The Florida Wildlife Corridor (FWC)
Many of Florida’s priority lands for conservation are in the Florida Wildlife Corridor (FWC), which has been a state legislative focus in the last few years.

The FWC lays out a vision to protect a landscape-scale ecological corridor throughout much of the state.
The FWC builds on two major state initiatives launched in the 1980s:

1. Greenways Planning:
   Large-scale planning for a statewide system of greenways and trails linking these protected lands, which resulted in the creation of the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN)
2. State Land Acquisition:
Statewide conservation and recreation lands acquisition programs known as Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever
Both the Sprawl 2040 and 2070 Scenarios point to significant development of state priority lands over the coming decades if critical lands are not protected.
By 2040, roughly 206,000 acres in the FWC could be lost to development or sea level rise

By 2070, 1.2 million acres of state priority lands within the FWC could be lost
What are “state priority natural lands?”

Lands that are either currently protected or are high priorities for protection (through public purchase, easement, zoning or some other means) for Florida’s biodiversity, water, or other ecosystem services, including:

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1. Current Florida Managed Lands (FLMA)
2. Future priority natural lands including:
   - Florida Forever conservation land protection projects
   - Priorities 1, 2, and 3 in the Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN), otherwise known as the Florida Wildlife Corridor
What is “protected”? 

Some are owned by Federal, State or Local Government

Some are protected through “conservation easement” where the land remains under private or public ownership with some restrictions on how the property is used to protect its conservation or agricultural value.
Florida Counties with Local Land Referenda

- Alachua
- Brevard
- Collier
- Flagler
- Hillsborough
- Indian River
- Lee
- Manatee
- Martin
- Miami-Dade
- Nassau
- Palm Beach
- Pasco
- Pinellas
- Polk
- Sarasota
- Seminole
- St. Lucie
- Volusia
How Do We Protect These Lands?

State Resources:
- Florida Forever
- Rural and Family Lands
- Florida Communities Trust
- Water Management Districts

Federal Resources:
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWC)
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Local Resources:
- County Conservation Referenda
- Planning Process
  - Future Land Use Maps (FLUM)
  - Local Comprehensive Plans
  - Zoning
  - Local Government Easements

Private Resources:
- Land Trusts/Conservation Easements
- Foundation Funding
GOAL: Protect 6 million acres (3/4 of the unprotected acreage in the Florida Wildlife Corridor) of the highest state priority lands

ASSUMPTION: A very approximate average of $4,000 an acre, with the total cost $24 billion in today’s dollars.

- 800-year scenario – If the Legislature and Governor approved $30 million a year (as it did on average between 2009 and 2020) for Florida Forever and Rural and Family Lands programs
- 80-year scenario – If $300 million a year were split between the two programs (historic funding and approximate average for 2021 and 2022)
- 48-year scenario – If $500 million a year were evenly split between the two programs
Protected Lands Can Have Multiple Natural and Economic Values

- Resource-based recreation & ecotourism
- Wildlife habitat & biodiversity
- Storm protection
- Flood control
- Water storage and cleansing
- Carbon sequestration
- Food & fiber security