



FLORIDA

2025 IMPACT REPORT

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Contents

Letter From the Executive Director	1
Preserving Florida's Lifeblood	2
Stormwater Problem Meets TNC Innovation	4
Improving Water Quality Through Smart Irrigation	5
Sustaining the Coral Heart of the Caribbean	6
Turning the Tide: Advancing Ocean Health	7
Donor Spotlight: John Levinson	8
Making Policy Work for Nature: Water	10
TNC Helps Galvanize Grassroots Effort	11
Saving Florida's Wildlands	12
Conserving Wild Florida From Tip to Top	14
Stewarding a Legacy: Longleaf Pine	16
Donor Spotlight: Donald Slavik Family Foundation	18
Nature's Superhighway: The Appalachians	20

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In 2025, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) reached a critical crossroads—the halfway point on the journey to fulfill our 2030 Goals. **Since setting these ambitious goals, we've achieved great things, thanks to your generous support.** From protecting

land across the peninsula so the endangered Florida panther can roam freely, to pioneering a new water management technology with the potential to

transform the health of the Indian River Lagoon and its wildlife, our efforts make a difference. And you play an essential role in that success. But there's a lot more to do and precious little time to do it all.

That's why TNC is sharpening its focus on the transformative practices that create the greatest impact to address biodiversity loss and ensure a resilient planet for nature and people. **In Florida, where we're facing rapid urbanization and population growth, it's critical that we protect and restore our natural lands and waters, while there's still time.** Your unrestricted gifts fuel this vital work in Florida and beyond. Our vision of a future with a livable climate, healthy communities and thriving nature is attainable, but we must bring together individuals, organizations and governments to maximize public and private resources and deliver meaningful results for nature—and our future.

In the pages to come, you'll experience the incredible power of your generosity. In more than 80 countries and all 50 U.S. states, we scale local solutions into global impact, working tirelessly to protect and restore our lands and waters amid a changing world. And we need everyone—especially you—collaborating with common passion and purpose, to realize our vital mission in this defining decade. Thank you for your commitment to nature and for partnering with us in this journey.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Greg Knecht, Executive Director

Help Us Achieve Our 2030 Goals



3 billion

Reduce or store 3 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually—the same as taking 650 million cars off the road every year.



1 million

Conserve 1 million km of river systems and 30 million hectares of lakes and wetlands—enough river length alone to stretch across the globe 25 times.



100 million

Help 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies such as floods, fires and drought.



4 billion

Conserve 4 billion hectares of ocean—more than 10% of the world's ocean area.



650 million

Conserve 650 million hectares of lands, such as forests and grasslands—an area twice the size of India.



45 million

Support the leadership of 45 million people from local and Indigenous communities whose well-being and livelihoods depend on healthy oceans, freshwater and lands.

Florida Conservation Priorities



Protecting and
Restoring Land



Safeguarding and
Revitalizing Water

Preserving Florida's Lifeblood

TNC is helping to restore Florida's
waterways for people and wildlife

On a cool winter morning, the sun glistens off the crystal-clear waters of Blue Spring. Fed by a limestone-rich aquifer that stretches below the entire state of Florida and portions of Georgia, Alabama and South Carolina, the spring's blue hue speaks to its artesian origins.

Drawn by its year-round temperature of 73 degrees Fahrenheit, today the spring appears almost muddy as hundreds of Florida manatees crowd its waters. Seeking refuge from a rare winter cold front, the manatees, which lack a thick layer of fat or blubber, migrate to Florida's springs when the rivers and coastal waters drop below 68 degrees—to avoid literally freezing to death.

A 6-month-old manatee calf nestles next to her mother. Daily, they venture out of the spring into the St. Johns River to feed. The river's lush seagrass beds and other aquatic plants provide them with a smorgasbord of options, for now. The vegetarian marine mammals need to eat 10% to 15% of their body weight



per day. For an average adult manatee weighing 1,000 pounds, that's 100 pounds a day.

Unfortunately, the abundant underwater gardens on which the manatee and so many other species rely are under threat. In 2021 and 2022, hundreds of manatees starved to death in the Indian River Lagoon when entire beds of seagrass seemed to disappear overnight. In truth, the grass beds had been gradually dying for decades as algal blooms fueled by excess nitrogen and phosphorus increasingly blocked the sunlight they needed to grow. (See page 4 for related article.)

These and other pollutants mostly originate from household, commercial and agricultural fertilizers and waste. Carried by rainwater and flood events, they flow across asphalt and concrete to storm drains and streams, ultimately contaminating Florida's rivers, springs and lagoons.

The threat to wildlife like manatees, endangered sea turtles, hundreds of fish and bird species, as well as local economies and people's health and livelihoods is real. But there is still time to save Florida's precious waters.

TNC is working as hard and as fast as it can—with generous support from donors and partners—to reduce the level of nutrients and pollution degrading Florida's life-sustaining waters and coastal estuaries, like the Indian River Lagoon. TNC is also focused on protecting sensitive riverine watersheds and marine and coastal habitats to safeguard biodiversity and to ensure healthy and diverse fisheries persist.

Together, we can restore Florida's waterways and the wildlife and people they sustain.

Did you know?

The Floridan aquifer system is one of the most productive aquifers in the world, providing 3 billion gallons of water per day for residents and commercial/agricultural uses. As Florida's population steadily climbs, increased freshwater demand is depleting the aquifer faster than it can be naturally replenished.

Overextraction coupled with rising sea levels is tipping the delicate balance that had kept saltwater from entering and tainting Florida's groundwater supply—accelerating a water scarcity scenario for the state.

LEARN HOW



**you can help TNC
tip the balance in
favor of water
conservation
for Florida.**

Stormwater Problem Meets TNC Innovation

Florida's waters are in crisis. Recent studies indicate that one in four of the state's natural waterways are degraded by high levels of nitrogen, phosphorous and other pollutants.

Largely originating from household, commercial and agricultural fertilizers and waste, these pollutants are carried by rainwater across urban landscapes to stormwater ponds, which function as temporary "pollution holding tanks." Unfortunately, holding times have been significantly reduced by more frequent, intense storms, causing these ponds to overflow and release pollutants into streams, rivers and estuaries. Additionally, the water in these ponds and in the subsequent runoff contains higher pollutant levels from rapidly growing cities. As a result, more and more pollutants are entering Florida's waterways—devastating habitat and threatening marine life like Florida manatees.

Now, imagine retrofitting this "urban" watershed with the latest technological advances, creating a system that networks stormwater ponds



with automated controls that respond instantly to rainfall, runoff and upstream water flow to improve water quality. One that integrates real-time data and actively manages water flows, reducing pollutant levels so that much cleaner water enters Florida's waterways.

TNC's Runoff to Resilience pilot project—launched this past year—is a foundational step toward achieving this future vision. The pilot is developing the building blocks to improve water quality across the state, starting with the iconic Indian River Lagoon, one of the most biodiverse estuaries in North America.

Partnering with industry leaders like AWS and Arup and research partners like the University of Florida, **TNC's Runoff to Resilience pilot will provide communities with the ability to reduce pollutants and their effects**—algae blooms, the disappearance of seagrass, and harm to the impressive waterways and wildlife for which Florida is known.

Longterm, TNC aims to integrate and scale the Runoff to Resilience system and tools into industry standard practices to enhance water quality in lakes, rivers, streams and estuaries across the state and beyond.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Runoff to Resilience is generously supported by donors that include DSF Charitable Foundation, The Edward E. Haddock, Jr. Family Foundation and The J.W. Couch Foundation.

Improving Water Quality Through Smart Irrigation

Agriculture accounts for roughly 37% of total freshwater withdrawals from Florida's underground aquifers—the state's primary water source. With a surging population and rising sea levels putting added pressure on this precious natural resource, TNC is laser-focused on developing solutions that safeguard water for the future.

MILESTONES ▼

TNC is partnering with **The Toro Company** and six local Florida farms to study the effectiveness of wireless, automated irrigation systems.

"Precision irrigation allows nutrients to stay in the plant root zone longer, maximizing plant growth while minimizing runoff—benefiting freshwater quality and wildlife," says David Royal, nutrient stewardship project manager for TNC in Florida.

The Toro system also enables farm managers to monitor and control water flows from their handheld devices, further preventing overwatering and limiting production costs. Upon completing the pilot project, TNC and its partners hope to expand the use of this technology, and others, to farms across Florida and in other states.



A vibrant underwater photograph of a coral reef. In the foreground, a large, textured brain coral is visible. To its right, a fish with a brown and white patterned body and yellow fins swims towards the left. The background is filled with tall, slender, branching corals reaching towards the surface. The water is clear and blue.

Sustaining the Coral Heart of the Caribbean

Coral reefs are the beating heart of the Caribbean's marine life and a cornerstone of coastal resilience. But rising ocean temperatures and human pressures have devastated these ecosystems—coral cover in the U.S. Virgin Islands has dropped by 60% in just 30 years.

With support from donors, long-term marine protections and innovative finance agreements—like TNC's Nature Bonds project in the Bahamas, which is unlocking \$124 million for marine conservation over the next 15 years—TNC is racing against time to reverse this trend.

MILESTONES ▼

At the Coral Innovation Hub in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, TNC is pioneering new methods to grow and outplant heat-tolerant corals, restoring reefs at an unprecedented scale. These efforts not only revive marine biodiversity but also protect communities from storm surges and support local economies.

In 2024, TNC and partners planted over 16,800 corals across the Bahamas and Virgin Islands. What's more, connectivity modeling shows the interconnected nature of these marine systems, with Florida being the "downstream" recipient of lobster larvae, fish larvae and corals.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Donors supporting TNC's vital coral research and restoration work include the estate of Susan "Simcha" Rudolph.



“The ocean gives us so much—food, enjoyment, climate control, inspiration and peace of mind. It’s our job to keep it clean, healthy and full of life. Ocean conservation just makes good sense.”

Jarred Fayson, TNC in Florida trustee, donor and avid fisherman

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

TNC’s OCN and marine conservation work is generously supported by donors that include Cannupa Foundation/John and Ellen Levinson, Halina and Joe Caravello, and Richard and June Smith Family Foundation.

Turning the Tide: Advancing Ocean Health

Through the Ocean and Coasts Network (OCN), a program that’s reimagining the future of marine conservation, TNC is tackling the most urgent threats to oceans and coastal regions and scaling solutions in Florida and across the Southeastern U.S., the Gulf and Caribbean. Facing rising seas, warming waters, habitat loss and increasing offshore development, TNC’s work is critical to maintaining sustainable and resilient ocean and coastal environments for the future.

Making a Difference

John Levinson puts financial savvy and passion for nature to work for TNC

As a young boy, John Levinson enjoyed hunting waterfowl with his father and friends and sailing the Chesapeake. Growing up in the Northeastern U.S., he remembers wild ducks were plentiful and snow geese would arrive in droves of up to 300 at a time. “We’d get up before the crack of dawn, drive [to the hunting spot], put out the decoys and just sit there and watch the sunrise and watch the birds come in,” he says. These experiences instilled in him a special appreciation for nature.

But over time, John says he noticed the number of ducks diminished, mostly due to habitat loss, and his eyes were opened to the importance of conservation. He became a lifetime member of Ducks Unlimited and later joined TNC’s Connecticut Board, where he served for a decade in several roles, including chair.

“I always had a love of nature. As I saw it becoming less accessible and abundant, it registered with me and that drew me into getting involved with TNC,” John says. As he learned more about the organization, he was impressed by its values, science-based approach to conservation and its global reach and influence.

Coral reef in Raja Ampat, Indonesia © Purwanto Nugroho/TNC Photo Contest 2019

“TNC replicates projects that work—around the globe—and we have the financial wherewithal and creativity to do things that no other organization can pull off. That is huge for me,” he says.

John should know. He’s visited TNC projects in Mexico, Indonesia, Brazil and the Caribbean, to name a few, for what he calls “purposeful travel” and has seen TNC in action.

Recognizing TNC’s power to make a difference, John and his wife, Ellen, recently contributed a founding gift to the global Ocean Accelerator. The accelerator will amass philanthropic seed capital of \$5 million its first year to leverage an additional \$30 million in public and private dollars over the next three years. The funds will be deployed to replicate and scale proven marine conservation successes—helping TNC protect 10% of the world’s ocean by 2030.

“It’s a private equity or growth investor way of looking at global conservation,” says John, who pioneered a tech hedge fund in 1994, founded Westway Capital and is now a professional seed stage venture capital investor and advisor/board member to young companies.

He admits the Ocean Accelerator appealed to him partly because of his business background. But it’s much more than that.

“It combines my love of nature, my understanding of financial markets, what we’re going to accomplish, the camaraderie we’ll build, the thrill of visiting the projects we invest in—and knowing we’re creating a bigger impact than we would as individuals. That’s the excitement for me.”

Now more of a bird watcher than a hunter, John shares his time between homes in Florida and Connecticut and serves on the TNC in Florida Board and the Miami Council. A group of TNC supporters and stakeholders, the 25-member council connects influential, conservation-minded Miamians with each other and to TNC’s work across the globe.

Whether it’s local or global, John, a longtime donor to TNC, admits that saving nature is complicated. He looks for projects with outsized solutions grounded in science that include economic incentives and legislation that can help scale conservation impact and help create a sustainable project structure.

“We’ve got biblical-size problems, and they’re not going to be solved by anything less than huge-scale solutions,” he says.



LEARN MORE

about the global Ocean Accelerator and how you can get involved.
Email sofia.leon@tnc.org and/or scan this code.





POLICY SPOTLIGHT

Making Policy Work for Nature: Improving Water Quality

TNC is integrally involved in shaping state policies that lead to improved water quality protections and works tirelessly behind the scenes and through active participation in the legislative process to ensure nature has a voice in government.

Aligned with TNC's Runoff to Resilience pilot project (see page 4), **Florida's new stormwater regulations (Senate Bill 7040), which became law July 1, 2024, require more stringent stormwater design and performance standards for development.**

"The rules now mandate modeling and calculations to help ensure each stormwater management system is designed to discharge to the required treatment level. This is a big step forward from the presumption of performance in the previous rule," says Lesley Bertolotti, TNC's sustainable communities strategy manager, who served on the technical advisory committee for the new stormwater rules.

Getting the rules through the legislative process was a win for nature. Stormwater rules had not been updated since the 1980s. The Department of Environmental Protection rules will help reduce nutrients and other pollutants in urban runoff, improving water quality for wildlife and the communities that depend on Florida's waters.

Nature scored another victory in 2025 when the Florida Legislature passed **House Bill 1143**. The bill **prohibits drilling, exploration and production of oil, gas and other petroleum products** within 10 miles of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve, and provides additional drilling restrictions statewide where the activity could harm habitat and wildlife.

"Drilling for oil and gas is threatening sensitive lands and waters across the South," says Garrett Wallace, TNC's Southern Division government relations director. "With this bill, Governor DeSantis and the Florida Legislature continue to demonstrate the leadership that's needed to protect our rare and sensitive lands and waters."





PROTECTING AND RESTORING LAND

POLICY SPOTLIGHT

TNC Helps Galvanize Grassroots Effort to Preserve Florida State Parks

“The good guys can still win. When we show up to be nature’s voice backed by science, data and experience on the ground and in the water, we can change the future of our communities and ecosystems.”

Kahreem Golden, Florida
government relations manager

In August 2024, when plans quietly emerged to introduce golf courses, pickleball courts, and large-scale lodging into Florida’s beloved state parks, communities across the state took action. From the Panhandle to the Keys, community members of all backgrounds spoke out with one voice—**Florida’s parks must be protected.**

It was apparent that real legislative change was needed to halt the state’s proposed “Great Outdoors Initiative” and safeguard Florida’s state parks in perpetuity. Springing into action, TNC—alongside more than 70 conservation partners—helped galvanize a movement of unprecedented scale to protect Florida’s public lands. TNC’s government relations team led an impact campaign that steered the groundswell of advocacy into meaningful public policy. Combined with supporters’ letters to legislators, packed public hearings and peaceful demonstrations across the state, TNC’s engagement brought this issue into clear view.

What followed was nothing less than transformational. Eight months later, the **State Park Preservation Act (HB 209)** passed unanimously in the Florida Legislature and was signed into law with critical conservation safeguards intact. This new legislation not only **bans incompatible development in state parks** but also guarantees public input in future park planning and reaffirms a vital principle: Florida’s parks exist to serve nature and people, not commercial interests.

Thanks to the voices of thousands, amplified by TNC’s leadership and trusted partnerships, Florida’s state parks will remain places where panthers roam, families hike and the next generation can experience the magic of wild Florida.



PROTECTING AND RESTORING LAND

Saving Florida's Wildlands

Amid rapid population growth and development, wildlife corridors offer hope for the future

As the last golden light fades behind the trees, a Florida panther moves silently through the grass, her two cubs trailing close behind.

It is not uncommon for the trio to travel long distances together—sometimes up to 200 miles—driven by hunger and the search for new territory. Once widespread across the Southeast, the Florida panther now clings to just 5% of its historic range.

The mother panther catches the scent of a white-tailed deer, but knows the hunt must wait until darkness deepens. Padding silently through the underbrush, they pass sun-drowsed alligators, slip over moss-draped logs and thread between quiet songbirds settling into saw palmettos for the night.

“When I saw the photos of the panther on my camera, I got all goofy about it, like it was a panda bear! I’m so happy that there are places like Tiger Creek Preserve and the state forest available to wildlife while there’s so much development happening around us. I’m sure that connectivity is why I’ve seen the panther, bears and so many other species on my land.”

Jim Trice, TNC Tiger Creek Preserve neighbor

These wildlands—rich and teeming with life—are among the last places where panthers can roam freely. As dusk gives way to a starry sky, the family journeys toward a familiar Cypress dome. But something has changed. The ground beneath their paws is no longer soft and familiar—it’s rough, unnatural and foreign.

What was once a sanctuary has become a wasteland of concrete and steel. A deafening roar erupts as a semitruck barrels past, briefly scattering the family. A near miss—this time.

This is the unfortunate reality facing the Florida panther and other iconic Florida wildlife as development continues to degrade and fragment the state’s wildlands, destroying the last remaining stretches of habitat.

The tragic loss of 36 Florida panthers in 2024, over 80% due to vehicle collisions, underscores the need to protect and connect these vital lands. There are only an estimated 200 Florida panthers left—the majority of which live almost exclusively in the southern tip of Florida. TNC works with partners across the state to protect wild and working lands from development—creating wildlife corridors and underpass road crossings that provide the panther (and other animals) with safe passageways and protected areas to hunt and breed.

This is where your support is invaluable. Your contributions help TNC safeguard and steward these essential habitats, ensuring that the Florida Wildlife Corridor remains a thriving lifeline for generations to come.



MILESTONES ▼

On Oct. 8, 2024, Jim Trice, a neighbor at the south end of TNC’s Tiger Creek Preserve (TCP), was checking the footage of his trail camera. Accustomed to seeing black bear and white-tailed deer, to his surprise, the camera revealed a lone Florida panther. His camera captured the panther again on Nov. 22, 2024. (See black and white image, left.)

The observations represent a high watermark for TNC—it had been decades since a Florida panther was seen in the area. The sightings are a strong indication that TNC’s land protection and stewardship strategies are cultivating a healthy environment for the Florida panther and that the organization’s work with partners like the Florida Wildlife Corridor is making a difference for Florida’s unique ecosystems and species.

Today, thanks to this collective effort, more than 29% of the state’s total land area is conserved.

Conserving Wild Florida from Tip to Top

From North Florida to the southern tip of the peninsula, TNC and its partners are protecting the state's mosaic of natural lands and waters, preserving the rare and unique flora and fauna that call Florida home—while there's still time.

MILESTONES ▼

Completion of the Florida Panther Dispersal Zone Within Sight

In fiscal year 2025, TNC helped protect **24,963 acres of Florida Wildlife Corridor** and laid the foundation for the conservation of additional properties in the Florida Panther Dispersal Zone. Critical habitat for the endangered Florida Panther, the Dispersal Zone connects the panthers' current breeding population, located south of the Caloosahatchee River, to suitable habitat north of the river. To remove the Florida panther from the endangered species list, at least three viable, self-sustaining populations of 240 panthers each, on both sides of the river, must be established. Creating safe passageways for panthers to migrate north to form additional breeding populations is essential to ensuring their long-term survival.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

TNC's land protection and Corridor Compatible Communities work is made possible thanks to the generosity of donors that include Donald Slavik Family Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation, Mrs. Candace S. Hamm, Rogers Family Foundation and The Spurlino Foundation.



Today, only a handful of properties remain to solidify a fully protected Dispersal Zone corridor for panthers and other animals to safely cross the Caloosahatchee River.

A Major Win for Northeast Florida

TNC played a pivotal role in helping secure \$117 million from the state of Florida to fund the protection of **76,000 acres** of privately owned woodlands in the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor. The property contains essential habitat for Florida black bear and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, eastern indigo snake and gopher tortoise, and is now part of a nearly contiguous conserved landscape of over half a million acres.

Protecting Lands Through Smart Development

With Florida facing rapid urbanization, TNC is utilizing its vast network of partners and science-based conservation data to **develop and promote the adoption of sustainable development practices and policies.**

For example, recently drafted Corridor Compatible Communities Design Guidelines help inform how development can occur while reducing impacts to wildlife corridors. These guidelines were officially launched at the Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation's Corridor Connect Summit in June and focus on development strategies which consider Florida's unique biodiversity, resilience and connectivity.

“TNC is proud to collaborate with a wide range of partners—each committed to ensuring that Florida remains an environmentally rich and beautiful place—to grow and promote sustainable development efforts to protect and enhance the Florida Wildlife Corridor.”

Lindsay Stevens, sustainable communities strategy and protection director





Stewarding a Legacy: **Florida's Remaining Longleaf Pine Forests**

Once stretching across 90 million acres of the Southeast, the longleaf pine forest is a symbol of ecological abundance and resilience. The forests provide habitat for more than 300 bird species, 2,500 plant species and 59% of the Southeast's reptiles and amphibians. Today, only 5 million acres of longleaf pine remain, and old-growth forests, which support the greatest diversity of plants and animals, have all but vanished. Restoration efforts are vital for reviving the rich tapestry of life these forests preserve.

“TNC in Florida pioneered groundcover restoration in the 1990s, collecting wiregrass seeds by hand, growing them in nurseries and hand-planting the grass plugs. Today, advanced equipment allows for large-scale seed collection and direct seeding, significantly accelerating the pace and scale of restoration. This work is absolutely vital for rebuilding habitat essential to so many of Florida's rare and endangered species.”

Chris Bergh, Florida field program director

MILESTONES ▼

Across the state, TNC is helping to replant and restore degraded longleaf pine forests to their natural state, creating healthy wildlife habitats while reducing runoff and land erosion and improving water seepage and quality. Since January 2020, TNC and partners have restored over **600,000 acres** of longleaf pine forest in Florida through prescribed burns, invasive plant removal, tree planting, groundcover restoration and strategic thinning of dense hardwood stands.

In the Florida Panhandle, TNC's longleaf pine stewardship work is preserving **one of six designated “hotspots” of biodiversity** in the U.S.—home to hundreds of rare plant and animal species, including 30 documented federally threatened or endangered animal species in the Apalachicola River area alone. Working with partners at Torreya State Park, TNC is methodically transforming a deforested landscape—battered by unsustainable logging—to its natural condition.

Annually, TNC collects and plants over 10,000 pounds of groundcover seeds while removing invasive plants, and with its partners, conducts regular prescribed burns to facilitate the forest's natural succession.



Making a Difference

The Donald Slavik Family Foundation: One family's commitment to protecting the natural world

Nature has always been a core component of Susan Slavik Williams' life. Her late father, Donald Slavik, strongly believed that preserving the natural world was the most important thing humans could work toward, and ensured that the family traveled and spent time together in nature.

Susan recalls an especially impactful moment with her father in 1993, when the two spent 10 days aboard a boat in the Bahamas while participating in a research expedition to study the spotted dolphin. "Each day, when the dolphins came near the boat, we would toss on our snorkeling gear and jump in. The dolphins, of course, chose the level of interaction, but we found that if we kept our fins together and kicked like they do, they would surround us to swim in tandem," she says. "It was absolutely magical to swim with five or six wild dolphins choosing to be within touching distance. There was such an intelligent sparkle in their eyes, and it was a great lesson about meeting animals on their terms."

Now at the helm of The Donald Slavik Family Foundation—established in 1995 for the purpose of saving wildlife and their natural surroundings, Susan, along with her husband, Felix Williams, aim to develop an in-depth understanding of conservation issues and support efforts in the foundation's two focus geographies: North America and Africa.

The foundation also has a particular interest in protecting carnivores—often the apex predators in an ecosystem. "When you save predators, the result is healthy ecosystems. Predators need large areas and healthy biomes, just like humans do," Susan explains.

It's this mission that prompted the couple to first partner with TNC in 2019. Since then, the foundation has supported TNC's efforts to protect and expand the Florida Wildlife Corridor and has also helped finance TNC habitat protection projects in Kenya and Zambia.

"Whether it's lions in Africa or panthers in Florida, these species are needed for their contribution to their environments and need to continue to exist as intended," Felix says.

The pair was inspired to come alongside TNC after learning about its success in conserving Florida Wildlife Corridor lands for panthers and witnessing growing public support for the organization's global work. "The program's [TNC's] successes are well known in the conservation world," Susan says.

According to the couple, conservation education is also crucial to achieving positive and lasting change. "Many people don't even know that Florida still has panthers," Felix remarks. TNC's work to inform and educate people in concert with its conservation science, collaborative approach, and impactful on-the-ground work aligns with the foundation's goals.

Susan and Felix envision a world that recognizes the importance of nature, and their work through The Donald Slavik Family Foundation supports this view. "We hope to help people appreciate the animals around them and to learn how to coexist with them, because human beings will only work to save things they understand," Susan says.



"When you save predators, the result is healthy ecosystems. Predators need large areas and healthy biomes, just like humans do."

Susan Slavik Williams, The Donald Slavik Family Foundation





Nature's Superhighway: Protecting a Safe Haven for the Future

The Appalachians. These ancient mountains stir the soul with their breathtaking beauty and timeless majesty. Picture dense forests alive with rustling leaves, crystal-clear streams that wind through deep valleys and the calls of wildlife echoing across the mountaintops. Stretching 2,000 miles from Alabama to Canada's Maritime provinces, the Appalachians are a sanctuary for a remarkable variety of flora and fauna, including moose, bobcats, countless bird species, and the endangered bog turtle, Virginia big-eared bat and Carolina northern flying squirrel.

One of the world's most biologically diverse landscapes, TNC aims to create a "wildlife superhighway" in the Appalachians by protecting and connecting 2.2 million acres by 2030.

Among the oldest mountains on Earth, the Appalachians possess an inherent resilience to changing temperatures and weather patterns, making the region a crucial landscape to protect for the future. There is evidence that the mountain range was used as a safe haven by woolly mammoths and saber-toothed cats during the most recent ice age.

As temperatures and sea levels rise and weather-related events intensify, wildlife and plants are expected to shift their ranges north and to higher elevations. In the U.S., scientists forecast the Appalachians will again become a sanctuary for species seeking refuge in a changing world—making TNC's work here even more critical.

MILESTONES ▼

Thanks to donors like **The Spurlino Foundation**, TNC is poised to protect 560 acres in West Virginia—in the heart of the Appalachians—directly adjacent to one of only three known maternal colonies of the endangered Virginia big-eared bat. The property's remote location provides the colony's cave with a safe buffer from human interference while also protecting its feeding grounds. TNC is pursuing hundreds of thousands of acres in potential land protection deals in the Appalachians to sustain biodiversity and ensure this unique and globally significant landscape remains a place where all life can thrive.

CREATE A LEGACY

Learn how you
can make a
difference for
nature through
a planned
gift today at
nature.org/legacy.



Planning for Nature's Future

“I have favorite places in this state, like I am sure you do. Slices of beach, parts of creeks and rivers, sections of trails, stretches of rural roads, all are echoes of the wildness that once abounded. So much of that has been lost to the pressures of progress and development. If we're to ensure that our children—and their children—inherit what remains, then we have to invest in the future of organizations like The Nature Conservancy, which stands firmly as an advocate for wildlife and wilderness. Making a planned gift, joining the Legacy Club, isn't just a wise investment, it's the right thing to do, now and for the future.”

Gilbert Miller, TNC Florida Board chair and Legacy Club member



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this video and see how
your gifts help people
and nature thrive.

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BUILDING A BRIGHTER TOMORROW, TOGETHER

TNC is committed to creating a future where people and nature can adapt and thrive amid the changing climate. Together with local and Indigenous leaders, TNC is increasing investment and spearheading innovations that reduce emissions, foster resilience and promote enduring, meaningful benefits across communities.

MILESTONES ▼

With the **Miccosukee Tribe of Indians**, TNC helped design and fund a \$15 million, holistic clean energy transition. This initiative will address chronic power outages in the remote Everglades community and eliminate about 12,900 metric tons of CO₂ equivalent by 2030—comparable to removing approximately 2,800 cars from the road.

With **Sarasota County and the Mote Marine Laboratory**, TNC is working to integrate solar technology and farming within an agricultural incubator program. This work is part of a broader effort to advance and scale agrivoltaics, a practice that maximizes land use benefits for climate, agriculture and nature.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Donors contributing generously to advance TNC's climate action work include Jane's Trust Foundation and VoLo Foundation.