



The Florida Senate

Local Funding Initiative Request

Fiscal Year 2024-2025

LFIR # 3505

1. **Project Title**
2. **Senate Sponsor**
3. **Date of Request**

4. Project/Program Description

Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary in Naples, FL is a critical component of the Western Everglades, protecting over 13,000 acres of freshwater marsh and prairie, pine uplands, and the largest remaining old growth bald cypress forest in the US. This UNESCO-designated Ramsar Wetland of International importance is owned and operated by nonprofit Audubon Florida as a living laboratory for best practices in wetland restoration and land management, and as an ecotourism amenity, raising awareness of and accelerating hydrologic restoration projects in the region. Over 100,000 visitors from around the world tour Corkscrew's 2.25-mile boardwalk annually, contributing to the economy of eastern Collier County/Immokalee. The proposed site modernization includes updated exhibit space in our visitor center, a new hub for conservation and restoration science, a new outdoor classroom to serve a greater volume of students, housing for interns and visiting researcher, and a new volunteer headquarters.

5. **State Agency to receive requested funds**
- State Agency contacted?**

6. Amount of the Nonrecurring Request for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Type of Funding	Amount
Operations	0
Fixed Capital Outlay	5,000,000
Total State Funds Requested	5,000,000

7. Total Project Cost for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 (including matching funds available for this project)

Type of Funding	Amount	Percentage
Total State Funds Requested (from question #6)	5,000,000	29%
Matching Funds		
Federal	0	0%
State (excluding the amount of this request)	0	0%
Local	0	0%
Other	12,000,000	71%
Total Project Costs for Fiscal Year 2024-2025	17,000,000	100%

8. **Has this project previously received state funding?**

Fiscal Year (YYYY-YY)	Amount		Specific Appropriation #	Vetoed
	Recurring	Nonrecurring		

9. **Is future funding likely to be requested?**
- a. **If yes, indicate nonrecurring amount per year.**
- b. **Describe the source of funding that can be used in lieu of state funding.**
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10. Has the entity requesting this project received any federal assistance related to the COVID-19 pandemic?

If yes, indicate the amount of funds received and what the funds were used for.

Complete questions 11 and 12 for Fixed Capital Outlay Projects

11. Status of Construction

a. What is the current phase of the project?

- Planning
 Design
 Construction
 N/A

b. Is the project "shovel ready" (i.e permitted)?

c. What is the estimated start date of construction?

d. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12. List the owners of the facility to receive, directly or indirectly, any fixed capital outlay funding. Include the relationship between the owners of the facility and the entity.

13. Details on how the requested state funds will be expended

Spending Category	Description	Amount
Administrative Costs:		
Executive Director/Project Head Salary and Benefits		0
Other Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Operational Costs: Other		
Salary and Benefits		0
Expense/Equipment/Travel/Supplies/Other		0
Consultants/Contracted Services/Study		0
Fixed Capital Construction/Major Renovation:		
Construction/Renovation/Land/Planning Engineering	Design, engineering and construction of a hub for wetland restoration and habitat management, youth education opportunities, and career development training for the next generation of watershed managers.	5,000,000
Total State Funds Requested (must equal total from question #6)		5,000,000

14. Program Performance

a. What specific purpose or goal will be achieved by the funds requested?



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For 70 years, Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary has protected the heart of the Western Everglades and CREW Watershed, serving as a critical linkage in the Florida Wildlife Corridor, fueling the area ecotourism economy with 100,000 visitors a year, and driving the science of wetland restoration. Water quality and wetland health are key to the well being and prosperity of Southwest Florida, influencing everything from flooding, to wildfires to harmful algal blooms. Audubon is investing in Corkscrew's restoration and land management campus to support its growth as a wetland restoration center of excellence.

b. What activities and services will be provided to meet the intended purpose of these funds?

Campus modernization through engineering and construction

c. What direct services will be provided to citizens by the appropriation project?

Increased capacity for wetland and hydrologic restoration will help address watershed impairment contributing to regional flood, fire and harmful algal bloom cycles; Facilities will also support outreach to and partnerships with private landowners, visiting practitioners, land management trainings, youth wetland education and mentorship. Corkscrew's 100K annual visitors are an important economic driver for eastern Collier County near Immokalee.

d. Who is the target population served by this project? How many individuals are expected to be served?

Grade school and high school students, university students, general public, tourists, state and local land management agencies.

e. What is the expected benefit or outcome of this project? What is the methodology by which this outcome will be measured?

1. Benefits to the community will include improved mental and physical health benefits associated with outdoor recreation; STEM enrichment for grade school, high school and university students. Success will be measured by the number of visitors.
2. Modernized facilities will accelerate the development, refinement and dissemination of land management and wetland restoration best practices. Benefits accrued include improvements to regional stormwater, groundwater and surface water, as well as improved wildlife corridor and habitat connectivity. Measurement will be in acres managed and restored using best available science.

f. What are the suggested penalties that the contracting agency may consider in addition to its standard penalties for failing to meet deliverables or performance measures provided for the contract?

Typical award is a reimbursement so failure to meet deliverables or performance as part of contractual terms with awarding state agency would potentially include loss of award and appropriation. Audubon Florida and Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary have a demonstrated history of meeting deliverables and coordinating with public and private grant funders to administer award funding through to project completion. Audubon has been recognized with the highest (4-star) rating from Charity Navigator.

15. Requester Contact Information

a. First Name **Last Name**

b. Organization

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number **Ext.**

16. Recipient Contact Information

a. Organization

b. Municipality and County

c. Organization Type



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- For Profit Entity
- Non Profit 501(c)(3)
- Non Profit 501(c)(4)
- Local Entity
- University or College
- Other (please specify)

d. First Name Last Name

e. E-mail Address

f. Phone Number

17. Lobbyist Contact Information

a. Name

b. Firm Name

c. E-mail Address

d. Phone Number

Please complete the questions below for Water Projects only.

18. Have you applied for alternative state funding?

- Waste Water Revolving Loan
- Drinking Water Revolving Loan
- Small Community Wastewater Treatment Grant
- Other (please specify)
- N/A

19. What is the population economic status?

- Financially Disadvantaged Community (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Financially Disadvantaged Municipality (ch. 62-552, F.A.C)
- Rural Area of Economic Concern
- Rural Area of Opportunity (s. 288.0656, Florida Statutes)
- N/A

20. What is the status of construction?



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Ready

21. What percentage of the construction has been completed?

0%

22. What is the estimated completion date of construction?

12/31/2025