
2010 AUDUBON REGIONAL CONSERVATION PRIORITIES

Every year Audubon of Florida updates its state policy and regional conservation plans and resolutions to express both our policy goals for the upcoming year and to give chapter leaders, board members and staff summary policy priority documents (in the form of short resolutions).

Regional Conservation

Audubon of Florida identifies programs in six regions in our strategic planning process. Regional conservation committees (RCCs) made up of chapter leaders and supported by policy staff are given responsibility to recommend conservation plans for their regions. The plans are then expressed as resolutions approved at the fall Assembly and subsequently by the Board.

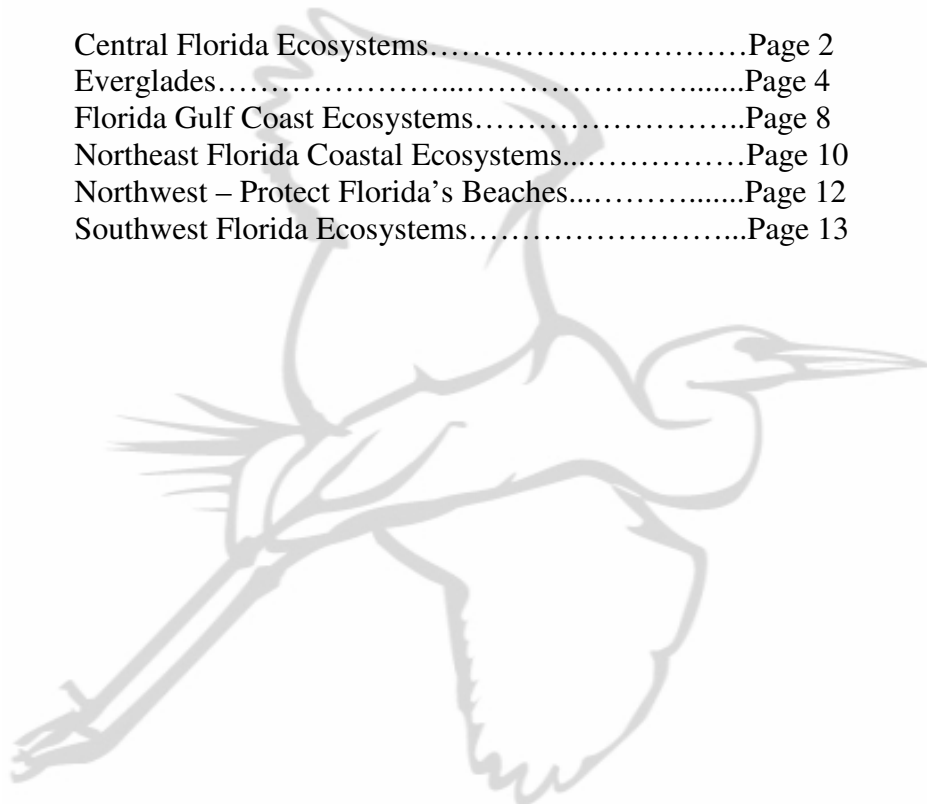
Engaging People in Conservation

Audubon is a volunteer organization that has long connected people with nature. In Florida we can do more and we can evolve with shifting population and changing civic and social participation. Engaging people is a fundamental part of our conservation strategy.

Building Field Capacity

There are now 44 chapters in Florida with roughly 600 listed chapter leaders. In general, the chapter network is strong with healthy chapters, is supported by a full time coordinator and benefits from annual training and leadership programs. Chapters and chapter leaders are the heart and soul of the Audubon movement. To the extent possible our plans and programs will emphasize including and empowering chapter leaders and promoting strong and healthy chapters.

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CENTRAL FLORIDA ECOSYSTEMS

Audubon is engaged in a program for the protection and restoration of the major aquatic ecosystems of Central Florida, which harbor the largest concentration of nesting Bald Eagles in the United States. Eagles are an indicator of the health of these systems and are emblematic of Audubon's efforts to preserve them.

While more eagles nest in Central Florida today than in the entire lower 48 states during the 1960s, growth sprawling out from Orlando and other urban areas along with water management decisions threatens to reverse this success story.

The Lake Wales Ridge is an ancient geological formation that harbors a unique upland "Scrub" community, which provides critical habitat to the Florida Scrub-jay and a number of other important species.

The Indian River is one of Florida's important estuaries that has been seriously compromised by overdevelopment and alteration of freshwater flows.

Other important avian indicators of ecosystem health in Central Florida include the Sandhill Crane, Whooping Crane, Limpkin, Wood Stork, Snail Kite, Swallow-tailed Kite, Burrowing Owl and Crested Caracara.

Central Florida, with its auto-dependent transportation systems and sprawling land use, is a major contributor of greenhouse gases.

High per-capita use of potable water, over-drainage of freshwater resources and reduction in groundwater recharge have put Central Florida on a path to water shortages.

Therefore be it resolved:

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise and using information derived from sound science in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon Societies (chapters) will call on our members and grassroots networks, and work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

- Build regional community consensus on the adoption of a "greenprint" or similar mapped database of habitats and natural lands to that must be conserved.
- Increase the effectiveness and funding of existing land acquisition programs and facilitate the creation of new programs to acquire targeted sites.
- Encourage the protection of land with new land use tools such as transferable development rights, density/conservation land tradeoffs, "rural land stewardship," sector plans and other mechanisms that can permanently protect natural lands without public purchase.

- Influence decisions on land development projects by state, regional, and local government agencies that result in substantial permanent commitments to preserve natural areas.
- Advocate for the adoption of Local Government Comprehensive Plans which provide strong conservation requirements for remaining natural areas in identified ecosystems and work to adopt conservation requirements in adopted plans.
- Urge decision-makers to enact and enforce meaningful water conservation requirements that eliminate excessive use, and avoid consumptive use withdrawals from rivers, lakes and wetlands.
- Support the implementation of “Distributed Storage” to hold back and cleanse water in the Kissimmee watershed through the restoration of more natural groundwater levels and restoration of historic wetlands.
- Advocate elimination of sewage sludge (“residuals”) spreading in the Kissimmee/Okeechobee watershed through enforcement of 2007 law which was intended to ban this practice.
- Support and strengthen regulations and conservation programs that protect existing Bald Eagle nest sites and propose protection of areas with high nesting potential.
- Foster better management of habitat on public lands through the establishment of effective priorities, funding and staffing and work to increase the frequency of prescribed fire as a primary management tool.
- Support regulations, land conservation programs, and intensified land management using prescribed fire to preserve Florida Scrub-jay and gopher tortoise habitat.
- Advocate for Florida’s high speed rail application for federal stimulus funds and other projects and funds to implement urban transit, commuter rail, light rail, and other public transportation as well as bicycle and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure that will reduce dependence on automobiles.
- Seek changes in Local Comprehensive Plans that favor compact urban development forms associated with public transportation systems and which minimize the need for automobile-based travel.
- Oppose highway projects and other infrastructure that facilitate “sprawl” development patterns.
- Recommend improvements to development proposals to minimize the need for automobile use and to increase “internal capture” of traffic patterns.
- Promote state and local protection for springs and springsheds.



EVERGLADES

The Greater Everglades Ecosystem encompasses three million acres of wetlands and Florida's most productive estuaries. The Everglades' slow-moving fresh water once flowed continuously from the upper Kissimmee River south to Lake Okeechobee through sawgrass marshes and tree islands to the coastal wetlands and seagrasses of Florida, Biscayne, and Rookery bays.

The Everglades is a unique international wildlife treasure and is home to more than 350 species of birds including the Wood Stork, Everglades Snail Kite and Roseate Spoonbill. The greater ecosystem also provides refuge for other important wildlife, including the Florida panther and Key deer. Additionally, the Everglades provides critical life support and services for humans -- recharging water supplies, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, providing world-class tourism crucial to the South Florida economy, and making available a backyard wilderness -- improving overall quality of life to millions of South Florida residents.

For decades, this magnificent system has been ditched, drained, polluted, invaded by exotic species, and paved over for buildings and roads. As a result, many species are jeopardized, and the wading bird super-colonies that once symbolized the ecosystem have seriously declined. Birdlife still serves as an indicator of ecological health, and the best measure of success for the Everglades restoration is the return of abundant bird populations.

Now, due in part to Audubon's advocacy, a number of restoration and protection projects are underway and will begin the construction phases this year. These include the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park, the Everglades Construction Project, the Northern Everglades Project, Kissimmee River Restoration and others.

Restoration is hindered by inadequate funding, faltering government commitment to full restoration, growth-related competition for land and water and inadequate regulatory protection. Restoration takes place acre by acre, project by project, and place by place. It involves many individual projects (CERP alone includes 68 restoration components) and Audubon is focusing on those projects that have the greatest promise to improve ecological conditions throughout the greater Everglades system.

Therefore be it resolved:

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise and using information derived from sound science in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon Chapters will call on our members and grassroots networks, and work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

Accomplish the following policy outcomes:

Federal Policy

- Advocate for passage of a 2010 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill and inclusion of Everglades restoration projects meeting the criteria for authorization: C-111 Spreader Canal Phase 1, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1, Broward County Water Preserve Area, C-43 Reservoir, and re-authorization of the Kissimmee River restoration project;
- Ensure that the projects proposed for a WRDA bill in 2010 are ready for inclusion;
- Advocate for federal funding for authorized Everglades restoration projects, including Indian River Lagoon South, Site 1 Reservoir, and Picayune Strand.

Climate Change: Establishing Everglades Restoration as a method for adaptation to climate change impacts:

- Promote prioritization of CERP projects that will provide a freshwater head to prevent salt water intrusion and sea level rise;
- Advocate for restoration methods that will allow the greatest extent of peat buildup throughout the Everglades, which can serve as a defense against sea level rise;
- Advocate for retention and restoration of natural lands, and policy to reduce GHG emissions from agricultural lands, especially as natural lands, including wetlands and forests, are important carbon sinks and buffer zones for climate impacts;
- Advocate for the dedication of funds allocated through cap and trade legislation to natural systems adaptation measures, including Everglades restoration efforts.

Southern Everglades & Florida Bay

- Secure construction of the one mile bridge over Tamiami Trail and work to complete Mod Waters as defined by Congress;
- Secure movement on Tamiami Trail “next steps” project to provide greater conveyance of water into Everglades National Park;
- Ensure that the PIR for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project is completed in 2010 Achieve federal authorization for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project in a 2010 WRDA bill;
- Begin construction on the C-111 spreader canal project and achieve federal authorization for this project in a 2010 federal WRDA bill;
- Work with scientists to build the case and advocate to remove barriers to sheetflow in Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and Everglades National Park (ENP);
- Advocate for immediate planning on BBCW Phase 2 and C-111 Spreader Canal Phase 2 to achieve maximum ecological benefits;
- Move forward with planning on all components of Decompartmentalization;
- Advocate for strong seepage management design and implementation;
- Secure SFWMD sponsorship of south Everglades land acquisition and wetlands protection;
- Educate public and policy makers about Everglades restoration’s ecological benefits to Florida Bay and Biscayne Bay;
- Make progress in achieving CERP water reservations;
- Advocate to prevent negative impacts to Biscayne Bay and CERP from the proposed expansion of the Turkey Point nuclear power plant.

Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA)

- Promote and implement a comprehensive sustainability plan for the EAA that focuses on Everglades restoration, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable growth within and around existing communities.
- Advocate for Governor Crist's River of Grass Initiative and for additional needed EAA lands;
- Influence decisions on use of state funds and lobby to secure state restoration funds;
- Secure state and district commitments to at least 1.5 million acre-feet of water storage;
- Oppose Inland Port proposals that would compromise restoration;
- Calculate Storm Water Treatment Areas (STAs) and water storage needs in the EAA. Increase treatment of waters entering the Everglades through the expansion of STAs and improvement of Best Management Practices (BMPs);
- Emphasize water storage, water treatment, habitat restoration (including corridor and flows), and water retention as essential ecological functions that should be recreated in the EAA and its watershed, to provide important benefits for South Florida;
- Assure the long-term land use of the EAA is consistent with Everglades restoration;
- Protect the integrity of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge;
- Ensure that proposed new West County landfill in Palm Beach County is sited so as not to harm the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Everglades restoration efforts, or water quality treatment areas.

Lake Okeechobee

- Advocate for implementation of the Northern Everglades Plan;
- Influence Lake Okeechobee watershed local government land use plans, including projects for water storage and treatment, including restoring wetlands;
- Monitor and comment on new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) water regulation schedule, including revised Adaptive Protocols that meet Caloosahatchee Estuary salinity needs, and divert small pulses from the St. Lucie to the Caloosahatchee when needed to meet salinity goals;
- Press ACOE forward on Hoover Dike improvements, while being cautious that improvements do not result in an increased tendency to maintain the Lake at ecosystem damaging high levels;
- Advocate control of non-native plant and animal species that damage ecosystems values;
- Secure state funds for specific Lake Okeechobee water quality improvement projects and programs;
- Prevent reversal of "back-pumping" decisions;
- Advocate enforcement of water quality standards for discharges to and from the Lake;
- Advocate southerly flow-routing to reduce or eliminate existing east and west discharges that damage downstream estuaries;
- Push to implement or improve residential fertilizer rule and eliminate land disposal of sewage sludge.

Indian River Lagoon and St. Lucie Estuaries

- Advocate for the reduction of flow from Lake Okeechobee to re-create the natural delivery of water to receiving bodies with regard to volume, timing and water quality;
- Advocate for public land acquisition for watershed and wetland protection;
- Advocate for funding and implementation of the Indian River Lagoon South CERP project, including the C-44 Reservoir and marshes;
- Seek to improve water quality to restore populations of oysters, seagrasses and other marine life while reducing the potential for algae blooms that adversely affect human health and the health of the environment.

Sustainable Development:

- Advocate for and shape smart-growth regional development limits and participate in revisions to development master plans;
- Protect Urban Development Boundaries in counties within the Everglades Ecosystem;
- Lobby and intervene in land use decisions as appropriate;
- Prevent development that compromises greater Everglades protection and Everglades restoration.



FLORIDA GULF COAST ECOSYSTEMS

Beginning with the founding of St. Petersburg Audubon in 1909, Audubon has over 100 years of history in the Gulf Coast Region. St. Petersburg Audubon Society celebrated their 100-year anniversary in 2009. Florida Coastal Islands Sanctuary has been active for 75 years. Hernando and Clearwater Audubon celebrated their 50-year anniversaries this year. Florida's Gulf Coast Region stretches from Sarasota County to Citrus County. With existing urban areas built to capacity, development pressures are spilling over into adjacent rural landscapes.

Florida's Gulf coastal areas include a rich assemblage of essential habitats that are used by diverse species of birds, fish and other wildlife and plants. However, much of Florida's Central Gulf Coast is now altered, disturbed, and dominated by human use as population growth and development have progressively diminished habitats that once supported abundant and balanced populations.

Populations of many coastal bird species are at immediate risk. Many species of colonial waterbirds, beach-nesting birds, and shorebirds have declined in their historic ranges. Some are listed by Federal and state agencies and require significant intervention and management efforts to prevent local extirpation or extinction. Audubon of Florida has identified more than twenty-five coastal Important Bird Areas in Florida, sites where birds gather in numbers to nest, forage, rest during migration, and over-winter.

At the same time, seasonal freshwater flows from springs, streams, and rivers in adjacent uplands and wetlands are vital to the area's diverse and productive estuaries. Water flows entering estuary systems have been significantly altered by upstream drainage, flood control, development, and water use projects. Water quality in many coastal waters is declining as a result of sediments, hyper-eutrophication, and pollution.

In the Tampa Bay area, the primary focus has been on the protection of colonial waterbird nesting islands along Florida's Central Gulf Coast. Audubon Staff and chapter volunteers have worked regionally to protect shorebird and wading bird nesting habitats. The Suncoast Shorebird Partnership now ranges from the Tampa Bay Area to Lee County. Least Tern rooftop nesting monitors continue to garner statewide recognition and engage new people. The northernmost counties of this region face a different set of challenges: with large landscapes under public ownership, their challenge is the management of conservation lands for habitat and species, while planning for encroaching development.

Therefore be it resolved:

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise and using information derived from sound science in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon Societies (chapters) will call on our members and grassroots networks, and work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

- Make science based decisions regarding water conservation, protection of springs and the aquifers, fertilizer ordinances and water withdrawal from lakes and rivers.
- Participate in regional visioning applying principals of sustainable growth. Participate in public campaigns with other environmental and community organizations to embody such principles in law and regulation.
- Advocate for wildlife corridors and against fragmentation of systems such as the Green Swamp, the Withlacoochee Watershed, etc.
- Collaborate with Audubon of Florida to advance the coastal habitat protection campaign, and strengthen and expand programs of beach nesting bird stewardship, and monitoring and conservation of shore-dependant birds.
- Engage in wildlife research and management programs for protection of such species as Florida black bear, Florida Scrub-jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Eastern Bluebird and Burrowing Owl. Support Operation Migration and the Whooping Crane East Coast Partnership.
- Participate locally in the National and statewide campaigns for Cap and Trade legislation and Renewable Portfolio Standards.
- Focus chapter resources to leverage Audubon of Florida's policy staff efforts in campaigns for Sustainable Clean Energy, National Cap and Trade legislation and Adaptation policies.
- Provide outreach, education and leadership on Climate issues.
- Oppose offshore drilling.



NORTHEAST FLORIDA COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS

The beaches of Northeast Florida are critical to shorebirds and seabirds in every season, including such imperiled species as Piping Plover, Least Tern, American Oystercatcher, Red Knot, and Gull-billed Tern. Portions of these beaches are critical as nesting areas for some species, and as resting and feeding areas for migrating and wintering species; habitat quality in addition to habitat quantity is essential to these birds' future.

The region's marshes are also of critical importance and are essential as nurseries for fish and invertebrate stocks and shelter significant wading bird populations as well as secretive rails.

Coastal maritime hammock is one of the most imperiled habitats of this region. In combination with Coastal Strand habitat, it is one of the few remaining acceptable nesting locations for dwindling populations of Painted Buntings. Similarly, these habitats provide essential autumn refueling sites for neotropical migrants and serve as first refuges upon their spring return.

Coastal Scrub habitat in this region has been degraded by fire suppression and by fragmentation to the point it no longer supports Florida Scrub-jays.

The resources of the inland counties of the Northeast Florida region include the lower St. Johns River and several other important river basins, an incredible diversity of springsheds, as well as the significant expanse of the Osceola National Forest and of prairie-type habitats.

Therefore be it resolved

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise and using information derived from sound science in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon societies (chapters) will call on our members and grassroots networks, and work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

- Support the continuation and the expansion of state, local, water management district and regional land acquisition programs and the prioritization of projects that secure Northeast Florida habitats.
- Develop public and political support for strategies to limit the impact of growth and watershed alteration on the health of wildlife habitats and to restore degraded habitats.
- Participate in local and regional development planning processes to preserve environmentally sensitive lands and the wildlife they harbor.
- Oppose destructive activities such as unnecessary deposition of sand on living shorelines, dredging, and coastal armoring projects that diminish the habitat value of these areas.
- Define, encourage and support better wildlife management measures, such as protecting birds from disturbances by humans, dogs and vehicles (especially vehicles on the beach) and supplementing natural nest sites with nest boxes.
- Use Audubon's expertise to assist land managers and agencies with focal species monitoring

- Strengthen and enforce existing laws and policies to protect habitat and water resources including strict interpretation and enforcement of wetland and water quality laws.
- Encourage more effective actions to protect water resources and water supplies, promoting water conservation and water for natural systems and wildlife.
- Support outreach and education programs to encourage people, local governments and property owners to protect environmentally sensitive lands and bird populations of regional significance.
- Help prevent the spread of invasive species through outreach and in partnership with other organizations
- Actively participate in public outreach and education on climate change challenges and promote actions and policies to reduce green house gases emissions
- Work together as a region to grow membership and to involve non-traditional audiences (such as minorities, faith-based groups, etc..) in conservation
- Collaborate to attain financial stability by discussing joint fundraising efforts and grant opportunities
- Use the newly established Northeast office to complement the conservation work of local Audubon societies (chapters) and further Audubon's national, state and regional mission



NORTHWEST FLORIDA – PROTECT FLORIDA’S BEACHES

Florida’s Panhandle and the Big Bend coastal areas are among the most beautiful, least developed and ecologically productive regions of the state.

Coastal areas include spectacular beaches, estuaries, marshes and floodplains that are home to diverse wildlife including resident and migratory birds. The Northwest Florida coast is part of the migratory flyway. Beaches provide habitat for endangered beach mice and nesting areas for a variety of sea turtles.

Northwest Florida’s coastal economy is largely based on being a destination for beach- and water-based recreation and tourism. State and local parks and the National Seashore are routinely listed as among the world’s finest beaches.

The region also has a rich fishery that supports both recreational and commercial fishing. Oysters, shrimp and other fisheries are historic and important parts of local economies.

Oil and natural gas exploration and recovery have long been banned in state waters although allowed in some federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico and other gulf states’ near-shore waters.

Proposals have recently been advanced in both Congress and in the Florida Legislature to open federal waters near Florida’s gulf coast and Florida near-shore waters to oil and natural gas exploration and drilling.

Florida is one of the largest per capita consumers of fuels and natural gas and is one of nineteen states that do not have a formal policy to encourage the production of energy and fuels from renewable sources.

Proponents claim (without proof) that oil and gas drilling in state waters will generate major revenues for the state, lower gas prices and create state energy independence.

In 2006 Senators Mel Martinez and Bill Nelson crafted a Congressional compromise that set realistic limits on drilling in federal waters near Florida’s coasts.

Therefore be it resolved:

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise and using information derived from sound science in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon Societies (chapters) will call on our members and grassroots networks, and work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

Take the strongest possible stand against lifting the existing ban on oil and natural gas drilling in state waters or expanding toward Florida the boundaries of the drilling area in federal waters.

Work with other conservation groups and coastal communities to mobilize public opinion and the positions of public officials against drilling close to Florida’s coast.



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA ECOSYSTEMS

Southwest Florida, particularly inland areas, is one of the fastest growing areas of the nation. Audubon of Florida and its five southwest Florida chapters are engaged in a plan for protection and restoration of its ecosystems. Audubon has a long history in the region beginning with hiring wardens to protect wading bird colonies from plume hunters, later creating the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, and helping to secure federal and state public lands.

The area has six signature species that help the public identify with the need to protect and restore land and waters: Florida panthers, which require large unrestricted territories, nesting Wood Storks, which depend on seasonal wetlands for forage, Snail Kites, which depend on good water management for lakes and wetlands, endemic Scrub Jays and Gopher Tortoises, which require protection and management of scrub and uplands, and juvenile Snook, which require healthy estuarine environments. These six species serve vital roles as indicator species, helping gauge the effectiveness of ecosystem-wide protection and restoration efforts.

Working from the science and policy base of the Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary and advocacy resources statewide, Audubon's strategy is to minimize the impact of this growth on specific components of the region, while proactively leveraging it for broad conservation achievements:

- Protect the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW), including the greater Corkscrew Swamp, in order to assure the abundance of birds and other wildlife and to provide a model ecosystem for people to visit and learn about nature.
- Restore the health of the Caloosahatchee River, its estuaries, and the near shore of the Gulf of Mexico, which all require increasing water storage and treatment all around Lake Okeechobee and upstream watersheds. Seek funding for necessary land acquisition and projects to achieve this restoration, including the US Sugar purchase, West Caloosahatchee (Berry Grove) Reservoir, and water quality treatment projects.
- Defend the Charlotte Harbor and Peace River watershed from any further mining and other land use impacts.
- Assure implementation of appropriate management plans for Babcock Ranch Preserve, Big Cypress National Pres., lands under conservation easements, and other conservation lands to maintain and improve wildlife habitat while allowing compatible human use for public lands.
- Promote restoration by working with the Everglades local communities to direct development away from needed conservation lands, historical and archaeological resources in such a way that both economic and ecological sustainability are achieved.
- Southwest Florida coastal and inland habitat is along migratory flyways, provides critical shorebird nesting areas, and requires protection and management for the benefit of birds and other wildlife.
- Using innovative tools, incentives and regulations, work to retain ranching and other low impact agricultural uses in Southwest Florida while working with landowners to reduce drainage and nutrient impacts to watersheds and retain or increase habitat values.

Therefore be it resolved:

Audubon of Florida, deploying professional staff and expertise in alignment with the volunteer leadership of local Audubon chapters will work with conservation allies, business and community leaders and public officials to:

Conserve Sites and Landscapes, Including Coastal Environments:

Develop public and political support to protect and restore critical components of the Big Cypress, Corkscrew, Caloosahatchee, Fisheating Creek, and Charlotte Harbor ecosystems.

Support state, local, water management district and regional land acquisition, management and protection necessary for essential habitat preservation, restoration, and water management.

Initiate and support innovative approaches to land use planning, complementing land acquisition, that take advantage of transfer of development rights, conservation easements, and other land use-based approaches to setting aside conservation areas and direct incompatible land uses away from conservation areas. Be involved directly in the land use planning, infrastructure development, and regulatory decisions that will shape the future of the region.

Support stronger policies and more effective actions to protect water resources including strict interpretation and enforcement of wetland and water quality laws, and proactively amending the exotics/seasonal wetland biases in permitting.

Conserve Birds and Other Wildlife (Indicators of Conservation Success):

Advocate regionally-based and proactive wildlife protection policies, to complement land acquisition and planning efforts, at every level of government, but focused particularly on local policies and comprehensive plans.

Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Adapt to Coming Changes:

Advocate and facilitate aggressive greenhouse gas pollution reduction commitments and actions at all levels of government and community, focusing on renewable energy sources, conservation and efficiency. Additionally, advocate adaptive community and conservation strategies.

Engage People, Build Field Capacity (including Science) and Build Financial Capacity:

Encourage, foster and support appropriate research and science, including accurate resource and land use mapping, to advance good policy and planning outcomes for Southwest Florida.

Increase the human and financial resources of Audubon in southwest Florida in a realistic effort to accomplish these vital and daunting conservation priorities.