

Why Conserve Land

- **Water Supply:** Agricultural and residential demand for water in Florida could more than double by 2070¹. Unfortunately, there are already several Water Resource Caution Areas in Florida where demand for water exceeds supply over a 20 year planning period.

Natural lands allow rainwater to percolate into our underground aquifers, where 90% of Floridians obtain their drinking water. As development replaces natural land cover, opportunities for aquifer recharge are decreased and stormwater runoff increases, much of which is lost to tide.



- **Wildlife:** Protected lands provide vital habitat for wildlife, including Florida's many imperiled species. It is necessary to connect protected lands statewide in order to provide migration pathways and ensure the sustainability of Florida's wildlife populations. Connected lands allow individuals from different areas to breed with each other, increasing genetic resilience; allow for new populations to recolonize an area if disaster strikes; and allow animals to migrate to more suitable climates as climate change alters their current habitat. Isolated habitats are more likely to experience local extinctions and local extinctions proceed species extinctions.



- **Air & Water Quality:** Conserved lands protect native vegetation that naturally filter out pollutants in our air and water. These plants can remove excess nutrients in stormwater before they reach our surface waters or aquifers.

¹ Geoplan Center at the University of Florida. "Technical Report Water 2070: Mapping Florida's Future - Alternative Patterns of Water Use in 2070." Edited by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and 1000 Friends of Florida, Nov. 2016.

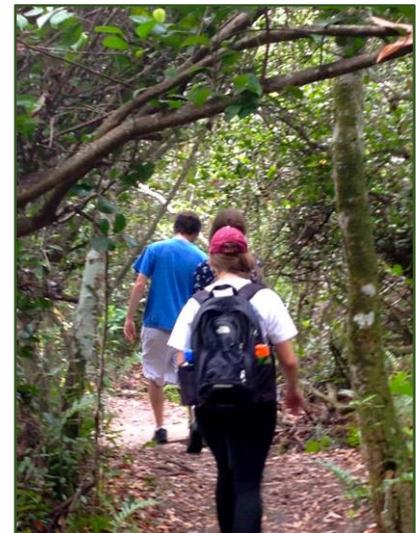
- **Economy:** Conserving land is less expensive and more effective than attempting complex restoration and infrastructure projects. Conserved lands also fuel our tourism-based economy. Outdoor recreation in Florida generates \$58.6 billion in consumer spending annually². In 2011, wildlife viewing generated \$4.9 billion³. In the 2016-2017 fiscal year, Florida's state parks generated \$3 billion⁴.



- **Climate Change Resilience:** Conservation lands, when managed properly, can remove carbon dioxide from the air and store significant amounts of carbon in plant cover and soil. Preserving lands along our coastline strengthens shorelines, buffering our communities from extreme weather events. Mangroves reduce wind speed and wave damage during storms and allow soil to build up over time, mitigating damage from sea level rise. They also store 3-5% more carbon per unit than other forest plants⁵. One acre of wetland can store up to 1.5 million gallons of floodwater, reducing flooding impacts from the next hurricane.



- **Defense:** The military needs natural lands to buffer their bases in order to run simulations and test equipment without interfering with civilian life.
- **Quality of Life:** Several scientific studies have concluded that spending time in nature is beneficial for people's health and well-being.⁶ Recreation lands also provide low-cost opportunities for the public to exercise.



² Outdoor Industry Association. Available at https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/OIA_RecEcoState_FL.pdf.

³ Wildlife viewing: Southwick Associates. *The 2011 Economic Benefits of Wildlife Viewing in Florida*. Prepared for Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. October, 2013.

⁴ Florida Division of Recreation and Parks. *Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Florida State Park System – Economic Impact Assessment*. October, 2017.

⁵ WWF. *Living Planet Report 2016: Summary*. WWF, Gland, Switzerland. 2016. P. 14.

⁶ University of Minnesota's Earl E. Bakken Center for Spirituality & Healing. "How Does Nature Impact Our Wellbeing?" Edited by Jean Larson and Mary Jo Kreitzer, *Taking Charge of Your Health & Wellbeing*, Regents of the University of Minnesota, 2016, www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/enhance-your-wellbeing/environment/nature-and-us/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing.