FAMU assumes ordinary operating costs (insurance, utilities, maintenance)



Credit: Charles Collins

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!



Operational Expenses and Proposed Funding Sources

Expense Category	FY23 Actual (\$)	FY24 Actuals (\$)	FY25 Adopted (\$)	FY26 Estimate (\$)	FAMU Fund Source
COMM SVC,DEVICES,ACCESSR	3,112.38	2,519.52	2,520.00	2,595.60	CAFS
CONTR SRV-JANITORIAL/PEST	205.00	123.20	2,739.00	2,821.17	LGFF + SOLR
CONTR SRV-MOWING	12,650.00	15,950.00	15,950.00	16,428.50	BAERS
CONTRACTED SERVICES	3,291.00	3,777.00	6,359.00	6,549.77	BAERS
EQUIPMENT\$5,000 OR MORE	6,391.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	CAFS
FEES/COSTS-OTHER	0.00	0.00	300.00	309.00	BAERS
FEES/COSTS-PERMIT APPLN	50.00	50.00	50.00	51.50	BAERS
INSURANCE & BONDS-PREMIUM	46,259.00	54,274.00	56,000.00	57,680.00	FAMU
OPERATING SUPPLIES	11,035.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	BAERS
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	45,233.00	43,787.00	10,000.00	10,300.00	BAERS
PROMO-WEBSITE&RELATED EXP	1,068.00	45.34	1,068.00	1,100.04	BAERS
RENTAL/LEASE-BUILDINGS	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	N/A
REPAIR/MAINT-BLDG & GRD	160,772.50	207,900.99	245,150.00	252,504.50	LGFF + SOLR
UNCAPITALIZED EQUIPMENT	0.00	1,696.46	0.00	0.00	BAERS
UTILITY SRV-ELEC/WTR/SWR	20,565.85	16,347.31	15,000.00	15,450.00	LGFF + SOLR
UTILITY SRV-TRASH REMOVAL	1,145.16	1,145.16	1,318.00	1,357.54	BAERS
UTILITY SRV-WTR,SWR,LPGAS	345.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	BAERS
Total	312,124.45	347,615.98	356,454.00	367,147.62	

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!

BAERS: Brooksville Agricultural & Environmental Research Station

SOLR: Rattler Solar Revenue

CAFS: College of Agriculture and Food Sciences

LGFF: Land Grant Formula Funding

FAMU: Florida A&M University



Governance and Operational Responsibility Framework

Facility/Area	Current Responsibility	Proposed Under FAMU
Manor House	Tampa Bay History Center (TBHC)	TBHC continues heritage role; integrated under FAMU oversight
Cabins / Cottages	Hernando County Facilities	FAMU assumes full operations and maintenance
Dining Hall & Conference	Hernando County Facilities	FAMU manages events, maintenance, retains revenue
Caretaker's House	Hernando County	FAMU assigns on-site facility manager
Trails & Grounds	County Parks & FDEP	FAMU implements stewardship and coordinates with County
Artifacts / Archives	TBHC & USF Archaeology	FAMU coordinates research access and ensures compliance
Education Programs	TBHC & County Extension	FAMU expands STEM, agritourism, workforce development
Utilities & Insurance	County Facilities	FAMU assumes utilities and insurance obligations
Capital Repairs	County	FAMU handles routine; County approves major projects
Public Access	County / TBHC	FAMU maintains access and provides quarterly reports

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!



Public Access, Programming, and Community Benefit

- Historic preservation and interpretation
- Environmental and conservation education
- Youth and STEM programming
- Agritourism and small-farm support
- Community meetings, workshops, and public programs



Credit: Charles Collins

Strike, Strike, and Strike Again!



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, there is a cemetery with many headstones in a grid pattern. Next to it is a small building with a parking lot. To the right, there is a large, dense forest with many trees. In the background, there is a river and more green fields. The sky is clear and blue.

Preserving a Public Asset Through Responsible Stewardship