

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN FLORIDA

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The responsible management and preservation of Florida's natural resources is vital to the success and sustainability of Florida's economy, including its three main economic drivers - tourism, agriculture, and development. Empirical research suggests that a sustainable and healthy economy is inextricably linked to the health of the State's natural environment. Floridians have expressed a desire and willingness to pay for land conservation and environmental restoration, and support candidates who favor strong environmental policies.

Former Florida Governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham recently said "Water is the lifeblood of Florida. It ties our state together, provides untold recreational opportunities and draws millions of visitors each year to our state, supporting jobs and economic growth. The pollution and usage issues affecting every facet of our water supply are serious and immediate, and we must address them in order to protect our heritage and preserve our quality of life." According to a 2010 U.S. Environmental Protection Agency report 80% of Florida's assessed miles of rivers and streams; 90% of assessed lakes, reservoirs, and ponds; and 97% of assessed bays, estuaries, and coastal shorelines are impaired (polluted).¹ The degradation of Florida's natural lands, waters, fish and wildlife is a threat not only to Florida's environment, but to its economy as well.

Florida's Ecology

- No part of Florida is more than 60 miles from the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico.²
- Florida contains 36,000 square miles of forests, croplands, and ranches;³ 10,500 square miles of offshore State lands (Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico);⁴ and 825 miles of sandy beaches.⁵
- Florida has almost 10,000 lakes and streams, and more than 700 springs (the largest concentration of freshwater springs in the world).
- The Floridan Aquifer is the most prolific in the United States.⁶

Florida's Economic Drivers

Tourism & Recreation

Impact on tax revenue and job generation

- Produced \$61.1 billion in taxable sales in 2011.⁷
- Contributed nearly 25% of 2011 state sales tax revenue (\$3 billion).⁸
- Directly supported 1.01 million jobs in 2010.⁹

- Visit Florida Board Chairman Tony Lapi said that every 85 visitors support 1 Florida job.¹⁰
- Governor Rick Scott said that tourism is a leading driver of the rebounding economy.¹¹
- Sales from tourism and recreation, which were up 7.2% statewide from November 2010 to November 2011, are on the leading edge of Florida’s economic recovery.¹²

Floridians & Tourists Use Protected Lands and Waters

- In 2006, 5.9 million Florida residents and nonresidents fished, hunted, or watched wildlife.¹³
- In 2011, 63% of Florida residents enjoyed beach activities, 49% viewed wildlife, 46% fished, 44% bicycled, and 40% picnicked.¹⁴
- In 2011, 49%t of tourists enjoyed beach activities, 47% viewed wildlife, 37% picnicked, 29% swam in public pools, and 26% visited historical or archaeological sites.¹⁵

Fishing

- Florida’s 2.8 million recreational fishers are the most of any state.
- The cumulative economic impact of recreational fishing in Florida is over \$8.3 billion.¹⁶
- Retail fishing sales in Florida exceeded \$4.8 billion in 2011.¹⁷
- Recreational fishing supports more than 79,000 jobs in Florida.¹⁸
- Recreational fishing in Florida generated over \$440 million in state and local taxes.¹⁹
- Commercial fishing and seafood processing generated \$5.6 billion in sales and 108,695 jobs in 2011.²⁰
- Over 1 million marine recreational fishing licenses were sold in Florida in Fiscal Year 2008, generating over \$29 million in state revenue.²¹

Boating

- In 2008, boating amounted to a \$16.8 billion economic impact and 202,743 jobs.²²
 - Nearly 100,000 of these jobs were in the manufacturing sector.²³

Outdoor Recreation

| Category | Retail Sales | State and Local Taxes | Economic Impact | Jobs |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|---------|
| Hunting | \$447,090,434 | \$49,231,663 | \$780,058,076 | 10,675 |
| Freshwater Fishing | \$1,536,222,314 | \$143,699,808 | \$2,630,617,741 | 24,802 |
| Saltwater Fishing | \$3,329,756,876 | \$345,766,792 | \$5,691,949,544 | 54,516 |
| Wildlife Viewing | \$3,456,599,022 | \$351,026,035 | \$5,784,257,906 | 51,380 |
| Total | \$8,769,668,646 | \$889,724,298 | \$14,886,883,267 | 141,373 |

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 2011²⁴

Park Attendance

- Florida's Department of Environmental Protection reported that park related activities generated \$970 million in direct economic benefits and supported approximately 19,347 jobs in 2010.²⁵
 - In 2010 Everglades National Park attracted 915,538 visitors who contributed \$135,494,000 in economic benefits and supported 1,956 jobs in the local area.²⁶
- The Florida State parks system provides \$70 million in state sales tax revenue.²⁷
- For every 1,000 visitors to a Florida state park there is a \$43,400 direct impact on local communities.²⁸
- The National Park Service reported 9,222,981 recreational visitors to Florida in 2010.²⁹
 - Tourists visiting National parks in Florida spent \$513,999,000 in 2010, which supported 7,608 jobs.³⁰
- On average, a state park closing for 1 year would result in a loss of nearly \$5.9 million in revenue for the State's economy. Similarly, if Florida's State parks enjoyed an increase of 10% in annual attendance during the next fiscal year, the State's economy would enjoy an increase of \$65 million.³¹

Development

Emerging Opportunities for Green Development

- RLRCo, a national real estate research firm, found that one-third of people searching for a home prefer development that is compact, less harmful to the natural environment, walkable, and mixed use.³²
 - Fewer than 10% of U.S. cities provide these features.³³
- Florida could take the lead in this emerging opportunity to attract desirable new residents who prefer environmentally sensitive development.

Green Development Saves Taxpayer Dollars & Improves Quality of Life

- Communities developed in the traditional automobile driven sprawl pattern incur increased infrastructure costs when compared to compact green communities.³⁴
- Compared to traditional development, compact green development was found to save municipalities an average of 25% on sewer and water infrastructure, and 33% in road costs.
- These costs require the raising of additional tax revenue or the reduction of municipal services.³⁵

- The end result is a reduction in quality of life for those living in urban sprawl communities.³⁶

Land near Natural Areas is More Valuable

- A 2009 study by The Nature Conservancy found that single-family homes within 100 feet of natural areas were worth \$14,400 more than comparable homes not located near a natural area.
- The study estimated that the aggregate positive impact on land values from natural areas was \$159 million in Leon County alone.³⁷

Military & Defense

Land Preservation Near Military Basis

- Land conservation surrounding military bases is a priority for the Federal Government and Florida Forever.
- Since 2002 the Department of Defense has provided Florida with \$14.45 million for land conservation, which has protected over 16,000 acres of natural lands.

Agriculture

Economic Impact

- Agricultural is an essential element of Florida's economy and relies on clean and abundant water resources and protected lands.
- Agriculture has an economic impact estimated at over \$100 billion annually.³⁸
- Agricultural sales add \$2.98 billion annually to state and local tax rolls.³⁹
- Direct employment in agriculture, natural resources, and related industries (1.3 million full time and part time jobs) represented 13.4% of all employment in Florida.⁴⁰

Environmental Stewardship is Sound Economic Policy

Water Supply

Protecting Water Resources

- If current water use trends continue, by 2050 Florida will need 12,800 million gallons of water per day to meet demand – and increase of more than 57% from 2000.⁴¹
- Traditional ground and surface water supplies may be insufficient to meet this need.

- Desalination, the major alternative to traditional water supply sources, would cost the state of Florida nearly \$6 billion per year to produce the additional water necessary at today's cost of \$3 per 1,000 gallons.⁴²

Economic Benefits of Environmental Preservation and Restoration

Everglades Restoration

- The restoration of the Everglades will increase economic welfare in Florida by at least \$46.5 billion.⁴³
- The benefit to cost ratio for Everglades restoration is estimated at greater than 4:1.
- Everglades restoration will support 442,664 jobs over the next 50 years.⁴⁴

Economic Benefits of Ecosystem Services

- Natural coastal resources provide more than \$11 billion a year in storm protection services.⁴⁵
- A study of ten Florida conservation areas found they generated \$1.8 billion annually in ecosystem services.⁴⁶

Businesses Favor Natural Resource Protection and Preservation

The Emerging Green Business Industry

- Green businesses in America constitute a \$175 billion industry that employs nearly 2 million people.
- In Florida alone, environmental businesses and eco-friendly products contribute an estimated \$9 billion a year to the economy and employ nearly 200,000 people.⁴⁷
- 82% of large companies in Europe and the U.S. believe sustainable business practices increase their company value.⁴⁸
- A national survey of 1,200 high-tech workers found that quality of life in a community increases the attractiveness of a job by 33%.⁴⁹

Floridians Support Land and Water Conservation

Floridians are Willing to Pay for Land and Water Conservation

- Floridians are willing to pay \$59-\$79 annually per household to restore the Everglades.⁵⁰
- Residents of the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) are willing to pay nearly \$44 each for the conservation of 250,000 acres of land within the District.⁵¹
 - SJRWMD residents put the highest value on land conserved for the primary purpose of protecting water resources.

Floridians Favor Conservation Policies

- 63% of Floridians would be more likely to vote for a legislative candidate who supports continued funding for Florida Forever.⁵²
- Sixty four percent of Florida voters favor increased funding for Everglades restoration.⁵³
- 67% of Floridians support continued legislative funding for Florida Forever.⁵⁴
- In 1972 the voters of the State of Florida passed a referendum with 70% of the vote to allocate the first \$200 million in land acquisition funding.⁵⁵
- Since 1988 Floridians have passed 78 ballot initiatives in support of land conservation.⁵⁶

¹ "Florida Water Quality Assessment Report, Assessed Waters of Florida by Watershed."

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² Julie Hauserman. Florida's Coastal and Ocean Future- A Blueprint for Economic and Environmental Leadership. September 2006. <http://www.nrdc.org/water/oceans/florida/flfuture.pdf>

³ Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Industries in Florida in 2009. Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. Published August 2011

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FE/FE89700.pdf>

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⁶ Water Resources, Atlas of Florida, Fernald, E. A. and D. J. Patton, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 1984, p 16

⁷ "Florida's Key Tourism Indicators." Visit Florida.

http://www.visitflorida.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Key_Indicators&Template=/CM/HTMLDisplay.cfm&ContentID=13117

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John Hielscher. "Florida Attracts Record Number of Tourists in 2011." Herald-Tribune. January 18, 2012.

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20120216/ARTICLE/120219623/2416/NEWS?p=1&tc=pg>

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Florida Tourism off the Charts: Record-Setting Number of Visitors in 2011." The News Service of Florida.

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¹² "Florida tourism rises to all-time highs." February 16, 2012.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/02/16/2645279/florida-tourism-rises-to-all-time.html>

¹³ "2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation." U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/fhw06-fl.pdf>

¹⁴ 2011 Florida Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Division of Recreation and Parks.

¹⁵ 2011 Florida Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey. Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Division of Recreation and Parks.

¹⁶ Economics of Fish and Wildlife Recreation. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Estimates through July 2011 <http://myfwc.com/media/1496521/EconomicsOfFishAndWildlife-July2011.pdf>

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