



WHAT WILL YOUR CONSERVATION LEGACY BE?

All projects listed here are priorities on the Florida Forever list and are eligible for Water and Land Conservation Amendment funds.



By Mark Long

Florida's First Magnitude Springs

Water quality, drinking water supply, springs, rivers

Florida boasts the largest concentration of continuously flowing "first magnitude"* freshwater springs in the world. This project would protect lands that surround 33 of our largest springs, buffering them from urban, agricultural, and mining pollution that not only harms water visibility and wildlife habitat, but also threatens our drinking water supplies. Nearly 40 percent of the First Magnitude Springs project area has yet to be protected, leaving them vulnerable to pollution.

Counties: Bay, Hamilton, Hernando, Jackson, Lafayette, Leon, Levy, Madison, Marion, Suwannee, Wakulla, Walton, Washington

* "First magnitude" springs have an average flow of 100 cubic feet of fresh water per second or more.



Ochlockonee River, By J.S. Clark (Flickr)

Ochlockonee River Conservation Area

Water quality, wildlife habitat protection and restoration

Preserving the Ochlockonee River Conservation Area would protect water quality in the Ochlockonee River, Lake Talquin, Lake Iamonia, and ultimately Apalachee Bay. Beyond keeping a six-mile stretch along the river in its undisturbed, natural condition, the project would also protect and restore a longleaf pine forest and wildlife habitat that is critical for rare animals, including the Gopher Tortoise. Only 25 percent of the project area has been preserved.

Counties: Gadsden, Leon



"Good Spot," By Tim Donovan, (FWCphoto Flickr)

Upper Saint Marks River Corridor

Wildlife corridor, outdoor recreation, water quality, springs

The 15,670 acres comprising the Upper Saint Marks River Corridor would protect an array of natural areas, including forested wetlands and old-growth cypress necessary to connect existing conservation lands and protect water quality in the St. Marks River and numerous springs in the area. The project also provides excellent recreation opportunities, including canoeing, fishing, hiking, hunting, and wildlife viewing by connecting recreation lands in Leon County, such as the J.R. Alford Greenway, Tom Brown State Park, and others. To date, only 25 percent of the project area has been protected.

Counties: Jefferson, Leon, Wakulla



By Rachel Kramer (Flickr)

Dickerson Bay / Bald Point

Critical wildlife habitat, beaches, Kemps Ridley sea turtles

Dickerson Bay/Bald Point is where the westernmost Big Bend salt marshes meet the easternmost white sand beaches of the Panhandle. Protecting this area is critical to the survival of the world's most endangered sea turtle, the Kemp's Ridley, which relies upon these beaches to nest and nearby shallow waters to feed. It also offers an important opportunity to protect beach dunes used by many species of shore birds, as well as marshes and lakes that support Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida Black Bear and other animals. The southern part of the project is designated for use as a state park to augment recreational opportunities of the adjacent Marshes Sands County Park. More than 40 percent of this project has yet to be protected.

Counties: Wakulla, Franklin



By David Roddenberry

Bear Creek Forest

Critical wildlife habitat, water quality

Acquisition of Bear Creek Forest would help establish the Northwest Florida Ecological Greenway, a proposed system of natural areas linking state, federal and non-profit conservation lands, and allowing for the protection of several native and endangered species, such as the Florida black bear, the gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow and several plant species that are unique to these wet prairies and forested wetlands. This land would also serve as a critical water recharge area where the wetlands act as both a sponge and filter for groundwater. To date, none of the 100,000 acres have been protected.

Counties: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf



Clear Creek/Whiting Field

Wildlife habitat, recreation

This project would allow for open space in an urbanizing area as well as stabilize land uses around the Whiting Field Naval Air Station to prevent encroachment onto a military base. A few of the proposed recreational uses for this land are camping, hiking, biking, wildlife observation, scientific research and environmental education. This site is also key for extending the Blackwater River Heritage State Trail.

To date only one-third of the project has been completed.

Counties: Santa Rosa