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Connecting the Florida Wildlife Corridor

Economic benefits of Corridor conservation

What is the Florida Wildlife Corridor?

The Florida Wildlife Corridor is a network of contiguous open space spanning nearly 18 million acres or more than 40% of the state. It's home to wildlife, numerous rivers and wetlands, and vital working lands.

- More than half (54%) of the Corridor is currently conserved (9.6 million acres).
- The remaining **8.1 million acres (46%) are opportunity areas for conservation.**

The Corridor at a Glance:

10M Conserved Acres

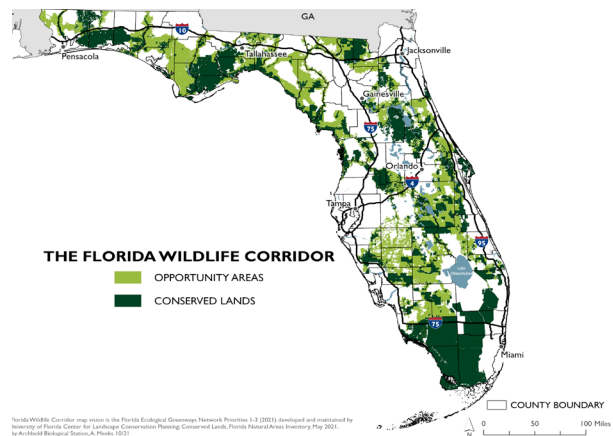
8M Opportunity Area Acres

144K Direct and Indirect Jobs

\$30B Annual Value to the State

The Economic Value to the State

The Florida Wildlife Corridor Coalition commissioned McKinsey & Company to assess the economic impact of the Corridor and the mechanisms by which the opportunity areas could be effectively and efficiently conserved.



The research found that the Florida Wildlife Corridor not only provides inherent scientific, recreational, and cultural value, but also supports significant economic activities and national security missions within the state. Specifically:

- The Corridor is home to **60 species at-risk of extinction**, such as the Florida panther and grasshopper sparrow.
- The Corridor supports **at least 114,000 jobs and provides \$30 billion in annual value*** in sectors such as recreation, tourism, and agriculture including ranching and forestry.
- Between 2022–2030, this number is estimated to total about \$298 billion.*
- With three major U.S. Department of Defense commands and several vital military bases located in or near the Corridor, these **open spaces are vital to national security.**

*Conservative figures, not all Corridor benefits quantified.

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One Mission. Multiple Pathways to Success.

By employing an innovative conservation strategy, the Florida Wildlife Corridor can be successfully protected affordably.

- The report strategy includes traditional conservation methods like easements and fee-simple land purchases, but also other less-common conservation levers, such as:
 - Nature-based tourism to help pay for newly acquired or protected conservation or working lands.
 - Markets to sell credits for carbon stocks in wetlands and forests.
 - Managed conversion as a last resort (development planned and built in a truly wildlife-compatible way).
- Approximately **900,000 acres were identified as having moderate or high connectivity value and being at-risk of development by 2030** (“Horizon 1”).
- **Prioritizing conservation of land at near-term risk of development utilizing this specific mix of conservation tools would cost approximately \$4.2-4.6 billion through 2030.**
- This is dramatically less expensive than the estimated \$17-42 billion cost of using only traditional methods (acquisitions and easements).
- The cost of preserving the priority lands would be frontloaded in 2022-2030, while the preservation benefits would continue to accrue in later decades.

The total cost of \$4.2-4.6 billion between 2022-2030 would be offset by the \$298 billion estimated value the Corridor would provide in that time for a 6.1x ROI.



Why Now?

Timing plays a critical role to keep pace with Florida’s rapidly expanding land market.

Without intervention, projections indicate 900,000 acres may be converted to incompatible use by 2030, jumping to nearly 4 million acres by 2050.

- Conversion of certain high-risk, high-priority parcels would cause irreparable functional loss that could not be mitigated by future conservation.
- The majority of the highest priority acres are not yet enrolled in any conservation program queue.
- This finding highlights the need for both increased investment in traditional land acquisition programs and new, innovative approaches that involve private sector solutions and public-private partnerships.
- Acting now, while public and governmental support is high and the cost is relatively affordable, can guarantee the land will be protected for future generations.

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