

Our World/Our Florida



Ginnie Springs turtle. © Ralph Pace

With YOUR help, we can protect and restore Florida's waters that sustain us all.

From Florida's sunny beaches to its cobalt springs and world-renowned Everglades, water is the essential element. It sustains our lives from the faucet that fills our glass to the food on our table. It is our economy's raw material, from agriculture to tourism. Water nourishes all life on earth, including Florida's amazing array of plants and wildlife.

Virtually surrounded by water, and with Florida's high rainfall rates, it's easy to take water for granted. Our beaches look healthy and inviting. Florida's Everglades and natural springs never cease to amaze. But our waters are in trouble. At risk are the quality and quantity of our waters, threatening not only Florida's treasured natural places, but also our quality of life.

But with YOUR support, The Nature Conservancy can advance a suite of strategies to protect Florida's water in ways where people and nature can both thrive.



Blue Head Ranch in Highlands County, Florida.
© Carlton Ward Jr.

The Challenge

Given Florida's growth rates, the state's fresh water demands are expected to increase by 20 percent over the next 20 years. By 2035, Floridians — homeowners, farmers, everyone — will be using 1.4 billion gallons of fresh water every day. We know that traditional sources won't be enough to meet this demand.

As water is increasingly drawn from underground aquifers and surface sources, Florida's natural systems are at risk. Our treasured springs, rivers and estuaries often lack sufficient water to keep them healthy and sustainable.

Just as challenging, poor water quality threatens more than half of Florida's freshwater bodies, including our rivers, lakes and springs. Among the many complex sources of pollution is runoff from roads and parking lots, as well as ranches and other agricultural enterprises.

Why It Matters

Ensuring clean and sufficient water matters for all of Florida's residents and visitors. Just look at the economic impact of tourism and agriculture for a glimpse of why it's important to ensure clean water. Florida's tourism economy is about \$89.1 billion a year, much of it based on beaches, golf courses and other places that need clean water. Agriculture — one of Florida's largest water users — provides \$8.5 billion in cash crops every year and employs 1.5 million people.

As Florida continues to grow in the coming decades, communities and regions are already planning for the infrastructure needed to sustain this growth. How can we balance the competing pressures of growth and sustaining natural systems for generations to come? The demands on our water supply are a reflection of increasing pressures, land use changes, and the bounds of mother nature's tolerance and resilience. They are a reminder that we can't take our water resources for granted. We have to plan for the long term to ensure clean and sufficient water for nature and people.

Nature — and You — Can Provide Solutions

Protecting our life-sustaining waters is among The Nature Conservancy's top priorities. Thanks to the support of more than 1 million members, we work in Florida, throughout the country, and in 69 countries. Guided by science, we pursue non-confrontational, pragmatic solutions to challenges like conserving clean water.

With your support, we partner with farmers, ranchers, businesses, agencies and organizations to safeguard water for Florida. Here's how your support helps Florida's water:

We're working with agriculture to reduce water use and pollution. We're collaborating with ranchers in central-southern Florida and sharing our success with northern agricultural producers. Creating incentives can encourage producers to grow crops that reduce water consumption and polluted runoff.

We're restoring Florida's springs. Providing an extraordinary window into Florida's aquifer system, our springs are struggling with insufficient fresh, clean groundwater. We're working to create restoration standards to help natural springs recover. Our science is creating restoration models to help springs throughout Florida.

We're keeping Everglades restoration on track. Committed to restoring the Everglades since 1972, we are working to ensure sound funding and sustainability for decades to come. In 2016, we helped secure up to \$200 million a year in state funds for Everglades restoration.



Wood stork in sawgrass plain, east Everglades National Park. © Eric Blackmore

Our Florida/Our Goals

We aim to:

Strengthen policies that protect water for nature.

Improve methods to reduce agricultural and urban water and fertilizer use.

Create replicable approaches to recover Florida's springs.

Advance restoring the Everglades, which provides water for 8 million people.

Restore forests and wetlands that filter and provide water.




Our World Campaign Goals:

SAVE THE LAST GREAT RIVERS AND LAKES: Inspire a sustainable water future.

Conserve 6 major river basins from destructive dam development.

Launch water funds across three continents serving more than 125 million people.

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