

# FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR VOICES ROUNDTABLE

Your goal with this roundtable session will be to find agreement among the constituents representing different perspectives about land use in Florida, and then to draft a land management proposal for Florida's land that meets the needs of all constituents as best as possible. This process is not a debate, but instead a mediation where the group members come to an agreement in order to make decisions.

You will have resources related to a constituent with interests in Florida land and/or the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Your group's task will be (1) to define and present the position for your assigned voice representing that perspective. (2) After a class discussion, you will make recommendations for land use. You will next move into mixed groups, representing multiple constituents, for a (3) roundtable discussion and drafting of a land management proposal.

**CONSTITUENT GROUP:** \_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 1: : Research, Write, and Present an Opening Statement

**15 MINS**

Your group (representing one constituent) will have 10 minutes to look through information and prepare a **30 second** (3-4 sentences) opening statement about your viewpoints, perspective, and needs. Use the questions below to help you develop the position. You can also use any links provided to find additional information to support your position.

- What are three main outcomes your group, considering the constituent perspective, would like to see related to Florida's land?
  
- Which of the above are critical/need to have? Which are nice to have?
  
- Are there any external pressures or constraints that might influence the constituent's perspective?

Summarize this position in 3-4 sentences:



**STEP 2: Presentation, Questions, and Recommendations**

**10 MINS**

Each group now presents their position to the class. After all groups have presented, each student may ask one question of any group. Then, each group meets again to develop three recommendations that they would like to see happen that align with the outcomes stated in your position.

After drafting your recommendations, each group member will write all three recommendations on separate sticky notes. Each student will need their own set of recommendation sticky notes for Step 3.

**STEP 3: Develop a Proposal with a Mixed Group of Constituents**

**20 MINS**

Next, you will move into a new group that includes one member of each constituent group. In this group, you have 10 minutes for sharing everyone's ideas and creating a Florida land proposal that meets one or more of everyone's recommendations. Use the chart paper and the recommendations on the sticky notes to rearrange and organize ideas until the proposal addresses each constituent's needs.

The proposal should consider the values and perspectives of each constituent. Include in the presentation a pie graph for how to allocate percentages of resources in the budget for:

- Transportation
- Land management
- Tourist development
- Endangered species management/monitoring/research/rehabilitation

The proposal should also include examples of how your recommendations would be part of the above categories.



### **CONSTITUENT: TOURISM OPERATOR AND INDIGENOUS LEADER**

“As an indigenous person growing up with the Miccosukee people, we’re always taught to always think about the future generations. I’m just being what the Miccosukee people raise our people to be, good stewards of the environment and of our people. Over the years, we’ve noticed a decline in the wildlife populations because of the disconnection of the landscapes. All this disconnection causes a lot of human and animal conflict. And if we want to protect the bear, if we want to protect the panther, they need to have wide open spaces to roam [...] So when you’re looking at the overall ecosystem of the Greater Everglades, I would rather see a farmer own a piece of land because when he quits farming, the land can eventually reclaim itself. But if you get rid of that farmer and you put a shopping mall in there, then you’ve lost that natural element to that environment. [...] Tourism brings in a lot of money from the outside world to Florida. And you have to have that healthy environment for tourists to wanna come back to enjoy those experiences.”

–Betty Osceola

**Additional resource:** <https://www.semtribe.com/culture/seminoles-and-the-land>

### **CONSTITUENT: CATTLE RANCHER**

“I’m a sixth generation Florida rancher. Our family moved down here in 1850, middle of 1850, brought their cattle with them and we have the seventh and eighth generation living on the ranch. [...] My dad saw the change. He saw that people will move here and we couldn’t stop them. He’d always say, ‘You know, people don’t come here to see a subdivision. They come here to see our scenic landscape.’ Florida’s got such a unique landscape and you fall in love with it when you’re raised with it. Ranch land gives the state so many benefits, the greenspace and the clean air they’re providing, the recharge area, the home for the endangered species. Most of your wildlife need bigger areas to live on. So you gotta have that continuous area for them to roam. You take one section out of it and it stops them from traveling. If we was surrounded on all four sides of development, it would be hard to ranch. The ranching business is not the most profitable business there is. So there’s other things you gotta learn how to do and keep your land intact. You will find if you would keep your ranch, do a conservation easement, you’ll find a way to make a living with it. Every rancher I know that went ahead and sold their land to a developer, there’s not one of them that didn’t come back and say, ‘I wish I wouldn’t have done that.’ Once we lose the Florida Wildlife Corridor, we’ve lost it all.”

–Carl Lightsey

**Additional resource:** <https://www.floridabeef.org/raising-beef/cattle-in-florida>



### CONSTITUENT: FISHING GUIDE

“We’ve done a tremendous job over the past 50 years in setting the pace for conservation in Florida. And now we need to finish that journey because we’re fighting a tremendous onslaught of development, 100,000 acres a year lost to housing and to roads and to shopping malls. By 2070, if development continues at the same pace, we’re projected to lose 5 million acres of rural and natural land in the state of Florida. And that’s nearly all the missing links in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. If we don’t protect the Corridor now, most of our state parks and national parks are gonna be islands surrounded by development. And that’s a world I want my kids to inherit.”

–Benny Blanco

**Additional resource:** <https://florida-guides.com/about/>

### CONSTITUENT: TREE FARMER

“People have this vision of what a logger is and it’s not what I think of myself. We cultivate our product and then we harvest it and we replant it. One of the tools we have is conservation easements. Conservation easements are a legacy tool because it means that as a landowner, you have put restrictions on that land that last forever. Wind Bend will never be a strip mall, it will never be a housing development. You give up your development rights and it helps the landowner because they receive payment for those rights that they give up. Critters don’t know boundaries, they don’t know property lines. They just go where they have to go. So it’s important that we have these corridors so that these critters that are so important to us are able to move at their own natural pace. Private lands and agriculture are what provide those habitats that are so vital ... It’s incredible how compatible Florida agriculture and wildlife are, even in the logging woods. I think we enhance our wildlife population more than we do to destroy it. Agriculture by and large is good for wildlife. We’re seeing more and more conversion ... from timber to development. That’s concerning, but most of the neighbors that we have are just as determined as we are to not develop. I’ve heard of a phrase that the last crop that will grow on these lands is houses. That’s not a good option.”

–Lynetta Griner

**Additional resource:** <https://www.flforestry.org/about-us/fl-forests-facts/>



### **CONSTITUENT: HOME BUILDER**

**“In Florida, construction contributed \$75 billion (5.1%) of the state’s GDP of \$1.5 trillion ... Construction (residential + nonresidential) employed 7.9 million workers in July 2023, an increase of 198,000 (2.5%) from July 2022 and an increase of 4.8% from February 2020, the peak pre-pandemic month. Construction employment in Florida in July 2023 totaled 612,700, an increase of 7,800 (1.3%) from July 2022 and an increase of 35,300 or 6.1% from February 2020.”**

Source: [https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/FL-US%20construction%20fact%20sheet\\_92023.pdf](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/FL-US%20construction%20fact%20sheet_92023.pdf)

**Additional resource:** <https://babcockranch.com/our-homes/builders/>

### **CONSTITUENT: COMMERCIAL BUILDER**

**“In Florida, construction contributed \$75 billion (5.1%) of the state’s GDP of \$1.5 trillion.”**

Source: [https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/FL-US%20construction%20fact%20sheet\\_92023.pdf](https://www.agc.org/sites/default/files/users/user21902/FL-US%20construction%20fact%20sheet_92023.pdf)

**“Florida’s commercial real estate industry is booming. According to recent numbers, commercial real estate contributed almost \$190 billion to the state’s economy, making it the third most of any state. Florida also ranked third in commercial real estate spending – at almost \$100 billion ... With billions of dollars contributed annually to Florida’s economy, commercial real estate is big business for Realtors.”**

Source: <https://www.floridarealtors.org/membership/specialties/commercial>

**Additional resource:** <https://www.floridarealtors.org/newsroom/market-data>



**CONSTITUENT: TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTOR**

“Florida is currently experiencing unprecedented population growth and is projected to grow by 1,000 people every day over the next 30 years – with some areas of the state currently experiencing more than 20 percent growth rates. As the state continues to experience rapid population and tourism growth, the Moving Florida Forward Infrastructure Initiative focuses on critical improvements to ensure that transportation infrastructure can meet the demands of current and future residents and visitors, including investments in major interstates and arterial roadways to ensure people and goods can move safely throughout the state.”

“With the \$4 billion dedicated for Moving Florida Forward’s initiative and the Department’s work program, FDOT’s total budget for the next 5 years totals over \$68 Billion in transportation investments.”

Source: <https://www.fdot.gov/movingfloridaforward/landing>

**Additional resource:** <https://highways.dot.gov/federal-lands/wildlife-crossings>

**CONSTITUENT: NEW FLORIDA RESIDENT**

“...population growth and is projected to grow by 1,000 people every day over the next 30 years.”

Source: <https://www.fdot.gov/movingfloridaforward/landing>

“There are many reasons to consider moving to the Sunshine State. With hundreds of miles of beaches, nearly 230 sunny days a year, abundant theme parks and so much more to offer, Florida became the nation’s fastest-growing state for the first time since 1957, according to the 2022 U.S. Census Bureau ... In 2022, Florida had the highest net migration increase of all the states. According to U.S. Census data, 738,969 residents moved into the state, while 489,905 residents moved out, meaning Florida gained a net population of 249,064 people that year. This growth can be attributed to a variety of factors, including Florida’s warm, sunny climate, job opportunities, diversity and more.”

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/home-improvement/moving-services/florida-moving-statistics/>

**Additional resource:** <https://www.redfin.com/state/Florida/housing-market>

