

Public Sources: Federal Funding F.2

Public Sources: State Funding F.3

Public Sources: Local Funding F.4

Private Sources F.4

Non-traditional Funding Opportunities F.4

restoration funding sources



The ability to restore natural systems within the DR/GR will largely depend upon Lee County securing funding for both land acquisition and ecosystem restoration. The following sources of funding for land acquisition and restoration are presented in categories of public and private sources. The public sources are further separated into federal, state and local programs. In order to maximize the restoration potential, a variety of funding sources should be used in combination with developing partnerships with other governmental agencies, private organizations, agricultural operators, and private developers.

Public Sources: Federal Funding

US Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Finance Program

This program assists the public and private sectors in their search for creative approaches to funding environmental programs, projects and activities. The EFP uses leveraging and partnerships to extend the reach and impact of its activities.

www.epa.gov/efinpage

Five Star Restoration Program

The Five Star Restoration Program brings together students, conservation corps, other youth groups, citizen groups, corporations, landowners and government agencies to provide environmental education and training through projects that restore wetlands and streams. The program provides challenge grants, technical support and opportunities for information exchange to enable community-based restoration projects. Funding levels are modest, from \$5,000 to \$20,000, with \$10,000 as the average amount awarded per project. However, when combined with the contributions of partners, projects that make a meaningful contribution to communities become possible. At the completion of Five Star projects, each partnership will have experience and a demonstrated record of accomplishment and will be well-positioned to take on other projects. Aggregating over time and space, these grassroots efforts will make a significant contribution to our environmental landscape and to the understanding of the importance of healthy wetlands and streams in our communities.

www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star/

Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Grants

Grants are issued annually for a variety of projects with the Research and Restoration Partners projects being the most applicable to the DR/GR. This program serves projects that have long-term applicability and serve as models for addressing habitat improvement and resource management challenges. Considering a continuing objective of the National Estuary Program (NEP) is to inform and educate as many segments of the public as possible, education remains an important component of all projects; therefore, many restoration projects include an educational element. The NEP also requires that restoration projects address at least one NEP goal and one NEP priority problem; be transferable to other locations; demonstrate value to the community; be innovative in design; and incorporate a permanent management strategy.

www.chnep.org/Grants/GrantsSupported.htm

USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

Conservation planning and technical assistance are provided for individuals wishing to develop and implement conservation plans. Conservation plans protect, conserve, and enhance the natural resources, including soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

Programs include: Conservation Technical Assistance Program and Activities; Environmental Improvement Programs; Stewardship Programs; Water Resources Programs; Easement Programs (farm and ranchland protection program)

www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs

Wetlands Reserve Program

The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.

United States Fish & Wildlife Service**North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) of 1989**

NAWCA provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife.

www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtm

Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act

The Partners Program provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners and Tribes who are willing to work with USFWS and other partners on a voluntary basis to help meet the habitat needs of our Federal Trust Species.

The Partners Program can assist with projects in all habitat types that conserve or restore native vegetation, hydrology, and soils associated with imperiled ecosystems such as longleaf pine, native prairies, marshes, or otherwise provide an important habitat requisite for a rare, declining or protected species.

ecos.fws.gov/partners

Endangered Species Grants

www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/index.html

Federal Grant Programs

This website's search engine covers all federal grant programs, and will be a useful resource as the grant programs may change year to year.

www.grants.gov

Public Sources: State Funding**Legislative Water Project Appropriations**

These are member projects or "Community Budget Issue Requests (CBIR)" for wastewater, stormwater, surface water improvement, and drinking water. This is an annual process implemented and directed by the Florida Legislature but coordinated with DEP. Local matching funds may be required and are always advisable. The amount of money available each year varies widely and depends exclusively on legislative appropriations.

www.dep.state.fl.us/water/waterprojectfunding/index.htm

Florida Department of Environmental Protection**Florida Forever Fund**

The Florida Forever Fund encompasses a wide range of goals, including: restoration of damaged environmental systems, water resource development and supply, increased public access, public lands management and maintenance, and increased protection of land by acquisition of conservation easements.

www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/acquisition/FloridaForever/faq.htm

South Florida Water Management District**Surface Water Improvement & Management (SWIM)**

SWIM funds are allocated for the implementation of Water Management District plans and programs to improve, restore and manage priority surface waters within their boundaries. Funds may be made available to local governments. Each district maintains a separate list of priority waterbodies. Funding for the SWIM program is periodically made available through state appropriations; other funds come from district ad valorem revenues.

Alternative Water Supply Funding

Funding for the construction of local alternative water supply projects, including funding for surface water capture, new storage capacity (such as aquifer storage and recovery wells), and other nontraditional water supply sources in a given area. Local matching funds are required. Funds are made available at the state level (\$52 million annually at this time) through DEP to Florida's five Water Management Districts and augmented with similar amounts from the districts.

Land Acquisition Program

**Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Division of Forestry**

Forestry Stewardship Program (min. 25 acres of forest land)

www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/cfa_steward_index.html

Other grant programs are available at www.fl-dof.com/services

Florida Community Trust Grants

www.floridacommunitydevelopment.org/fct

Public Sources: Local Funding

Lee County Conservation 20/20 Program

The county has acquired 3,730 acres of land within the DR/GR through the Conservation 20/20 program. Additional lands should be acquired to further the protection of the county's water resources and wildlife. Restoration of the acquired land may be utilized to help return the water storage and hydroperiods within the watersheds. Hydrologic restoration will allow for the historic plant communities to be re-established, helping both the water storage, water quality, and wildlife. The 20/20 program criteria should be amended to increase the rankings of potential acquisitions that would carry out the preferred DR/GR land-use scenario.

Lee County Department of Transportation and other Public Works projects' mitigation

(e.g. wetland impacts; impacts to panther or woodstork habitat)

The Conservation 20/20 Program allows for public works projects to mitigate impacts through the enhancement of existing ecosystems and restoration of disturbed areas within Conservation 20/20 properties. This system should be continued and integrated into any future DR/GR restoration program.

Private Sources

Mitigation from development for impacts to wetlands and/or listed species

The county should work with the State and Federal permitting agencies to have impacts within the DR/GR mitigated within the DR/GR to better protect the valuable natural resources by establishing a Regional Offsite Mitigation Area (ROMA).

The Nature Conservancy

Partnering with The Nature Conservancy would enhance the land acquisition and management of conservation lands within Lee County.

www.nature.org/aboutus/howwework/conservationmethods/privatelands

Ducks Unlimited

Funding for land acquisition and restoration of wetlands may be available.
www.ducks.org

Non-traditional Funding Sources

DR/GR Environmentally Significant Lands Bond Program

Instead of modifying the Conservation 20/20 program, Lee County could initiate a special program to help fund DR/GR acquisition and restoration using moderate yield bonds which would be attractive to investors and save Lee County money over time.

Land Swaps

Land within a preferred mining area could be swapped for land outside the mining area to concentrate mining while insuring the protection of interconnected natural lands that are important to water and wildlife resources.