

NON-TIMBER REVENUE SOURCES:

*CONSERVATION
EASEMENTS AND
GOPHER TORTOISE
RECIPIENT SITES*

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Conservation Easement Overview

- Real estate transaction: the landowner is paid for rights given up
- Legal Agreement between a Landowner and a Qualified Organization
 - Voluntary
 - Permanent
 - Landowner Retains Ownership in Fee
 - Right of Enforcement
- Easements can be layered
- Goals can include environmental conservation, limitations on development, and agricultural production
- Public access is not a requirement
- Easements pay anywhere from 40-50% of appraised value in fee up to 85%
- General process: evaluation and ranking, appraisal, BDR/Phase 1 Environmental, closing

Rural and Family Lands Protection Program

- Created in 2001 by passage of the Rural and Family Lands Protection Act
- Over 125,000 acres of working agricultural lands conserved
- Administrated through the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Straightforward application process
- Lands ranked by the following criteria:
 - Bona fide agricultural operation
 - Location with respect to the Florida Wildlife Corridor
 - Threat of development



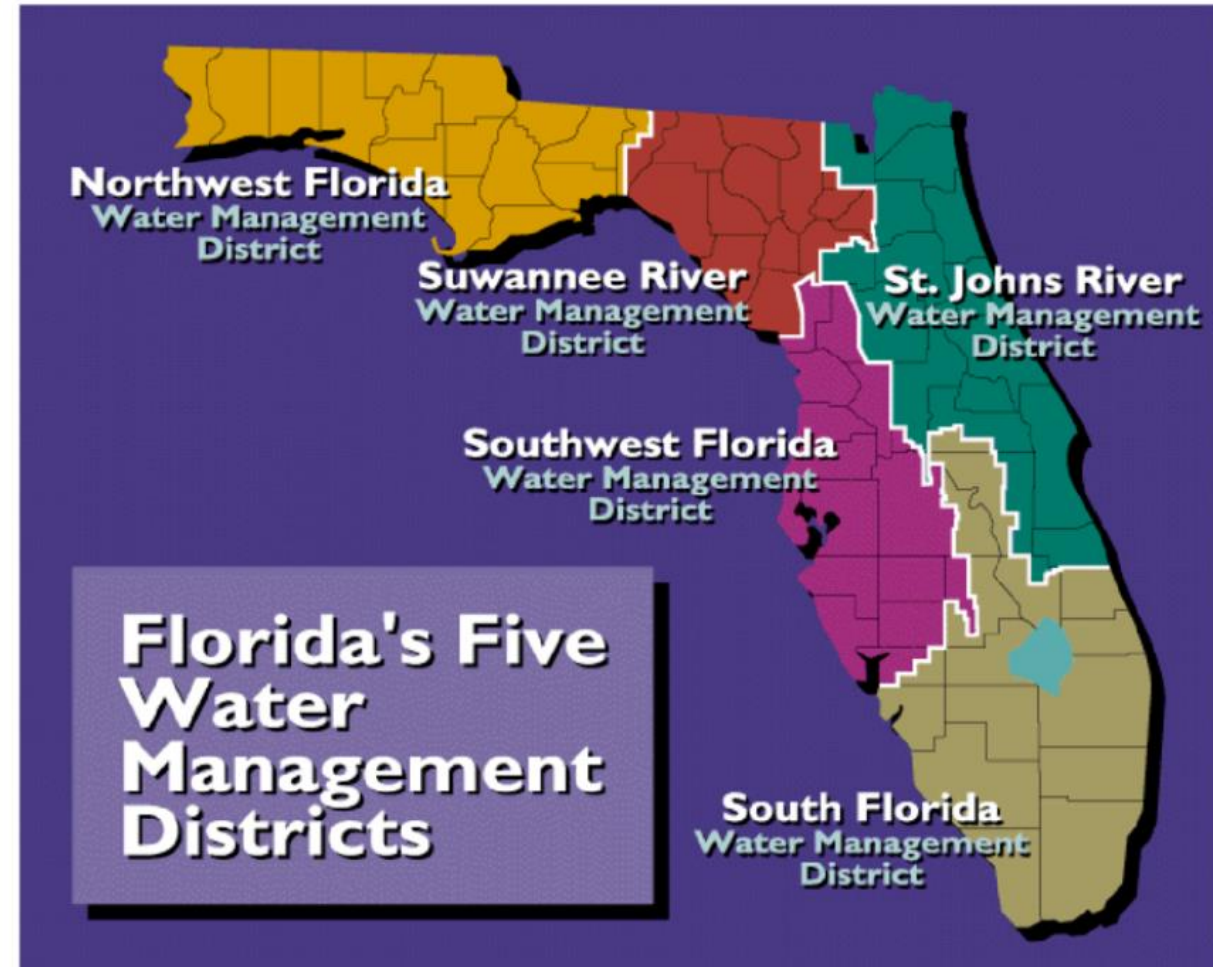
Florida Forever

- Established in its current form in 2001, Florida Forever is the successor to Preservation Florida and Preservation 2000 (P2000)
- Over 2.6 million acres conserved – one of the largest public land acquisition programs in the United States
- Administrated through Florida Department of Environmental Conservation
- Properties are ranked by the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC)
- Land is conserved based on its ecological attributes and can be purchased in fee or less-than-fee
- Ranking categories include climate change, cultural resources, critical natural lands, etc.



Water Management Districts

- The WMDs have an interest in conserving pervious surface in their drainage basins in service of water quality
- The Districts purchase lands less-than-fee as their budgets allow via their taxing authority
- The Governing Boards can approve the acquisitions
- The WMDs will partner with other government agencies to purchase conservation easements



County Land Conservation Programs

- Approximately 34 counties in Florida either currently have land conservation programs or have had them in the past
- County programs will frequently partner with state programs to make public dollars go further or if an acquisition is particularly expensive
- These programs are typically funded through sales tax enabled by voter-led referenda

Gopher Tortoise Recipient Site Program

- The program has existed since the late 1990s / early 2000s but took its current form in 2007
- Long term recipient sites require a perpetual conservation easement although there are other options under this program that do not require an easement
- Other requirements to qualify for the program:
 - Vegetative monitoring (30% herbaceous, 60% canopy cover)
 - Habitat management plan
 - On-going land management
 - Reporting requirements
 - Long-term endowment
- New in 2025: program has moved from regulatory to landowner assistance

