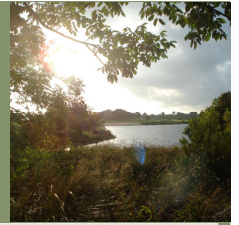


FLORIDA FOREVER: TIME TO INVEST IN CONSERVATION LANDS



History

One of Florida's great success stories is our 2.5 million acre network of state parks and public lands that provide recreation, habitat for wildlife, and water resource protection. Over four decades a series of land conservation measures have been popular with people and enjoyed bipartisan support from successive Governors and legislatures.

Public lands provide affordable access to beaches, wildlife habitats, and waterways. Florida's diverse natural systems attract people from around the nation and the world. These visitors contribute billions to Florida's economy. Tourism, agriculture, forestry products, water supply, sport and commercial fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation – are all sustained by Florida's ongoing investment in conservation.

Florida Forever allocates funds for public land acquisition through the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the five water management districts, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Florida Forest Service, and grants to local parks. The Florida Forever List is a carefully vetted group of projects proposed to preserve our state's natural areas and water resources and establish parks and recreation areas.

Previous Appropriations

Florida Forever, authorized to spend \$300 million a year, was interrupted by declines in state revenues and shifts in priorities related to the economic recovery. With the economy gaining ground, it is time to again invest in the highest priority conservation lands. The fiscal year 2014 state budget provides an opportunity to invest in public lands as the Preservation 2000 bonds will be paid off, freeing more than \$250 million in recurring state revenue.

Governor's Budget Recommendation

Governor Scott's proposed FY14 budget included \$75 million for Florida Forever – 1/3 from new appropriations and 2/3 from sale of existing state lands not needed for conservation and recreation. Florida's population is once again growing at a rapid pace. Investing now in conservation land and water resources helps preserve some of Florida for our citizens of today and tomorrow.



Florida panther by RJ Wiley

Florida Forever was created in 1999 to succeed the extremely successful Preservation 2000 conservation program. Under Florida Forever and Preservation 2000, Florida has protected more than 2.5 million acres of land. The Florida Forever Coalition is a collection of the state's leading environmental organizations, including Audubon Florida, Defenders of Wildlife, The Trust for Public Land, 1000 Friends of Florida, Florida Recreation and Park Association, and the Florida Wildlife Federation. More information can be found at <http://www.FloridaForeverCoalition.org>.



What You Can Do to Help

1. **Stay informed.** Visit <http://www.FloridaForeverCoalition.org> for the latest information on what's happening with this important land conservation program.
2. **Stay connected.** Sign up for our newsletter, bookmark our blog, "like" us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter!
3. **Participate in one of our action campaigns.** Add your name to a petition, send a letter—*let your voice be known!* More information is available on our website.
4. **Contact your Legislators.** It's easy, just visit: <http://flsenate.gov/Senators/Find> to find the appropriate contact information, then make your call in support of Florida Forever. Be polite and tell the person on the phone that you support Florida Forever and hope that your elected official does too.
5. **Visit your public lands.** Take your family and friends to one of Florida's incredible state parks, state forests, watersheds, and wildlife management areas. For a directory of parks, please visit: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/> and <http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DslParks/home>.

