

# Florida Forever Talking Points

## Next Year's Budget and the Florida Forever Successor

### **Florida Forever Funding Must Be Included in FY 08–09 Budget**

The Florida House approved budget for Fiscal Year 2008-09 DOES NOT CONTAIN ANY FUNDING FOR FLORIDA FOREVER. By contrast, the Senate's approved budget does contain this funding. Funding should be at least \$300 million in bonding — the amount that has been appropriated every year since 1990.

### **Minimal New Revenue Is Required**

The brilliance of Florida Forever is that it employs bonding — money borrowed and available today, and paid off in the future when Florida's economy has recovered. To borrow \$300 million next fiscal year will cost approximately \$8 million in General Revenue.

### **Successor is Program Essential**

Major opportunities exist to protect the best of Florida's remaining habitat and landscape-scale tracts of land. However, to realize these fleeting opportunities, we must act TODAY to enact a successor to the Florida Forever program. Without a potent Florida Forever program — with the promise of increased funding in the future — much of Florida's lands and waters will be fragmented and lost over the coming years.

### **Protect the Integrity of Florida Forever**

It is essential that a successor program not be diminished in its focus on — and funding for — land acquisition. Some pending legislative proposals seek to undermine acquisition. Florida Forever's annual funding must not be diverted to other activities or purposes.

### **The Situation is Urgent**

The current real estate slump provides historic opportunities for land conservation — but they will not last. We need a Florida Forever successor program, and the promise of more funding in the future, in order to realize these opportunities. Right now real estate prices are down, critical landscapes are available, and willing sellers are coming forward. The state's capital expenditures can be delayed for things like roads and bridges, which can just as easily be built in the future. There is no second chance for natural lands once they are developed.