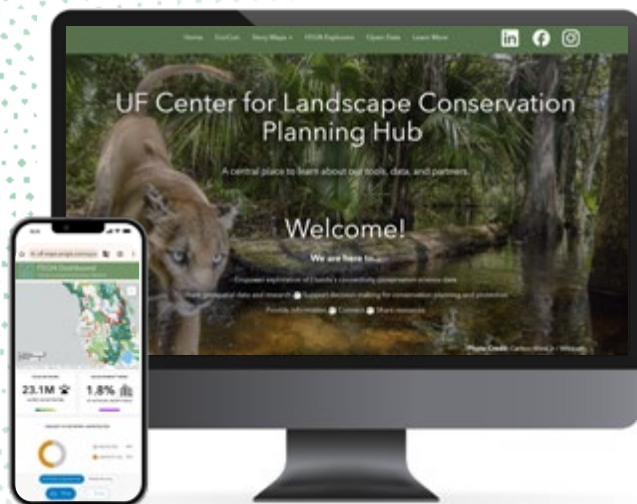


UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
CENTER FOR LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PLANNING

Impact REPORT 2025



Highlights Conservation in Science & Culture



Conservation Science in Practice

EcoCon: Expanding Florida's Ecological Connectivity Planning Capacity

This year the Center unveiled our most comprehensive conservation planning tool. Integrating 150+ data layers, it empowers users to evaluate natural resources, search by country or parcel, and perform complex spatial analyses, turning raw data into actionable conservation information. All 3 of our online, open-access, map-based tools are accessible through our HUB.

Click this QR Code to learn more about CLCP's HUB



New Book Releases!

The Center celebrates the publication of **The Florida Meadow Manual** (March 2026). Authored by Gage LaPierre, Ph.D., and Isabella Guttuso Browne, the guide turns Florida native plant research into practical steps for planning, designing, and maintaining meadow landscapes. It highlights how meadows function as green infrastructure—supporting pollinators, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity across our urban to rural landscapes. The Center is also anticipating the release of **Regional Landscape Conservation Planning: Wildlife, Connectivity, and the Florida Model**, co-edited by Reed Noss and Tom Hctor, with 46 contributors, including 12 Center staff. Scheduled for release in April 2026 by the University of Florida Press, this book provides rich context and explanation for Florida's long history of science-driven regional conservation planning.



Art and Landscape Conservation



Granville Fisher, *Everglades*, 1965, Harn Museum of Art, The Florida Art Collection, Gift of Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers, 2020.18.758.

CLCP x Harn Museum of Art

The **Wild Waters fine art exhibition** at the Governor's House in St. Augustine features a century of Florida landscapes to spark modern conservation action. Showcasing over 30 artists' perspectives from 1871–1965, the collection illustrates the timeless value of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The exhibition also serves as a powerful bridge, using the artwork to connect the public to the vital natural, recreational, and economic services that the landscape provides, and to consider the changes in these landscapes today. Follow us on social media for upcoming exhibition programming.

DIRECTOR'S *Note*



Florida is at a crossroads as rapid growth continues to convert rural lands to development, threatening our natural resources. That is why the University of Florida Center for Landscape Conservation Planning (CLCP) works to empower Floridians with science-based planning and design to protect the wildlife, water resources, and open spaces essential for a healthy, sustainable, and economically vibrant state.

The Center works to provide the best available science and tools to guide land-use planning that protects the strategic natural and rural lands needed to support wildlife, water, and other ecosystem services. We work with partners across the spectrum of government, conservation organizations, land trusts, landowners, and communities on state and regional conservation planning, land protection, education, and outreach.

In 2025 the Center's achievements spanned all these areas, as these highlights show.

To support conservation planning, we advanced strategic prioritization and boundary updates for the Florida Wildlife Corridor and Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN), developed criteria to rank projects for the Rural and Family Lands Protection Program, and identified critical gaps in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. We expanded connectivity science, developing models of coastal ecological connectivity and identifying wildlife crossing priorities.

In 2025, our partnership with the Florida Conservation Group helped protect more than 30,000 acres, particularly within the ecologically and economically significant Peace River Valley and Great Prairie regions. Through targeted outreach in collaboration with Live Wildly, the Center also supported conservation engagement among more than 5,000 landowners across 18 counties, ensuring that land protection decisions were guided by the best available science and aligned with long-term conservation priorities.

The Center regularly engages communities while also mentoring University of Florida landscape architecture students to advance science-based rural and urban green infrastructure protection. In 2025, we rolled out several powerful online tools to help citizens, planners, and policymakers explore and protect the FEGN, including an online viewer and dashboard, and the EcoCon planning platform, which allows users to turn spatial data into actionable conservation planning and design.

We are pleased to announce the release of two new books: *Regional Landscape Conservation Planning: Wildlife, Connectivity, and the Florida Model*, which includes contributions from 12 Center staff, and *The Florida Meadow Manual: Creating and Maintaining Resilient Green Spaces* by co-authors Gage Daniel J. LaPierre and Isabella Guttuso Browne, both published by the University Press of Florida and available for purchase in March-April 2026. Last year also saw the culmination of a long-term collaboration with the Harn Museum of Art, which resulted in *Wild Waters*, an exhibition bringing 19th-century Florida landscape paintings into direct dialogue with the Center's modern GIS maps of our state's critical ecological network and Florida Wildlife Corridor.

As always, thank you for supporting the Center. Your partnerships are essential to secure a prosperous, resilient future for Florida, and we at the Center will continue to work assiduously with all our partners to support that future.

Tom Hctor, Ph.D., *Director*

YOUR SUPPORT IS CRITICAL!

Click this QR code
to donate today towards the future of
Florida's land and wildlife.



Conservation PLANNING

Strategic Prioritization

The Center provides state, federal, and local agencies the information needed to help make strategic land protection decisions, and to ensure that each dollar spent and acre conserved delivers maximum conservation value. This includes data on the most important ecological priorities, areas at greatest threat, and the best opportunities for conservation funding. Our data is then used in public workshops and webinars to support public awareness and decision-making processes about Corridor protection.

SAFEGUARDING THE GREATER OKEFENOKEE ECOSYSTEM

This study focuses on Trail Ridge and the area within and surrounding Pinhook Swamp—a critical “ecological bridge” connecting the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge with Osceola National Forest, and the Ocala to Osceola (O2O) Corridor. These areas are essential components of **an ecological network between Georgia and Florida** and part of our work with partners in Georgia and Alabama to expand understanding of cross-state ecological priorities.

Land Use Planning

The Center is a leader in the conversation on how to balance rapid human development with landscape protection. In a collaboration with **1000 Friends of Florida**, in 2025 we spearheaded the second iteration of our *Planning to Protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor* webinar series, as well as other web-based training opportunities.

Webinar topics included:

»» **Combating Sprawl:** Innovative strategies for smart growth.

»» **Agricultural Resilience:** Navigating challenges and unlocking opportunities for Florida’s working lands.

»» **The Urban-Rural Interface:** Protecting the delicate transition between urban and rural environments.

»» **Building Bridges:** Fostering bipartisan and cross-sector cooperation.

»» **Economics of Rural Land Use:** We facilitated an additional webinar and report with **Urban3** that shows the fiscal value of land conservation to Florida’s future.

Click this QR Code to learn more about **Planning to Protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor** webinars



The Florida Ecological Greenways Network (FEGN)

The FEGN prioritizes a connected statewide rural and natural landscape.

- »» **Secures the future:** creates a corridor for wildlife migration and sea level rise adaptation
- »» **Sustains the economy:** preserves the heritage of Florida’s working agricultural and ranching lands
- »» **Enriches lives:** expands public access to recreational parks and trails
- »» **The Challenge:** **11,805,194 acres remain unprotected**

FEGN:
The Florida Ecological Greenways Network
for the Florida Wildlife Corridor

The Florida Wildlife Corridor represents the highest priorities in the FEGN, essential for maintaining a statewide ecological network of nearly 18 million acres of both wild and working lands.

»» **7.7 million acres are still vulnerable to development**

Our *Community Visioning for Conservation* webinar

(also with **1000**

Friends of Florida)

and report serve as a blueprint for **grassroots impact** – demonstrating how community visioning and science-based decision making can be used to support sustainable growth and protect land.

By integrating **science-based planning** with **local government leadership**, we are demonstrating a scalable model for growth - empowering residents to take an active role in protecting their community’s **green infrastructure**, and ensuring that future development is strategically diverted away from our most important rural and natural landscapes.

Click this QR Code to learn more about **Community Visioning for Conservation** webinar



Land PROTECTION

Science-Based Land Conservation: In 2025, our ongoing partnership with the **Florida Conservation Group (FCG)** catalyzed significant progress in regional land protection. We provided the critical science support needed for FCG to work directly with ranchers and other private landowners to safeguard Florida's environmental and agricultural heritage.

**Acres of private and ranch land
successfully protected**
30,000+

**Acres advanced to the Florida Cabinet
for final approval**
8,500+

Acres submitted to state and federal conservation programs*
21,000+

**Acres prepared for submission to the Rural Family
and Lands Protection Program****
43,000+

Peace River Valley & Great Prairie Region Initiative

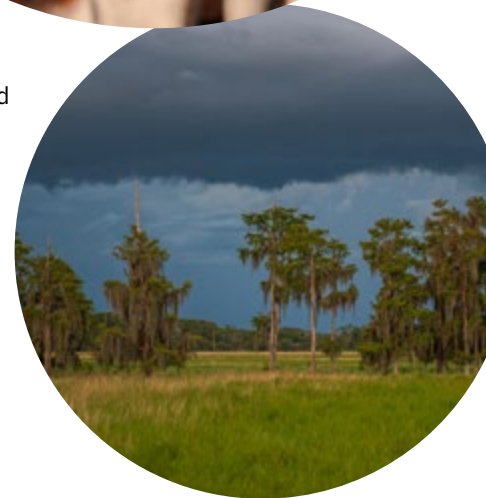
The Center provides GIS and science support for the Florida Conservation Group's efforts in the Peace River Valley and Great Prairie regions. This initiative focuses on Southwest Florida's ranching heartland and rural Hardee and DeSoto counties—areas with some of the lowest land protection rates, despite critical ecological, hydrological and economic significance. To date, **FCG has protected more than 50,000 acres in the Peace River Watershed and 94,000 acres across the Great Prairie landscape.**

Advancing State-Level Conservation & Watershed Protection

The Center continues to serve as a vital technical partner to the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)** and the **Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)**. By providing foundational science and strategic oversight, we ensure that Florida's land acquisition programs deliver maximum return on investment for the state's environment and economy.

>>> Securing Working Landscapes: In collaboration with FDACS and Common Ground Ecology, the Center is developing evaluation criteria and conducting site surveys necessary to support land protection by the **Rural and Family Lands Protection Program (RFLPP)**.

>>> Safeguarding Aquatic Preserves: The Center continued collaboration with the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** to prioritize land protection opportunities within the watersheds surrounding our state's aquatic preserves. By securing these upland buffers, we are protecting the water quality and ecological health of Florida's most pristine coastal and estuarine environments.



*Florida Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Services' Agricultural Conservation Easement programs, county programs, and water management district programs.

**Submitted in January 2026, ensuring a robust pipeline for future conservation.

Connectivity in Action

TRAILS, ROADS, CROSSINGS, & COMMUNITIES

The health of the state and the **Florida Wildlife Corridor** are inextricably linked to the design of our human environments. By bridging the gaps between transportation, recreation, urban planning, and ecology, we are ensuring that Florida's growth does not come at the expense of its natural resources and way of life.

Balancing Strategic Urban Growth and Rural Land Protection

BRIDGING THE SPECTRUM FROM RURAL TO URBAN LAND USE

Guided by the principle that "**good urban planning is good rural planning**," the Center provides the scientific framework to support thoughtful design and planning across the land-use spectrum. Our work emphasizes that sustainable development is a critical defense for our state's natural and working lands.

»» **Policy & Advocacy:** In partnership with **1000 Friends of Florida** and others, we develop information to equip stakeholders with data-driven strategies to combat sprawl and sustain healthy agricultural landscapes.

»» **Anticipating Threats:** We collaborate with state partners to model climate and development risks, identifying the most urgent opportunities for land protection before they are lost.



Building Climate-Ready Communities

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & RESILIENCE

Through our collaborations with the **Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience (FIBER)**, the **UF Historic Preservation Program**, **Center for Land Use Efficiency (CLUE)**, and others, we are proving that nature is our best defense against a changing climate.

»» **Community-Level Impact:** Our team engaged in critical resiliency projects in Matlacha and Historic St. Augustine, focusing on how green infrastructure can mitigate flood risks while preserving local heritage.

»» **Next-Generation Solutions:** We supported student-led research that explored the vital intersection of **affordable housing and green stormwater infrastructure**, ensuring that future planners view social and environmental health as a single goal.

The Future of Sustainable Recreation

RECREATIONAL TRAILS AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Working alongside the **Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation** and other partners, the Center is helping develop a roadmap for balancing Florida's future trail networks and public access with Corridor protection.

»» **Ecologically-based Trail Planning:** We are developing data on **wildlife sensitivity and trail access priorities**, identifying specific opportunities where recreational trails can coexist with—and even support—conservation goals through land protection.

Crossings for Safe Passage: The Wildlife Connectivity Initiative

ADDRESSING LINEAR INFRASTRUCTURE & ANIMAL MOVEMENT

Transportation networks are the lifeblood of our economy, but they can be a barrier to our wildlife. Through our Wildlife Connectivity Initiative, the Center is making the Florida Wildlife Corridor safer for the species that call it home.

»» **Evaluating Green Zones:** Green Zones are locations where roadways intersect important ecological areas of the Florida Wildlife Corridor. The Center is working with the **Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation** to identify conservation strategies to enhance corridors and connectivity.

»» **Identifying Wildlife Crossings Needs and Priorities:**

Working with **FDOT** and other partners, we have created data-driven models to identify and prioritize **collision hotspots**, providing the science needed to locate wildlife crossings structures where they will make roads safer for people and wildlife.

Engagement + EDUCATION

The Center collaborates with partners to develop technical guidance, workshops, seminars, and programs outlining ways to protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Student Visions of the Future

Center staff teach multiple studios and courses at the University of Florida, while mentoring both graduate and undergraduate students. Our graduate students pursue individual research under Center supervision. Their topics provide an array of brilliant visions for Florida's future.



Click this QR Code
for more info about
Student Projects



Sarah Lockhart Statewide Land Trust Collaboration and Geospatial Resources

Derya Yesilkusak Planning and Design Strategies for Wildland–Urban Interface Zones

Stephanie Medo Camera Trapping: Evaluating Wildlife Use of Crossings and Corridors

Marc Grossberg Alternative Development Patterns and Performance Evaluation

Veronica Cancio Coastal Community Engagement and Green Stormwater Infrastructure

CLCP x UF Landscape Architecture x Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation



Click this QR Code
for more info about
Sanibel StoryMap



Sanibel StoryMap

Sanibel Island's history is a masterclass in conservation planning. As one of the first community-led initiatives to create a land management plan that prioritized both ecological integrity and safe emergency evacuation, Sanibel set a national precedent and offers a unique blueprint for resilience. In

commemoration of this planning project, **UF Department of Landscape Architecture** and the CLCP held an exhibition and educational events in 2024 and developed a StoryMap in 2025 that preserves access to the story, the maps, the keynote lecture, local interviews, and other contemporary sources for public access.

CLCP x Canvas of the Wild

We are synthesizing corridor science and spatial data to develop interactive ESRI **StoryMaps for the 10 Critical Linkages**—the unprotected “Priority One” lands of the FEGN, essential for maintaining a connected Florida Wildlife Corridor. Featuring custom murals by **Canvas of the Wild**, these profiles translate technical data into visual storytelling with information about each of the linkages, empowering stakeholders to understand the threats and opportunities within Florida's most vital ecological corridors. Each StoryMap illustrates the linkage's ecological, cultural, and historical challenges and possibilities. Three StoryMaps are complete and the remaining seven are scheduled for release this year – stay tuned!

Click this QR Code
to learn more about
Critical Linkages' StoryMaps



The Center for Landscape Conservation Planning is in the field.

Agricultural Landowner Outreach

This year, the Center partnered with **Live Wildly** and **Florida Conservation Group (FCG)** to support a targeted landowner outreach initiative within the Florida Wildlife Corridor. We provided analytical tools and data to help FCG engage **5,000+ agricultural landowners across 18 counties**, matching them with the right programs to protect their rural land and Florida's heritage.

Wildlife in Action: O2O Corridor Camera Traps

Employing trail cameras, we monitor how various species navigate high-risk "pinch points" along the Florida Wildlife Corridor. With the support of our partners including **Live Wildly** and the **F Stop Foundation**, our camera traps capture real-time movement in these threatened corridors; we are transforming raw footage into a roadmap for wildlife movement and permanent corridor connectivity.

Wekiva River Basin Black Bear Study

Collaring black bears in the Wekiva subpopulation with the **Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation** gives us data to evaluate real-time bear behavior, conduct more effective management, and create conservation subdivision designs for safer coexistence between humans and bears.



Images courtesy of Wildpath

