

FLORIDA FOREVER COALITION

Website: <http://www.FloridaForeverCoalition.org>

House Budget

Item 1544: \$25 million from GR for Florida Forever, \$50 million from state lands

Item 1378A: \$25 million GR for Rural Lands

Senate Budget

Item 1544: \$10 million from Florida Forever TF, \$50 million from state lands

Item 1378A: \$1 million from Florida Forever TF for Rural Lands

- Ask:**
- 1. Senate to take the House budget position on land conservation funds**
 - 2. House and Senate include proviso that appropriated funds will 'be used for conservation lands under the Florida Forever program'**

Governor Scott's budget request included \$25 million in general revenue and \$50 million in surplus land sales for Florida Forever. The House budget is close to the Governor's request but has different proviso. The Senate provided \$50 million from surplus lands and appears to reallocate \$10 million from existing Florida Forever funds, but did not allocate new general revenue.

Please continue the Florida Forever land acquisition program for FY 2014 by appropriating at least \$25 million in general revenue and \$50 million in surplus land sales.

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

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 heisted 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.

The Florida Forever Coalition includes Audubon Florida, Defenders of Wildlife, Florida Recreation and Parks Association, Florida Wildlife Federation, 1000 Friends of Florida, and the Trust for Public Land.

For more information please contact

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