



Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-3000

Charlie Crist
Governor

Jeff Kottkamp
Lt. Governor

Michael W. Sole
Secretary

Florida Defense Alliance Department of Environmental Protection Update 14 May 2010

Florida Forever and REPI – Conservation and Encroachment Buffering Partnerships

Update: The Florida Legislature appropriated \$15 million for *Florida Forever* for FY10-11. On March 24, 2010, Secretary Sole wrote letters to leaders of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Defense and Armed Services Committees recommending a significant increase in federal Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) funding for FY11. (See attached letters.)

For FY10, the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) has provided \$3,814,000 to fund REPI projects at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Camp Blanding National Guard Joint Training Center, Eglin Air Force Base, Homestead Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Whiting Field and Outlying Field Whitehouse. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be involved in the projects at Eglin and Camp Blanding.

In April, 2010, DOD sent a request to the services for proposals for FY11 funding. Proposals are due by September 1, 2010. DOD continues to refine the selection criteria to ensure they are allocating their limited funds towards the highest mission priorities and most effective partnerships. After mission priority, points are also awarded for projects with higher partner contributions that have willing sellers ready to complete transactions. DOD is strongly encouraging innovations and have added the possibility of extra points for a project that demonstrates a new approach to leveraging additional or different funding, reducing costs, structuring the transaction with conservation financing techniques, or combining additional objectives such as wetlands mitigation, conservation crediting, carbon sequestration or cultural or historical preservation. DOD expects to have a prioritized list of projects for FY11 funding in early fall and will allocate funds to those as soon as they have the final appropriated amount.

Background:

DEP manages the *Florida Forever* program, which protects significant conservation lands; helps restore damaged environmental systems; provides protection for significant water bodies and ground water recharge areas; improves water resource development; provides recreational opportunities; and increases access to and management of public lands. It is also an excellent way in which Florida has helped sustain the military mission by preventing incompatible encroachment around military bases. Florida increased its emphasis on military partnerships in 2006 by adding statutory language to encourage protection from encroachment and provide a buffer for military owned lands wherever possible. Projects with high conservation value that are also designated high priority for protection of a military mission would move up the Florida Forever list where opportunities present themselves and provided funding is available.

The DOD REPI program enables the state and the military to combine funding resources to protect conservation and recreation lands and to sustain the military testing and training missions. Current partnership agreements between DEP and military bases to acquire lands that provide a buffer for military-owned lands and protect natural resources include Camp Blanding National Guard Joint Training Center, Naval Air Station Whiting Field, and Eglin Air Force Base. Since passage of REPI in 2003, the State of Florida has combined \$62.5 million of Florida Forever funding with \$7 million of REPI funds to protect approximately 33,000 acres of conservation lands adjacent to military bases.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Proposed Numeric Nutrient Criteria for Florida

Update: In April, 2010, numerous parties around the State submitted up to 2,300 individual comment letters and packages to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on their proposed numeric nutrient criteria for fresh waters in Florida. DEP evaluated the science behind EPA's proposed criteria and evaluated whether the criteria were established at levels necessary to protect designated uses of Florida's lakes and flowing waters. DEP has made recommendations for improvements to the EPA proposal. Since the close of the comment period, DEP and EPA have continued to discuss the technical and policy issues of disagreement associated with the derivation of numeric nutrient criteria. Both EPA and DEP are committed to continuing the effort to resolve these issues. DEP maintains a web page where individuals can track progress, review DEP comments on EPA's proposed criteria, access materials, and learn about public meetings:
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wqssp/nutrients>.

Background:

On January, 26, 2010, EPA proposed federal numeric nutrient water quality criteria for fresh waters in Florida. While DEP has comments regarding EPA's proposal, the department supports the establishment of numeric nutrient criteria, provided they are based on sound science. Criteria values that are more stringent than necessary result in forced investment of limited public and private dollars for requirements that have no environmental benefit. And criteria less stringent than necessary can result in failure to prevent environmental harm.



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March 24, 2010

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
119 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Carl Levin
Chairman
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John McCain
Ranking Member
Senate Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Levin, and Ranking Member McCain:

I am writing to respectfully urge you to continue strong funding support for the Department of Defense Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) to preserve conservation land surrounding the nation's military installations. The initiative merges national defense and environmental interests by supporting partnerships between the Department of Defense, states, and non-profit organizations to acquire conservation land from willing sellers that buffers military installations from encroachment and conserves habitat for wildlife. We appreciate the additional funding provided each year and recommend a significant increase for FY2011 to meet the growing demands.

The need for REPI funding in the past several years has been much greater than the funding available.

- In FY2007, the military services proposed projects totaling approximately \$155 million for a \$40 million appropriation.
- In FY2008, there was almost \$89 million in requests for a \$46 million appropriation.

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Carl Levin
The Honorable John McCain
March 24, 2010
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- In FY2009, there was approximately \$122 million in requests for a \$56 million appropriation.
- In FY2010, there was over \$129 million in requests for a \$54.7 million appropriation.


In Florida, since FY2005, while military installations have requested more than \$54 million for REPI projects, they have received about \$12 million.

Florida is a leader in acquiring lands to strengthen national security and protect natural resources. Through REPI and the state's *Florida Forever* land acquisition program, Florida has already partnered with the Army National Guard at Camp Blanding, Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Naval Air Station Whiting Field, and Eglin Air Force Base by purchasing conservation land to prevent encroachment on military installations. To date, the State of Florida has combined \$62.5 million of *Florida Forever* funds with REPI funding to protect more than 33,000 acres of conservation lands that buffer military bases.

Florida's defense industry remains a growing economic sector with an annual economic impact of nearly \$60 billion, supporting more than 723,000 jobs and generating \$1 billion in local and state tax revenue. Protecting military installations from encroachment that can adversely affect their training and testing mission is vital to maintaining their long-term viability.

Thank you for your continued leadership in supporting the sustainability of both our military operations and our environment. We look forward to more opportunities to partner with our defense installations in this important effort. If you or your staff has any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 850-245-2011.

Sincerely,



Michael W. Sole
Secretary

cc: Members, Florida Congressional Delegation



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3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
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Secretary

March 24, 2010

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Acting Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
H-149, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Defense
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ike Skelton
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2120 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John McHugh
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2340 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks, Ranking Member Young, Chairman Skelton, and
Ranking Member McHugh:

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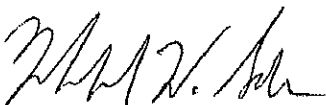
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Sincerely,



Michael W. Sole
Secretary

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