

From: Governor's Press Office [Governor'sPressOffice@eog.myflorida.com]
Sent: 10/23/2017 8:38:53 PM
Subject: WHAT THEY ARE SAYING: Florida Leaders Applaud Gov. Scott's Proposed Historic Investment for Environment



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 23, 2017

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Florida Leaders Applaud Gov. Scott's Proposed Historic Investment for Environment

MAITLAND, Fla. – Today, Florida leaders applauded Governor Rick Scott's announcement that he will propose more than \$1.7 billion to protect Florida's environment as part of his 2018-2019 recommended budget. This \$1.7 billion funding for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is a more than \$220 million increase over the current year.

The proposed funding will include:

- A historic investment of \$55 million for Florida's springs;
- A historic investment of \$100 million for Florida's beaches;
- A record \$355 million for Everglades restoration;
- A record \$50 million for Florida's state parks; and
- \$50 million for Florida Forever to help preserve and protect our natural lands

Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Noah Valenstein said, "DEP applauds Governor Scott for continuing to make the protection of our natural resources a priority. This budget proposal will allow us to continue to make real progress safeguarding our environment through partnerships and projects. We look forward to a busy year ahead as we get to work implementing the crucial projects that will be funded by this budget."

Erik Eikenberg, CEO of the Everglades Foundation, said, "Governor Scott's environmental budget recommendation includes significant funding for America's Everglades. This includes expediting key features of the Central Everglades Plan and getting to work on storage south of Lake Okeechobee. We thank the Governor for this bold Everglades budget and we look forward to working with Senate and House members to make it happen."

Eric Draper, executive director of Audubon Florida, said, "Audubon Florida is excited about Governor Scott's environmental budget requests for this upcoming session. This year's request includes funding for Florida's premier land conservation program, Florida Forever. The Governor's budget recommendation also includes funding for Florida's iconic springs and our award-winning state parks."

These budget recommendations put additional focus on land conservation, parks, springs and Everglades and estuary recovery- Audubon's top priorities for protecting water and wildlife. We were glad to welcome Governor Scott back to Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples and the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey in Maitland."

Deborah Flack, president of the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association said, "Governor Scott's commitment to healthy beaches continues, fully recognizing their economic importance to Florida. \$50 million for the traditional statewide program reflects an appreciation for the outstanding performance of existing beach management projects following Hurricane Irma in protecting upland structures and reducing coastal flooding. They worked outstandingly, and we are going to need them again. The additional funding for storm damage recovery for our beaches and dunes demonstrates the Governor's recognition that critically-eroded beaches not part of any existing solution must be brought into the statewide program. Our coastal communities and local government partners are most appreciative of the Governor's budgetary commitment to sustaining Florida's beaches."

Temperince Morgan, executive director of The Nature Conservancy in Florida, said, "Governor Scott's proposed budget will support critical restoration and protection projects for some of Florida's most precious resources, including springs and our award-winning state parks."

Paula Russo, president of Friends of Florida State Parks, said, "We're pleased that the Governor's budget includes a historic investment in Florida's nationally-recognized state park system. Florida State Parks are beloved by residents and visitors alike, and Governor Scott's budget ensures these resources will be preserved and available for generations to come."

Duane De Freese, Ph.D., executive director of the IRL Council & Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, said, "This is a historic commitment by Governor Scott to Everglades restoration, water infrastructure projects, and surface water quality improvements for Florida. All are essential to restore the health of the Indian River Lagoon."

David C. Jones, president of Florida Disabled Outdoors Association, said, "We commend the Governor for his continued support of accessibility improvements in our state parks so that more individuals will be able to enjoy their beauty and recreational opportunities."

South Florida Water Management District Governing Board Chairman Dan O'Keefe said, "Governor Scott's proposal for a record \$355 million for Everglades restoration in next year's environmental budget clearly demonstrates his commitment to completing projects that will provide immediate benefits for South Florida's ecosystems. This infusion of funding would enable the South Florida Water Management District to make significant progress on providing needed clean water for the Everglades while protecting this region's vital coastal estuaries."

Brian Armstrong, executive director of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, said, "We applaud the Governor's commitment to Florida's springs. This vital funding will allow our springs experts to continue working to protect these important natural systems within our District."

Dr. Ann Shortelle, executive director of the St. John River Water Management District, said, "It's this type of commitment and leadership by Gov. Scott that allows us to continue working to protect and restore our vital natural resources in Florida. An investment of \$55 million in Florida's springs and \$50 million in Florida Forever sends a clear message that the environment is a priority for this administration."

Hugh Thomas, executive director of the Suwannee River Water Management District, said, "The Suwannee River Valley is a treasure trove of springs, wild and scenic rivers, and pristine shorelines

that we work diligently to protect. Governor Scott's paramount investment in Florida's natural resources is a powerful promise to the current residents and future generations of our spectacular state."

Brett Cyphers, executive director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, said, "We are grateful for the continued vision and leadership shown by Governor Scott. The environmental resources of this region are our hallmark. This continued support for the protection and restoration of our springs, beaches and our award-winning state parks will ensure the health and well-being of our residents, economy and environment."

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