

### **Area Information:**

As described by the Gilchrist County Chamber, Gilchrist County is nestled in the heart of North-Central Florida, residents are surrounded by undisturbed woods, natural springs, ponds, and rivers. It is a haven from the rush and bustle of contemporary life -- peaceful and tranquil. Old Timers like to think of Gilchrist County as the Natural Florida, how Florida was "meant to be" before the tourism boom. The County's northern border is outlined by the Santa Fe River, a natural wonder which slips underground in a slow whirlpool near Oleno State Park and reappears three miles away before merging with the great Suwannee River. The historic Suwannee River, made famous in song by Stephen Foster, meanders gracefully, forging the County's western border. These two rivers are punctuated by several world famous Florida springs, including Hart Springs with its long boardwalk down to the Suwannee, Ginnie Springs with its nine clear freshwater springs, and Blue Springs, with its deep, blue waters. Gilchrist County is a small, rural county located in North Central Florida. The nearest metropolitan areas are Gainesville, to the East; and Live Oak/Lake City to the North.

For those with school-aged children, Gilchrist County is the first and only Florida School District to receive all A's in the State of Florida school grade system. The Progressive Farmer magazine ranked Gilchrist County the 9<sup>th</sup> best place to live in Rural America in 2008. Additionally, with Shands Hospital and the University of Florida nearby, medical services and cultural opportunities are plentiful.