

Florida Forever Resolution

WHEREAS, the Rivers Coalition is committed to protecting lands critical to the future of Florida's environmental resources; To fight for a safe, healthy and ecologically balanced St. Lucie River Estuary and Indian River Lagoon, natural resources that are vital to the economy and quality of life of Martin County and the Treasure Coast; and

WHEREAS, the Rivers Coalition represents 50 separate organizations with over 200,000 members; and

WHEREAS, Florida Forever has helped to save many of Florida's beaches, rivers, bays, forests, coral reefs and estuaries that provide the foundation for our \$3 billion tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, Florida Forever has acquired more than 600,000 acres throughout Florida since 2000 and allocates \$300 million annually to purchase environmentally sensitive and other lands; and

WHEREAS, Florida has experienced rapid population growth, with approximately 1,100 new residents every day in recent years; and


WHEREAS, the effectiveness of Florida Forever has diminished because of escalating land prices and the impacts of inflation; and

WHEREAS, virtually all of the funding for the Florida Forever program through the Fiscal Year 2009–2010 is already obligated to or anticipated for planned land purchases, leaving practically no funding for new conservation projects for the next two years; and

WHEREAS, a 2007 survey conducted by members of the Florida Forever Coalition found that more than 70% of Florida's voters approve of the Florida Forever program; and

WHEREAS, there is no second chance to protect Florida's great resources, and the costs of Florida's most special places will only increase in the future.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Rivers Coalition urges the 2008 Florida Legislature to enact legislation to create and fund a successor program to the Florida Forever program and to immediately double funding for Florida Forever because of the enormous need for land conservation funding in our state.



Leon Abood
Chairman, Rivers Coalition

3/3/08

Date