

Conserving Florida's Environment & Natural Resources

Conserving Florida's environment and natural resources has remained a key focus since Governor DeSantis took office. The Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget continues Florida's support of Everglades restoration projects, invests in Florida's conservation lands, restores our waterways and funds infrastructure projects to improve water quality and safeguard Florida's water supply.

Prioritizing Florida's Everglades and Water Quality

During his first term in office, Governor DeSantis called for **\$2.5 billion** to be invested over four years for the protection of water resources. The Governor surpassed that goal by securing over **\$3.3 billion** during his first term.

Governor DeSantis reinforced his commitment to prioritizing Florida's waterways in his second term by calling for an historic **\$3.5 billion** investment for Everglades restoration and protection of our water resources. The Governor's Budget includes more than **\$1.5 billion** for this initiative, bringing the total investment during the Governor's three years of the second term to **\$4.8 billion**, already exceeding the **\$3.5 billion** goal.

Investing in Florida's Everglades

The Governor's Budget includes more than **\$805 million** for Everglades restoration projects, including:

- **\$613 million** for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).
- **\$64 million** for the EAA Reservoir to continue this critical project to reduce harmful discharges and help send more clean water south of the Everglades.
- **\$50 million** for specific project components designed to achieve the greatest reductions in harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries as identified in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project Draft Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement dated August 2020.
- **\$78 million** for the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

Investing in Florida's Status as the Fishing Capital of the World

Governor DeSantis has prioritized investments to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission that support the continued management of a robust snapper, snook, tripletail, and bonefish stock.

Supporting Floridians' Constitutional Right to Hunt

The Governor's Budget prioritizes investments in Florida's deer and wild turkey populations and to design and construct new shooting sports and archery facilities in Liberty and Polk Counties.

Defending Florida's Everglades from Invasive Species

Governor DeSantis has prioritized efforts to remove the invasive Burmese python from the Everglades. The Governor's Budget includes more than **\$3 million** to remove pythons from the Everglades utilizing both traditional methods and innovative technologies.

Protecting Florida's Water Quality, Quantity and Supply

The Governor's Budget also includes **\$550 million** for targeted water quality improvements to achieve significant, meaningful and measurable nutrient reductions in key waterbodies across the state and to implement the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. This includes:

- **\$275 million** for the expanded Water Quality Improvement Grant Program for projects to construct, upgrade or expand wastewater facilities, including septic to sewer conversions, stormwater management projects, and agricultural nutrient reduction projects.
- **\$100 million** for the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) Protection Program for priority water quality projects, as called for in Executive Order 23-06.
- **\$80 million** for the Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area project to reduce the levels of phosphorus and nitrogen in the Kissimmee River prior to flowing into Lake Okeechobee.
- **\$50 million** to accelerate projects to meet nutrient reduction goals, called Total Maximum Daily Loads.
- **\$20 million** for critical infrastructure including wastewater and stormwater projects to address water quality and coral reef restoration in Biscayne Bay.
- **\$25 million** for water quality improvements in the Caloosahatchee River watershed.

The Governor's Budget includes **\$50 million** to restore Florida's world-renowned springs. This funding may also be used for land acquisition to protect springsheds and is crucial to supporting homeowners and local communities as they work with the state to achieve septic and nutrient reduction requirements.

The Governor's Budget includes more than **\$85 million** to improve water quality and combat the impacts of harmful algal blooms, including blue-green algae and red tide, including:

- **\$50 million** for harmful algal blooms mitigation to implement water quality treatment technologies in Lake Okeechobee.
- **\$10 million** for innovative technologies to aid in the prevention, cleanup, and mitigation of harmful algal blooms.
- **\$10.8 million** to increase water quality monitoring, support the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, and maintain the water quality public information portal.
- **\$10 million** to assist county governments with their responses to emergency conditions associated with harmful algal blooms and red tide events.
- **\$4.2 million** in funding for continued support of research activities conducted by the Center for Red Tide Research.

The Governor's Budget includes **\$60 million** for the Alternative Water Supply Grant Program to help communities plan for and implement vital conservation, reuse and other alternative water supply projects. DEP will continue to engage local governments, industry, universities and water management districts to identify and research all viable alternative water supply sources and is working to provide an assessment of funding needs critical to supporting Florida's growing economy.

The Budget also includes **\$20 million** for the continued implementation of the Water Supply Grant Program for Northwest Florida.

Investing in South Florida Water Management

Recognizing the importance of both the Everglades and South Florida's water supply to the state's economy the Governor's Budget includes a second consecutive year of **\$150 million** to support the continued management capabilities of the South Florida Water Management District.

Prioritizing Florida's State Parks

Florida's State Parks have won the National Gold Medal a record four times for having the best state park system in the nation. The Governor's Budget dedicates **\$69 million** to infrastructure improvements and resource management with the goal of maintaining this high standard.

Protecting Florida's Conservation Lands and Waterways

The Governor's Budget includes **more than \$132 million** to protect Florida's conservation lands and waterways to ensure Florida's prized properties are accessible for future generations of Florida families. Project highlights include:

- **\$100 million** for the Florida Forever Program, the state's blueprint for conserving Florida's natural and recreation lands, including those located within the Florida Wildlife Corridor.
- **\$15 million** for the Florida Communities Trust, to acquire community-based parks, open space and greenways that further outdoor recreation and natural resource protection needs.
- **\$15 million** for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP), which provides competitive recreational grants to local governments for the acquisition and/or development of land for public outdoor recreation.
- **\$2.5 million** for the Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Program, to support the commercial fishing industry, including infrastructure for receiving or unloading seafood.

Protecting Florida's Domestic Food Security & Family Farms

In addition to funding Florida Forever, the Governor's Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget makes funding for Florida's working agricultural lands and family farms permanent by providing an annual appropriation of **\$100 million** to the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program.

Investing in Florida's Coastlines

Strong infrastructure is the best way to protect the state's shorelines against the impacts of a future hurricane, and that includes both natural and physical infrastructure improvements.

With the additional investment of **\$261 million** for infrastructure projects in our local communities, Governor DeSantis has invested over **\$2 billion** to strengthen the state's coastal infrastructure and help communities prepare for the impacts of flooding and hurricanes through targeted funding and directives that enhance efforts to protect our

inland waterways, coastlines, shores, and coral reefs, all of which serve as invaluable defenses against flooding.

To expedite the renourishment of Florida's award-winning beaches, the Governor's Budget includes **\$100 million**, a **\$50 million** increase over the current year, recognizing that Florida's 1,300 miles of coastline is important for our economy, quality of life, and defenses against hurricanes.

Florida's Coral and Artificial Reef Infrastructure

Restoring Florida's coral reef has been a consistent priority for the Governor, and included within the recommended total **\$26.2 million** for coral reef protection and restoration is **\$11.2 million** to continue Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative, established in Executive Order 23-06, to restore 25 percent of Florida's Coral Reef by 2050. Florida's Coral Reef will be restocked with hardy populations of native corals and other keystone species to re-establish and strengthen natural reproduction, dispersal, and recruitment patterns. Florida's Coral Reef Restoration and Recovery Initiative, along with **\$10.4 million** for artificial reef infrastructure and monitoring, will significantly enhance flood protection in Southeast Florida and strengthen coastal economies.

Restoring Florida's Oyster Industry

The Governor's Budget includes **\$30 million** to restore Florida's Oyster's reefs in Apalachicola Bay. Prior to 2012, more than 90 percent of Florida's commercially harvested oysters, and approximately 10 percent of the nation's wild-harvested oysters, were produced in Apalachicola Bay. This project will provide for continued restoration in Apalachicola Bay in support of sustainable oyster reefs that protect and enhance the ecosystem services this natural resource provides to the public.

Investing in Florida's Citrus Industry

In order to preserve Florida's iconic citrus industry, the Governor's Budget includes more than **\$20 million** for citrus research and the Citrus Health Response Program. This includes **\$7 million** for research and additional advertising by the Department of Citrus including research to help increase the production of trees and advance technologies that produce a resistance to citrus greening.

Combatting Wildfires

In addition to providing **\$4 million** to support the replanting of trees and timber impacted by hurricanes and natural disasters, the Governor's Budget includes over **\$45 million** to effectively combat wildfires:

- **\$32 million** for land management and wildfire suppression activities; and
- **\$13.3 million** for wildfire suppression equipment.

Mitigating and Restoring Contaminated Sites

The Governor's Budget includes **\$206 million** for the cleanup of contaminated sites with a focus on promoting redevelopment of these areas once cleanup has been completed. Cleanup and redevelopment of these sites will ensure Florida's new businesses and growing communities can continue to grow. Specific investments include:

- **\$195 million** for Petroleum Tanks Cleanup;
- **\$7 million** for Dry Cleaning Solvent Contaminated Site Cleanup; and
- **\$4 million** for Hazardous Waste Contaminated Site Cleanup.