

A person is standing in a small motorboat on a calm lake at sunset. The sky is filled with vibrant orange and yellow clouds, reflecting on the water. The boat has the word "POLAR" written on its side. The background shows a dark treeline and distant mountains under the twilight sky.

## Outdoor Recreation Programs and Supply

# Chapter 3

*Tomoka State Park, Credit: Walter Ebbert*

As with other states, Florida's outdoor recreation programs are the collaborative efforts of many federal, state and local governments, as well as private institutions, businesses and non-governmental organizations. A multitude of recreation providers fund, manage and support opportunities for outdoor recreation, which collectively, help meet the needs of Florida's citizenry and visitors. No one entity could tackle this enormous challenge alone.

### Roles In Providing Outdoor Recreation

To efficiently meet the state's diverse, outdoor recreation needs, some division of responsibility is required. It would not be ideal, for example, for agencies charged with managing state parks, forests, wildlife and aquatic resources to also be responsible for local ball fields, tennis courts and neighborhood playgrounds.

The core responsibility for promoting, coordinating and inventorying all outdoor recreation efforts beneficial to the general public rests with state government. This is the only level of government where such a task can be accomplished effectively, especially when the resources on which recreation is based crosses jurisdictional boundaries, as with regional or statewide trails.

Thus, whether directly or indirectly, the state must work to ensure that public demand for outdoor recreation is brought into a reasonable balance with the supply of opportunities (at least in a broad, regional

perspective). Rather than meet these needs entirely through state-level programs, the state should assume responsibility for ensuring that needs are met through the planned and coordinated efforts of state, federal and local governments, as well as via private interests.

In Florida, the state's primary responsibility is to provide resource-based outdoor recreation, at least as far as its direct programming efforts are concerned. This is accomplished through the acquisition of lands and development of facilities necessary to make natural and cultural outdoor recreation resources of regional or statewide significance available to the public.

The extensive land requirements, the typical location outside urban centers and the higher costs of operation have led the state to assume this role as a bridge between the large, nationally significant parks and forests managed by the federal government and the community playgrounds and recreational facilities traditionally provided by local governments. No other level of government can reasonably be expected to meet this obligation.

User-oriented outdoor recreation, like other local services, is largely the responsibility of local government. The need for this form of recreation is strongest in urban and suburban areas, and it increases in proportion to the degree of urbanization.

However, 29 of Florida's 67 counties and eight cities have established excellent conservation and environmental land acquisition programs of their own that offer many forms of resource-based recreation. These programs typically originated from referendums in which citizens voted to increase their sales taxes



or property taxes to fund land acquisition and management. Matching funds from state programs such as *Florida Forever* have also provided incentives for these local acquisition efforts.

All local governments, large or small, are faced with the task of providing a wide range of recreational opportunities that are important to the well-being of their citizens. These include everything from cultural arts programs to ball fields to nature trails. However, local governments are finding it increasingly difficult to accomplish this, particularly considering rising costs and slimmer budgets.

While the state's primary focus in its outdoor recreation efforts is directed toward resource-based outdoor recreation, a substantial effort is made to assist local governments with financial support and technical assistance to construct user-oriented recreation facilities. Three programs — the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, the Florida Communities Trust Program and the Florida Recreational Trails Program — provide local governments with funds in the form of matching grants for acquiring and developing recreational lands and facilities. The demonstrated priorities and needs of local governments are given full consideration in the allocation of funds from these programs.

Private recreation providers are also an essential component of the state's outdoor recreation supply. Commercial providers meet a significant portion

of the overall demand for both resource-based and user-oriented outdoor recreation in Florida, particularly tourist-generated demand. For example, commercial providers supply nearly 90 percent of the campsites in the state and meet a considerable portion of the overall demand for camping facilities by residents and visitors.

Non-profit organizations include private and quasi-public institutions such as scout troops, church groups and conservation organizations. These entities provide land and facilities primarily for the use of their members, but in some cases for the public at large.

Clubs and other organizations not certified as non-profit by the Florida Department of State (FDOS), such as hunt clubs, country clubs, yacht clubs and others, manage lands and facilities that are primarily available only to organization members and their guests. In doing so, they can relieve some of the pressure that is often placed on public facilities.

In addition, private industry lands (timber companies and other industries with extensive land holdings whose lands or portions thereof are open to the public) are used for resource-based recreation, although some forms of user-oriented facilities are also available. In recent years, however, many such areas have been withdrawn from use by the general public, particularly areas for hunting, and are now available only to leaseholders or others who have access to the lands.



## Outdoor Recreation Programs

Florida's ever-growing and ever-changing public demand have fueled a variety of outdoor recreation programs over the years. While both private and public efforts have served this demand, most formal outdoor recreation programs have been instituted by various levels of government. Not only have state and federal agencies been extensively involved, but practically every county and municipality in Florida conducts some outdoor recreation programs of its own.

Many of these diverse programs have evolved more out of expediency than by careful design, and as a result, there has been much duplication and overlap. Fortunately, however, most of the legitimate outdoor recreation needs in the state have been met in some fashion by concerted efforts to coordinate these governmental programs.

### *Florida's Outdoor Recreation Providers:*

- Federal Government
- State Government
- County Government
- Municipal Government
- Private Sector



Florida's outdoor recreation providers can be classified into five categories: federal government, state government, county government, municipal government and private sector providers. Both federal and state agencies are concerned with areas and facilities designed to accommodate the demand for resource-based outdoor recreation. County and municipal governments are the primary suppliers of the public facilities needed for user-oriented recreation, although some also provide areas and facilities to meet part of the need for resource-based outdoor recreation.

Private recreation providers, which include non-profit organizations and other entities not certified as non-profit by the FDOS, such as hunt clubs, country clubs and yacht clubs are a necessary component of the state's outdoor recreation supply and meet a significant portion of the overall demand for both resource-based and user-oriented outdoor recreation in Florida.



*Florida National Scenic Trail, Credit: Abigail Chambers*

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The federal government has responsibility for developing recreational facilities and programs that provide public opportunities that are not, or cannot, be made available by state or local government.

Federal roles in outdoor recreation are broad in scope and include dredging waterways, lock and levee construction and maintenance, endangered species protection, habitat preservation and providing crucial funds for many programs through federal grants. Federal agencies coordinate and cooperate on resource protection efforts such as protecting wilderness areas, designating wild and scenic rivers and implementing trail connectivity projects that require inter-jurisdictional management.

The core mission of most of the federal agencies, with the exception of the National Park Service, is not recreation per se. However, by the nature of their settings and vast tracts of federal lands - the national forests, national wildlife refuges, military installations, dams and locks, waterways and estuaries - are key locations for outdoor recreation and play a crucial role in the state's outdoor recreation supply.

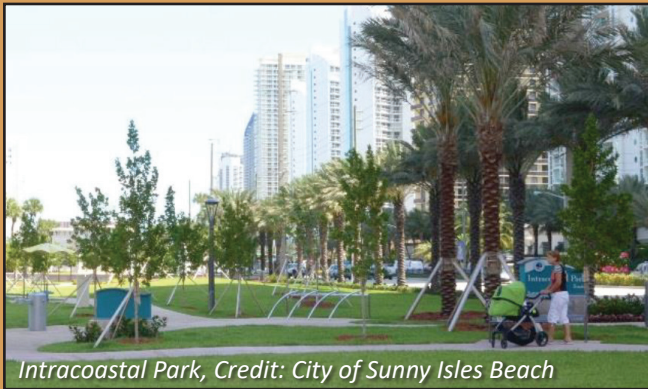


# SPOTLIGHT

## Land and Water Conservation Fund

The National Park Service administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a federal program that provides funding for park acquisition and development projects. The LWCF provided more than \$27 million to Florida's local governments between 2004 and 2017, resulting in the establishment and improvement of more than 137 different parks throughout the state.

Intracoastal Park, located in the City of Sunny Isles Beach, received \$200,000 through the LWCF program. The grant helped enhance the park's presence as an open, public green space amid a bustling urban setting. The funds provided for the renovation of a multi-use trail, and helped add a waterfront viewing area, a shaded playground, picnic facilities, landscaping, security lights, bicycle rack and other support facilities.



Intracoastal Park, Credit: City of Sunny Isles Beach

## U.S. Department of The Interior

### National Park Service

The mission of the National Park Service (NPS) is to “preserve the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of this and future generations.” The NPS also “partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.” Besides active land management for outdoor recreation, the NPS also administers financial and technical assistance programs to aid state and local agencies and private citizens.

### In Florida, NPS's mission includes:

- Managing 11 national parks, preserves, monuments, memorials and seashores comprising approximately 2.6 million acres of submerged and upland areas set aside for their natural or historic interest.
- Administering the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Program, which provided more than \$27 million to local governments between 2004 and 2017 to fund 137 park acquisition and development projects. These funds are awarded to meet recreation needs identified through an open selection process described in Appendix D.
- Maintaining the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 United States Code 470).
- Designating significant properties or landmarks of national historical or archaeological interest, as defined in the Historic Sites Act of 1936 (16 United States Code 461), including districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects of state and regional significance.
- Collaborating with other federal agencies as well as state and local government programs designed to achieve national goals such as clean air, protection of wilderness areas, clean water and access to waterways and coastal areas under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Water Resources Development Act.
- Providing matching grants through the Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid Program, an expansion of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, to government, private groups and individuals for historic preservation surveys, planning activities and community education. These programs are administered in Florida by the Division of Historic Resources within FDOS.
- Administering the Federal Lands-to-Parks Program, which enables states and local governments to establish park and recreation areas on federal properties which are no longer needed for military or civilian uses by conveying lands for that purpose.
- Coordinating the Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program by providing planning assistance to communities for projects that are designed to protect rivers, trails and greenways on lands outside of the federal domain.



# Outdoor Recreation Resources and Facilities by Category of Provider, Statewide 2018

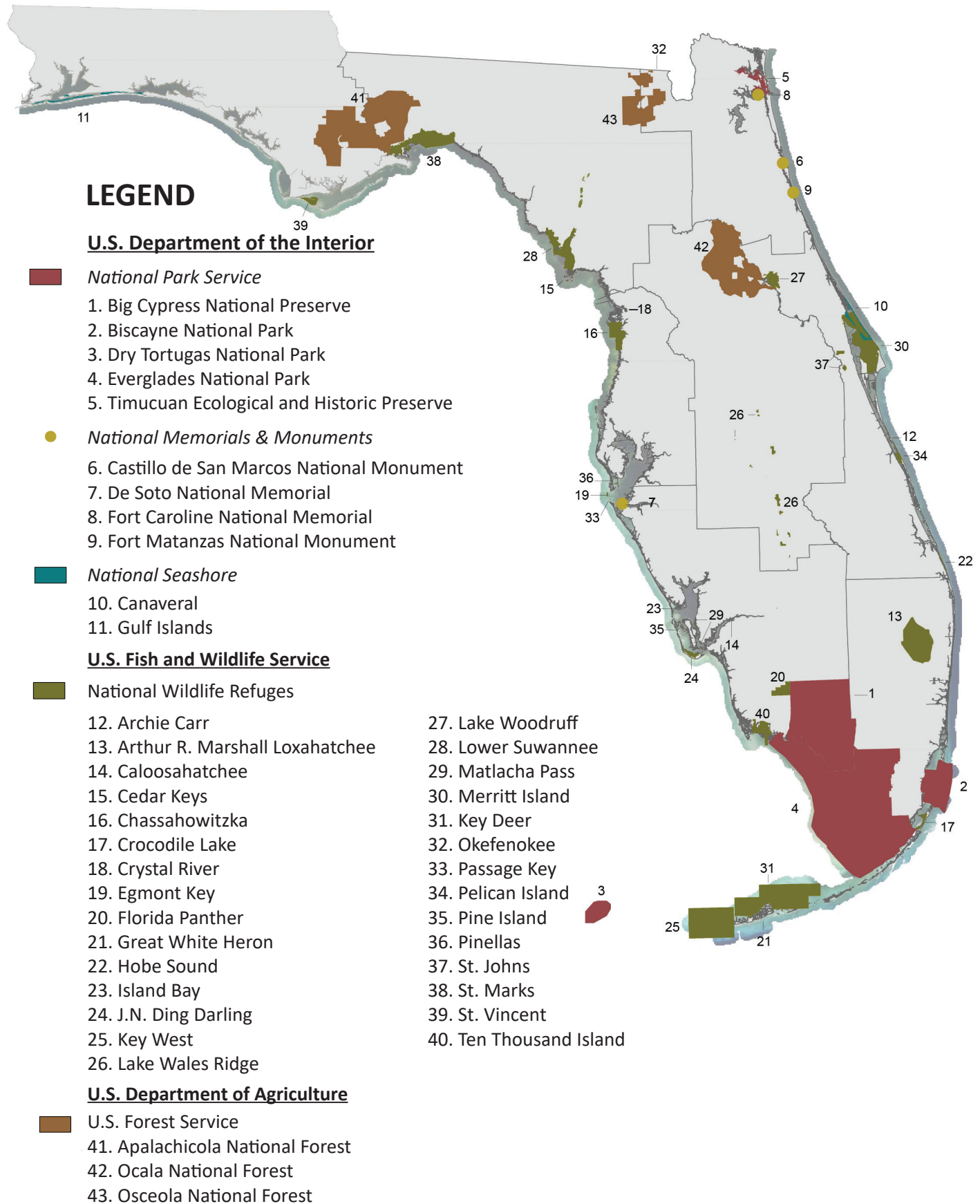
Table. 3.1

Facilities	Federal	State	County	Municipal	Non-Government	Total
<b>Outdoor Recreation Areas</b>	70	715	4,000	5,424	3,105	13,314
Land (in Acres)	4,600,730	4,697,593	422,331	113,022	410,594	10,244,270
Water (in Acres)	855,076	2,805,714	50,580	7,278	24,385	3,743,033
<b>Acres TOTAL</b>	<b>5,455,806</b>	<b>7,503,307</b>	<b>472,911</b>	<b>120,300</b>	<b>434,979</b>	<b>13,987,303</b>
<b>Cabins</b>	37	240	103	14	3,136	3,530
Tent Campsites	1,026	1,087	1,223	195	4,768	8,299
RV Campsites	2,138	4,778	3,531	1,451	118,750	130,648
Historic Sites	390	1,182	239	188	190	2,189
Commemorative Structures	9	26	33	148	38	254
Museums	25	103	136	116	163	543
Picnic Tables	1,966	9,345	26,375	24,060	56,373	118,119
Hunting Areas (Acres)	2,065,648	3,324,594	15,002	0	22,952	5,428,196
Bike Trails (Miles Paved)	73.5	358.5	600.8	439.6	63.5	1,536
Bike Trails (Miles Unpaved)	144	2,512.4	816.1	232.3	49.7	3,755
Canoe Trails (Miles)	517	997.6	247.6	136.6	309	2,208
Hiking Trails (Miles)	974	4,460.9	2,834.9	353.9	282.8	8,907
Equestrian Trails (Miles)	120.7	2,291.9	642.9	156.9	169.4	3,382
Jogging Trails (Miles)	71.4	312.1	638.3	263.7	71.3	1,357
OHV Trails (Miles)	401	286	0.2	0.7	0	688
Nature Trails (Miles)	310	278.5	707.5	375.9	208.2	1,880
Freshwater Beach (Miles)	0.7	4.1	17.4	6.7	9.3	38
Freshwater Boat Ramps	89	266	614	297	366	1,632
Freshwater Boat Ramps (Lanes)	98	288	756	362	417	1,921
Freshwater Catwalks	12	2,839	205	244	231	3,531
Freshwater Catwalks (Feet)	907	28,229	193,958	60,385	25,507	308,986
Freshwater Jetties	120	120	3,849	75,125	1,306	80,520
Freshwater Marinas	6	17	7	18	297	345
Freshwater Marinas (Slips)	51	86	234	682	10,218	11,271
Freshwater Piers	27	72	256	276	86	717
Freshwater Piers (Feet)	4,515	4,388	18,998	27,938	41,452	97,291
Saltwater Beach (Miles)	139	125	93.8	80.5	36.7	475
Saltwater Boat Ramps	35	45	278	258	314	930
Saltwater Boat Ramps (Lanes)	52	59	455	359	351	1,276
Saltwater Catwalks	53	52	363	192	145	805
Saltwater Catwalks (Feet)	23,044	20,541	72,542	54,857	42,161	213,145
Saltwater Jetties	10,120	11,603	14,389	26,769	9,964	72,845
Saltwater Marinas	11	32	22	65	618	748
Saltwater Marinas (Slips)	698	401	1,311	5,409	36,601	44,420
Saltwater Piers	17	41	148	155	102	463
Saltwater Piers (Feet)	7,506	20,032	37,509	50,905	19,703	135,655
<b>Baseball Fields</b>	51	66	2,609	2,804	181	5,711
Basketball Goals	55	103	3,791	3,507	647	8,103
Equipped Play Areas	52	92	1,889	2,746	449	5,228
Football Fields	18	48	1,043	936	91	2,136
Golf Courses, 18-Hole	8	3	14	63	800	888
Golf Courses, 9-Hole	5	2	13	20	138	178
Golf Courses, Executive	1	1	3	11	190	206
<b>Golf Holes Total</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>1,459</b>	<b>16,884</b>	<b>19,024</b>
Multi-Use Courts	6	12	406	375	159	958
Multi-Use Fields	9	56	980	810	235	2,090
Outdoor Swimming Pools	15	27	157	324	1,505	2,028
Racquetball Courts	19	187	644	733	265	1,848
Shuffleboard Courts	6	13	365	1,710	2,353	4,447
Tennis Courts	78	331	1,777	2,767	4,216	9,169
Volleyball Courts	1	50	355	331	46	783



# Federal Recreation Lands by Managing Agency

Figure. 3.2



## Federal Agency Outdoor Recreation Resources

Region	# of Recreation Areas	Land (in Acres)	Water (in Acres)	Acres Total
Northwest	11	871,043	12,653	883,696
North Central	4	518,415	2,746	521,161
Northeast	9	132,764	405	133,169
Central West	6	24,605	10,007	34,612
Central	3	498,693	10,000	508,693
Central East	13	111,360	174,560	285,920
Southwest	14	610,253	22,052	632,305
Southeast	10	1,833,597	622,653	2,456,250
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4,600,730</b>	<b>855,076</b>	<b>5,455,806</b>

Table. 3.2

## National Trail System



*Florida National Scenic Trail, Copyright 2014 Bill Buck, National Trails Guide*

The National Trail System Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-543) authorized creation of a national trail system comprised of National Recreation Trails, National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails. While National Scenic Trails and National Historic Trails may only be designated by congressional act, National Recreation Trails may

be designated by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance, upon application from the trail managing agency or organization. When designated, these trails are recognized as part of the National Trail System, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2018.



In order to be certified as a National Scenic Trail, a trail must contain outstanding recreation opportunities and encompass more than 100 miles of a continuous, primarily non-motorized trail. Eleven National Scenic Trails have been designated across the U.S. A total of 1,400 miles of hiking trails across Florida were designated as the Florida National Scenic Trail (FNST) in 1983. The FNST is further discussed under the U.S. Forest Service section on page 34.

National Historic Trails commemorate historic and prehistoric routes of travel that are significant to the nation. Throughout the United States, there are 19 National Historic Trails made up of 53,609 miles of designated trails. These trails provide user experiences through a series of interpretive facilities along trails and signed automobile routes. There are currently no National Historic Trails in Florida.

National Recreation Trails provide outdoor recreation opportunities in a variety of urban, rural and remote settings. A total of 33 trails including more than 790 miles of land-based trails and 2,244 miles of paddling trails have been designated in Florida. These trails are managed by federal, state, county and municipal agencies and run the spectrum from urban jogging and bicycling in Tallahassee to wilderness canoeing in the Everglades.

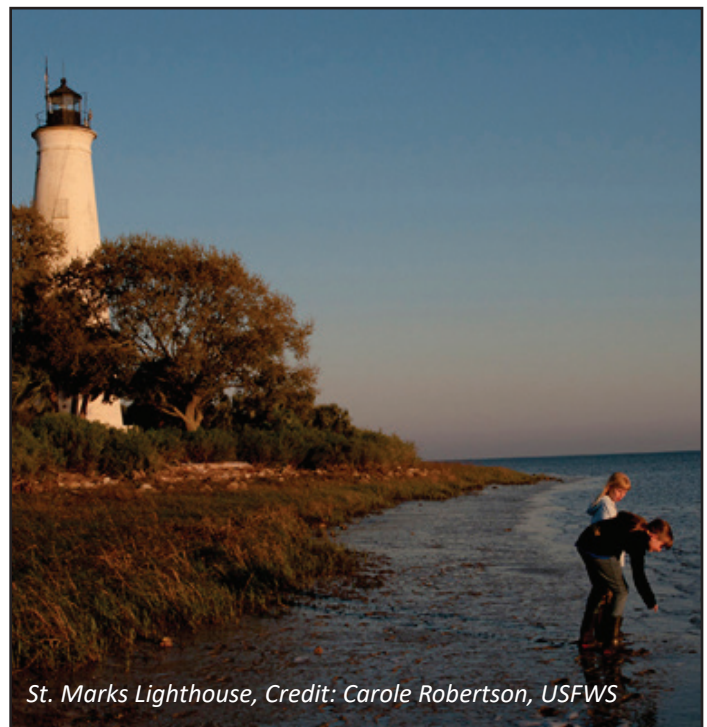
## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), an agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior, is to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. This mission is accomplished by enforcing federal wildlife laws, protecting endangered species, managing migratory birds, restoring nationally significant fisheries and conserving and restoring wildlife habitat including wetlands. The USFWS also distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies across the nation. The activities of the USFWS in Florida include:

- Management of 29 national wildlife refuges, comprising nearly one million acres of land and water. Most of the refuges are limited-purpose outdoor recreation areas that provide bird watching, wildlife observation, fishing, environmental education and interpretation. Some refuges also offer public hunting.

In addition, the Service manages a national fish hatchery in Welaka and maintains law enforcement facilities at six locations.

- Administration of federal aid programs, including Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act and Wallop-Breaux Act), Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act) and Wildlife Partnership Act (conservation of non-game species). These grant programs are managed in Florida by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Grants to Florida under the Clean Vessel Act (clean boating programs) are managed by the Clean Marina Program in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Office.



*St. Marks Lighthouse, Credit: Carole Robertson, USFWS*

### Clean Marina Program

In 1992, Congress enacted the Clean Vessel Act (CVA), which established a federal grant program administered by USFWS to reduce aquatic pollution. The grant program enables marinas to purchase, install and maintain pump-out equipment. The Sport Fishing Restoration Program provides funding, comprised of revenues from excise taxes on fishing equipment, boats and motorboat fuels. Since Florida's CVA Program initiation in 1994, more than 570 pump-outs have been installed across the state. Florida's Clean Marina Program (CMP) is a voluntary, partnership-driven initiative that assists







St. Augustine Municipal Marina, Credit: Florida Coastal Office

facilities throughout the state with incorporating environmental Best Management Practices (BMPs) into their operating procedures. It provides compliance assistance, supplies education on storm readiness through the Clean and Resilient Program and encourages the provision of sewage pump-out stations, recycling and the proper disposal of hazardous materials to ensure a sustainable future for our marine and freshwater environments. With more than 380 designated facilities in Florida, CMP educates recreational boaters, marinas, boat yards and marine retailers on pollution control, and enhance recreational boating through brochures and workshops that emphasize protecting aquatic resources.

## U.S. Department of Agriculture

### U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) provides leadership in the management, protection and use of the nation's forests and grasslands. The agency is dedicated to multiple-use management of these lands for sustained yields of renewable resources such as wood, water, forage, wildlife and recreation to meet the diverse needs of people. The responsibility of the USFS in the field of outdoor recreation is to sustainably develop the recreational potential of National Forests and protect their scenic character. The USFS also cooperates with other federal, state and local agencies in planning and developing recreational resources on other federal, state, local and private lands.

In Florida, the USFS administers three National Forests: the Apalachicola, the Ocala and the Osceola. Together these areas contain approximately 1.2 million acres of land and water, thus making a major

contribution to the state's recreational resources. They contain some of Florida's most pristine lands including extensive woodlands, swamps, springs and streams. Within the National Forests, the USFS manages numerous designated public recreation sites. The vast majority of National Forest land is open for dispersed recreational purposes, such as hiking, hunting, fishing, primitive camping and wildlife viewing.



Credit: FDEP

### Florida National Scenic Trail

The USFS is the federal administering agency for the Florida National Scenic Trail, or FNST. The FNST, designated by Congress in 1983, extends from the Big Cypress National Preserve north to the Gulf Islands National Seashore in the Florida Panhandle. Along the way, the Florida Trail passes through lands managed by more than two dozen public land managing agencies in more than 40 separate management units. The USFS acts as a partner with state land management agencies and private landowners to obtain through-trail access for the project. The non-profit Florida Trail Association, Inc., through its volunteer membership of hiker-volunteers, provides nearly 70,000 hours of manpower each year to build and maintain the FNST and other hiking trails throughout Florida.



## U.S. Department of Defense

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The U.S. Department of Defense (USDOD) includes the Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Each provides outdoor recreation opportunities in Florida. The USDOD has 17 military installations in Florida that make lands available for recreational purposes. Although public outdoor recreation is not a primary function of USDOD, its contributions in this regard are nevertheless important to Florida's overall outdoor recreation program. Generally, all military installations offer some degree of outdoor recreation programs for military personnel, dependents and their guests. However, access to their resources for recreational use by the general public is usually limited.

### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Along with its primary responsibilities for navigation, flood risk management, environmental restoration and beach renourishment, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has made considerable efforts to provide recreational facilities. It is the policy of USACE to plan for and provide outdoor recreation resources and facilities at all of its water resources projects. For information on the Corps' recreational opportunities, visit [www.corpslakes.us](http://www.corpslakes.us).

The USACE's general authority for recreational development stems from the Flood Control Act of 1944, which was later expanded by the Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (16 United States Code 460). The latter act directs that all projects give full consideration to opportunities for outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement, and it establishes outdoor recreation and preservation of wildlife and fish as a full project purpose.

Florida is divided into two USACE districts. The Mobile District manages recreation sites at the Jim Woodruff Lock and Dam on Lake Seminole, a 37,500-acre impoundment in southern Georgia and Jackson County, Florida. Excellent opportunities for camping, hiking, fishing, hunting and boating are available here.

The Jacksonville District manages Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway in southern Florida. Not only does this managed area provide extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, but its series of locks and canals provides a cross-Florida waterway that is

popular among pleasure boaters. The Okeechobee Waterway connects the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico via the lake, the St. Lucie Canal and the Caloosahatchee River. A few of the outdoor recreation opportunities include three full-facility campgrounds along the Okeechobee Waterway and the 110-mile Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail that runs atop the Herbert Hoover Dike.

In partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other federal, state, local and tribal agencies, the USACE is implementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), one of the world's largest wetland restoration projects. The project covers 16 counties and more than 18,000 square miles. The plan was approved by Congress through the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, which was reauthorized by Congress in November 2007. It includes 68 project elements and will require more than 35 years to construct at an estimated cost of \$10.5 billion. The CERP Master Recreation Plan will provide guidance to assist recreation planning within CERP project fee title lands, and will help provide recreation opportunities that are compatible with the restoration purposes of the project.

## U.S. Department of Transportation

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The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) within the U.S. Department of Transportation provides grants to state and local governments for various recreational trail projects, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and scenic highways. The Recreational Trails Program provides funds to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized trail uses. The Office of Greenways and Trails in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks administers the financial assistance program in coordination with the FHWA.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (formerly the Transportation Enhancements Program) provides funding for improvements that are not part of the features routinely found in transportation projects. Enhancements such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities, preservation and conversion of abandoned railroad



corridors to trails, and scenic overlooks projects have been provided in Florida through this program. Since 2000, a total of approximately \$647.3 million in funds (representing more than 2,300 projects) have been apportioned to Florida through the program.

The National Scenic Byways Program recognizes roads having outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational and archaeological qualities by designating them as National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads, America's Byways or State Scenic Byways. Grants and technical assistance are provided to the states to implement projects on designated byways, and to plan, design and develop a state scenic byway program. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in cooperation with FHWA, is the administering agency for the Florida Scenic Highway Program.

## U.S. Department of Commerce

The **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** is a scientific and technical organization that works to preserve and enhance the nation's coastal resources and ecosystems. Its mission is to provide products, services and information that promote safe navigation, support coastal communities, sustain marine ecosystems and mitigate coastal hazards. The National Ocean Service provides assistance to Florida in observing, understanding and managing coastal and marine resources. Florida is an active partner in several programs that directly affect resource protection in Florida's coastal areas.

The **National Estuarine Research Reserve System** is a network of estuarine areas across the nation established for long-term stewardship, research and education. Each reserve has developed an organized ecological research program containing extensive teacher training, education, research and monitoring. Findings are communicated to coastal managers and other decision makers, as well as local citizens. Florida contains three of these reserves: Apalachicola, Guana Tolomato Matanzas and Rookery Bay.

The **National Marine Sanctuary Program** designates and manages areas of the marine environment with special national significance due to their conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, scientific, cultural, archaeological, educational or aesthetic qualities. The Florida Keys National Marine



*Hikers enjoying boardwalk at Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Credit: ANERR*

Sanctuary, one of 16 in the National Marine Sanctuaries System, covers 3,800 square miles and encompasses part of the most extensive living coral reef system in the nation (and the third largest in the world).

The **National Coastal Zone Management Program** fosters an effective partnership among federal, state and local governments. By leveraging federal and state matching funds, the program strengthens the capabilities of each partner to address coastal issues while giving states the flexibility to design a program that accommodates their unique coastal challenges.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Florida Coastal Office administers the Florida Coastal Management Program. This state program serves as the lead coordinator with eight other state agencies and five water management districts in enforcing 24 statutes and implementing several coastal zone management programs in cooperation with NOAA. The program works to protect coastal resources, build and maintain vibrant communities, enhance coastal access, protect remarkable places and revitalize working waterfronts.

In 2002, the National Coastal Zone program initiated the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP). The program protects important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical or aesthetic values and that are threatened by conversion





*Cayo Costa State Park, Credit: Greg McCracken*

from their natural or recreational state to other uses. The Florida Coastal Management Program manages this grant program, which provides up to \$3 million for each eligible project.

## STATE PROGRAMS

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The State of Florida's responsibilities for providing public recreation are met through a variety of facilities and programs, each unique to the mission of many separate entities.

## Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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**T**he **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)** is charged with the protection, administration, management, supervision, development and conservation of Florida's natural and cultural resources.

Direct acquisition and management of public outdoor recreation and conservation areas help accomplish this broad mandate, as do major initiatives and agency priorities which contribute to healthy ecosystems. The FDEP's functions include protecting and conserving Florida's water quality and supply; protecting springs and oceans; restoring America's Everglades; acquiring, conserving and managing conservation and recreation lands; enforcing environmental laws and regulations; investing in cleaner sources of energy; and protecting the health of Florida's communities.

## Division Of Recreation and Parks

The FDEP's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) develops and operates Florida's state park system and state greenways and trails for the benefit and enjoyment of Florida's citizens and visitors. The state park system contains many of the best remaining examples of Florida's original domain and cultural heritage. Units in the state park system are classified



175 STATE PARKS

9 NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES

The DRP's Florida Park Service manages 175 state parks, state trails and historic sites spanning nearly 800,000 acres of Florida's natural environment, including 100 miles of beaches, nine National Historic Landmarks and 68 sites on the National Register of Historic Places. The mission of the Florida Park Service is to provide resource-based recreation while preserving, interpreting and restoring natural and cultural resources.



68 HISTORIC SITES

ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES



100 MILES  
OF BEACHES

for management according to the natural and cultural resources they contain and the desired balance between resource preservation and public use.

Besides providing nearly 800,000 acres for public recreational use, the state park system is the largest steward of public historic properties in the state. More than 83 parks contain significant historic resources, including almost 300 historic structures and more than 1,500 archaeological sites. These resources provide a broad array of unique interpretive and educational opportunities for residents and visitors. In addition to administering Florida's state park system, DRP also administers the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The FDEP's Office of Park Planning is responsible for maintaining the Florida Outdoor Recreation Inventory (FORI), a comprehensive inventory of the

existing outdoor recreation resources and facilities in Florida. The FORI also has an interactive mapping function, allowing users to search by location, provider and resource/facility categories. The inventory provides details regarding parks, recreation areas, open spaces and other outdoor recreation sites in the state.

The FORI includes the known outdoor recreation resources and facilities provided by federal, state, county and municipal governments, commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations and clubs. The database consists of more than 13,000 records, maintained for the purpose of developing the SCORP. In 2017, new web-based and mobile applications powered by FORI data were launched, enabling users to find recreation sites more easily on state and federal lands. These new applications, known as *Outdoor Florida*, can be accessed on the FDEP website and can be downloaded from iTunes and Google Play.



Outdoor Florida app



The DRP created the *Outdoor Florida* application to fulfill legislation that took effect July 1, 2016. This purpose of this app is to increase awareness of recreational opportunities available to the public

on Florida’s conservation lands. Recreation sites associated with state and federal lands were added in 2017; municipal, county and other sites will be included in 2018.

The **Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program** (FRDAP) provides financial assistance to eligible local governments, including the 67 county governments and 412 incorporated municipalities of Florida. Funding from the program is awarded on a competitive basis that considers the total project costs and the economic status of the applicants among other evaluation criteria. Pursuant to Section 375.075, Florida Statutes, and Chapter 62D-5, Part V, Florida Administrative Code, FDEP recommends to the Legislature each year that an appropriation of not less than five percent of the total amount credited annually to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund be authorized for the program.

Since 2001, the program has also received two percent of the bond proceeds made available through the *Florida Forever* program. Funding for the program has been awarded to approximately 1,805 projects for the last 16 fiscal year funding cycles.

### State Agency Outdoor Recreation Resources

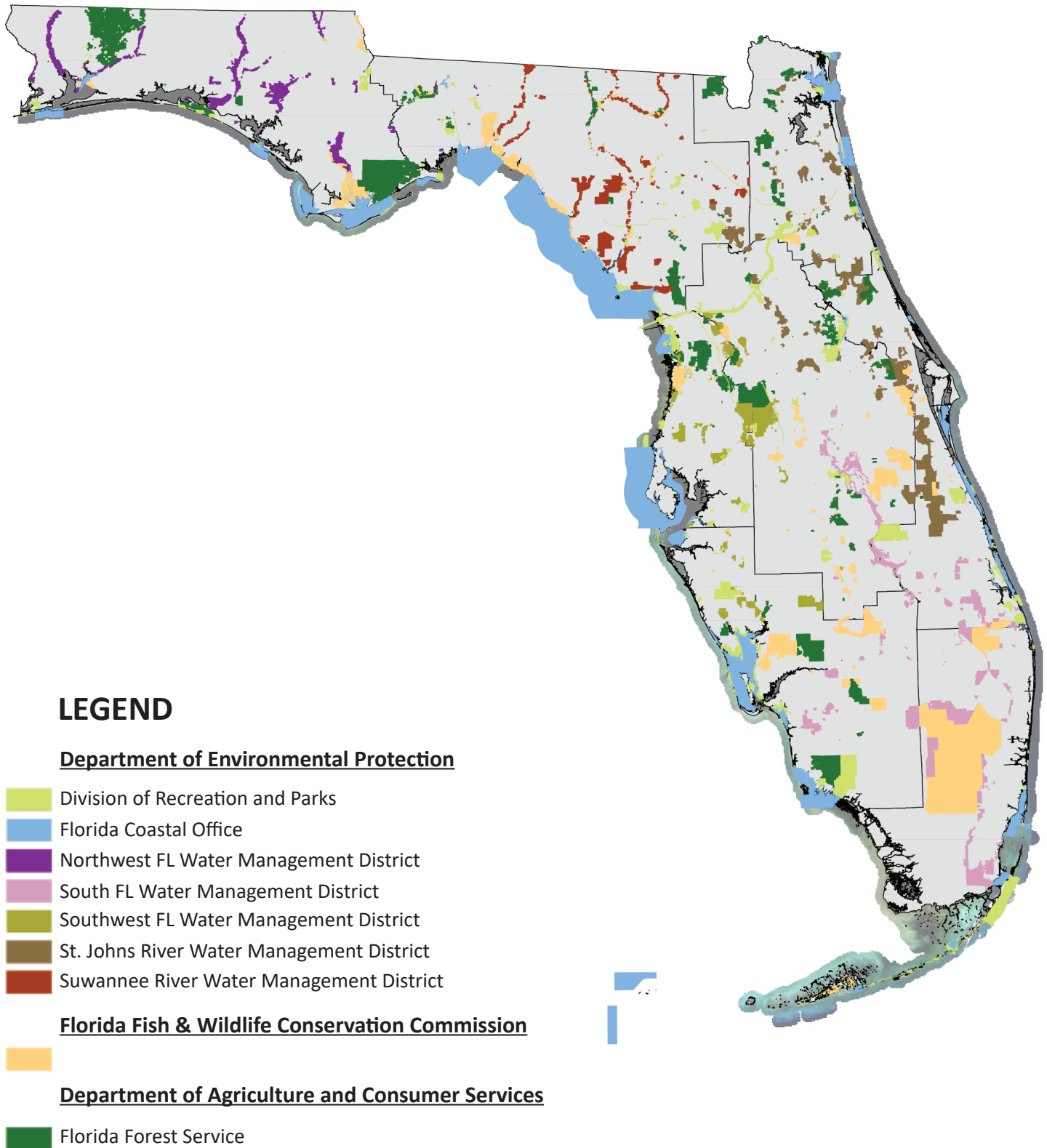
Region	# of Recreation Areas	Land (in Acres)	Water (in Acres)	Acres Total
Northwest	83	835,357	359,030	1,194,387
North Central	168	565,149	1,028,469	1,593,618
Northeast	80	342,118	171,364	513,482
Central West	63	349,959	492,253	842,212
Central	108	656,916	103,374	760,290
Central East	88	479,219	113,589	592,808
Southwest	65	525,907	382,257	908,164
Southeast	68	942,968	155,378	1,098,346
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>4,697,593</b>	<b>2,805,714</b>	<b>7,503,307</b>

Table 3.3



# State Recreation Lands by Managing Agency

Figure 3.2



## Office of Greenways and Trails

The Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) within the Division of Recreation and Parks provides statewide leadership and coordination to establish, expand and promote the Florida Greenways and Trails System (FGTS). To fulfill its mission under the Florida Greenways and Trails Act (Chapter 260, F. S.), OGT coordinates and implements the plan for the FGTS in partnership with communities, businesses, agencies, the Florida Greenways and Trails Council and many other stakeholders.

The OGT also maintains and updates the vision maps that are a companion to the FGTS Plan, encompassing land-based trails, paddling trails and ecological greenways. The vision maps for land and paddling trails are included in Appendix C. As of 2017, the OGT manages 11 state trails and greenways totaling nearly 75,000 acres.

The OGT establishes the vision for the FGTS by

identifying and coordinating greenways and trails planning efforts throughout Florida. The OGT expands the statewide system through the acquisition of eligible projects under the Greenways and Trails component of the *Florida Forever* program, and has partnerships with nearly 30 communities that develop and manage state-acquired greenways and trails on behalf of OGT. In addition, the OGT coordinates with and provides technical assistance regarding the acquisition, development, designation and management of greenways and trails projects that fulfill the FGTS plan and vision.

The OGT also disseminates information about the many benefits that greenways and trails provide to Florida residents and visitors. Lastly, OGT provides information to residents and visitors about greenways and trails-related recreational opportunities through publications, e-newsletters, FloridaGreenwaysAndTrails.com and VisitFlorida.com/trails.

East Central Regional Rail Trail, Credit: Volusia County Parks, Recreation and Culture

# SPOTLIGHT



Stretching 52 miles between Volusia and Brevard Counties, the East Central Regional Rail Trail is the longest rail-to-trail acquisition in Florida. Once completed, the trail will connect three major tourism destinations in the state: the greater Orlando area, Kennedy Space Center and Daytona's beaches. The trail corridor was purchased by the state through the Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program, with Brevard and Volusia Counties responsible for construction and management of the trail. In 2017, OGT acquired property to be developed as a trailhead by the town of Keystone Heights along the Palatka-Lake Butler State Trail.





## Florida Coastal Office



The Florida Coastal Office (FCO) is the principal manager of submerged lands and their associated marine and aquatic resources in Florida. The Florida Aquatic Preserve Act of 1975 (Chapter 258, Part II, Florida Statutes), authorizes the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to maintain state-owned submerged lands with exceptional biological, aesthetic and scientific value as aquatic preserves. These areas offer prime opportunities for fishing, boating, swimming, paddling, snorkeling, diving and other water-related types of recreation.

The FCO manages Florida's 41 aquatic preserves, including 37 saltwater and four freshwater sites, encompassing more than 2 million acres of sovereign submerged lands. In cooperation with NOAA, FCO manages approximately 240,000 acres of submerged land and coastal uplands in three National Estuarine Research Reserves: Apalachicola, Guana Tolomato Matanzas and Rookery Bay. In addition, FCO partners with NOAA to manage the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. The sanctuary contains 3,800 square miles of submerged lands around the 126-mile long Florida Keys, and encompasses the most extensive living coral reef system in the nation.

Through the Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative and the Coral Reef Conservation Program, FCO supports Florida's membership in the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and the U.S. All Islands Committee. These programs coordinate research and monitoring, develop management strategies and promote partnerships to protect the coral reefs, hard bottom communities and associated reef resources of southeast Florida.

## Division of State Lands

Since 1968, Florida has invested nearly \$8 billion through successive land acquisition programs to conserve approximately 3.9 million acres of land for environmental preservation, conservation and outdoor recreation purposes. The Division of State Lands (DSL) administers these land acquisition programs on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund and FDEP. The DSL also provides administrative oversight for approximately 12 million acres of state owned lands, including 700 freshwater springs, 4,510 islands of 10 acres or more and 7,000 lakes. The state's public lands help ensure that everyone has the opportunity to appreciate Florida's unique landscapes.

### Florida Forever

The DSL administers the *Florida Forever* program, which was created by the 1999 Florida Legislature as the successor to the Florida Preservation 2000 program established in 1990. *Florida Forever* supports a variety of land acquisition purposes, including the preservation of environmental, conservation and water management lands and to provide grants to local governments. Since *Florida Forever's* inception, 718,126 acres of land and water have been acquired, reflecting an investment of more than \$2.9 billion.

In 2008, *Florida Forever* was extended for another decade by the Florida Legislature. As part of the program's re-authorization, several important changes were made to the original program, including the creation of two new land acquisition programs. The Rural and Family Lands Protection Act was established in the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the acquisition of agricultural lands through perpetual easements and other less-than-fee techniques. The Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program was created to preserve and restore working waterfronts and provide public access to Florida's waters. In 2011, the Florida Communities Trust and Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts programs were transferred to the DSL.

In addition to these new programs, greater emphasis was placed on providing public access to conservation lands, increasing accountability of public land management, protecting listed plant and animal species and addressing climate change.



## Florida Communities Trust

The **Florida Communities Trust** (FCT), established in 1989 to help local governments preserve parks, open space, beaches and natural areas, has created more livable communities throughout the state. Matching and full grants for conservation and recreation land acquisition projects are provided to local governments, as well as to nonprofit environmental organizations through a competitive application process. The FCT receives 21 percent of annual proceeds from *Florida Forever*, when it is funded. The FCT also periodically receives specific funding allocations for land acquisition. In 2017, FCT held an application cycle for funding that, per statute, required all projects to enhance recreational opportunities for individuals with unique abilities.

As of June 2017, more than 92,400 acres were acquired through the program. The FCT provided nearly \$842 million of the \$1.57 billion spent to acquire these lands, while local government partners provided more than \$724 million in matching funds.



Credit: City of Fernandina Beach

**92,400**

More than 92,400 acres acquired as of June 2017

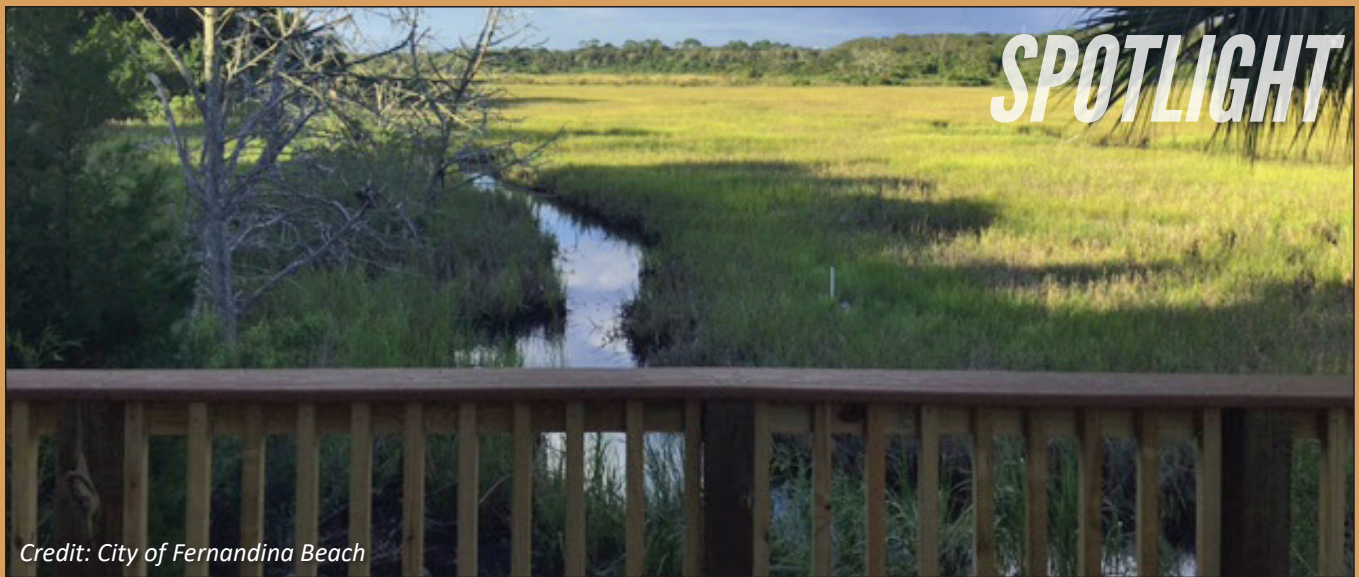
**842** Million

Nearly \$842 million in project funding provided

**724** Million

More than \$724 million in matching funds from local government partners.

Florida Communities Trust provides matching and full grants for conservation and recreation land acquisition projects.



Credit: City of Fernandina Beach

The City of Fernandina Beach acquired Egans Creek Greenway (ECG), a 275-acre greenway corridor, with matching funds from FCT in three phases between 2000 and 2003. Management of the greenway focuses on wetland restoration, removal of exotic nonnative vegetation and preserving the Egans Creek corridor as a natural storm water filter. The ECG continues to be a popular destination for local residents and visitors to Amelia Island. The city developed numerous public-use facilities in the park, including educational kiosks, a wildlife observation platform, geocaching sites and a network of multi-use trails and boardwalks. The city also provides guided ECG walks and other field-based learning opportunities throughout the year.

The ECG, along with Fort Clinch State Park to its north, is an important natural corridor within the City of Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island. The ECG enhances the community's resilience and provides a wide-range of nature-based outdoor recreational opportunities.



## Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), a federally-funded competitive grant program that provides financial assistance to local communities for the development of trails. Since its inception, the RTP has assisted communities in 50 of Florida's counties to establish and expand their trails.



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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
GREENWAYS & TRAILS

***The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and the Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program have assisted 121 communities across the state with the development and expansion of recreational trails.***



The City of Kissimmee is developing Shingle Creek Regional Trail, a 32-mile, multi-use recreational trail. Shingle Creek is the headwaters of the renowned Florida Everglades, and this trail was selected as one of 101 America's Great Outdoors projects by President Obama's administration. This trail is the result of 25 years of planning and purchasing pristine parcels of land adjacent to scenic Shingle Creek. The trail offers a beautiful, natural environment for cyclists, pedestrians, bird watchers and other nature lovers. Phase 1 is complete and additional phases are underway. Once fully constructed, the trail will run through some of Florida's most urbanized areas and will connect to an even larger regional trail network.

## Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program

The Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) is a state competitive grant program that provides financial assistance to local governments to develop and/or acquire land for public outdoor recreational purposes. Over the last 16 fiscal year funding cycles, funding has been awarded to 1,805 projects.

The City of Miami Springs (population 14,000) recently matched a \$50,000 FRDAP grant to purchase a 35-foot water slide for the pool at its new Miami Springs Aquatic Center. The center's pool provides a place to swim, and swimming lessons and water aerobics programs for the public are offered as well.



## Division of Water Resource Management



Coastal protection and restoration are vital in preserving one of Florida's most valuable natural resources - its 825 miles of sandy shoreline fronting the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Straits of Florida. To date, more than 229 of the state's 411 critically eroded shoreline miles have been restored and monitored under the Beach Management Funding Assistance Program (formerly the Beach Erosion Control Program), which works in concert with other agencies and local governments to protect, preserve and restore coastal sandy beaches.

Financial assistance is requested annually from the Program in amounts of up to 50 percent for beach projects and 75 percent for inlet projects from county and municipal governments, community development districts and special taxing districts for shore protection and preservation. In addition to beach restoration and nourishment, funds are also available for the construction of dunes and dune protection measures such as the planting of native dune vegetation. The Florida legislature appropriated more than \$878 million dollars for beach erosion control activities from 1964 through 2016.

### Mining and Mitigation Program

The Division of Water Resource Management (DWRM) is responsible for protecting the quality of Florida's drinking water as well as its rivers, lakes and wetlands, and for reclaiming lands after they have been mined for phosphate and other minerals.

The DWRM's programs establish the technical basis for setting the state's surface water and ground water quality standards, which are critical to maintaining the viability of water resources for public outdoor recreational use. By 2030, Floridians are expected to use about 7.4 billion gallons of fresh water per day, an increase of about 16 percent, or one billion gallons more per day over 2015 levels. The Water Protection and Sustainability Program, created in 2005, has the task of increasing alternative water supplies to meet existing and future water supply needs. The FDEP's 2015 Annual Report on Regional Water Supply Planning describes the highlights and accomplishments of this program. The report also describes the progress of the state's five water management districts in meeting Florida's future demands for water.

The DWRM's **Mining and Mitigation Program** (MMP) regulates mining in Florida through a review and monitoring process. Originally established in the late 1980s to regulate, restore and reclaim phosphate-mined land, the program has evolved to incorporate a habitat and wildlife management program. The program manages extensive habitat corridors in Florida's areas that were historically disturbed by mining activities.

Today, the MMP is responsible for managing approximately 16,450 acres of state-owned lands along the Peace and Alafia Rivers. The management focus is on the protection of water, natural and cultural resources. Long-term management activities are implemented to protect these greenways, wildlife corridors and riparian buffers. In 2012, the MMP also restored 2,000 acres as part of the Upper Peace River/Saddle Creek Restoration project. This project improved the water quality and ecology of the Saddle Creek Basin, expanded public recreational opportunities and increased wildlife use in the Peace River corridor.



## Water Management Districts

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The Office of Water Policy within FDEP addresses statewide water management issues in coordination with Florida's water management districts and other agencies. Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, created five water management districts for the purpose of managing and conserving the state's water resources. The five districts were organized around major drainage basins in the state: Northwest Florida, Suwannee River, St. Johns River, Southwest Florida and South Florida. Land acquisition is one of the districts' primary tools for carrying out their mission of flood control, water storage and management, water resource development and preservation of wetlands, streams and lakes.

The districts play a key role in providing public outdoor recreation opportunities on lands under their ownership. The water management districts acquire land and construct water resource-related capital improvements, including water resource or water supply development and restoration projects. The districts are required to make their lands available for compatible public outdoor recreation uses whenever practicable. Numerous public access sites and recreational facilities have been developed on district-owned lands throughout the state in cooperation with other state agencies, the federal government, counties, municipalities and the private sector. Examples of the recreational opportunities provided on district lands include hiking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, bicycling, canoeing, primitive camping and wildlife viewing.

## Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is the agency responsible for conserving the state's fish and wildlife resources; it was established in 1999 by an amendment to the Florida Constitution that consolidated multiple agencies. In 2004, after consulting stakeholders, employees and other interested parties, the FWC adopted a new internal structure to address the complex conservation issues of the 21st century. The new structure focuses on programs such as habitat management that affect numerous species, and the agency continues to move decision-making processes closer to the public realm.

Florida's Constitution authorizes the Commission to enact rules and regulations regarding the state's fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people. To do this, seven Commissioners (each appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate) hold five public meetings each year to hear reports, consider rule proposals and conduct other business.

Central to FWC's role in outdoor recreation is the management of hunting, fishing, boating and wildlife viewing opportunities. The FWC receives federal funds for preservation, restoration and enhancement of Florida's sport fishing resources, including boating access facilities, from the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration (also known as the Dingell-Johnson or Wallop-Breaux) program. The FWC also receives funds for protection of endangered species from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration (also called the Pittman-Robertson) Trust Fund. These programs are administered at the federal level by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which provide grants and technical assistance to the states.

### Division Of Marine Fisheries Management



**T**he division of Marine Fisheries Management (DMFM) develops sustainable management recommendations for consideration by the FWC Commissioners for more than 500 saltwater species. This management ensures the long-term conservation and sustainability of Florida's valuable marine fisheries resources while balancing the needs of anglers. Saltwater fishing along Florida's 2,276 miles of coastal and offshore areas created an economic impact of more than \$7.6 billion and supported more than 100,000 jobs in 2014. In addition, Florida's commercial fishers landed approximately 85 million pounds in 2014, worth more than \$220 million dockside. The DMFM staff also work with federal and



state agencies on marine issues, and represent Florida on the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fishery management councils and the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic States marine fisheries commissions.

The DMFM outreach and education team provides the public with opportunities to learn more about saltwater fishing, from learning basic fishing skills and fish identification to sustainable habits such as the best ways to catch and release fish. The DMFM's other programs include planning and deploying artificial reefs; reaching out to commercial, recreational and charter fishermen about regulations and their experiences; ensuring that reports of commercial fish landings provide accurate data; removing derelict traps from the water through the trap retrieval program; and making public comment on issues that may affect Florida anglers.

## Division Of Freshwater Fisheries Management

**T**he Division of Freshwater Fisheries Management (DFFM) provides expertise on Florida's freshwater fish populations, angler use and other aspects of freshwater fisheries to ensure high quality fishing opportunities. Florida has more than 3 million acres of freshwater comprising 7,700 named lakes and 12,000 miles of fishable rivers, streams and canals. More than 200 species of freshwater fishes inhabit these waters and include many highly sought-after sportfish species. The DFFM provides the public with information on freshwater fisheries management issues, fishing opportunities, aquatic education and outreach and other matters aimed at improving aquatic resources and promoting responsible life-long participation in sport fishing. Additionally, freshwater fish production facilities provide a dependable supply of the specific size, quantity and quality of freshwater fish to meet specific management objectives.

## Division Of Law Enforcement

**F**WC's Division of Law Enforcement protects residents and visitors who enjoy Florida's natural resources, and its officers enforce resource protection and boating safety regulations in the state's woods and waters. The Boating and Waterways Section is responsible for educating boaters about boating safety, ensuring boat access, installing and maintaining waterway signage

and identifying derelict vessels. The Boating and Waterways Section also administers several grant programs, including the Florida Boating Improvement Program and the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program.

The Federal Sport Fish Restoration Program is a "user pays, user benefits" program that is aimed at improving sport fishing and boating opportunities. Federal funds collected from taxes on fishing tackle, motor fuels and import duties on tackle and yachts are returned to appropriate state agencies for research, management, education and facility development related to sport fishing. These three programs funded more than 220 grants around the state, totaling more than \$33 million, to help construct boat ramps and related access facilities.

## Division Of Hunting and Game Management



**T**he Division of Hunting and Game Management (DHGM) uses scientifically proven game-management strategies and professional expertise to perpetuate sustainable hunting opportunities statewide, with an emphasis on waterfowl, small game, deer, wild turkey and alligators. The Division also develops rules and recommends wildlife management policies on nearly 6 million acres of public lands that provide various hunting opportunities. The Division also houses the Hunter Safety and Public Shooting Ranges section, which offers programs and facilities to teach people hunting laws, ethics, conservation and responsible use of firearms. Through these activities, DHGM strives to accomplish a high level of satisfaction among those who use and depend on healthy game wildlife resources.



## Division Of Habitat and Species Conservation

This division is responsible for the state's Wildlife Management Area (WMA) system, one of the nation's largest, which includes 147 tracts totaling approximately 5.9 million acres in public and private ownership. The FWC is the lead manager of 54 areas that span 1.4 million acres, and is a co-manager of 93 areas that cover an additional 4.5 million acres. This system is vital to sustaining the fish and wildlife resources of the state. The state's WMAs also provide scenic and wild settings for a range of outdoor recreation opportunities including hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing and nature study.

In addition to managing the public lands of the WMA system, division staff also work with private landowners to assist them in keeping their lands healthy and rich with wildlife. Private landowner stewardship is extremely important to ensure that wild Florida, and the benefits it provides for Floridians and our economy, survives into the future. The Landowner Assistance Program, housed within the Office of Conservation Planning Services, offers a range of services to private landowners.

## Public Access Services Office

The Public Access Services Office (PASO) plans and develops public use opportunities on FWC-managed areas. Staff develop enhancements such as trails, fishing docks and viewing blinds to support these opportunities. Among the trails managed by PASO is the nationally recognized Big Bend Saltwater Paddling Trail, an open-water route along Florida's coast from the Aucilla to Suwannee rivers. The PASO coordinates FWC's volunteer programs, engaging citizens in a range of citizen science and stewardship projects, see (page 49).

Another major focus of PASO is connecting people to wildlife through wildlife viewing. The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail, managed by this office, is a network of more than 500 sites throughout the state selected for their excellent wildlife viewing. The trail uses special highway signs identifying designated sites, along with guidebooks and maps, a website and social media to highlight Florida's birding and wildlife viewing opportunities. The PASO staff also assists rural communities to plan and develop ecotourism opportunities focused on wildlife.



*J.W. Corbett WMA, Credit: David Moynahan, FWC*



# FWC's Citizen Science and Stewardship



*Volunteers work in many ways to help FWC accomplish its mission. Citizen scientists assist FWC staff to monitor fish and wildlife populations, control exotic species, improve habitat and teach conservation education and recreational skills programs. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, nearly 5,000 volunteers donated their time to conserving fish and wildlife, a contribution valued at more than \$2.5 million. Volunteers enjoy their work with FWC, reporting that the opportunity to make a difference, learn and spend time with other people committed to conservation keeps them engaged.*

*"As an FWC volunteer, I can combine my love for the outdoors with healthy physical work, sharing my interests with like-minded people and, most of all helping preserve the flora and fauna. I am privileged to go to areas not typically open to the general public, and I work with many wonderfully dedicated staff and volunteers. FWC volunteering is an incredible program and the dedicated staff that supports it is amazing!"*  
– Connie Sweet, retired zoologist and FWC volunteer.



*The FWC's mission is "managing fish and wildlife for their long-term well-being and benefit of the people." Its Wildlife Management Area system, one of the largest in the nation, celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2017.*

## Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services

### Florida Forest Service

**T**he Florida Forest Service (FFS) is a major contributor to Florida's total outdoor recreation inventory. Areas managed by the FFS consist of 38 state forests and other lands totaling more than 1.1 million acres, all of which provide public access and ample opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreation experiences.

The FFS outdoor recreation objective is a balance of compatible recreational uses with other resource management activities under a multiple-use concept. Resource-based recreation opportunities offered by the FFS include camping, hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, off-highway vehicle use, hunting, fishing, paddling, nature study and wildlife viewing.

Hunting is permitted on most of the acreage managed by FFS, and is administered in cooperation with the FWC as part of their Wildlife Management Area program. Section 589.19 (4), Florida Statutes directs the FFS to designate specific areas of state forests as Operation Outdoor Freedom special hunt areas to honor wounded veterans and service members and provide them with valuable hunting and other outdoor experiences.

The FFS also administers the T. Mark Schmidt Off-Highway Vehicle Safety and Recreation Program, which was authorized by Chapter 261, Florida Statutes in 2002. The Act provides guidelines to promote safety and education, and project funding for recreational





use on public lands of off-highway motorcycles (OHM), all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and recreational off-highway vehicles (ROV).

In addition to directly providing resources and facilities for outdoor recreation, the FFS assists private landowners in developing forest management plans that often include an outdoor recreation component. At a landowner's request, the FFS will assess the land's potential for hunting, fishing, wildlife management, water access facilities, camping and related activities and assist in the development of a land management plan.

## Florida Department of State

### Division of Historical Resources

The Division of Historical Resources (DHR) is responsible for preserving and promoting Florida's historical, archaeological and folk culture resources. The DHR directs historic preservation efforts throughout the state in cooperation with state and federal agencies, local governments, private organizations and individuals. The director of DHR serves as the State Historic Preservation Officer, acting as a liaison with the national historic preservation programs conducted by the National Park Service. Chapter 267, Florida Statutes, directs DHR to develop a statewide historic preservation plan. Its primary purpose is to guide the implementation of sound planning procedures for the location, identification and protection of the state's archaeological and historical resources.

The Bureau of Historic Preservation (BHP) conducts programs aimed at identifying, evaluating, preserving and interpreting historic and cultural resources of the state. Programs include the Florida Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Grants-in-Aid Program, National Register of Historic Places/National Historic Landmark Program, Historical Markers Program, Certified Local Government Program and Florida Folklife Program. The BHP also reviews federal or state undertakings that may affect historical or cultural resources, and maintains the Florida Master Site File, the state's inventory of known historical and archaeological resources.

The Bureau of Archaeological Research (BAR) is responsible for the protection of archaeological and historical resources on state-owned and state-controlled lands, including sovereign submerged

lands. Bureau archaeologists conduct archaeological surveys and excavations throughout the state. The state's underwater archaeology program includes pre-Columbian sites and underwater archaeological preserves established to protect and interpret shipwreck sites to the public.

## Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (FDEO) provides technical and financial assistance to local governments through a wide range of programs. These include Community Development Block Grants, Community Service Block Grants, the State Small Business Credit Initiative, Rural Development Grants and the Rural Infrastructure Fund. The FDEO's Bureau of Community Planning coordinates state-level review of local government comprehensive plans required by Chapter 163, Florida Statutes. The FDEO also assists local governments and regional agencies with land use planning issues.

### Community Planning Technical Assistance



Main Beach Park, Fernandina Beach  
Credit: Fernandina Beach Parks & Recreation

Subject to legislative appropriations, FDEO annually provides Community Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA) grants to local governments or regional planning councils working for or on behalf of local governments. These grants are generally in the \$25,000-\$40,000 range and fund a variety of land planning projects identified by the grantees, including land planning activities related to parks and recreation. For example, FDEO provided CPTA grant funding to the City of Fernandina Beach to update its Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



## Competitive Florida Partnership

The Competitive Florida Partnership assists communities through funding and technical assistance to create and implement an economic development strategy. Key to the strategy's creation is the input of stakeholders from across the community spectrum, including those representing parks and recreation. As of 2016 there were 16 designees, many of whom brought new outdoor recreation opportunities to fruition through planning and funding. In the case of White Springs, the town developed an idea from the strategy process and designed a project to attract eco-tourists to the area.

Another recreation project that developed from this partnership was the work to extend access to Torreya State Park into Gadsden County near Chattahoochee. The initial collaboration between FDEO planners and stakeholders evolved into a technical assistance grant (See CPTA grant 2016-2017 description, above).

## Florida Department of Transportation

The Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) primary statutory responsibility is to coordinate the planning and development of a safe, viable and balanced transportation system serving all regions of the state, and to assure the compatibility of all components, including multimodal facilities. To provide for the state's transportation needs, FDOT (under Chapter 334, Florida Statutes) gives consideration to the preservation and enhancement of the environment and the conservation of natural resources, including scenic, historic and recreational assets.

The FDOT provides a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity and preserves the quality of our environment and communities. The FDOT builds and operates rest areas along interstate highways for public use and provides opportunities for water-based recreation on causeways and bridges. In addition to providing access, FDOT administers multiple programs to support community visions and values through initiatives such as the State Pedestrian and Bicycle Program, the Florida Scenic Highway Program, the Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Program and the Transportation Enhancement Program.



C2C Pinellas Trail segment opening,  
Credit: Office of Greenways and Trails

The FDEO provided CPTA funding for development of an assets and opportunities inventory of cultural, natural and economic resources, and an Urban-Rural Design Overlay Study of the Coast-to-Coast Connector Trail (C2C). This 250-mile paved trail winds from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean through Pinellas, Pasco, Hernando, Sumter, Lake, Orange, Seminole, Volusia and Brevard Counties. Up to 20 separate trail segments will be linked together to form the C2C. The Urban-Rural Design Overlay is intended to establish a unifying overall branding image for these linkages of the statewide network of greenways and trails.



Torreya State Park,  
Credit: Aaron Miller, FDEP

In 2016-2017, FDEO provided CPTA grant funding for a feasibility study for a proposed Chattahoochee to Bristol trail. If established, the trail will connect to Torreya State Park and will create additional outdoor recreation opportunities in North Florida. Local governments interested in parks and recreation planning are encouraged to contact FDEO about CPTA grant funding.



## Pedestrian & Bicycle Program



*East Central Regional Rail Trail,  
Credit: Volusia County Parks, Recreation & Culture*

**T**he FDOT develops initiatives and programs to improve the safety, mobility and accessibility of pedestrians and bicyclists on Florida's roadways. As part of this program, the state pedestrian and bicycle coordinator and district pedestrian and bicycle coordinators in each of FDOT's seven field operations regions work with municipal pedestrian and bicycle coordinators to develop and update design, maintenance and operation guidelines for all state, municipal and local bicycle facilities. Florida's Pedestrian and Bicycle Strategic Safety Plan promotes walking and biking as transportation options to improve health and wellness, and as a form of recreation.

## Florida Scenic Highway Program



*Credit: Florida Department of Transportation*

**T**he Florida Scenic Highway Program is a grass-roots effort to showcase and heighten awareness of Florida's intrinsic resources cultural, historical and archaeological, recreational, natural and scenic - which collectively enhance the overall traveling experience. Designated highways tell a story that is representative of Florida's

past and present lifestyles. Participation in the program is voluntary and benefits the communities along the routes in matters such as resource enhancement, protection and economic sustainability.

Proposed scenic highway corridors are reviewed based on criteria established by FHWA and the FDOT. Each designated corridor is managed by a byway organization made up of interested citizens, local government representatives, and local business owners. As of December 2016, there are 26 designated scenic highways in Florida.

## Florida SUN Trail Program

**T**he SUN Trail program provides funding for the development of a statewide system of paved multi-use trails (SUN Trail network) for bicyclists and pedestrians, physically separated from vehicular traffic. The SUN Trail network aligns to the Florida Greenways and Trails System Plan's Priority Land Trail Network, modified by the removal of corridors that are not envisioned as paved trails.

The funding framework consists of a two-tier structure. One tier implements projects within the two major regional trail systems selected as priorities by the Florida Greenways and Trails Council, a statutory advisory body to FDEP. The top two Regional Trail Systems are the Coast-to-Coast Trail Connector (C2C), a 250-mile trail system linking the Gulf and Atlantic coasts through Central Florida, and the St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop (SJR2C), a 270-mile trail system that will link several communities including St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Titusville, DeLand and Palatka. The second tier implements projects in the Individual Trail category. This allows SUN Trail funding distribution to other projects, within the network, to ensure a more general geographic distribution.

In October 2016, FDOT announced the selection of the first year of projects to receive funding under the program. A total of \$44.4 million was awarded to 45 separate projects located across 21 counties throughout Florida. The funds for fiscal year 2016-17 were immediately available to begin work. Twenty-two of the funded projects help to advance the two major regional trails systems. Five of these are part of the C2C and 17 are part of the SJR2C. Twenty-three projects are for individual trail segments throughout the rest of the state.

Established during the 2015 legislative session, the SUN Trail program provides an annual allocation of up to



\$25 million for projects within the SUN Trail network. Once constructed, management of the multi-use trails are by other public agencies. Development of the Five-Year Plan, for funding projects through fiscal year 2023, is underway.

## State University System of Florida

The State University System of Florida consists of 12 institutions that serve more than 300,000 students and contain almost 14,000 acres of land. Each university has an approved master plan that addresses the issue of outdoor recreation space. Recreational facilities maintained by each university provide opportunities for participation in a variety of athletic activities such as tennis, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer and football.

Many state universities also operate resource-based recreation areas detached from the main campus

for use by students, alumni and in some instances, the general public. These areas provide opportunities for both active and passive outdoor recreation activities, such as golfing, swimming, canoeing, hiking, camping, nature study and picnicking.

## Regional Planning Councils

Sections 186.501 and 186.512, Florida Statutes, also known as the Regional Planning Council Act, divides the state into 10 regional planning councils. Each council provides a link between local and state governments, and is comprised of two-thirds county and municipal officials and one-third gubernatorial appointees. Additionally, the council includes ex-officio members from FDOT, FDEP, the corresponding Water Management District and a nominee from FDEO.

One of the primary functions of each council is the preparation and adoption of a strategic regional



Upon completion, the Coast-to-Coast Trail (C2C) will be a 250-mile paved, multi-use trail across Florida. Running from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean, the C2C will link communities between St. Petersburg and Titusville by connecting 20 existing and planned multi-use trails. As of 2017, the C2C is approximately 75 percent complete; completion is expected in 2020. The C2C includes two of the state's most popular trails, the Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail and the West Orange Trail, both of which have fueled economic transformation of communities, particularly those of Dunedin and Winter Garden. This corridor also includes significant portions of the developing 52-mile East Central Regional Rail Trail, the longest single rail-trail corridor ever acquired by the state. The C2C will be developed and managed by a broad range of communities and agencies.



Figure. 3.3

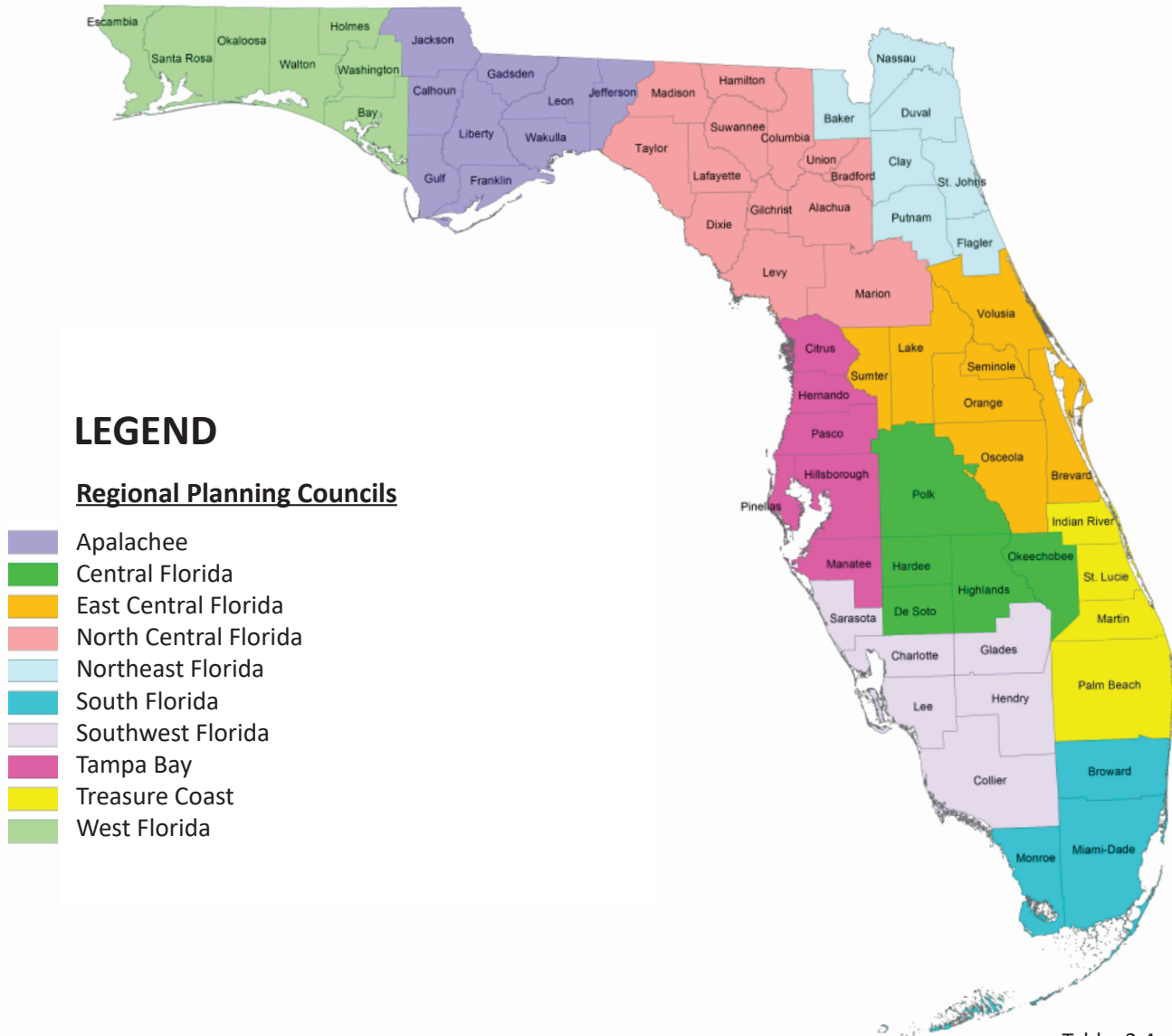


Table. 3.4

Local Agency Outdoor Recreation Resources				
Region	# of Recreation Areas	Land (in Acres)	Water (in Acres)	Acres Total
Northwest	875	9,505	962	10,467
North Central	709	31,710	1,663	33,373
Northeast	934	43,700	475	44,175
Central West	1,406	115,508	2,582	118,090
Central	1,407	55,717	34,947	90,664
Central East	1,283	65,561	9,914	75,475
Southwest	1,017	138,044	3,208	141,252
Southeast	2,032	75,539	3,618	79,157
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>9,663</b>	<b>535,284</b>	<b>57,369</b>	<b>592,653</b>





Orange County Highway 50 boat ramp, Credit: David Moynahan, FWC

policy plan, providing goals and policies which guide the economic, physical and social development of the region. Using this plan as a guideline, the councils review local strategic and development plans, link planning efforts of various entities to ensure regional consistency, and facilitate planning or growth management disputes.

shoreline stabilization and environmental restoration projects. The FIND is the state sponsor of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from the Georgia border to the southern end of Miami-Dade County. The WCIND stretches from the northern border of Manatee County to the southern border of Lee County and contains the 152-mile long Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.

## Special Districts

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Chapter 189, Florida Statutes, also known as the Uniform Special District Accountability Act of 1989, addresses the operation of special districts in Florida. More than 1,600 special districts exist statewide, providing infrastructure and services in a wide range of areas including fire control, libraries, ports and inlets, mosquito control, water control, community development, roads and hospitals. In some cases, special districts play an expanded role in providing outdoor recreation opportunities, conservation and resource management services.

## Navigation Districts

Navigation districts in the state play a particularly important role in outdoor recreation. The Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND) and the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) provide assistance programs that develop waterway access projects such as boat ramps, marinas, boardwalks, fishing piers, waterfront parks, navigation channels,

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVIDERS

Besides being the main provider of user-oriented recreation facilities and programs, local governments pursue opportunities to acquire open space and conservation areas for their communities, often in partnerships with state agencies or non-profit conservation groups. Although the size of the properties acquired under these programs may not be as large as those acquired for conservation by state and federal agencies, they can be critically important in achieving a community's goals for environmental preservation, recreation and open space or growth management.

Much of the success of the state's land acquisition programs is the result of the cooperative partnerships between federal, state and local governments and national and local land trusts. Many of the projects have been sponsored jointly by partnering arrangements, and such partnerships with local governments have increased in recent years. Of Florida's 67 counties, 29 have implemented land acquisition programs as have several cities and regional authorities. Such programs have generated nearly \$2 billion to acquire conservation and recreation lands.



## COUNTY ROLES

Florida's 67 counties vary in character from densely populated metropolitan areas such as Miami-Dade and Pinellas, to sparsely populated rural areas like Glades and Liberty. County governments are key components of Florida's recreation and park system. All counties do not have the same outdoor recreation needs nor have they all been able to fund responsive programs to the same degree, but every county in the state has an officially established outdoor recreation program. In some counties, user-oriented recreation programming is limited, but resource-based facilities such as roadside picnic areas or boat ramps are common amenities. In some counties, user-oriented facilities may be available only at public schools and municipal parks. More than half of Florida's counties, however, have undertaken sophisticated recreation programs involving the administration of numerous and diverse parks, facilities and program activities.

Counties are primarily concerned with the local outdoor recreation needs expressed by the unincorporated and incorporated populations within their jurisdictions. As a rule, counties are an ideal level of government to provide regional or large community parks. Unlike cities, the larger acreage of counties provides a wider range of resources and a greater



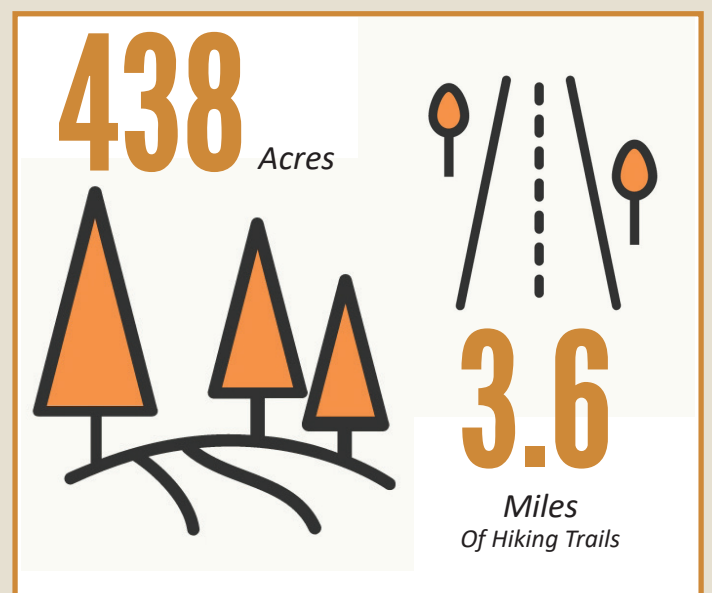
Credit: Marion County Parks & Recreation

variety of outdoor recreation venues. As a result, the typical county outdoor recreation program in Florida may offer a combination of resource-based and user-oriented activities. Beaches, swimming areas, boating access sites, picnic sites, scenic areas and, occasionally, campgrounds are among the more popular types of resource-based areas and facilities provided. However, in more populous counties, the availability of undeveloped land for recreational needs is shrinking. These entities must reimagine how to provide these opportunities for future generations.



Vera Carter Environmental Center, Tibet-Butler Preserve  
Credit: Orange County Parks and Recreation

The Orange County Parks and Recreation Division oversees the Tibet-Butler Preserve, one of Orlando's greatest assets. This 438-acre property was purchased by the South Florida Water Management District through the Save Our Rivers program. Through this unique joint venture program, the county manages the preserve's diverse wildlife and natural areas, which include bay and cypress swamps, marsh, pine flatwoods and scrub, which can be enjoyed on 3.6 miles of interpretive hiking trails. Lake Tibet-Butler, for which the preserve was named, borders the park and has been designated an Outstanding Florida Water.



The Vera Carter Environmental Center interprets the preserve's wetlands, uplands and fire ecology, and live animals are featured as well. Schools and other groups of all ages participate in hands-on interpretive programs focusing on plants, animals, outdoor sports, sciences and the environment. The center also offers free weekend programs for families.



# SPOTLIGHT



Credit: Henry LaBelle Recreation Board

## HENDRY LaBELLE RECREATION BOARD

Sometimes cities and counties team up to provide better services. In 1990, the Hendry LaBelle Recreation Board (HLRB) was formed to oversee all recreation in western Hendry County. The Recreation Board manages both city and county parks, and an inter-local agreement between the City of LaBelle and the county was created to supervise daily operations and improvements to current and future parks. The HLRB's mission is "to keep all individuals of Hendry County active, healthy and entertained in the beautiful area of LaBelle by providing various sports and activities for everyone to participate in."

## MUNICIPAL ROLES

Nearly all of Florida's 412 municipalities have developed recreation programs and facilities of one type or another. Many cities have established park and recreation programs with trained staff who administer parks, facilities and programs. Smaller cities may have only limited facilities and rely on the county government, local school system, private organizations or non-profit groups to carry out athletic programs.

Due to population densities and the lack of large open space areas that support resource-based recreation opportunities, municipal recreation systems tend to concentrate on providing more intensive user-oriented facilities that require relatively little space. Typical municipal outdoor recreation facilities include playgrounds, swimming pools, ball fields, tennis courts and golf courses.

Given their heavy emphasis on user-oriented facilities and programs, Florida's municipalities have a smaller role in the statewide, resource-based outdoor recreation system. There are certainly exceptions, however, especially where cities or towns are located on bodies of water or along the coasts. For example, Atlantic and Gulf coastal communities provide many excellent public beach facilities, while those located on navigable waters (coastal or inland) operate marinas, boat ramps, docks, mooring fields and other boating facilities.

Municipal programs play a primary role in the provision of user-oriented recreation opportunities in Florida. The importance of the role of

municipal programs will continue to grow as increased public emphasis is placed on close-to-home recreation. Since Florida's municipal recreation agencies are the recreation providers closest to the people, they are usually the first to feel the pressures to establish programs for meeting the added demands of new residents.

## PRIVATE SECTOR & NON-GOVERNMENT ROLES

In addition to the more conventional forms of outdoor recreation provided by all levels of government, the private sector affords a wide array of recreational opportunities. Private providers and facilities range from for-profit recreational enterprises such as campgrounds, golf courses, marinas, outfitters and attractions of all kinds to non-profit conservation and advocacy organizations.

Industries with extensive land holdings, notably the forest products industry in Florida, provide vast recreation resources and excellent facilities on their lands for the use of the public, often at only a nominal fee. However, this resource is quickly disappearing in many parts of the state as timber lands are being converted to private access leases or developed for residential and commercial purposes.

Private outdoor recreation, because of its size, complexity and the fact that it undergoes rapid and frequent change, is extremely difficult to inventory in a comprehensive manner.





Chair Ski, Credit: Florida Disabled Outdoors Association



In addition to its direct delivery of outdoor recreation programs, rental equipment, tours and other opportunities, the private sector can respond quickly to opportunities for acquiring property for subsequent donation or resale. This capability makes the private sector a valuable partner with public agencies in the provision of resource-based outdoor recreation. Private companies and non-profit organizations have transferred thousands of acres to state government for recreation and conservation purposes. Those transfers represent a substantial contribution to the overall supply of outdoor recreational opportunities in Florida.

### Commercial Providers

Florida's commercial outdoor recreation providers are a vital component of the state's economy. Commercial providers meet a significant portion of the overall demand for both resource-based and user-oriented outdoor recreation in Florida, particularly tourist-generated demand. Because of their capabilities and further potential for fulfilling demand, the private commercial sector must bear a large share of the responsibility for meeting demand for both resource-based and user-oriented recreation.

### Private Organizations

This category includes private and quasi-public organizations such as the YMCA, 4-H, scouting organizations, faith-based and veterans groups and foundations. Conservation organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Archbold Biological Station and Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy are included as well. These organizations not only acquire and manage conservation land, but they also conduct preservation, restoration research programs and educational activities. These groups provide land and facilities primarily for the use of members, but in some cases for the public at large.

### Clubs

Country clubs, tennis clubs, hunt clubs, yacht clubs and many others round out Florida's list of recreation providers. These groups manage land or facilities that are primarily available only to organization members, families or their guests. In addition, private industry lands are included (timber companies and other industries with extensive land holdings whose lands or portions thereof are open to the public). The majority of these lands are used for resource-based recreation, although some forms of user-oriented facilities are also available.



**"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of a bike ride."**

- John F. Kennedy



Credit: Frank Weber, Orange County Government

