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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Florida Wildlife Federation and Gulf Partnership Announce \$450,000 Investment to Accelerate Florida Land Conservation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (March 18, 2025) — The Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) is pleased to announce a collaboration with the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation (Gulf Partnership) to provide \$150,000 annually over the next three years, totaling \$450,000, to support land and easement acquisitions across Florida. This funding will be directed to the Gulf Partnership's Project Assistance Fund (PAF), which helps cover critical expenses associated with conservation transactions—a crucial step in securing permanent protection for Florida's natural and working lands.

The Gulf Partnership is a coalition of 28 local, regional, and national conservation organizations working across the Gulf Coast to accelerate the pace, quality, and permanence of voluntary land and water conservation. This investment marks a strategic effort to enhance conservation outcomes by removing financial barriers that often prevent land trusts from executing timely acquisitions and securing matching funds from state and federal programs.

"Conserving Florida's natural landscapes protects wildlife habitat, improves water quality, and preserves the state's environmental legacy for future generations," said Sarah Gledhill, President and CEO of the Florida Wildlife Federation. "Through this collaboration with the Gulf Partnership, we are ensuring that Florida's land trusts have the resources they need to navigate complex conservation transactions and secure lasting protections for our state's most important wildlife habitats."

Despite record state and federal conservation funding, many Florida land projects remain stalled due to administrative delays, mismatched grant cycles, and lack of upfront capital. The PAF provides small grants, up to \$35,000 per project, to cover due diligence and transaction costs like appraisals, title searches, legal reviews, and environmental assessments. By easing these financial barriers, the PAF helps land trusts unlock larger funding from programs like Florida Forever (Florida Department of Environmental

Protection), Rural and Family Lands (Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Natural Resources Conservation Service).

Florida is home to some of the nation's most ecologically diverse landscapes, including mangrove forests, freshwater springs, longleaf pine forests, bottomland hardwood forests, ranchlands, sandy beaches, and barrier islands. However, with 86 percent of the Gulf Coast under private ownership, these natural places face increasing threats from population growth and broader climatic events.

Through this partnership, the Gulf Partnership anticipates that this funding from FWF will yield significant benefits for Florida's conservation landscape with the potential to assist at least 12 conservation projects protecting approximately 4,000 acres of land and leverage upwards of \$45 million in additional public and private conservation funding.

"With this funding from the Florida Wildlife Federation, we are empowering land trusts to act quickly and effectively in securing high-priority conservation lands," said Vance Crain, Executive Director at Gulf Partnership. "This is a win for conservation, a win for Florida's communities, and a win for future generations."

#### **About the Florida Wildlife Federation**

The Florida Wildlife Federation is a statewide non-profit dedicated to safeguarding Florida's water, wildlife, and wild spaces by taking action today to prevent irreversible loss tomorrow. Since 1936, we've united conservationists, anglers, hunters, recreationists, and wildlife enthusiasts to protect Florida's ecosystems. From the halls of legislature to the homes of everyday Floridians, we've achieved milestones such as securing protections for iconic species like the Florida panther and constitutional amendments for land and water conservation. With a steadfast commitment to tackling challenges like pollution and unchecked development, we envision a future where Florida's natural resources are fiercely protected by and for all. Learn more at [floridawildlifefederation.org](http://floridawildlifefederation.org).

#### **About the Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation**

The Gulf Partnership is a coalition of 28 conservation organizations working to increase the pace, quality, and permanence of land and water conservation. Since its founding, the Gulf Partnership has invested nearly \$1 million in conservation projects, helping to protect over 53,000 acres and leverage more than \$137 million in additional funding.

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