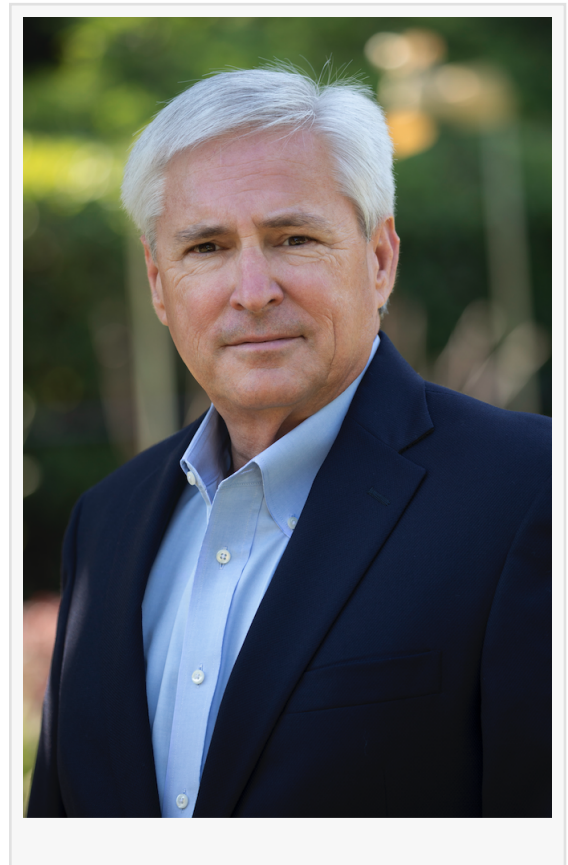


Conservation Easement Pioneer Brokers \$7.75 M Conservation Deal in Central East Florida

LAKELAND, FL, USA, December 6, 2022 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- As efforts to conserve sensitive rural land in Florida amid a construction boom continue, seasoned land broker [Dean Saunders](#) brokered a \$7.75 million conservation deal in Central East Florida. Mr. Saunders, a national expert in conservation, has secured the future of 3,600 acres rich in biodiversity and necessary habitats for some of Florida's most beloved wildlife.

"This transaction highlights how vital it is to have public funding available for conservation deals," said Mr. Saunders, Founder and Managing Director of Lakeland-based [SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzle](#). "As rural is increasingly developed to accommodate Florida's growing population, Florida needs to secure a steady source of funding for conservation deals to ensure a healthy balance between development and conservation for years to come. Compensating landowners for choosing to conserve land is the best strategy to reach that balance."



The property, known as Abington Preserve, is located in Okeechobee County and is home to diverse species such as the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, sandhill cranes, gopher tortoises, wood storks, and the crested caracara.

Mr. Saunders assisted the seller in permanently preserving the land by means of conservation easements through the Florida Forever Project.

The Florida Forever Project is Florida's premier conservation and recreation lands acquisition program; a blueprint for conserving Florida's natural and cultural heritage. Since the inception of the Florida Forever program in July 2001, the state has purchased more than 897,785 acres of land with approximately \$3.3 billion, according to the Florida Office of Environmental Services.

During his time as a Florida Legislator two decades ago, Mr. Saunders created the [conservation easement](#) program to encourage Florida landowners to conserve sensitive land. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement with a government agency or nonprofit land trust that rewards landowners who choose to limit development on their land. These easements are custom created to meet the personal and financial needs of the landowner while retaining private ownership. The goal is to preserve and protect ecological, historic or scenic resources.

In recent years, ranch owners have increasingly pursued conservation deals as Florida allocated fresh funding for conservation efforts. Case in point, the state recently allocated more than \$56 million to acquire seven properties across the state that will be designated for conservation. The seven parcels total nearly 20,000 acres, more than 98% of which are within the Florida Wildlife Corridor, a recently designated network of connected lands that are crucial for wildlife habitat. The Abington Preserve is one of the seven parcels.

Since its conception as a land brokerage in 1996, SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzler has held a passion for protecting Florida's natural ecosystems. He has been at the forefront of this mission, helping landowners protect their land from future development.

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About Dean Saunders

Dean Saunders, ALC, CCIM is the Founder, Managing Director & Senior Advisor of Lakeland-based SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzler. A former Florida House of Representative, Mr. Saunders also served in the US Senate as Agricultural Liaison, Special Assistant, and Director of External Affairs to US Senator Lawton Chiles, then Governor Chiles. He is known as the father of the Florida's conservation easement program, which he got passed during his time as a Florida legislator.

About SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzler

Founded as a land brokerage in 1996 by Dean Saunders, SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzler has grown into a nationally-recognized, full-service real estate brokerage firm focusing on land and commercial real estate transactions. With more than 70 expert advisors located in Florida and Georgia, the firm has closed over \$4 billion in transactions on behalf of buyers, sellers, investors, institutions, and landowners.

The Lakeland-based firm is a national leader in conservation easements, with decades of experience assisting agricultural owners in selling their land to the State of Florida for conservation. SVN | Saunders Ralston Dantzler has been involved in some of Florida's most significant land deals over the last decade.

Paola Iuspa-Abbott
Top of Mind PR
+1 305-726-5848

paola@topofmind-pr.com

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