



March 12, 2010

Commissioner Jane Sauls
Leon County Commission
301 Leon County Courthouse
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear Commissioner Sauls:

This letter is written to urge and encourage you and your fellow commissioners to approve the establishment of a community garden on County property adjacent to the Ft. Braden Library.

In support of this effort, we are providing a brief summary of the actions we have taken to help establish a Community garden in our area and to provide for its support in the community.

We have been operating as a committee of the Green Thumbs Garden Club at Fort Braden, but it is anticipated that the Fort Braden Community Gardens Association will be a separate entity from the garden club, with the garden club as a major supporter of the Gardens.

We very much appreciate your efforts to provide resources and sustainability to the Fort Braden area which has many mid- to low-income families who will benefit from use of the garden or the produce grown there.

It is our plan to involve community organizations to the fullest extent possible, including schools, churches, civic organizations, and businesses.

We have sought and will continue to seek help and advice from other gardening organizations, and the many excellent community resources available to us.

Thank you so much for your support.

Very truly yours,

Community Gardens Committee
Green Thumbs Garden Club, Fort Braden

By: Janis Piotrowski, Chair

- Enclosures:
- Map and possible layout
 - Summary of planning to date
 - Proposed rules and regulations
 - Proposed flyer
 - Needs list

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PROPOSAL FOR COMMUNITY GARDEN AT FORT BRADEN COMMUNITY

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Fort Braden Community Gardens

Background

Fort Braden is a community in western Leon County located on Blountstown Highway (State Highway 20) approximately 12 miles west of Capital Circle SW. This is a rural community surrounded by Lake Talquin and various tracts of local, state, and federal lands. Much of the area is heavily forested. The majority of the residents are low to moderate income. The center of the community consists of the Fort Braden School (pre-K through 8th grade), the Fort Braden Community Park and athletic fields, the Fort Braden Community Center, the Fort Braden Branch Library, and the Fire Department Station 14, all located in close proximity on the Blountstown Highway.

The Community Center and neighboring Library have become the home to many community activities, including exercise programs, senior programs, food share programs, a garden club, voting poll, sports, picnicking and playgrounds.

The Fort Braden Green Thumbs Garden Club has taken on the beautification of the Community Center property as its main project. The members have supplied many hours of volunteer time and personal funds to plant, prune, mulch and generally spruce up the grounds. They have worked in cooperation with the County's Department of Parks and Recreation.

In spring of 2008 members of the Garden Club formed a committee to investigate the possibility of establishing a community garden. The purpose of the project was to:

1. provide an opportunity for low income residents and those living in the forested areas to grow their own food;
2. bring together community residents;
3. share good gardening practices;
4. provide educational and community service opportunities for the school, library, and other youth and non-profit programs.

Summary of Planning to Date

The members have researched, visited, and consulted with other community gardens including the FAMU program and the recently established Havana Community Gardens. In addition, they have been in contact with the:

Damayan Group
Master Gardening Program of the Leon County Extension Office
Fort Braden School
Fort Braden Library
Girl Scouts Troop #659
Apalachee Beekeepers Association

All have expressed support and interest in the project.

Extensive research has also been done at community gardening websites as well as that of the American Community Gardening Association which provides many resources and contacts for community gardens.

Proposed Site

The Fort Braden Branch Library, adjacent to the Fort Braden Community Center is located on the corner of Blountstown Highway and Joe Thomas Road on a 9.5-acre site. The Library and the associated parking area occupy only the front half of the site fronting on Blountstown Highway. The rear of site accessible from Joe Thomas Road is open and cleared. This parcel purchased by the County in 1999, was formerly a residence with a garden/agricultural area (Tax Parcel No. 43-04-20-853-000-0). There is enough room to accommodate parking and at least 40 garden plots with 8 foot wide aisles and 3 foot wheelbarrow access lanes. With lots of 15' x 15', this would occupy a space 100' x 193' with plenty of room for expansion if demand should warrant it.

In addition, this site also contains a pole barn in good condition, which could be utilized by the gardeners as a meeting and educational site. There is a water spigot near the pole barn but it is not turned on and the status of the well is unknown. Having a water source will be critical to moving forward with the project. There is a large storage shed on the property, which is locked and presumed to be used by the county.

A county trash and recycling center is directly across Joe Thomas Road from the site. The operations there include a drop off for yard waste and tree trimmings, which are shredded twice annually. This would provide an excellent source for use on pathways and as mulch in the garden.

Site maps and a preliminary proposed garden layout are attached.

What is needed to move forward?

Based on the experience and advice of the Havana Community Gardens and other community gardening projects, it is proposed that the Fort Braden Community Gardens would become a separate entity from the existing garden club.

The organizing committee has made numerous contacts and is ready to solicit membership, volunteers, and donations from the local residents, various businesses, churches, and organizations in the area once approval is given for use of the site.

Initial Set Up

The following are the critical needs required for the establishment of the gardens

- **Approval of land usage**
- **Initial site work and installation of water access**
- **Fencing and gate**
- **Culvert access from Joe Thomas Road**
- **Legal assistance/clarification on liability issues**

A complete list of immediate and future needs is attached

Proposed Annual Budget

After the initial set up of the garden, it is anticipated that all other funding would come from donations and rental of the garden plots.

40 garden plots 15' x 15' yearly rental @ \$30/plot = \$1200

It is anticipated that the funds would be used to maintain and develop the gardening site, for instance, to provide mulch for pathways, to develop gardening areas for handicapped gardeners and children, to provide signage, to mark lot boundaries, to build and maintain a compost bin for plant waste, to develop and maintain site beautification, and to provide information and educational programs and resources for the gardeners and community organizations.

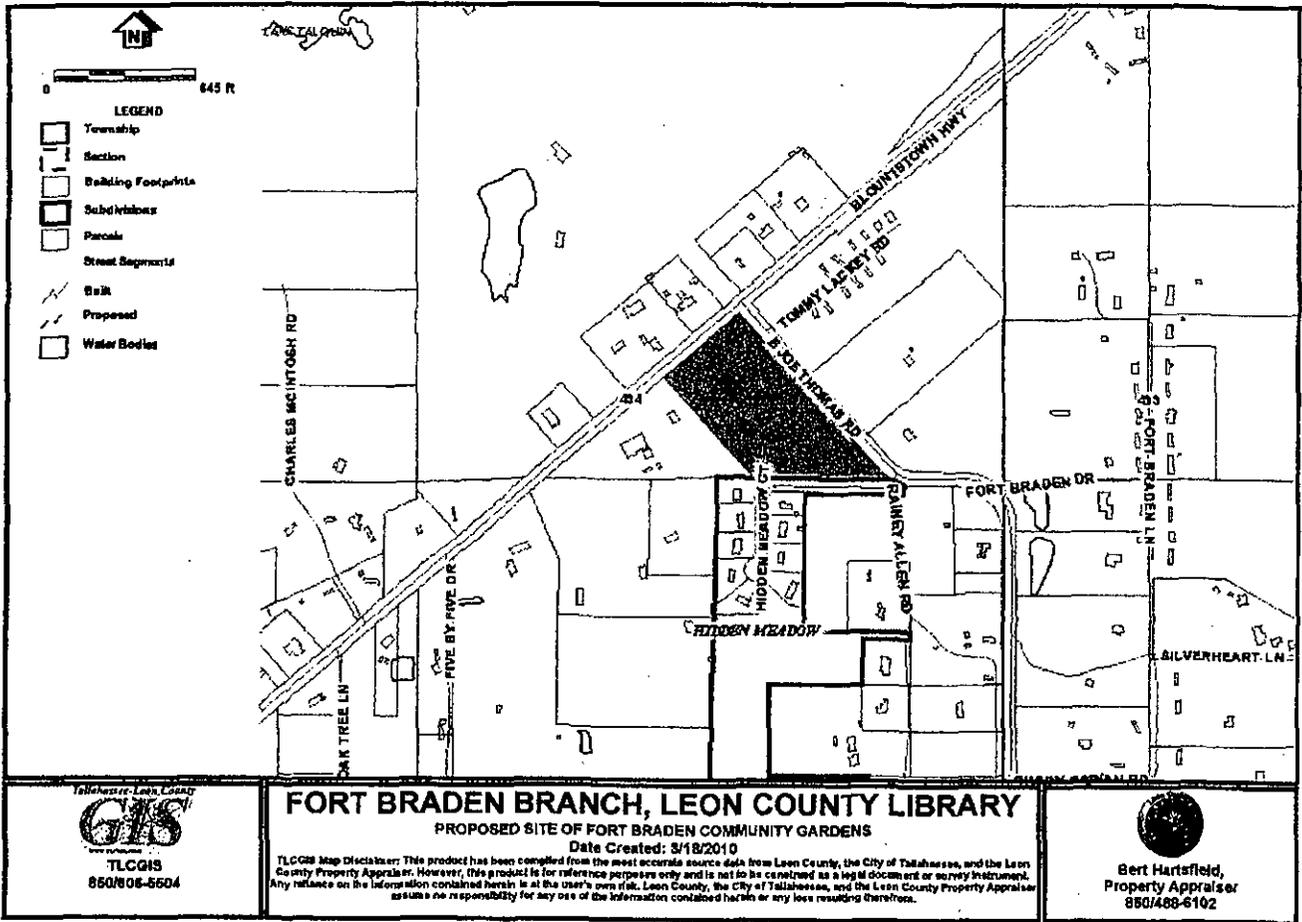
Conclusion

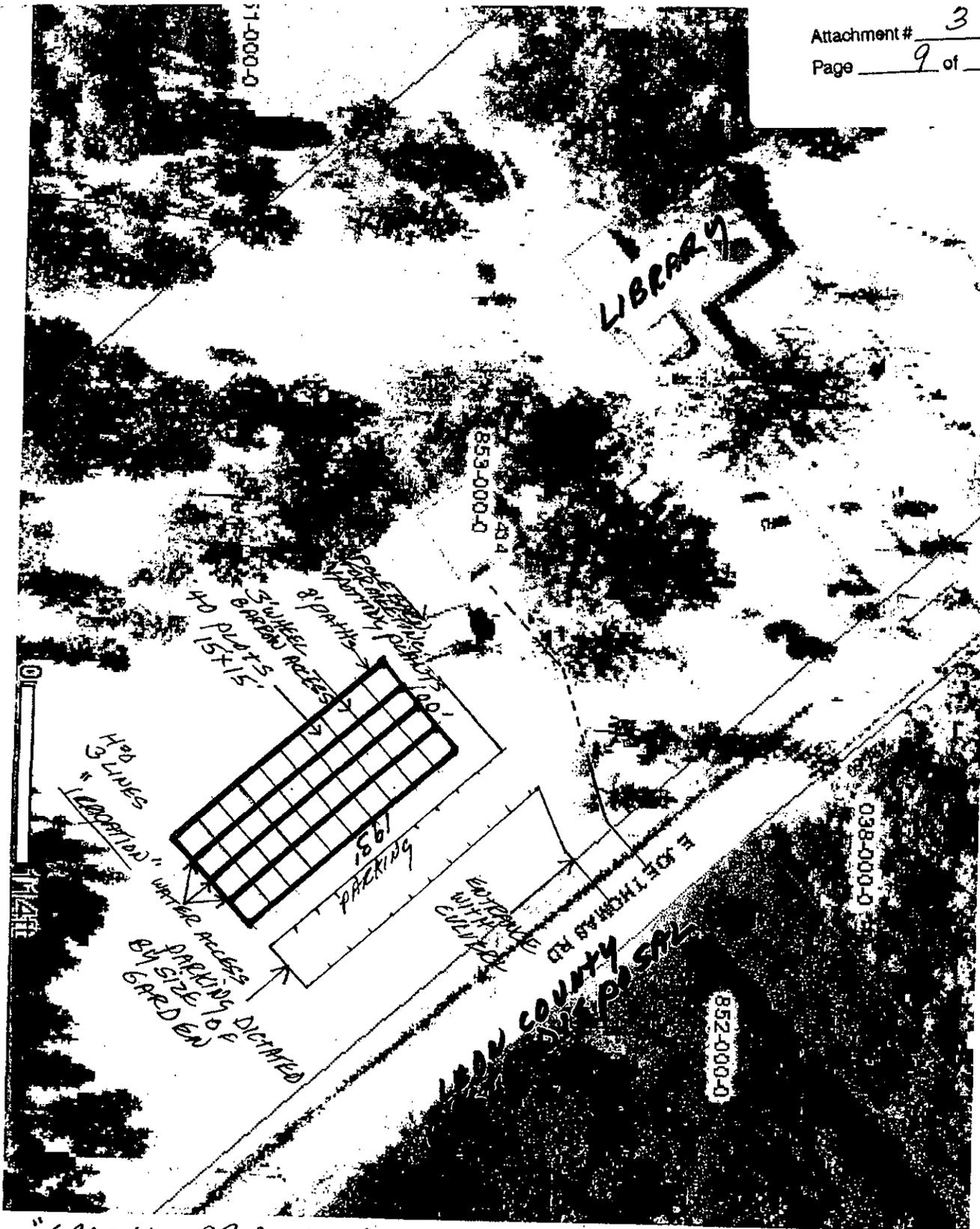
Public interest in area community gardens, including the newly formed Havana garden which already has a waiting list, and interest expressed by those in the Fort Braden community who have been contacted, indicate that this is a viable project with a great potential for success.

Volunteers, both within and outside the Green Thumbs Garden Club, have shown an interest in participating.

The site is ideally situated within the community and is well suited for this public purpose.

Immediately upon approval by the County Commission, steps will be taken to reach out to additional potential sponsors and gardeners. For instance, flyers will be distributed to businesses, churches, and community organizations, as well as individuals, a web site is planned, newspaper publicity will be solicited, and several orientation and educational meetings are planned to inform the community about the project and solicit support and participation.





"LAYOUT PROPOSAL FOR FORT BRADEN COMMUNITY GARDEN"

"GREEN THUMB"
GARDEN CLUB
MEMBERS

LINDA NICHOLSON
JANE PIOTROWSKI
CHRIS HIERHOLZER
MELANIE HIERHOLZER



Attachment # 3
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Attachment # 3
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FT. BRADEN COMMUNITY GARDENS

(Proposed)

Initial Needs to establish garden

Culvert, approach access from Joe Thomas Road

Designated parking area

Water Supply

Piping, Hose Bibs (one for every two garden plots)

Perimeter Fencing (8 to 12 feet tall)

Tilling/Ground prep

Weatherproof sign/bulletin board

Straw, mulch, mushroom compost

Port-o-let or bathrooms/bathroom access

Future needs/wants

Compost bin

Website development/hosting

Storage shed

Bee hives

Picnic table(s)

Perimeter landscaping, flower beds

Benches in several places

Trash barrels

Greenhouse

Sandbox, play area

Water fountain

Handicap accessible garden plot(s)



FT. BRADEN COMMUNITY GARDENS

2010 Rental Agreement Form

Assignment of garden plots within the Ft. Braden Community Gardens, Joe Thomas Road

The Ft. Braden Community Garden agrees to rent to the undersigned Gardener(s), a single garden plot in the Ft. Braden Community Gardens (FBCG), for a period of one year, renewable on January 1st of each year. The rental fee for the plot is \$30 per year. This fee includes access to FBCG, use of the assigned plot, and access to water for use in maintaining the plot.

Leon County has established an area for a community garden on property owned by the County on Joe Thomas Road, South of Highway 20, adjacent to the Ft. Braden Library. Gardeners wishing to use the FBCG are subject to the terms and conditions contained in this agreement.

Gardeners agree to:

1. Plan, plant, weed and harvest their plot during the gardening season and maintain the area around the bed extending into the pathway. The plots are to be used for growing vegetables, flowers, or herbs for personal (non-commercial) use only.
2. Contribute two hours during one of the scheduled workdays to maintain the community garden area. The workdays will be determined by the community gardeners at the beginning of the season and coordinated with the FBCG Management Committee. Projects will include pathway mulching, weeding, and general cleanup.
3. Attend scheduled community garden orientations.
4. Provide all tools, seeds, plants, and other supplies, materials, and equipment necessary for their gardening efforts.
5. Pay the annual gardening fee set each year to help offset some of the cost of preparing the garden site, providing water, and administering the program.
6. The gardening fee will not be refundable to gardeners who abandon their plots.
7. Gardens shall follow all rules and regulations for the community garden heretofore or hereafter established by the FBCG. Violation of any rules and regulations, or of any provision of this agreement, shall be grounds for termination by FBCG
8. Prior to terminating the privileges of a Gardener for default under this agreement, FBCG shall notify the Gardener, in writing, at the address indicated on the Gardener's application form, stating the grounds for the proposed termination. If the problem is not promptly corrected, or if satisfactory arrangements are not made with FBCG for the correction of the problem, the parcel(s) will be considered abandoned and open for reassignment to other gardeners.

2010 FBCG Rules and Regulations

BOUNDARY LINES

DO NOT MOVE THE CORNER STAKES. These are the boundaries of your plot. As the season progresses, you may find they will need to be pounded in again or replaced. If possible, connect your four stakes with string, or you may construct a small, temporary fence. No orange fencing, rusted fencing, or barbed wire is allowed. Please keep plants within your plot. Be considerate of your neighbors when planting tall plants along boundary lines, which may block sunlight from adjacent plants. All walkways in front of your plot must be kept clear and are not considered part of your garden space.

GARDEN MAINTENANCE

Individual garden plots and adjacent pathways shall be maintained by renting Gardeners. If a problem occurs with the garden site, such as water leaks, please contact the garden manager. Gardeners who habitually neglect or abandon their plot will forfeit their privilege to rent a plot during the next garden season. Neglected plots are a potential source of weed seeds and pests and detract from the beauty of FBCG. Neglected plots may be cleared and/or re-rented if the Gardener does not take appropriate action. If you plan to be on vacation for an extended period of time, please ask a neighboring gardener, relative, or friend to care for your plot in your absence. If you wish to discontinue using your plot, please contact the garden manager.

COMPOST & MULCH

Compost will be provided at the garden area as it becomes available and supplies last. For weed suppression, gardeners may use their own biodegradable mulch such as straw, biodegradable mats, woodchips, etc. Materials that do not decompose, such as carpet, black plastic, etc., are discouraged. Gardens must remove all non-biodegradable material by the end of the growing season.

PESTICIDES

To prevent over-spray contamination and other problems affecting your neighbors and the environment, inorganic chemical pesticides and herbicides are prohibited in FBCG. We strongly encourage the use of organic gardening techniques and organic chemical compounds to control pests and weeds. Gardeners found to be using non-organic chemical pesticides or herbicides risk losing their gardening privileges.

REFUSE

An area is designated at the community garden for organic waste to be composted. Litter, meat products/bones, diseased or buggy plants, and non-bulky organic waste should NOT be placed in the compost area. Please keep our community garden clean by taking all litter and trash home with you after each visit.

VANDALISM

Security is not provided. Vandalism and theft can be a problem, especially during harvesting season. If you notice unauthorized people in the gardens or suspicious activity, please help your gardening neighbors by calling the Leon County Sheriff's Office at 922-3300.

WATER, HOSES AND SPRINKLERS

The water faucets are shared with other gardeners. The County does not supply hoses, but other gardeners may be willing to share their hoses. Please be considerate of the gardeners whose plots are near the water faucets when moving hoses. **NO SPRINKLERS OR MICRO-IRRIGATION WILL BE ALLOWED IN THE COMMUNITY GARDEN. GARDENS SHOULD BE WATERED WITH SOAKER HOSES OR HAND WATERED AS NECESSARY.**

BE NEIGHBORLY!

Be a good neighbor to your fellow gardeners. Do not exceed your own garden boundaries. Be considerate when using water, hoses, mulch, fencing, etc. Please discard unwanted or unnecessary items properly. Please supervise children when gardening. Keep pets out the garden area. Do not pick crops that do not belong to you unless given permission by the plot user.

Thank you for comply with the Rules and Regulations listed above. Your cooperation will ensure a more abundant and pleasant gardening season for you and your neighbors.

Please initial the following:

 I would like to share my contact information with fellow community gardeners.

 I understand that community garden-related news will be sent to the email address provided by me on this form and posted on the FBCG bulletin board and it is my responsibility to stay current with garden news.

I understand and agree that neither Ft. Braden Community Gardens, Leon County, nor any of its officers, agents, volunteers, or employees, shall be held responsible or made the subject of any claim for damages or liability arising from personal injury, property damage or loss of any sort to me, my guests, or any other person, or loss of any other sort arising out of or related to participation in programs at Ft. Braden Community Gardens, whether the result of the negligence of the Ft. Braden Community Gardens, Leon County, other Gardeners, or any other person. I HEREBY AGREE TO RELEASE, INDEMNITY AND HOLD HARMLESS THE FT. BRADEN COMMUNITY GARDENS, AND LEON COUNTY, THEIR OFFICERS, AGENTS, VOLUNTEERS, AND EMPLOYEES, FROM ANY SUCH CLAIM, LIABILITY, OR LOSS.

I have read, understood and will comply with this agreement, including the hold harmless provisions herein, concerning the use of a community garden plot. Attached is payment in the amount of \$30 for use of a garden plot for one year. Make checks payable to Ft. Braden Community Gardens and mail to Ft. Braden Community Gardens

Primary Gardener's Signature

Print Name

Date

Address

Email

Daytime Phone

If you change addresses (home or email) it is your responsibility to inform FBCG.

(Below this line for FBCG use only)

Date/Time Received: _____ **Payment included:** Yes ___ No ___

Plot Number Assigned: _____ **Date Assigned:** _____

Notes: _____

Garden Manager: ??

Contact Information



Ft. Braden Community Gardens

Don't Miss
Out on
Your
Chance to
be a part of
this new
community
resource

Reserve a
garden plot

Get
involved
with
planning

Show your
support

Leon County Community Gardens
Pilot Project
Joe Thomas Road
Behind the Ft. Braden Library
Limited number of garden plots available



To find out more, call:
Chris or Melanie Hierholzer – 574-0156
Linda Nicholzen – 575-4446
Janis Piotrowski – 575-3953
fortbradengarden@gmail.com

Eat healthier
Reduce food costs
Get more exercise
Meet new friends
Get involved in your community

FT. BRADEN COMMUNITY GARDENS CONTACT LIST

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Tallahassee, FL 32310
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Hm 575-4446

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Hm 350-1217

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Tallahassee, Florida

Zach Galloway
Tallahassee Leon County Planning Department
891-6400

Trevor Hylton
U of F IFAS Extension
Leon County Agricultural Center
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Cell 566-0104

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caphogg@bellsouth.net

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386-6556

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Havana Community Garden Assn.
Bbruggner@gmail.com

Nathan Ballantine
Tallahassee Food Gardens
Maninoveralls@gmail.com
322-0749

Teretha Scott, Branch Manager
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Tallahassee, FL 32310
606-2900
Scott.te@leoncountyfl.gov

Vicki Adams, Girl Scout Coordinator
Girl Scout Council of the Florida Panhandle
vadams@gscfp.org

Beverly Lineberry, Troop Leader
Brownie Troop #659
Brownietroop659@yahoo.com

Future Contacts

Ft. Braden Christian Fellowship Church
Highway 20
575-7381

Country Feed Store and Garden Supply
6260 Blountstown Highway
574-3333

Lake Talquin Baptist Church
Highway 20
576-5641

Talquin Hardware and Supply
18958 Blountstown Highway
576-6700

Aenon Baptist Church
Highway 20
576-6911

Ebenezer Leon Baptist Church
8453 Blountstown Highway
576-6911

Berean Christian Fellowship Church
6214 Blountstown Highway
574-6034

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