

FLWC Strategic Plan – Text Only

Sep 17, 2018

Why: To Keep FL Wild. We cherish wild Florida and we seek collaborative solutions to connect and protect the remaining wild places for current and future generations.

How: The Florida Wildlife Corridor uses dynamic and engaging visual storytelling, in-the-field expeditions and advocacy to give a voice to wild Florida.

What: We seek the permanent protection of the Florida Wildlife Corridor – a statewide network of connected lands and waters that supports wildlife and people.

Vision:

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is a permanently protected, statewide network of connected lands and waters that supports wildlife and people across Florida.

Mission:

To champion a collaborative campaign to permanently connect, protect and restore the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Strategy:

The organization will focus advocacy on the protection of critical land and water linkages most at risk within the Florida Wildlife Corridor, activating a growing network of supporters and partners to increase conservation by 10% each year to protect an additional 300,000 acres within the Corridor by the end of 2020.

Values:

- We rely on a **science-based approach** to conservation that prioritizes habitat connectivity for wildlife and the protection of water resources.
- We foster **engagement** through outreach, education, and outdoor experiences, and we encourage people to get outside to experience and share wild Florida.
- We focus **advocacy** on increasing funding for land and water conservation in Florida.
- We believe that maintaining **working lands and waters** preserves rural economies and cultural heritage that intertwine and are compatible with the Corridor.
- We support **planning and smart growth** that incorporates compact development, public transportation, open space, urban boundaries, separation and viability of rural areas, and access to nature.
- We believe that transportation corridors benefit from planned and **safe wildlife crossings** and signs to protect drivers and wildlife.

WILD FLORIDA

The beauty of wild Florida is both subtle and striking. From the dense, swampy Everglades to sandy beaches and expansive pine forests, Florida boasts more than 350 unique ecosystems and contains mysteries waiting to be discovered. Thousands of native wildlife species call Florida home. Whether passing through in migration or inhabiting a small space for a lifetime, wildlife abounds, delighting visitors and residents alike. As Florida's human population grows from 22 million to a projected 33 million by 2070, sharing space with wildlife requires protection of its habitats. We must act strategically, cooperatively and soon. We believe that people and wildlife can co-exist. The best way to ensure that is by permanently connecting and protecting the Florida Wildlife Corridor. With your help, we can keep Florida wild for generations to come.

Pillar 1: Connect Citizens to Wild Florida (Storytelling)

The organization grew as an effort to cultivate a collective conservation ethic through fine art, photography and prose. Formats such as film, blogs and social media expand our reach to broader audiences. Multi-media storytelling has the power to transform and we use it to increase visibility and foster conservation advocacy for the protection of the Corridor.

Objective 1: *Communicate Corridor conservation via storytelling*

The Florida Wildlife Corridor weaves tales and uses imagery to inform, inspire and connect.

Success Measures:

- Produce three new short films each year, including the annual Expedition and Critical Linkages campaign
- Commission one new photography or art piece annually and curate existing content in fresh ways
- Conduct 10 in-person film screenings or presentations annually
- Directly engage more than 1,500 people annually via presentations, film screenings and participation in partner-led events
- Provide content to regional, state and national media, including two op-eds annually

Objective 2: *Leverage expeditions for Corridor conservation*

Whether a continuous 1,000 miles or a week-long trek, time spent in wild Florida helps us understand how to best protect it. Inspired by the movement of wildlife like the Florida panther, Florida black bear and manatee, our expedition team regularly traverses a network of public and private lands much the way wildlife does. Our two, 1,000-mile cross-state journeys demonstrated that a connected network of public and private lands is still intact. However, as 20 acres of natural and agricultural lands are lost to development each hour, permanent protection is imminently necessary. Each year, we will complete a short Expedition in a priority location of the Corridor to assess its viability. Through expert-focused, in-person observations linked to science and conservation priorities, we will facilitate the development of recommendations to support its protection.

Success Measures:

- Conduct one short Expedition annually
- Host three Expedition-related events for partner, media and citizen engagement

- Develop policy recommendations for the Expedition region with input from partners and stakeholders

Pillar 2: Advance Conservation of Wild Florida (Advocacy)

With an influx of 1,000 new residents to the state daily, people love Florida and are happy to call it home. Education of new Floridians, elected officials and business leaders is an ongoing opportunity to create conservation advocates. Collaborating with partners, the organization will build support for a shared vision for conservation, targeting public and private resources towards the protection of priority lands and waters.

Objective 1: *Increase advocacy to protect Wild Florida*

Without demonstrated public will, we will lose wild Florida and the wildlife it supports. The citizens of Florida consistently support conservation, and the passage of the Florida Water and Land Conservation Amendment aka Amendment 1 by 75% of the voters in 2014 speaks to their desire to protect special places. Increased funding for programs like Florida Forever and the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program through this and other legislation is necessary for additional conservation, including acquisition and conservation easements.

Building on our visibility efforts, our organization will present opportunities for public engagement and action around Corridor protection by improving our outreach and sharing the work of our organization and partners. Wherever possible, messaging will be driven towards measurable actions and outcomes.

Success Measures:

- Improve communications platforms including new film content, interactive mapping and geostories, blog and website redesign by 2020
- Reach 30,000 social media followers on both Facebook and Instagram by 2020
- Develop or share relevant legislative messages each session for citizen support of conservation funding and other complementary actions
- Co-develop public “calls to action” through Critical Linkages and other film campaigns
- Host four events annually for the public, partners and donors to create opportunities for engagement

Objective 2: *Shepherd the Corridor as a strategic statewide conservation vision*

The organization promotes the Florida Wildlife Corridor as a strategic statewide conservation vision for connecting natural and agricultural lands and waters in Florida. Using input from key conservation partners, we will evaluate and pursue ways to formally designate the Corridor, to enhance its visibility, advance conservation within its boundaries and enhance funding.

Myriad partners help to implement the Corridor vision through their own Connection, Protection and Restoration (CPR) strategies. Each year, the organization will convene partners to discuss and prioritize key Corridor areas for education and advocacy campaigns, including Expeditions. The organization elevates the work of these partners by sharing their stories and supporting their on-the-ground conservation and restoration, research, education and outreach efforts.

Success Measures:

- Initiate a process to seek formal designation of the Corridor. Recruit additional partners and seek legislative co-champions by 2020. Integrate into conservation planning processes by 2022.
- Convene an annual conservation partner summit
- Solicit partners to identify the most critical near and long-term priority areas within the Corridor
- Work with partners to select Expedition location and two priority regional areas for storytelling campaigns annually
- Evaluate conservation progress annually towards goal of protecting 300,000 acres within the Corridor by the end of 2020
- Collaborate with partners on shared priorities and conservation initiatives
- Utilize social media and other platforms to amplify the message of partner CPR actions in monthly newsletters and bi-weekly social media posts
- Provide direct or in-kind support of partners through content development, joint messaging, fundraising or participation in regional and statewide efforts

Objective 3: *Engage key decision makers in conservation of the Corridor*

Conservation requires action from elected officials. Achieving full protection of the Corridor also requires commitment from business, industry, development and transportation sectors to avoid ecologically significant habitats, provide functional wildlife passageways and maintain connectivity for wildlife and water supply.

The organization will leverage relationships with a broad range of stakeholders and key decision makers, to advance conservation of wild Florida. We will also evaluate other private opportunities or public-private partnerships to accomplish CPR goals, as applicable. We will explore other creative conservation strategies that support large landscape scale connectivity and a strong economy.

Success Measures:

- Educate 10 or more elected officials through in-person meetings and enlist support for policies and funding needed to accelerate the pace of conservation by 10% each year
- Provide comments during each legislative session at committee or Cabinet-level meetings to encourage allocations of at least \$300 million annually for land and water conservation through the Land Acquisition Trust Fund
- Present the Florida Wildlife Corridor vision to key constituents (landowners, transportation, development and planners) through quarterly communication
- Participate in discussions with transportation and planning agencies to identify areas for wildlife passage ways as opportunities arise and provide maps to inform wildlife-compatible land use and transportation planning
- Explore conservation finance and other strategies to achieve Corridor CPR as opportunities arise