

Florida Conservation Coalition



FLORIDA'S Water & Land Legacy

Dear FCC Members and Friends,

Florida has a long and proud history of protecting important natural areas for water, wildlife and recreation. Whether you've watched wading birds glide above the Everglades' vast marshes, taken a dip in one of Florida's cool clear springs, or walked under some of Florida's towering pines, you understand the importance of protecting our cherished natural areas for future generations.

That's why we are inviting you to take part in Florida's Water and Land Legacy Campaign—[will you help us protect Florida's special places before they disappear forever?](#)

For more than two decades, Florida led the nation in protecting hundreds of thousands of acres of lands needed to provide a clean and abundant water supply, habitat for fish and wildlife, and the spectacular natural areas that make Florida a wonderful place to live and visit.

But in recent years, funding for water and land conservation has been slashed. Now, for every dollar spent by the state, **less than two-hundredths of a penny go to water and land conservation**. As a result, critical water protection areas, wildlife habitat, and natural areas unique to Florida remain vulnerable to unwise development decisions and deep funding cuts.

That's why we need to act NOW. Florida's Water and Land Legacy and our conservation partners have launched a statewide campaign to put the Florida Water and Land Conservation constitutional amendment on the November 2014 ballot. The amendment is the best way we can assure that adequate funding is dedicated to conservation—and we need your help.

[Will you help us gather the signatures we need to put the amendment on the ballot in 2014?](#)

The Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment would ensure stable funding to acquire and protect undeveloped forests and wetlands, crystal clear springs, vibrant coastal areas and wildlife habitat. **But we need to gather one million signatures to put this important issue before Florida voters.**

[Will you volunteer to help us reach this ambitious goal?](#)

Every Floridian deserves clean water and healthy rivers, lakes and springs where we can swim and fish. We're lucky to live in a state with so many natural wonders and opportunities to enjoy nature. Let's work together to protect our state's treasured natural areas and waters for future generations. Together, we can win.

Regards,

Aliki Moncrief, Field Director

Founder and Chairman, Bob Graham; Vice-Chairman, Nathaniel Pryor Reed

TITLE: Water and Land Conservation - Dedicates funds to acquire and restore Florida conservation and recreation lands

SUMMARY: Funds the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to support acquisition, restoration, and improvement of conservation lands including wetlands and forests; fish and wildlife habitat; lands protecting significant water resources and drinking water sources, including the Everglades, and the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams; beaches and shores; outdoor recreational lands; and historically or geologically significant sites, by dedicating 33 percent of the net revenues from the existing excise tax on documents for twenty years.

FULL TEXT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT:

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF FLORIDA THAT:

Article X, Section 28, Florida Constitution, is created to read:

SECTION 28. Land Acquisition Trust Fund.--

a) Effective on July 1 of the year following passage of this amendment by the voters, and for a period of twenty years after that effective date, the Land Acquisition Trust Fund shall receive no less than 33 percent of net revenues derived from the excise tax on documents, as defined in the statutes in effect on January 1, 2012, after the Department of Revenue first deducts a service charge to pay the costs of the collection and enforcement of the excise tax on documents.

b) Funds in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund shall be expended only for the following purposes:

1) As provided by law, to finance or refinance the acquisition and improvement of land, water areas, and related property interests and resources for conservation lands including wetlands, forests, and fish and wildlife habitat; lands that protect significant water resources and drinking water sources, including lands protecting the water quality and quantity of rivers, lakes, streams, springsheds, and lands providing recharge for groundwater and aquifer systems; lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area and the Everglades Protection Area, as defined in Section 7(b) of Article II; beaches and shores; outdoor recreation lands, including recreational trails, parks, and urban open space; rural landscapes; historic, archaeological, or geologic sites; management of lands acquired; together with the restoration of natural systems related thereto; and the enhancement of public access and recreational enjoyment.

2) To pay the debt service on bonds issued pursuant to Article VII, Section 11(e).

c) The moneys deposited into the Land Acquisition Trust Fund as defined by statutes in effect on January 1, 2012, shall not be or become commingled with the General Revenue Fund of the state.

FLORIDA'S WATER & LAND LEGACY

The Campaign to Protect Florida's Most Cherished Waters and Natural Areas

Florida's Water and Land Legacy • 316 Williams Street, Tallahassee, FL 32303 • (850) 629-4656
campaign@FloridaWaterLandLegacy.org • www.FloridaWaterLandLegacy.org

Florida's Water and Land Legacy is a coalition of the state's leading conservation organizations including The Trust for Public Land, Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club and many others. Together with concerned citizens, they have united to launch a major constitutional amendment campaign for the November 2014 ballot.

A constitutional amendment is the best way we can assure that adequate funding is dedicated solely to restoring critical natural areas, like the Everglades, and protecting Florida's magnificent waters and lands for future generations. Floridians understand the value of clean and abundant water for people and wildlife, and they cherish the natural areas that make Florida special. That's why the amendment would ensure that these values have a place in our state's constitution.

This important amendment:

- 1. Ensures that our cherished beaches, rivers, lakes, springs and forests are protected for future generations.** Vibrant and healthy natural areas supply us with clean water and improve our quality of life. Irreplaceable treasures like the Everglades and our world-class beaches also draw millions of visitors every year and form the backbone of our tourism economy. Yet almost 2 million acres of important water protection areas, beaches, springs and other vital natural areas remain vulnerable to unwise development decisions and deep funding cuts. This amendment creates stable and long-term funding for conservation programs like Florida Forever and Everglades restoration, ensuring that we safeguard our most treasured waters and lands for future generations.
- 2. Directs one-third of existing state revenues from "doc stamps" to fund restoration and conservation projects in Florida's most critical water protection areas and lands.** The amendment will dedicate funding to conserve and restore Florida's most cherished waterways and natural areas using existing state revenues generated by real estate transactions. Fees on real estate transactions, aka "doc stamps," have been assessed in Florida for decades to pay for important programs including land conservation and affordable housing. Yet since 2009, these fees have been diverted to the state's general revenues while Florida Forever funding for water and land conservation projects has been slashed by **97.5 percent**.
 - In 2012, the legislature allocated only \$8.5 million to protect important water protection areas and conservation lands. Compared to the state budget of \$60 billion, that means that for every dollar the state spends in 2012, less than **two-hundredths of a penny** will go to water and land conservation. That's less than \$1 for every Floridian.
 - The amendment would provide more than \$5 billion for water and land conservation in Florida over the next ten years and \$10 billion over the twenty-year life of the measure, all without any tax increase.
- 3. Reinforces Florida's long-standing leadership on water and land conservation.** In Florida, conserving the water quality of our lakes, rivers and springs and acquiring lands necessary to protect drinking water sources historically has transcended party politics. Popular programs like Florida Forever—geared towards funding important conservation projects—have been a priority of every Governor for the last four decades, including Governors Graham, Martinez, Chiles, Bush and Crist.



316 Williams Street
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(850) 629-4656

www.floridawaterlandlegacy.org

August 7, 2012

Dear Friend,

I am writing to ask your organization to join many of the state's leading conservation organizations, like The Trust for Public Land, Audubon Florida, Florida Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife and more, in endorsing the Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment. We believe that this is one of the most important campaigns for land conservation and the environment in Florida in our lifetime.

This statewide campaign would establish a dedicated funding source for land conservation, management, and restoration through a state constitutional amendment for the November 2014 ballot that will designate one-third of the existing documentary stamp tax revenues (paid to the state any time real estate is sold). Based on current projections, this would provide over \$5 billion for conservation in Florida over the next ten years and \$10 billion over the twenty-year life of the amendment. Funding would be allocated using the existing Florida Forever structure, and would also go to Everglades land acquisition and restoration.

This measure is critical because funding for water and land conservation, management, and restoration has essentially been eliminated over the past few years. For more than twenty years, the Florida Legislature provided \$300 million annually for Florida Forever, the nation's most successful state conservation program, and its predecessor, Preservation 2000. These funds helped protect over 2.4 million acres of critical water resources, natural areas, wildlife habitat, parks, greenways, and trails throughout Florida, including some of the state's most cherished landscapes, such as the Everglades, the Florida Keys, the St. Johns River, miles of Atlantic and Gulf Beaches, and hundreds of community parks.

But since 2009, funding for water and land conservation programs like Florida Forever has been slashed by 97.5 percent. Because of this, the only way to secure significant funding for water and land conservation, management, and restoration is through a constitutional amendment to create a dedicated source of funds.

Polls show that a significant majority of Floridians, both rural and urban, would vote to support this amendment. And Florida has a strong track record of supporting conservation measures. Of the 99 city and county land conservation measures on the ballot since 1988, 81 have been approved—an 81 percent passage rate. Voters in every major urban county in Florida (except Orange County) have approved dedicated funding for land conservation and parks, many by overwhelming margins of over 70 percent.

Support for Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever has historically been bi-partisan. Governors Graham, Martinez, Chiles, Bush and Crist have all supported state funding for land conservation.

Until recently, Democratic and Republican leadership in the Florida Legislature have supported funding for conservation as well.

We hope that you will join us in supporting this critical constitutional amendment. Next month, Volunteers will begin gathering the **one million** signatures needed to put this amendment on the November 2014 ballot. Your endorsement will help create a solid foundation for the signature-gathering campaign and will help mobilize Floridians across our state to take action to shape Florida's environmental legacy so that our state's cherished places are protected for future generations.

Enclosed you will find a copy of the amendment language, background information, and an endorsement form. Please send the enclosed form to our campaign headquarters, or fill out the endorsement form online at www.floridawaterlandlegacy.org/endorse. Your endorsement is critical to empowering Floridians across the state and placing this important on the 2014 ballot.

If you would like an electronic packet that you can circulate to your board members, we would be happy to send that to you. Please contact Aliki Moncrief at (850) 629-4656 or aliki@floridawaterlandcampaign.org and we'll send those materials to you right away or answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

For Florida's environment,



Pegeen Hanrahan
Campaign Manager



Aliki Moncrief
Field Director



Campaign Headquarters
316 Williams Street
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 629-4656
www.floridawaterlandlegacy.org

Florida's Water and Land Legacy, Inc.

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Endorsement Form

✓YES! We/I endorse the Water and Land Conservation Amendment to establish a dedicated funding source for land conservation, management, and restoration through a state constitutional amendment.

✓YES! Florida's Water and Land Legacy may use the name of the following organization or individual as an official endorser of this ballot initiative.

Contact Information

Name of Organization/Individual: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Contact Person(1) _____ Title _____

Contact Person(2) _____ Title _____

Phone Number(s): _____

Email address(s) _____

Name of your organization's newsletter _____ Online/Email/Print _____

Editor _____ Frequency of Publication _____ Deadline ____/____/____

Endorsement

In addition to lending our name as an official campaign endorser, we will:

- Share our lists for volunteer recruitment
- Share our lists for fundraising
- Make a financial contribution of \$ _____

Signature of Authorized Representative _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____ Title _____

We/I will also support Florida's Water and Land Legacy in the following ways:

- Provide the following staff time: _____
- Gather signatures and distribute materials at our outreach tables.
- Include volunteer recruitment notice or flyers in our mailings.*
- Send a postcard to our volunteers/supporters to recruit signature gatherers.*
- Send an email alert to our members to recruit volunteers and/or announce meetings.
- Include an article on the initiative in our newsletter
- Have a campaign representative speak at one of our meetings.
- Provide support for web design tech support graphic design media/communications
- Other _____ More comments on back

* Template language, flyers and postcards will be provided by the Legacy Campaign.