



# 2023 Legislative Priorities

The Florida Recreation and Park Association believes there should be public investment in parks, open space and recreation to achieve positive environmental, economic, and health outcomes for all Floridians.

The investments made locally where Floridians live, work and play assure long term commitment for sustainable stewardship of our state's natural resources.

For up-to-date information on current 2023 Bills we are following please visit [frpa.org/legislative/23legislative](https://frpa.org/legislative/23legislative)

COMMUNITY

HEALTH

ECONOMY

ENVIRONMENT

# THE FLORIDA RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION...

Supports efforts to provide funding for the rehabilitation, development and capital improvements for local and state park improvements in order to enhance the active and passive recreational infrastructures in the state.

Opposes legislation that has a negative impact on the administration of park and recreation services and natural resource management including the sale of park lands and open-space and the imposition of regulatory or statutory requirements that provide no added protections or benefit to Florida's recreational consumer.

Supports the enactment of policies and encourage state funding opportunities which assist agencies in meeting sustainability objectives including energy and water efficiencies, connectivity and mobility improvements, carbon sequestration through natural landscape management and protection, and active transportation enhancements.

Supports opportunities for all Floridians to access and enjoy physical activity, proper nutrition and healthy lifestyle options through the promotion of healthy foods, youth programming, maximizing the usage of green space in urban/suburban and rural settings for personal enjoyment, active transportation, and complete street implementation.

Parks, open spaces and recreation services add to the local economy, improve community health, build community and help preserve Florida's unique environment.

For more information please contact:

**Eleanor Warmack**  
FRPA Executive Director  
411 Office Plaza Drive  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
(850)878-3221  
eleanor@frpa.org

**Lester Abberger**  
Florida Lobby Associates  
PO Box 1168  
Tallahassee, FL 32303  
(850)524-2779  
lesterabberger@nettally.com

IT STARTS IN  
**PARKS**  
HEALTH • COMMUNITY • ECONOMY • ENVIRONMENT

Created December 2022 by the Florida Recreation and Park Association  
411 Office Plaza Drive | Tallahassee, FL 32301 | (850)878-3221 | frpa.org

# Community Building

Local parks and recreation agencies play a critical role in building community in the State of Florida. It is in public spaces owned, operated and managed by local government parks and recreation agencies, that residents and visitors alike develop a sense of place, celebrate community pride, creating a sense of community cohesion when societal pressures can easily divide. We believe that outstanding Florida communities offer safe, dynamic, equitable, attractive, and friendly neighborhoods and equal access to a high quality of life, including education, recreation, and personal growth opportunities for all generations.



Parks are the great equalizer; they are accessible and affordable to all. Spaces for celebration and dialogue, creating a safe environment where cultures can celebrate what unites them rather than what divides them.



Recreation programs combat juvenile crime and delinquency by providing outlets where youth can socialize and learn in safe environments with community role models and mentors. Proactive planning for future growth assures Florida continues to be an attractive and sought after destination for tourists and residents. This requires a multi-disciplinary approach to planning, redeveloping, and retrofitting communities that considers the health impact that the built environment

has on the people that live, work, and play there.

# Environmental Resiliency and Sustainability

We are losing ground in our efforts to assure the preservation of lands for future generations of Floridians. The loss of these public lands and spaces negatively impact the long term environmental needs of our State. The state of Florida's water supply, quantity and the ability to manage sea level rise in urban areas, should be of great concern to all Floridians. Urban forests and tree planting programs assure that our air is cleaned naturally and greenspace is ample, providing attractive communities where people want to live and work. These areas also provide opportunity to preserve our habitat for wildlife and endangered species.



Beyond the natural environment, local parks and recreation agencies, through recreation programming, educate our citizens on nature and the benefit of preserving our environment. We are educating the next generation of land stewards. Additionally, sound planning and maintenance principles that encourage alternative energy usage and production, efficient resource utilization, and sustainable resource management practices promote resilient and sustainable communities.

Florida's legacy land acquisition and development program, Florida Forever, requires full funding if programs contained within such as the Florida Communities Trust Program and the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program, are to continue to address the acquisition and development needs of our State. Through these programs state funds are leveraged with Florida's local governments to maximize the ability to acquire and develop these valuable lands. These partnerships also assure that the challenge of maintaining these lands is shared with local governments who, in most cases, maintain ownership of the lands and assure they are accessible to Florida's residents and visitors to the State.



# Economic Impact

In a study conducted by George Mason University and the National Recreation and Park Association, local parks and recreation agencies generated nearly \$154 billion in economic activity in 2015 and supported over 1.1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone. In Florida specifically, the economic activity (actual transactions) was \$7.2 billion, with labor income of \$2.4 billion, and support of 60,084 jobs.

The Florida Sports Foundation estimates over 16 million annual out of state visitors come to Florida attributed to the sports industry. A large number of these sports activities are occurring on lands and in facilities operated by local government parks and recreation agencies.

Local parks and public spaces are the deciding factors when individuals select where they want to live, work and raise their families. They are what make our State the chosen destination for tourists and residents alike. These areas are major attractors for our creative class within the workforce, and are primary reasons why business chose to locate in specific areas. Evidence demonstrates that property values increase when they are in close proximity to preserved lands or public parks. An immediate return on one's investment.

On these lands and in these spaces residents and visitors celebrate commemorative events and holidays.

They support their local economies by attending special events, festivals, parades and sporting tournaments. These activities impact direct and indirect revenues to our State.

When people maintain pride in their community, they choose to invest in their community. Creating positive public private partnerships, local government parks and recreation agencies leverage these investments for a high return in the form of quality of life and sustainable communities.



## Health

The costs of caring for Floridians who suffer from diet related diseases, the chronically ill, and those at risk for health deficiencies, continue to increase. Local parks and recreation programs provide the opportunity for citizens to seek affordable and accessible options for their physical health and wellness. Increased funding for additional programs is necessary.

Local parks and recreation agencies are often seen as an extension of our health care system. Partnering with private health care providers, hospitals, and rehabilitation facilities, parks and recreation agencies provide opportunities for citizens to achieve a healthy lifestyle through access to parks, trails and facilities. They also provide programs allowing citizens to maintain a network within their community that fosters a healthy state of mind and a connection to community resources.

Local parks and recreation agencies provide programs and services to youth, families, and our aging populations. Without these programs, these populations could be isolated without the support system they need to flourish.

