



FLORIDA CONSERVATION COALITION

A non-partisan coalition of non-profit organizations and concerned citizens

It shall be the policy of the state to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty. Adequate provision shall be made by law for the abatement of air and water pollution and excessive and unnecessary noise and for the conservation and protection of natural resources.

--Article II, Section 7(a), Florida Constitution

Mission Statement

The Florida Conservation Coalition is devoted to protecting and conserving Florida's land, fish and wildlife and water resources that are essential to the well-being and quality of life of the residents of this state, and for its long-term economic prosperity. Florida's natural resources are a treasure to be conserved for the people of Florida and must be managed judiciously, not squandered.

Our focus is ensuring that state safeguards are in place to protect and properly manage the supply and quantity of Florida's water resources and our rich natural environment. We support the continuation and meaningful funding of Florida Forever to protect sensitive natural lands, protect water resources and offer recreational opportunities to citizens and tourists. We support an effective state and regional process of managing growth and development to maintain and enhance the quality of life for present and future Floridians.

To accomplish this, it is essential that citizens of all ages and backgrounds understand the importance of protecting these priceless resources. It is imperative that candidates for office, elected officials and all policy makers be informed on key conservation issues. Further, citizens must exercise their right to vote for elected officials at the national, state and local levels who share their conservation ethic and are willing to provide true vision and leadership. Citizens must get involved and stay engaged at all levels. We encourage citizens and groups to join in the political process by contacting their legislators, working in their communities, and encouraging everyone to vote.

2011-2012 Top Priority Water Policy and Management

Principles:

1. Florida's water belongs to the people and must be maintained as a public resource.
2. We must maintain effective state safeguards to ensure that we have abundant and clean water for us, our children and grandchildren.
3. It is essential to protect Florida's rivers, streams, springs, lakes, aquifers, sinks, and wetlands and their associated systems to safeguard our water resources, fish and wildlife, and the many recreational benefits they provide.
4. We must protect Florida's estuaries and near-shore waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico as they are dependent on clean fresh water flowing from the land and are the basis of recreational and commercial fishing and Florida's seafood industry.
5. It is imperative that we protect Florida's significant natural lands as they cleanse and store our drinking water as well as the water needed to support agriculture and the environment.
6. We must protect our water supply from over use, which can be caused by over-development, over-pumping for agriculture, industrial and other uses, and is made worse in times of drought.
7. To accomplish these principles, Florida's regional watershed-based system of managing and protecting water needs to be maintained to avoid a one size fits all approach that would disrupt present and future efforts to provide clean water supplies to all Floridians.

Benefits:

Clean water is a vital resource because beaches, rivers, lakes, streams, sinks, wetlands and uplands:

- Provide significant economic benefits from associated tourism.
- Support Florida's environment including natural lands, wildlife, and vegetation.
- Store and cleanse drinking water and water for personal and business uses for close to 20 million residents and more than 80 million visitors a year.
- Support agriculture, a multibillion-dollar industry in Florida.
- Provide untold recreational opportunities for millions of residents and visitors.

Threats:

Florida's water faces serious threats including drought, over pumping, saltwater intrusion, and pollution caused by runoff from development and agriculture, within sensitive watersheds. These threats are confounded by funding cuts to water management districts, failure to fund the Florida Forever program, top down water management from the state instead of regional districts, talk of piping water from one watershed to another, and moves toward

privatizing water as a commodity instead of treating water as a public resource.

The Florida Conservation Coalition emphasizes the following priorities:

- Restoring reasonable funding for Florida's regional water management districts to provide for water quality protection, adequate water supplies, flood protection, and natural resources protection.
- Funding Florida Forever including acquiring land for water resource protection.
- Reaffirming Florida's commitment to restore the Everglades, upon which South Florida's water supply and quality of life depends.
- Managing Florida's water resources at the regional, not state level.
- Ensuring that growth management laws and policies support sustainable use of water.
- Promoting efficient use and conservation of water.
- Opposing efforts to privatize Florida's water.