

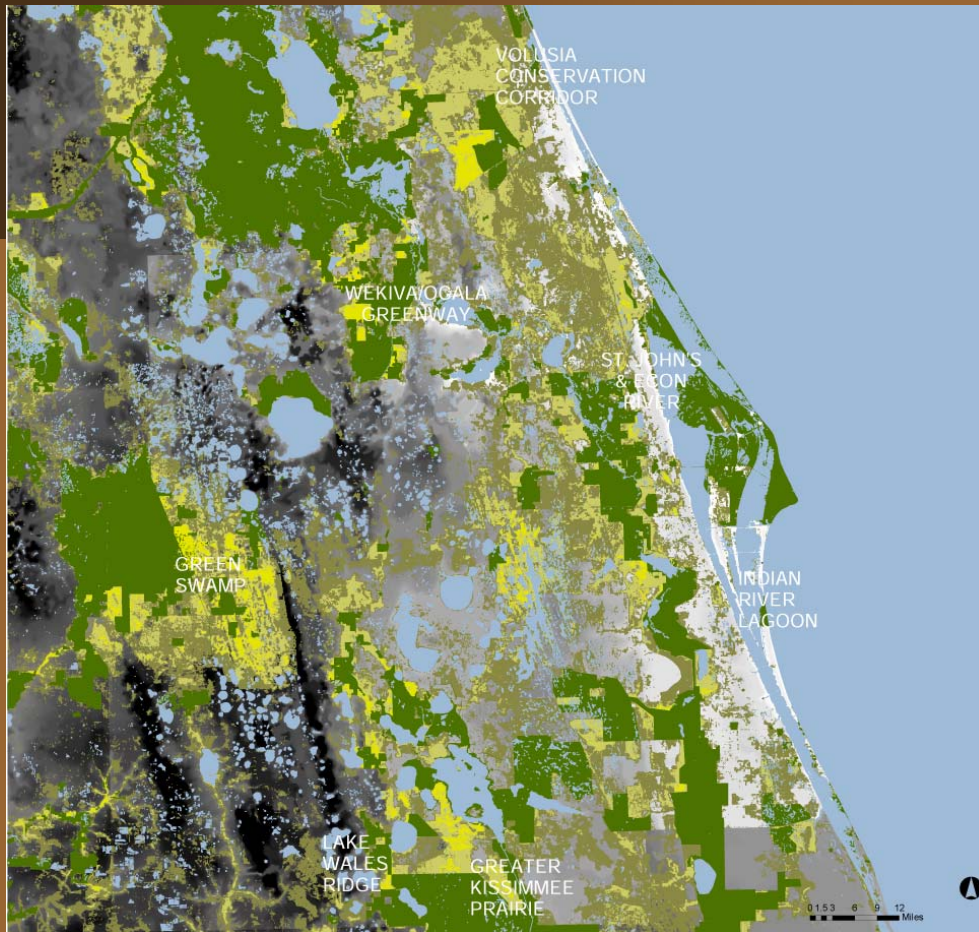
Saving Central Florida Ecosystems - A Land Authority for the 7 County Region

Charles Lee
Audubon of Florida
1101 Audubon Way
Maitland, FL 32751
(407) 539-5700

7/7/2006

Saving the 7 Ecosystems...

Conservation Needs



Topography



Conserved 2004

Water

Future Conservation: lowest priority

Future Conservation: medium priority

Future Conservation: highest priority

- Wekiva-Ocala Ecosystem
- Green Swamp
- Kissimmee Headwaters
- St. Johns River
- Indian River Lagoon
- Lake Wales Ridge
- Volusia Conservation Corridor(Blueway)

*map research based upon Florida Forever, FNAI, TNC, & FLFWL Data.

Unprecedented Effort Needed to Save the 7 Ecosystems...

- ◆ Hundreds of Thousands of acres
- ◆ Escalating Land Prices
- ◆ Need is in the **BILLIONS** of dollars (for conventional acquisition).
- ◆ Preservation 2000/Florida Forever only \$6 billion total statewide over *20 years*.

Can't Rely on State to Do the Job alone...

- ◆ When Governor Martinez and Legislature created P-2000 in 1990 the program was \$300 million per year and state budget was \$26 billion.
- ◆ Today, Florida Forever is STILL \$300 million per year...state budget is \$66 billion.
- ◆ Even if State Land Dollars were doubled, MAJOR local funding would be needed...

Central Florida Needs a Land Authority to do the job...

- ◆ Created by Legislature Like an Expressway Authority...
- ◆ Controlled locally by a board accountable to the people in the 7 counties..
- ◆ Mission defined by the Legislature...saving the 7 identified ecosystems...

Powers of the Land Authority...

- ◆ Purchase Land (Fee Simple or Easements) in the 7 Ecosystems..
- ◆ Implement a Regionwide Development Rights Trading system...

Funding for the Land Authority...

- ◆ Funding Method Established in Legislation.
- ◆ Options: (A) Percentage of Growth of Ad Valorem Tax Base of 7 Counties (B) Legislative Allocation of Documentary Stamp Tax Proceeds from within 7 Counties.
- ◆ Growth funds program rather than new taxes.

How Land Purchases Would Work...

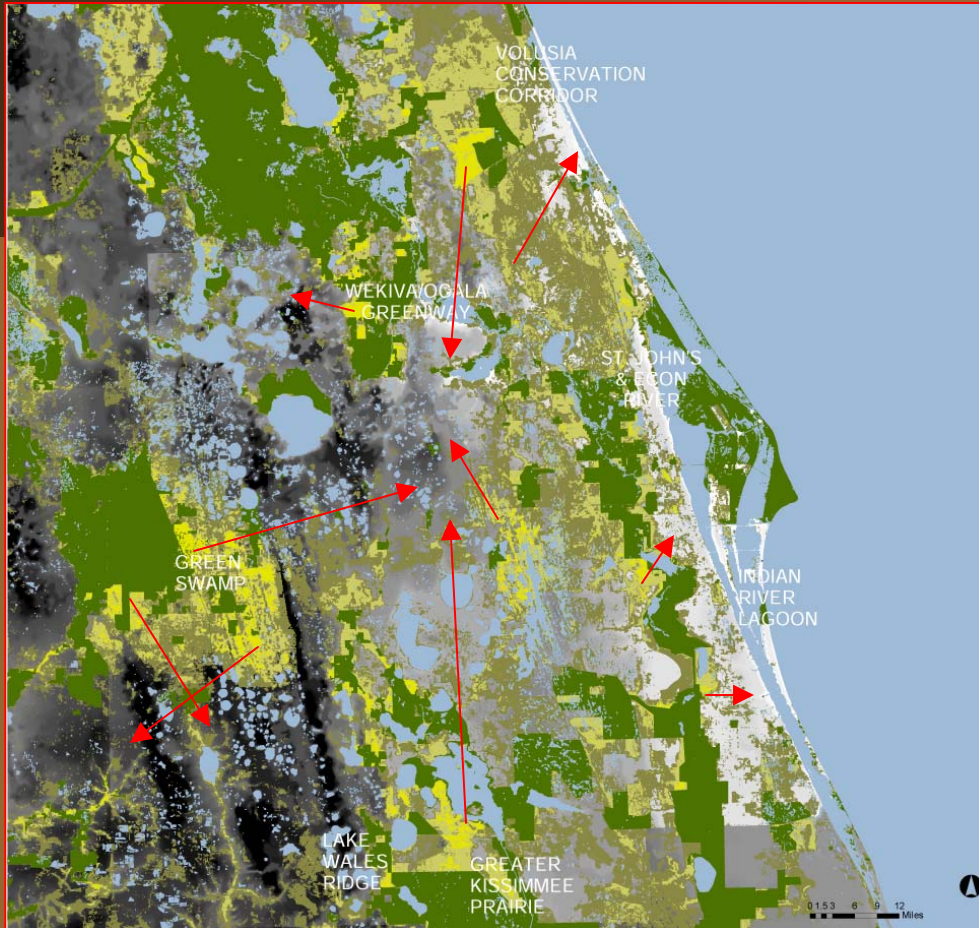
- ◆ Land Authority Maps Purchase areas in the 7 Ecosystems
- ◆ Land Authority negotiates and purchases land...
- ◆ Ownership vests in (a) State if matching funds from DEP (b) WMD if matching funds from WMD,
- ◆ Ownership vests in Authority/Counties if no matching funds.

How Development Rights Transfer Would Work...

- ◆ Legislation provides for each county and municipality in 7 county region to designate “Receiver Sites” in land use plan.
- ◆ Authority Designates “Sending Areas” consisting of lands mapped for acquisition in ecosystem.
- ◆ Any landowner/developer in “Receiver Site” area can double density or floor area ratio allowed by purchase of development rights from owners in sending areas.

How Density Transfers Work...

Arrow = Transfer



Topography



- Wekiva-Ocala Ecosystem
- Green Swamp
- Kissimmee Headwaters
- St. Johns River
- Indian River Lagoon
- Lake Wales Ridge
- Volusia Conservation Corridor(Blueway)

*map research based upon Florida Forever, FNAI, TNC, & FLFWL Data.

Governance of Land Authority

- ◆ Board of at least 7 members
- ◆ OPTION: Appointment by Governor from list of candidates supplied by County Commissions.
- ◆ OPTION: Appointment directly by elected officials in Central Florida Counties/Municipalities.
- ◆ OPTION: Election similar to Soil and Water Conservation District.

Levels of Cooperation Required...

- ◆ Counties surrender a small part of ad valorem tax base growth...OR, Legislature surrenders a small part of Documentary Stamp Tax growth now going to General Revenue Fund.
- ◆ Local Governments must agree to designate Receiver Sites for Development rights transfers.
- ◆ Local Governments must agree on composition of Authority board to govern the program.

Optimum Results Would Result IF...

- ◆ Funding could total \$1 billion per year...
- ◆ Local Governments will **AGGRESSIVELY** designate Receiver Sites for Development Rights Transfers...or forego “Gratuitous Upzoning”...
- ◆ State Land Purchase Policies direct preferential matching dollars toward the Central Florida program.

CONCLUSION...

- ◆ Expressway Authorities, Airport Authorities and similar entities are routinely created by the Legislature to create the necessary infrastructure to support growth.
- ◆ Saving the 7 great ecosystems of Central Florida is equally important to sustainable growth in the region.
- ◆ The Community should build a consensus toward the creation of a Land Authority for the 7 county Central Florida Region.