

## The Florida Recreation and Park Association

believes there should be public investment in parks, open space and recreation to achieve positive environmental, economic, and health outcomes for all Floridians. The investments made locally where Floridians live, work and play assure long term commitment for sustainable stewardship of our state's natural resources.



## Overarching Values

- ◆ Support efforts to provide funding for the rehabilitation, development and capital improvements for local and state park improvements in order to enhance the active and passive recreational infrastructures in the state.
- ◆ Support the enactment of policies and encourage state funding opportunities which assist agencies in meeting sustainability objectives including energy and water efficiencies, connectivity and mobility improvements, carbon sequestration through natural landscape management and protection, and active transportation enhancements.
- ◆ Oppose legislation that has a negative impact on the administration of park and recreation services and resource management including the sale of park lands and open-space and the imposition of regulatory or statutory requirements that provide no added protections or benefit to Florida's recreational consumer.
- ◆ Support opportunities for all Floridians to access and enjoy physical activity, proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle options through the promotion of healthy foods, youth programming, maximizing the usage of green space in urban/suburban and rural settings for personal enjoyment, active transportation, and complete street implementation.

### For More Information Please Contact

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# Environmental Sustainability

We are losing ground in our efforts to assure we preserve and protect conservation lands for future generations of Floridians. Florida's legacy land acquisition and development program, Florida Forever, requires full funding if programs contained within such as the Florida Communities Trust Program and the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, are to continue to address acquisition and development needs of our State. Through these programs state funds are leveraged with Florida's local governments to maximize the ability to acquire and develop these valuable lands. These partnerships also assure that the challenge of maintaining these lands is shared with local governments who in most cases maintain ownership of the lands and assure they are accessible to Florida's residents and visitors to the State.

The Florida Forever programs should be minimally funded at the historic \$300 million per year funding level of the Program. The cost of acquiring and developing land for future use and for environmental protection and conservation is costly. The impact of not providing funding for our natural future today, will make it an insurmountable goal in the future.

- Park development stimulates local economies by employing professional services and local contractors;
- Land acquisition programs allow for the strategic purchase of open space to provide for recreation, and the protection of critical water resources for future generations;
- Historical and cultural heritage sites require preservation and restoration assistance;
- The ability to leverage local, state and federal funding mechanisms that provide for open space and clean water, assures ample protection exists for wildlife to prosper and regenerate.



*Barr Hammock—Alachua County*



*Apalachicola Riverfront Park*



*City of Kissimmee's Lakefront Park*

## Community Health and Wellness

The costs of caring for Floridians who suffer from diet related diseases, the chronically ill, and those at risk for health deficiencies, continue to increase.

Local parks and recreation programs provide the opportunity for citizens to seek affordable and accessible options for their physical health and wellness. Increased funding for additional programs is necessary.

Local parks and recreation agencies are often seen as an extension of our health care system. Partnering with private health care providers, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities, parks and recreation agencies provide opportunities for citizens to achieve a healthy lifestyle through access to parks and facilities for physical activity. They also provide programs allowing citizens to maintain a network within their community that fosters a healthy state of mind and a connection to community resources.



**Port St. Lucie Parks and Recreation**

## Economic Impact of Parks and Recreation

In a study conducted by George Mason University and the National Recreation and Park Association, local parks and recreation agencies in 2013 generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity and supported almost 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone.

In Florida specifically, the economic activity (actual transactions) was \$7.4 billion, with labor income of \$2.7 billion, and support of 60,801 jobs.

“The Florida Sports and Recreation Industry contributes substantially to the overall vitality of Florida’s economy. It is estimated that over 13.3 million tourists visited the state solely for the purposes of participating in a sporting or recreational activity” according to a study commissioned by the Florida Sports Foundation and conducted by the Haas Center. A large number of these activities are occurring on lands and in facilities operated by local government parks and recreation agencies.



**Broward County Parks and Recreation**

*Nearly 300 children ages 6 to 14 enrolled in the Miami-Dade County Parks Fit2Play Program (with the University of Miami) maintained healthy weight and body mass index (BMI) throughout the school year. As a result of participation in the Fit2Play Program, those who started the program with high blood pressure, were able to lower their pressure. The school children also improved their physical health, fitness levels and knowledge about nutrition and healthy lifestyle behaviors.*

## Community Building

Local parks and recreation agencies play a critical role in building community in the State of Florida. The provision of green space to avoid over development and protection of wildlife and the environment is vital. It is in these public spaces that residents and visitors alike develop a sense of place; celebrate commemorative events and holidays; support their local economies by offering special events, festivals, parades and sporting tournaments; and access paths and trails to maintain a balanced physical and mental wellness. We believe that outstanding Florida communities offer safe, dynamic, equitable, attractive, and healthful environments with friendly neighborhoods and equal access to a high quality of life, including education, recreation, and personal growth opportunities for all generations.

FRPA advocates for the promotion of resilient and sustainable communities through sound planning principles that promote alternative energy usage and production, efficient resource utilization, and sustainable resource management practices.

Proactive planning for future growth assures Florida continues to be an attractive and sought after destination for tourists and residents. This requires a multi-disciplinary approach to planning, redeveloping, and retrofitting communities that considers the health impact that the built environment has on the people that live, work, and play there.



Central Broward Regional Park

**It's not just a walk in the park, or a place to jog. It's your COMMUNITY...** Florida's parks have become an integral component of economic development as well as an investment in the arts and cultural growth within our communities. Parks provide the setting for social events large and small where people can connect with each other, and participate in classes and group activities for personal enrichment. Parks also provide an investment in infrastructure needed to accommodate revenue generating sporting events and tourism, benefitting the local economy and community as a whole.