

Cooperative Conservation Blueprint

Guiding Principles

1. Maintaining and preserving healthy ecosystems is important to maintaining and strengthening healthy communities and people.
2. Without a comprehensive strategy, disjointed and incremental land use policy decisions result in the conversion of significant amounts of Florida's agricultural and natural lands at an unprecedented rate of consumption. This pattern provides an unacceptable and unsustainable picture of how we should accommodate Florida's expected population and economic growth.
3. We must establish a sustainable course in terms of the future of Florida's rural, natural and agricultural lands while acknowledging the interconnected needs of protecting and enhancing private property values and rights and creating new markets and economies.
4. A sustainable future for Florida requires a vision that protects the state's ecosystems, promotes efficient land use, ensures opportunities for a viable agricultural economy and working lands, healthy ecosystems and promotes vital, livable urban, suburban and rural communities.
5. As landscapes change and data improves, continually updated, accurate data – science-based, empirical and tested – should provide the basis for conservation-minded policy making in order to design and invest in a sustainable future. Data must be accurate to the scale necessary to support policy making – statewide, regional, local and individual project.
6. Florida must adopt more innovative ways to leverage and better use the economic engines that create value by linking conservation, community development and agriculture.
7. Using clear, understandable and accessible science and data, the public must be involved, informed and support efforts to establish a sustainable future.
8. A sustainable future includes a conservation plan that is accepted and used by conservation planning and advocacy groups, private landowners and state, regional and local government agencies.
9. An online GIS-based application built from empirical, accurate, verifiable and scalable data accessible to policy makers, planners, land owners, environmental stakeholders and the public is necessary, needed, will be valued and will represent an important tool for creating a sustainable future.
10. The development of a Cooperative Conservation Blueprint will require a coordinated and cooperative effort. Continued effort to strengthen existing data sets should be complimented by additional steps that advance the funding, legislative support and local government and stakeholder training necessary to actualize the adoption of such an effort.

By adopting these principles and creating the *Blueprint*, the vision is that consensus and data will encourage and enable policymakers to set priorities to achieve a sustainable future for Florida.