
1000 FRIENDS of FLORIDA
40th ANNIVERSARY
A Special Edition of Our foresight Newsletter
Always HERE
Always FLORIDA
40 Years of 1000 Friends of Florida | 1986 – 2026
BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES • SAVING SPECIAL PLACES
Fort DeSoto Park | Photo by Anja Weigelt

# Looking Back, Looking Forward


Paul Owens

With his two faces — one looking backward and one forward — the Roman god Janus symbolized a simultaneous reflection on the past and fixation on the future. It's an appropriate metaphor for 1000 Friends of Florida on our 40th anniversary.

As detailed in this commemorative newsletter, we have four decades worth of accomplishments to mark and celebrate. These accomplishments are a testament to the wisdom and determination of our visionary leaders and dedicated staff, but they would not have been possible without the longstanding and loyal support of legions of Floridians who have generously provided us with the resources to continue pursuing 1000 Friends' vital goals of building better communities and saving special places. We could not have done it all without you.

But we will not be resting on our laurels. Our urgent work and our need for your support will continue. The Florida fact of life that compelled our founders, including Nathaniel Reed and Dr. John M. DeGrove, to establish 1000 Friends in 1986 persists today: relentless population growth that, without thoughtful planning, threatens irreversible damage to Florida's greatest assets — our environment and quality of life. Forty years on, disruptive changes in our climate and economy may make growth even more challenging to navigate.

So even as we look back with pride and gratitude, we will never lose our forward focus: to do all we can to ensure Florida's greatest assets are protected for all of us, and for all those who follow. Here's to the next 40 years.

Paul Owens

Paul Owens
*President*

## ABOUT THE Voices of 1000 Friends

For our **40th anniversary**, we sat down with founders, former staff, board members and longtime partners and asked them to share what they remember. Their words appear throughout this issue as the **Voices of 1000 Friends**, lightly edited for length and clarity. These are the people who built **1000 Friends**, and we are deeply grateful to each of them for their time, their candor and their stories. You can hear more in our **Voices of 1000 Friends** series on social media.



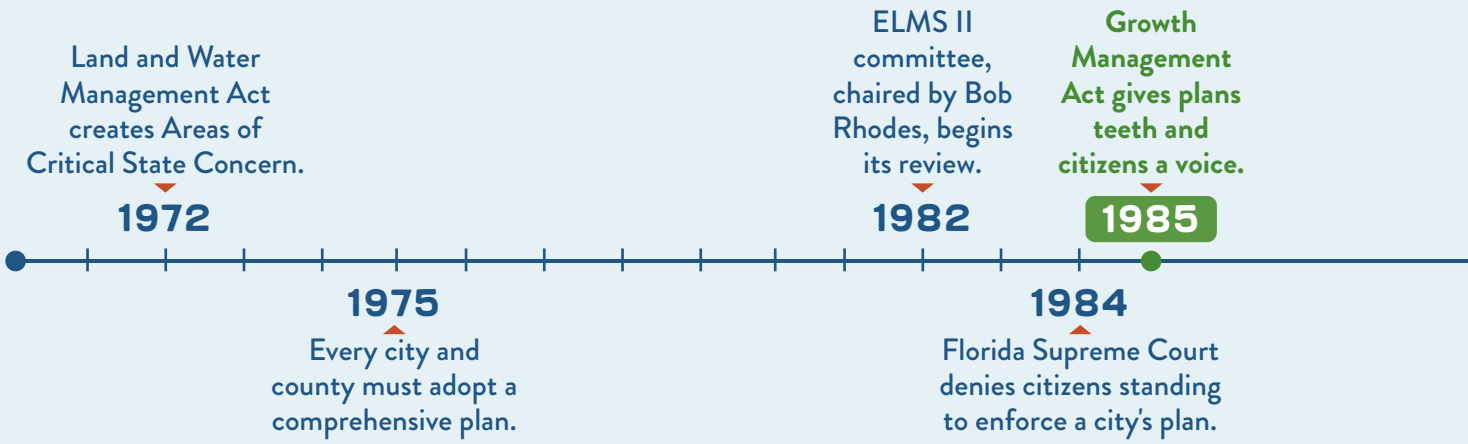
*"I remember Nat Reed telling me the strongest thing you can do is to touch that emotion people have, where they love the place they live. It locks people into wanting to see the place they live managed in a thoughtful way. Not immune to change, but not haphazardly changed. That's what the planning law was all about, and that's what 1000 Friends is all about."*

**JIM MURLEY,**
*Founding Executive Director*

# Prelude to a Legacy

*From the first local plan reviews to statewide projects and grassroots campaigns, these pages follow the work through the people behind it. Our story starts 14 years before our founding.*

## Before 1000 Friends | 1972–1985

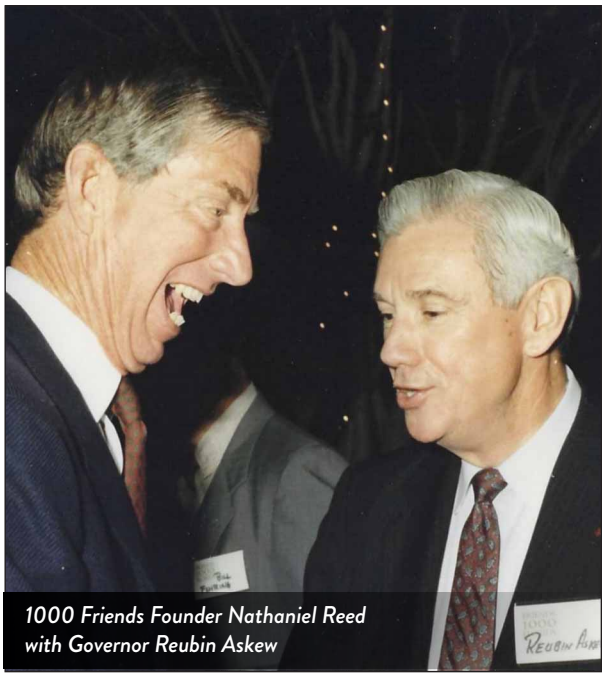



PROLOGUE | 1972–1985

## Setting the Stage

In 1972, Governor Reubin Askew and the Legislature passed a set of landmark laws, including the Land and Water Management Act that created Areas of Critical State Concern. John DeGrove chaired the task force behind it, and a young state senator named Bob Graham helped carry it. The 1975 Local Government Comprehensive Planning Act required every city and county to adopt a plan, but the law lacked provisions requiring them to follow those plans.

A second Environmental Land Management Study Committee, chaired by Bob Rhodes with Nathaniel Reed and DeGrove as members, drafted the framework for the 1985 Growth Management Act, signed by Governor Graham. When a 1984 court ruling left citizens unable to enforce a city's plan, the uproar helped write citizen standing into the new law. The founders knew a law alone would not be enough. Borrowing a model from another grassroots advocacy group, 1000 Friends of Oregon, they set out to build a citizen watchdog.



*1000 Friends Founder Nathaniel Reed with Governor Reubin Askew*

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"During the Big Cypress hearings, I got a cold call from Nathaniel Reed, the Assistant Secretary of the Interior. I had not met him. He said, 'I've been reading the accounts of your hearings. I know it's been rough. I just want to call to tell you that you're doing the right thing. You've got all of my support.'"*

**BOB RHODES,**
*Founding Board Member*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 1986–1989

**1986** — Civic and conservation leaders led by Nathaniel Reed and John DeGrove found 1000 Friends of Florida as a citizen watchdog for the new growth management law.

**1988** — Our first Founders Summit, "The Cost of Quality: Insuring Florida's Future," draws more than 350 people and becomes a recurring forum for growth leaders.

**1989** — In DCA v. Brevard County, the first test of the 1985 law, we intervene. The settlement strengthens protections for the Indian River Lagoon.

**1988** — Staff and attorneys begin reviewing local comprehensive plans under Rule 9J-5, commenting on dozens, including 15 county and two city plans in 1990 alone.

**1989** — The Florida Communities Trust Act passes with our advocacy, giving local governments state grants to buy the parks and natural lands their plans call for.

FEATURED STORY | 1986

# A Voice for the Florida They Loved

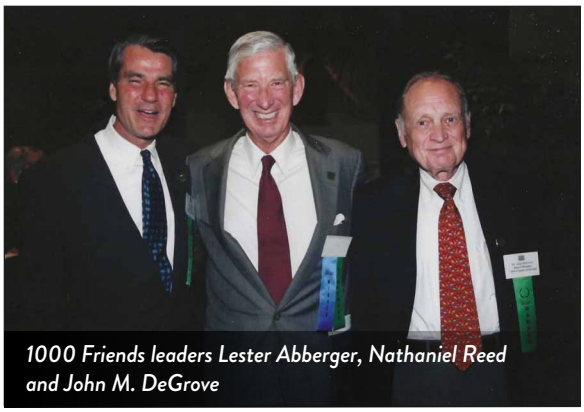
In 1986, a group of civic and conservation leaders led by Nathaniel P. Reed and Dr. John M. DeGrove founded 1000 Friends of Florida around a simple conviction: communities could plan for growth and still protect the landscapes that made the state extraordinary. The 1985 Growth Management Act had just given Florida a framework, but laws alone could not speak for a river, a neighborhood or the people who cared about them.

Launched with a founding grant from the Mellon Foundation, the new organization set an ambitious bar: Nat Reed insisted we raise $600,000 before opening an office in Tallahassee, so people would know we were serious. Supporters who gave $1,000 became Founding Friends. Jim Murley became the first executive director and brought planners, conservationists and residents into the same conversation.

By 1988, staff were reviewing local plans and the first Founders Summit had drawn more than 350 people. What began as an idea became a statewide voice rooted in the belief that Floridians should help shape their own future.



*Some of 1000 Friends' first staff members, pictured at one of our early office locations in Tallahassee*


*1000 Friends leaders Lester Abberger, Nathaniel Reed and John M. DeGrove*

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"John was a fifth-generation Floridian who came across as someone who just walked out of the woods, but he was as sophisticated as they come, and as smart as they come. And Nat brought the super strength of his intellect and energy, and his fundraising capacity, enabling 1000 Friends to hire really good people."*

**NANCY STROUD,**
*Former Board Member*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 1990–1993

**1990** — **Preservation 2000 passes: $3 billion over ten years, then the nation's largest land-buying program, born from a commission led by our chairman Nathaniel Reed.**

**1991** — Our Successful Communities program helps Lake Wales write a comprehensive plan to keep the small-town character that makes it special.

**1991** — With our support, Palm Beach County voters approve $100 million to buy environmentally endangered lands. A $150 million conservation bond follows in 1999.

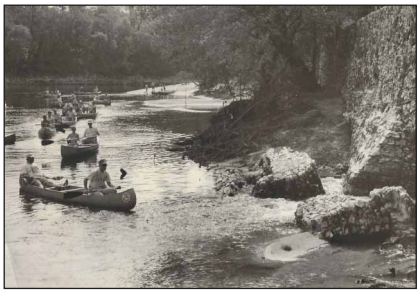
**1992** — **The Sadowski Act creates a permanent, dedicated source of money for affordable housing, won by the coalition our staff member Jaimie Ross built.**

**1993** — In Brevard County v. Snyder, the Florida Supreme Court requires rezonings to closely follow the comprehensive plan. We file a friend-of-the-court brief supporting planning.

FEATURED STORY | 1990

# A Lasting Investment in Florida's Land

As development pressure spread, the question was how Florida could protect important natural places before they were lost. In 1990, Governor Bob Martinez asked 1000 Friends Chairman Nathaniel Reed to lead a commission on Florida's environmental future. Its top recommendation became Preservation 2000: a $3 billion investment over ten years, at the time the nation's largest program to buy and protect natural land. 1000 Friends helped win its passage, and the Florida Communities Trust brought matching support to local projects, linking conservation with growth planning. Over the decade, the program protected more than a million acres. Preservation 2000 became the blueprint for saving wild Florida and laid the groundwork for Florida Forever.



*Paddlers pass the historic springhouse at Suwannee Springs, near Live Oak. In the 1990s, Preservation 2000 and Save Our Rivers brought special places like this into public hands.*
Photo: Tim Spivey, SRWMD

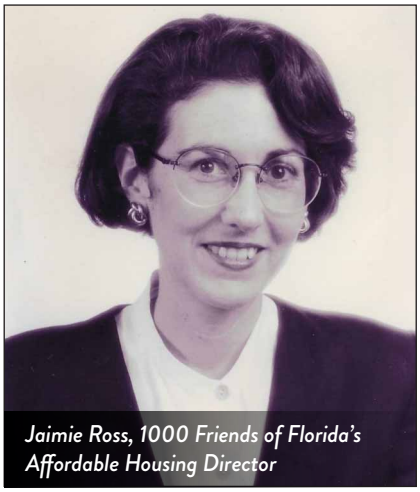
**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

*"One of the first things that was really great to do was to buy over 32,000 acres of preserve property. We went to the voters and said, if you think this is important, you have to vote for this. Give us the money to do it. And they supported it, twice."*

**KAREN MARCUS,**
*Former Board Member and Longtime Palm Beach County Commissioner*

## MAKING ROOM FOR PEOPLE, TOO | 1992

Protecting Florida's special places also meant planning communities where people could afford to live. Through the leadership of staff member Jaimie Ross, 1000 Friends formed the Sadowski Coalition in 1991, an unusually broad alliance of housing, business and community interests. In 1992, under Governor Lawton Chiles, that effort won passage of the William E. Sadowski Affordable Housing Act, creating state and local housing trust funds with a permanent, dedicated source of revenue. More than 30 years later, the trust funds remain one of Florida's most important housing tools, and we are still fighting to protect them.



*Jaimie Ross, 1000 Friends of Florida's Affordable Housing Director*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 1994–1998

**1994**

Through 1997, we win a series of Florida Supreme Court rulings keeping sweeping "takings" amendments off the ballot, and help shape the more-measured Bert Harris Act.

**1995**

With 1000 Friends' leadership, the Florida Greenways and Trails Act becomes law, and the program wins a national DuPont award from The Conservation Fund and National Geographic.

**1997**

After six years of litigation in which 1000 Friends is a party, a court upholds the finding that the Keys' near-shore waters have reached their carrying capacity, reshaping how the islands grow.

**1997**

1000 Friends and DCA launch Waterfronts Florida, which helps Mayport, St. Andrews and San Carlos Island revitalize their working waterfronts with technical assistance and seed grants.

Poulos v. Martin County guarantees citizens a trial when they challenge local development orders. Our friend-of-the-court brief helps make the case.

FEATURED STORY | 1995

## Greenways Connect the Dots

Many of the greenways and rail-trails Floridians hike and bike today trace back to a bold idea from the early 1990s. In 1991, 1000 Friends and The Conservation Fund launched the Florida Greenways Project to map a statewide network of trails and protected corridors, building on the ecological research of University of Florida scientists Larry Harris, Reed Noss and Tom Hoctor. 1000 Friends staffed the Florida Greenways Commission, co-chaired by Nathaniel Reed, which turned the vision into law in 1995. Rivers, habitat and public access cross city and county lines, so a connected network required neighbors to work together. That network is part of the foundation of today's Florida Wildlife Corridor.



*Members of the Florida Greenways Commission, which we staffed, show off the Florida Greenways poster. From left: Kent Wimmer, Dr. Mark Benedict, Lt. Gov. Buddy MacKay, Patti McKay, Deloris Ovenden, Kirby Green and Jim Murley.*

### LIVING WITHIN THE KEYS' LIMITS | 1997

In the Florida Keys, 1000 Friends pushed for something no Florida plan had done before: tying growth to what the islands could actually carry. After six years of litigation in which we were a party, a 1997 appellate ruling upheld the finding that the Keys' near-shore waters had reached their carrying capacity. Monroe County's plan was rewritten around hurricane evacuation time, water quality and habitat, with annual caps on new building. Nearly 30 years later, the Keys still manage growth under that system, and 1000 Friends continues to work with local partners to defend it.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

*"What I'm most proud of from working for 1000 Friends is that we started the Florida Greenways effort that's resulted in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. We staffed the Florida Greenways Commission, presented the first vision for greenways and trails, and then we got greenways and trails legislation passed."*

**KENT WIMMER,**
*1000 Friends Community Planner, 1990–1996*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 1999–2003

**1999** — Governor Jeb Bush signs the Florida Forever Act, another $3 billion decade of conservation land buying. We help lead the campaign for it.

**2000** — We begin work to protect Palm Beach County's Agricultural Reserve, some of Florida's best winter farmland, after voters fund conservation there in 1999. Our work continues.

**2001** — In Pinecrest Lakes v. Shidel, a court orders apartment buildings torn down for violating Martin County's plan. We back resident Karen Shidel.

**2002** — Our Protecting Florida's Springs manual gives communities practical planning tools to protect springsheds. It later wins a national planning award.

FEATURED STORY | 2001

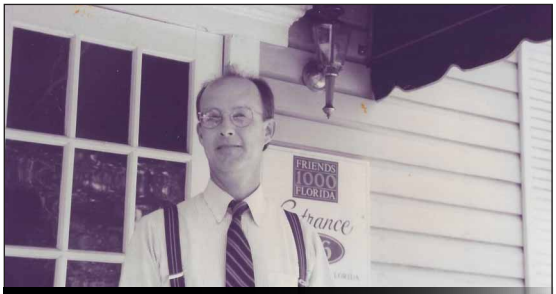
# The Day a Court said "Tear it Down"

In a stunning win for everyday citizens, a Florida court ordered a developer to demolish apartment buildings because they violated Martin County's comprehensive plan. Martin County resident Karen Shidel refused to back down when multifamily buildings went up beside her single-family neighborhood. The developer kept building, and residents moved in, while the case moved through the courts. In Pinecrest Lakes, Inc. v. Shidel, the Fourth District Court of Appeal ruled that a comprehensive plan is "a command" local governments must obey, and the buildings came down. 1000 Friends legal director Terrell Arline filed a friend-of-the-court brief backing Shidel. The ruling remains one of the strongest statements of citizen enforcement in Florida law.

Shidel was one case among many. For four decades, 1000 Friends has served as a watchdog and, when needed, a litigator, standing with residents to hold local governments to the plans they adopt. From the first test of the 1985 law in Brevard County to the Florida Keys, Miami-Dade's growth boundary and Walton County's dune lakes, we have helped establish that a comprehensive plan is a promise to the public, and that citizens have a right to see it kept.

## FLORIDA FOREVER CARRIES THE WORK FORWARD | 1999

When Preservation 2000 ran its course, 1000 Friends helped lead the campaign for a successor. In 1999, Governor Jeb Bush signed the Florida Forever Act, committing another decade and $3 billion of state investment in conservation land. Together, the two programs have protected more than 2.6 million acres. Saving natural lands and managing growth have always been connected decisions for us, and consistent funding for Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program remains one of our defining commitments.




*Terrell Arline, one of our longtime legal directors, outside the 1000 Friends office. He filed our friend-of-the-court brief in the Shidel case and argued for citizens in courtrooms across Florida.*

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"A local developer had requested multifamily zoning in a single-family neighborhood. While the court was considering it, the developer continued to build and actually had condominium units built and occupied. The ultimate resolution was: it's inconsistent, you knew it was inconsistent. The buildings were torn down."*

**CHARLES PATTISON,**
*Former Executive Director*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 2004–2007

**2004** — The Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act, which we helped shape, pairs a new road with strong environmental protections and land buying for the Wekiva River basin.

**2006** — Our Florida 2060 project maps where sprawl could lead: about 7 million more acres developed if Florida keeps growing the way it has.

**2007** — The American Planning Association gives our springs manual its National Planning Excellence Award for Best Practice.

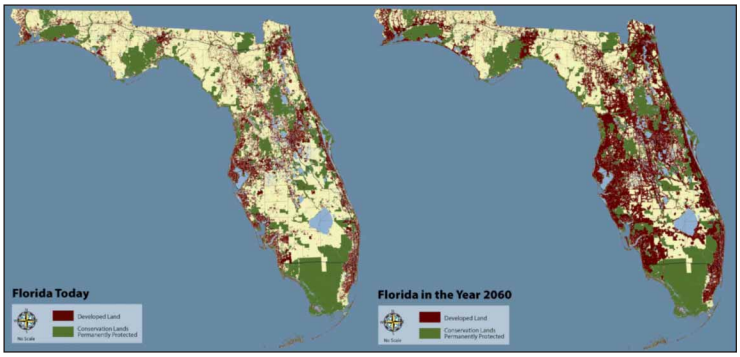
**2006** — Our challenge to the Scripps research park on the Mecca Farms site pays off: the county moves it to Palm Beach Gardens, near an existing university campus.

**2006** — On our recommendation, the state buys about 74,000 acres of Babcock Ranch, one of the largest conservation purchases in Florida history.

FEATURED STORY | 2006

# When Florida Saw its Future on a Map

What would Florida look like if development continued along familiar patterns? Florida 2060, released in 2006 with researchers at the University of Florida and the University of Central Florida, made that question visible. Using statewide parcel data, the team mapped growth at 2020, 2040 and 2060 and found that roughly 7 million more acres could be developed. The maps gave Floridians a common starting point for conversations about where to build and what to protect. Florida 2060 became a signature 1000 Friends project: its maps were picked up by newspapers, planners, local officials and researchers across Florida and beyond, and are still cited today. "Florida 2060" became shorthand for the stakes of sprawl. Florida 2060 laid the groundwork for the Florida 2070, Water 2070 and Sea Level and Agriculture 2040/2070 studies. Its power lay in making choices visible: the future was not fixed.




## A BETTER WAY THROUGH THE WEKIVA | 2004

A new road through the Wekiva region raised a familiar Florida question: could transportation needs be met while protecting a river and the springs that feed it? 1000 Friends played an instrumental role in developing and passing the 2004 Wekiva Parkway and Protection Act, which paired completion of the parkway with strong new protections and land acquisition for the Wekiva River basin. Residents, agencies, elected leaders and conservation partners all had a hand in the outcome. The law became a model for how a major road can move forward alongside binding safeguards, rather than at their expense.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"When that got published, it was just everywhere. You couldn't go someplace without somebody going, 'Oh, you're 2060.' I went, 'No, I'm not quite that old.' But the point was, we showed the possibility of what Florida would look like between 2010 and 2060."*

**PAUL ZWICK,**
*Former Board Member and Florida 2060 co-author*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 2008–2012

We help move a proposed inland port out of the Everglades Agricultural Area to a more suitable site near South Bay.

**2010**

**The Community Planning Act replaces much of the 1985 law, and the state abolishes the Department of Community Affairs. We responded by strengthening our education and coalition building.**

**2011**

**The Dr. John M. DeGrove Webinar Series begins, offering free planning education to residents, planners and local officials across Florida.**

**2012**

**2011**

We help found the Florida Conservation Coalition, chaired by Bob Graham and Nathaniel Reed, to stand up for Florida's water and land.

In Lowe's v. DCA, our legal challenge keeps Miami-Dade's growth boundary from expanding onto remnant Everglades wetlands for a big-box store.

FEATURED STORY | 2012

# Empowering Citizen Planners

Dr. John M. DeGrove helped establish 1000 Friends on the belief that informed citizens are essential to good planning. After his death in 2012, the webinar series bearing his name became a way to carry that belief forward. Free online programs bring planners, advocates, local officials and residents together to examine the issues shaping Florida's future, and the series has taught thousands of people how community planning really works. It crosses county lines and makes specialized knowledge available to people who might never attend a conference. It honors DeGrove not with a monument, but with a continuing conversation about the places Floridians call home.

DR. JOHN M. DEGROVE WEBINAR SERIES



*John M. DeGrove, 1000 Friends Founder and namesake of our webinar series*

## WHEN THE STATE STEPPED BACK, WE STEPPED UP | 2011

In 2011, the Legislature replaced much of the 1985 Growth Management Act with the Community Planning Act and abolished the Department of Community Affairs, the agency that had reviewed local plans for a quarter century. State oversight of local growth decisions largely disappeared. 1000 Friends did not walk away. We shifted toward education and coalition building: teaching residents and local officials how the law still enables them to plan well.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

*"At that time, no one really questioned the legitimacy of citizen advocacy in growth management. It was just accepted that this is the system. Now the whole citizen access part of the system is really under threat. What an important role 1000 Friends of Florida has played in educating and engaging citizens to care about growth management, and giving them the tools to engage in the process."*

**JANET BOWMAN,**
*Former Legal Director*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 2013–2016

**2013**

In U.S. Sugar v. 1000 Friends, an appeals court upholds our win blocking large-scale mining on farmland in the Everglades Agricultural Area.

**2014**

At the urging of a broad coalition that includes 1000 Friends, 75 percent of Florida voters approve Amendment 1, earmarking billions for land and water conservation for 20 years.

**2016**

We help secure a settlement with Walton County that strengthens protections for its rare coastal dune lakes, found in only a handful of places on Earth.

**2016**

In partnership with UF and with funding from the state agricultural department, our Florida 2070 and Water 2070 reports show what continued sprawl could cost in land and water.

We join opponents to Lake Pickett North, a large development proposed on rural land in east Orange County.

FEATURED STORY | 2014

## A Vote for Water and Land

In 2014, 75 percent of Florida voters approved Amendment 1, the Water and Land Conservation Amendment, dedicating a third of documentary stamp tax revenue to land and water conservation for 20 years. Nathaniel Reed was one of its strongest champions. Support crossed party lines and regions, from coastal cities to rural counties: a rare statewide agreement that Florida's land and water are worth paying to protect. 1000 Friends supported the measure as part of decades of work to sustain land acquisition programs, and we have pressed lawmakers every session since to spend the money as voters intended. Passing the amendment was only one step. Lawmakers have not fully honored the voters' intent, and how the money is appropriated remains a continuing advocacy front for us.



*1000 Friends President Paul Owens and his wife Betsy paddle Silver Springs* | Photo by Anja Weigelt

### FLORIDA 2070: OUR RESEARCH CONTINUES | 2016

Ten years after Florida 2060, 1000 Friends returned to the maps with our University of Florida research partners and funding from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Florida 2070 updated the projections with new data and, for the first time, compared current development patterns with a more compact alternative. Water 2070 added what each path would mean for water demand. Under current trends, more than a third of the state could be developed by 2070 and water demand could more than double. The series continues today with our Sea Level and Agriculture 2040/2070 studies.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"Nathaniel Reed was one of the strongest supporters of the Water and Land Conservation Amendment. In 2014, I managed and ran that campaign, and he was a passionate advocate for dedicating a third of the documentary stamp tax to land conservation, management and restoration. And he made sure I was doing the job I should do as a campaign manager."*

**WILL ABBERGER,**
*Former 1000 Friends planner and Amendment 1 campaign manager*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 2017–2021

**2018**
Our Trouble in Paradise report, completed with leadership from Nathaniel Reed before his passing, lays out six critical environmental issues facing Florida and how to address them.

**2019**
Lawmakers authorize three toll roads totaling about 330 miles through rural Florida. We help lead the pushback; the program is repealed in 2021.

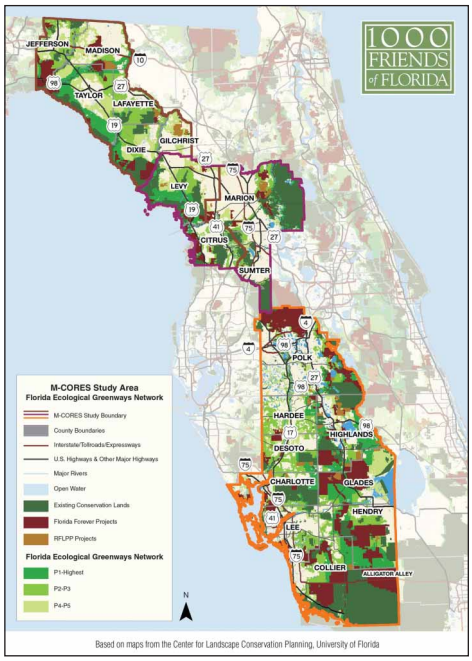
**2020**
We back successful conservation ballot measures in Collier, Manatee and Volusia counties, part of a wave of local investments in land protection.

**2021**
The Florida Wildlife Corridor Act recognizes an 18-million-acre network of connected lands, building on three decades of greenways work.

FEATURED STORY | 2019

# How Floridians Stopped the "Roads to Nowhere"

In 2019, the state authorized the Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance program, known as M-CORES: three toll road corridors totaling about 330 miles through some of Florida's last rural and natural lands. Farms, springs, wildlife habitat and small communities stood to be affected by the roads and the development they would invite. 1000 Friends helped lead the pushback. We opposed the legislation, then served on the corridor task forces to press for scrutiny and public input, and we prepared maps, citizen primers and webinars so residents could make their views heard. Rural residents, conservation groups and local officials joined in a growing backlash, and we did not endorse the task forces' final reports. In 2021, lawmakers repealed the program. The "roads to nowhere" were never built.




## THE FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR BECOMES LAW | 2021

Based on research from our partners at the University of Florida, the 2021 Florida Wildlife Corridor Act recognized an 18-million-acre network of connected natural and working lands running the length of the state, giving three decades of greenways work a unifying statewide framework. 1000 Friends supported the law and later developed webinars and online courses to help local planners protect the corridor through their comprehensive plans. Statewide conservation goals only hold when they become practical choices in the counties and towns the corridor runs through.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

*"The threats of new giant highways cutting through Levy County and Taylor County, where barely anyone lives: the proposed toll road through the Big Bend was a huge deal, and there was huge opposition from these very rural counties. Because they see it: you put the giant road, and then next is the development."*

**SUSAN CARR,**
*1000 Friends Board Member*

# Forty Years of Serving Floridians

## 2022–2026

We endorse land conservation measures that go on to passage from voters in Alachua, Brevard, Indian River, Nassau and Polk counties.

**2022**

The southern Brevard Barrier Island, vital sea turtle nesting habitat, becomes Florida's first new Area of Critical State Concern in nearly four decades with a law we helped draft.

**2023**

A wave of public outrage and the united opposition of groups including 1000 Friends stops plans for golf courses and resort hotels in nine state parks. The State Park Preservation Act is unanimously passed in 2025 with our support.

**2024**

**2023**

Our Sea Level 2040/2070 report, with UF, maps nearly a million acres at risk from rising seas by 2040, and 1.7 million by 2070.

**2024**

Our Agriculture 2040/2070 report with our UF partners projects the loss of 2.2 million acres of farmland by 2070 if current growth patterns continue.

APA Florida's Grassroots Award honors our work building a statewide network of citizen planners.

FEATURED STORY | 2024

# Floridians Spoke Up, Together, For Their Parks

When plans for golf courses, resort hotels and other commercial development surfaced for nine Florida state parks in 2024, people across the state made clear what these public places meant to them. 1000 Friends worked with allies to channel that outcry, and the proposals were withdrawn. The effort did not end there. In 2025, we helped advance the State Park Preservation Act to guard against future incompatible development. As 1000 Friends marks forty years, this story brings our mission into focus: informed Floridians acting together can keep treasured places open and protected for those who come after them.



*Jonathan Dickinson State Park, in Martin County, was one of the parks targeted for development in 2024. Floridians spoke up, and the plan was dropped.*

## SENSITIVE BREVARD BARRIER ISLAND BECOMES THE FIRST NEW AREA OF CRITICAL STATE CONCERN IN NEARLY 40 YEARS | 2023

The southern Brevard Barrier Island is a narrow meeting place of coastal habitat, neighborhoods and globally significant sea turtle nesting beaches. In 2023, 1000 Friends drafted and helped secure unanimous passage of legislation designating it an Area of Critical State Concern, the first new designation in Florida since 1985. We then worked with state planning staff on implementation. The achievement grew from attention to one special place and from people willing to work through the planning system on its behalf.

**The Voices of 1000 Friends**

> *"Don't be discouraged. There's still lots worth saving, and lots of great successes to champion. I ask my students to imagine places they love, and most of them love the front porch swing at their grandparents' house. It's not a question of whether we grow and change, because we will. It's how we grow and change."*

**THOMAS HAWKINS,**
*Former 1000 Friends Staff Member*

# DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

## *THANK YOU to Our Donors Who Contributed During the Period from February 16, 2026 to September 15, 2026.*

*We appreciate the many foundations, corporations, organizations, and individuals supporting our work over the years. Recent gifts have been provided by:*

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Vicki Silver

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Bellini Better World Foundation

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Jim Swann

### NATHANIEL REED SOCIETY ($5,000 - $9,999)

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Tall Timbers Research, Inc.
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***Protecting Florida for the next generation. Rainbow Springs State Park, Dunnellon***
Photo: Jesse Adair Creative/Shutterstock.com

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