

Extending Volusia Forever

Facts-at-a-Glance

What is Volusia Forever?

An award-winning, voter-approved program that finances the acquisition and improvement of environmentally sensitive, water resource protection and outdoor recreation lands, and manages those lands as conservation stewards in perpetuity.

When did it pass and by what percentage of voters?

In 2000, Volusia County voters approved by 61% a tax of 1/5 mil on taxable value of real property for 20 years. Importantly, this continued a similar voter-approved initiative, the 1986 Endangered Lands Program. Voters have thus twice affirmed their commitment to our environment.

What have the results been?

\$89 million has been raised and more than 38 thousand acres purchased.

What will it cost voters?

No new tax. It's a continuation of current tax - which is just \$.20 for \$1000 taxable property value –less than 50 cents per week, approximately*.

*Based on taxable home value of \$130,000.

What agencies have matched these dollars and helped secure more projects?

- The Nature Conservancy
- St. Johns River Water Management District
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- Florida Forest Service
- Florida Communities Trust
- Various Florida cities

What are some of the properties that Volusia Forever has purchased?

- Lake George Forest and Wildlife Management Area
- Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve
- Hickory Bluff Preserve
- Plum Creek Conservation
- Green Springs Park
- Long Leaf Pine Preserve

From what organizations has Volusia Forever received awards?

- Trust for Public Land
- 1000 Friends of Florida
- National Association of Counties

Why should the County continue this program?

Continuation of this program protects our investment thus far, and is critical to residents, fresh water sources, local wildlife populations, and County realization of Comprehensive and Resiliency Plans.

Through Volusia Forever, partnerships are formed connecting land and funding to make water recharge more efficient and effective.

Which goals, objectives and/or policies in the Comprehensive Plan Goals would Volusia Forever help us achieve?

- Smart Growth Initiative
 - SG1 – To ensure the Volusia County retains an interconnected core network of environmentally important lands to help preserve the County’s ecosystems into the future
- Natural Groundwater and Aquifer Recharge Element
 - B. 10.1 Protect the quality and quantity of the surficial and Floridan aquifers, including the Volusia-Floridan sole source aquifer and protect and enhance the capabilities of the groundwater recharge areas for the present and future water supply of the County
 - 11.1 Conserve, protect and manage the coastal resources of Volusia County including the wetland and upland ecosystem so as to maintain and enhance native habitats, floral and faunal species diversity, water quality and natural surface water characteristics.
 - 11.1.1 Maintain management programs to ensure the long-term protection and enhancement of wetland habitats, water quality, and selected natural upland habitats. The primary means of accomplishing this objective will be through the retention of interconnected hydroecological systems where the wetlands and uplands function as a productive unit resembling the original landscape.
 - 11.1.1.4 Areas of critical wetland and native upland habitats not connected to corridors that exhibit resource values should be evaluated for inclusion as conservation or recreation areas within future development plans.
 - 11.1.1.12 The Environmental Management Division will continue to support and sponsor estuarine, oceanfront, and shoreline habitat restoration and protection projects.
- Land Use
 - 11.2 To conserve, protect, and restore coastal resources by managing growth and land use so as not to damage or destroy those resources.
- Water Quality
 - 11.3 To protect, enhance, and improve the quality of the estuarine environment throughout Volusia County.

Which goals in the Resiliency Initiative would Volusia Forever help us achieve?

The Resiliency Initiative seeks to encourage development of cross-disciplinary plans, policies and strategies to protect the health, safety and economic welfare of residents, business and visitors through recognition that natural disasters, changes to climate, and human manipulation require careful consideration of when and how to develop infrastructure, natural resources and built environment that can withstand and adapt to these changes. Volusia Forever helps achieve the following goals:

- Prioritize the use of Green Infrastructure as a first line of defense
- Promote interconnectivity of natural lands for wildlife migration
- Enhance stormwater systems to be more resilient
- Improve water quality in surface water bodies
- Incorporate resiliency into local and regional plans, policies, processes and objectives
- Preserve and adapt the built environment to keep people safe from and mitigate current and future natural hazards

What should the Volusia County Council do?

Place Volusia Forever on the 2020 ballot and *Let Voters Decide* if they would like to continue this program for another 20 years at the same rate