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CS/HB 951

By the Committee on Environmental Protection and Representatives Dockery, Melvin and Suarez

1	A bill to be entitled
2	An act relating to the Green Swamp Area of
3	Critical State Concern; amending s. 380.0677,
4	F.S.; creating the Green Swamp Land Protection
5	Initiative as successor to the Green Swamp Land
6	Authority; providing mission; providing powers
7	of the Division of State Lands of the
8	Department of Environmental Protection;
9	providing for negotiation of conservation
10	easements for land protection; requiring
11	development of an acquisition work plan;
12	providing factors for selection of properties;
13	providing for an annual list of proposed
14	acquisitions; directing the division to develop
15	a conservation easement program; providing
16	rulemaking authority; providing for
17	coordination and assistance of the Florida
18	Communities Trust Program within the Department
19	of Community Affairs, the Boards of County
20	Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the
21	Southwest Florida Water Management District,
22	and the St. Johns River Water Management
23	District; providing for ownership rights and
24	interests and use of property conveyed through
25	a conservation easement; deleting powers and
26	duties of the Green Swamp Land Authority;
27	deleting provisions relating to land protection
28	agreements, termination of such agreements, and
29	availability and reversion of certain
30	appropriated funds; providing reporting and
31	<pre>staffing requirements; amending ss. 259.041,</pre>

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259.101, 259.105, and 380.507, F.S.; providing 1 2 conforming language and cross references; 3 providing for vesting of title to certain lands under the Florida Preservation 2000 Act in 4 5 furtherance of the mission of the initiative; providing an effective date. 6 7 8 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida: 9 10 Section 1. Section 380.0677, Florida Statutes, is 11 amended to read: 380.0677 Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative 12 13 Authority.--(1) CREATION; INTENT.--There is hereby created the 14 15 Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative Authority. The Green 16 Swamp Land Protection Initiative is to proceed as the 17 successor in interest to the Green Swamp Land Authority and shall not unlawfully affect the terms of pending land 18 19 protection agreements, easements, or other contracts 20 previously entered into under this section. 21 (2) MISSION.--The mission of the Green Swamp Land 22 Protection Initiative Authority shall be to balance the protection of the ecological values of the Green Swamp Area of 23 24 Critical State Concern with the protection of private property 25 rights and the interests of taxpayers through the acquisition 26 of lands, or rights or interests in lands, from willing 27 sellers within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. 28 To that end, the authority is encouraged to coordinate with 29 the Division of State Lands of the Department of Environmental Protection is encouraged to coordinate with, the Florida 30 31 Communities Trust Program within the Department of Community

Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake 1 2 Counties, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and 3 the St. Johns River Water Management District to identify, select, and acquire less-than-fee-simple interests or rights 4 5 in parcels within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, as part of overall land acquisition efforts by the 6 7 state and the districts. When the Department of Environmental 8 Protection and the water management districts are planning to 9 acquire parcels within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, they shall consider acquiring such parcels using 10 11 alternatives to fee simple techniques in consultation with the 12 land authority. 13 (3) POWERS; BUDGET; GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL OF PROPOSED 14 ACQUISITIONS. -- The Green Swamp Land Authority shall have all the powers pursuant to s. 380.0666, except that it may not 15 16 issue bonds and must annually submit its budget to the Governor and the Legislature for review. In addition, the 17 authority must annually submit a list of proposed acquisitions 18 to the Governor for review and approval. The Governor may 19 20 remove proposed acquisitions from the list, with cause, if the 21 Governor determines such acquisitions would not further the 22 mission of the authority. By September 5 of the fiscal year in which the authority's budget is submitted, the chairpersons of 23 the appropriations committees of the Senate and the House of 24 25 Representatives may transmit to the Governor and the authority 26 comments on and objections to the proposed budget. The 27 Governor shall respond in writing to the comments and 28 objections. 29 (3) (4) APPLICATION FOR CONSERVATION EASEMENT LAND PROTECTION AGREEMENT; LIST OF PROPOSED ACQUISITIONS. -- Owners 30 of agricultural and other property within the Green Swamp Area 31 3

of Critical State Concern may shall have 3 years from the 1 2 effective date of the land authority's rules to apply to the 3 Division of State Lands land authority concerning their interest in signing a conservation easement. A conservation 4 5 easement land protection agreement restricting some or all of б their rights to their land. A land protection agreement is a 7 voluntarily negotiated instrument which may provide 8 compensation to a landowner in return for an undivided perpetual interest in real property the willingness of the 9 landowner to accept restrictions or conditions on the use of 10 the parcel of land, including the right to develop the land as 11 defined in s. 380.04, and may be created or stated in the form 12 13 of an easement in any deed, will, or other instrument executed 14 by or on the behalf of the owner of the property and subject 15 to the provisions in s. 704.06. The conservation easement agreement shall include provisions for compliance and shall be 16 recorded and indexed in the same manner as any other 17 instrument affecting the title to real property. A 18 19 conservation easement land protection agreement signed by the 20 fee simple owner does not confer with it the right of public access to the real property, unless public access is a right 21 22 specified within the easement agreement. Selected applicants' properties shall be ranked on the authority's list of proposed 23 24 acquisitions. Work shall continue on listed projects for which 25 acquisition has begun but not closed within the 3-year period, 26 until the acquisition is successfully completed. During the 27 time the property remains on the authority's list of proposed 28 acquisitions, and for 2 years thereafter, the property owner 29 may not change the current use of the property. 30 (4)(5) ACQUISITION WORK PLAN SELECTION; CRITERIA.--The Division of State Lands, with the Florida Communities Trust 31 4

Program within the Department of Community Affairs, the Boards 1 2 of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the 3 Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the St. Johns River Water Management District, authority shall develop a 4 5 work plan to identify procedure for competitive selection of б properties appropriate for conservation easements land 7 protection agreements. Selection of properties to be included 8 in the work plan <del>criteria</del> shall be based primarily on the 9 water resource and ecological and environmental resource values of the parcels. Other factors may include the threat of 10 11 impending development, and the historical significance of the property, or other factors determined to be relevant by the 12 13 division, in consultation with the Florida Communities Trust 14 Program within the Department of Community Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake Counties, the 15 16 Southwest Florida Water Management District, and the St. Johns 17 River Water Management District authority. Conservation easements land protection agreements shall be voluntary. The 18 19 price paid for an interest in land or restricting the rights 20 or interests in land shall not exceed the appraised value of those rights or interests. The selected properties shall 21 22 constitute a list of proposed acquisitions, to be updated at 23 least annually. 24 (5)(6) PROGRAM; CONSIDERATION. -- The Division of State 25 Lands authority, with the assistance of the Florida 26 Communities Trust Program within the Department of Community 27 Affairs, the Boards of County Commissioners for Polk and Lake 28 Counties, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, and 29 the St. Johns River Water Management District Districts, shall develop a conservation easement land protection agreement 30 31 program, including procedures for selecting, valuing, and 5

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monitoring to ensure compliance with the purposes of this 1 2 section within the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern. 3 The Division of State Lands shall Southwest Florida and St. Johns River Water Management Districts may act as the 4 acquisition agent agents for the initiative land authority, 5 and title to the lands, or interests or rights in lands 6 7 acquired pursuant to this section, shall vest in the district 8 where the acquisition project is located. Among the procedures shall be a process for determining the amount of consideration 9 that may be paid in exchange for an undivided perpetual 10 interest in the real property or a restriction on interest in 11 12 the real property for the willingness of a property owner to 13 accept restrictions or conditions according to the terms of a 14 land protection agreement. The division may adopt authority shall make rules necessary to govern the conservation easement 15 16 application process, implement the conservation easements, implement a work plan, and implement the conservation easement 17 program, along with other rules related to this section that 18 19 are necessary to carry out this section. To encourage 20 participation in the land protection agreement program and to create a sense of fairness, the land authority is directed in 21 22 making rules to reflect changes in land values as a result of the designation of the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 23 Concern and implementation of Polk and Lake Counties' 24 comprehensive plans. Such rules shall be reviewed by the 25 26 Southwest Florida and St. Johns River Water Management 27 Districts. 28 (6)(7) APPROPRIATIONS. -- From funds appropriated to the 29 Department of Environmental Protection for land acquisition from the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund for 30 fiscal years 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997, \$4 million 31

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shall be reserved each fiscal year to carry out the purposes 1 2 of this section. To the extent practicable, moneys 3 appropriated from the Conservation and Recreation Lands Trust Fund, Save Our Rivers Trust Fund, and Florida Communities 4 5 Trust Fund shall be used to acquire lands, or interests or rights in lands, on the Conservation and Recreation Lands, 6 7 Save Our Rivers, or Florida Communities Trust land acquisition 8 plans or lists, as defined in s. 259.035, or a land 9 acquisition plan under s. 373.59 or s. 380.508. However, nothing in this subsection prohibits the Division of State 10 11 Lands Green Swamp Land Authority from entering into 12 conservation easements land protection agreements with any 13 property owner whose property is not on any of such lists. 14 From sums appropriated to the Department of Environmental Protection from the Water Management District Lands Trust Fund 15 for fiscal years 1994-1995, 1995-1996, and 1996-1997, \$3 16 million shall be reserved each fiscal year to carry out the 17 purposes of this section. Such amounts as are used from the 18 19 Water Management District Lands Trust Fund shall be credited 20 against the allocations as provided in s. 373.59 to the St. Johns River Water Management District or the Southwest Florida 21 22 Water Management District in proportion to the amount of lands for which an interest was acquired, and shall not be required 23 24 by a district for debt service payments or land management purposes. From funds appropriated to the Department of 25 26 Community Affairs for the Florida Communities Trust Program 27 from the Preservation 2000 Trust Fund for fiscal years 28 1994-1995 through 1999-2000, \$3 million shall be reserved each 29 fiscal year to carry out the purposes of this section. Appropriations identified pursuant to this subsection shall 30 31 fund the acquisition of lands, or the interests or rights in 7

lands, and related costs of acquisition. Such funds shall be 1 2 available for expenditure after the land authority has adopted 3 rules to begin its program. Funds reserved pursuant to this subsection, for each of the referenced fiscal years, shall 4 5 remain available for the purposes specified in this subsection б for 24 months from the date on which such funds become 7 available for disbursement. After such time has elapsed, any 8 funds which are not legally obligated for expenditure shall be 9 released for the lawful purposes for which they were otherwise 10 appropriated.

11 (7)(8) OWNERSHIP RIGHTS AND INTERESTS. -- Ownership of 12 any rights or interests which are conveyed through a 13 conservation easement land protection agreement shall vest in 14 the Southwest Florida Water Management District or the St. Johns River Water Management District, based on where the 15 acquisition project is located. The districts shall monitor 16 the conservation easements agreements under their respective 17 jurisdictions to ensure compliance with the terms of the 18 19 easements agreements, and shall provide the county property appraiser, the county tax collector, and the county manager 20 with copies of conservation easements land protection 21 22 agreements that specify the deed restrictions on lands. 23 (8)(9) USE OF PROPERTY AGREEMENT. -- A private property 24 owner who enters into a conservation easement land protection agreement may use the property in any manner consistent with 25 26 the terms of the easement agreement. A conservation easement 27 that land protection agreement which limits the use of 28 property to agriculture shall allow the owner to change from 29 one agricultural activity to another unless otherwise prohibited by the provisions of the easement agreement. Unless 30 otherwise stated, easements agreements shall not prohibit the 31

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construction or operation of: barns or other buildings 1 necessary to agricultural activities, such as employment 2 3 housing; hunting and fishing camps; or a specified number of single-family residences solely for the use of the property 4 5 owner or the owner's family. (10) TERMINATION OF LAND PROTECTION AGREEMENTS. -- A fee 6 7 simple owner of lands subject to a land protection agreement 8 may petition the governing board of the water management 9 district which holds title to the interests or rights in those 10 lands to terminate the agreement. If the district finds that 11 ownership of a parcel of land or interests or rights in a parcel of land acquired pursuant to this section is no longer 12 13 needed to protect the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 14 Concern, the district may dispose of the land, or interests or 15 rights in the land, according to procedures adopted pursuant to s. 373.089. 16 (9)(11) PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTED. -- Nothing in this 17 section shall be construed to abrogate the constitutionally 18 protected property rights of private property owners within 19 20 the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern, whether or not 21 they choose to participate in the Green Swamp Land Protection 22 Initiative Authority's acquisition program. (10) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS. -- The Department of 23 24 Environmental Protection is directed to submit a report on the 25 status of the Green Swamp land acquisition program to the 26 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the 27 House of Representatives prior to the 2001 and 2002 Regular 28 Legislative Sessions. The department shall include in these 29 reports any recommendations relating to the Green Swamp land acquisition program. 30 31

1	(11) STAFFING REQUIREMENTSThe Division of State
2	Lands shall provide staff, resources, and support sufficient
3	to fulfill the mission of the Green Swamp Land Protection
4	Initiative in an expeditious manner. The division shall
5	designate a coordinator for the initiative who shall
6	physically travel to the Green Swamp Area of Critical State
7	Concern, on at least a quarterly basis, to provide assistance
8	and services to the area landowners. The division shall
9	provide reasonable notice to the landowners of the
10	coordinator's visits, which shall include the time, date, and
11	location of each visit.
12	Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (11) of section
13	259.041, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:
14	259.041 Acquisition of state-owned lands for
15	preservation, conservation, and recreation purposes
16	(11)
17	(b) All project applications shall identify, within
18	their acquisition plans, those projects which require a full
19	fee simple interest to achieve the public policy goals,
20	together with the reasons full title is determined to be
21	necessary. The state agencies and the water management
22	districts may use alternatives to fee simple acquisition to
23	bring the remaining projects in their acquisition plans under
24	public protection. For the purposes of this subsection, the
25	term "alternatives to fee simple acquisition" includes, but is
26	not limited to: purchase of development rights; obtaining
27	conservation easements; obtaining flowage easements; purchase
28	of timber rights, mineral rights, or hunting rights; purchase
29	of agricultural interests or silvicultural interests; entering
30	into land protection agreements; entering into conservation
31	easements as defined in s. 380.0677 <u>(3)</u> ; fee simple
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acquisitions with reservations; creating life estates; or any 1 2 other acquisition technique which achieves the public policy 3 goals listed in paragraph (a). It is presumed that a private landowner retains the full range of uses for all the rights or 4 5 interests in the landowner's land which are not specifically acquired by the public agency. The lands upon which hunting 6 7 rights are specifically acquired pursuant to this paragraph 8 shall be available for hunting in accordance with the 9 management plan or hunting regulations adopted by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, unless the hunting 10 11 rights are purchased specifically to protect activities on 12 adjacent lands. 13 Section 3. Subsection (3) of section 259.101, Florida 14 Statutes, is amended to read: 15 259.101 Florida Preservation 2000 Act.--(3) LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAMS SUPPLEMENTED.--Less the 16 costs of issuance, the costs of funding reserve accounts, and 17 other costs with respect to the bonds, the proceeds of bonds 18 19 issued pursuant to this act shall be deposited into the 20 Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund created by s. 375.045. 21 Ten percent of the proceeds of any bonds deposited into the 22 Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall be distributed by the Department of Environmental Protection to the Department of 23 Environmental Protection for the purchase by the South Florida 24 Water Management District of lands in Dade, Broward, and Palm 25 26 Beach Counties identified in s. 7, chapter 95-349, Laws of 27 Florida. This distribution shall apply for any bond issue for 28 the 1995-1996 fiscal year. For the 1997-1998 fiscal year only, 29 \$20 million per year from the proceeds of any bonds deposited into the Florida Preservation 2000 Trust Fund shall be 30 31 distributed by the Department of Environmental Protection to 11

1 the St. Johns Water Management District for the purchase of 2 lands necessary to restore Lake Apopka. The remaining proceeds 3 shall be distributed by the Department of Environmental 4 Protection in the following manner:

5 (a) Fifty percent to the Department of Environmental 6 Protection for the purchase of public lands as described in s. 7 259.032. Of this 50 percent, at least one-fifth shall be used 8 for the acquisition of coastal lands.

9 (b) Thirty percent to the Department of Environmental Protection for the purchase of water management lands pursuant 10 11 to s. 373.59, to be distributed among the water management 12 districts as provided in that section. Funds received by each 13 district may also be used for acquisition of lands necessary 14 to implement surface water improvement and management plans approved in accordance with s. 373.456 or for acquisition of 15 16 lands necessary to implement the Everglades Construction 17 Project authorized by s. 373.4592.

(c) Ten percent to the Department of Community Affairs 18 19 to provide land acquisition grants and loans to local 20 governments through the Florida Communities Trust pursuant to 21 part III of chapter 380. From funds allocated to the trust, 22 \$3 million annually shall be used by the Division of State Lands to implement the Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative 23 24 Green Swamp Land Authority or specifically for the purchase of conservation easements through land protection agreements, as 25 26 defined in s. 380.0677(3)(5), of lands, or severable interests 27 or rights in lands, in the Green Swamp Area of Critical State 28 Concern. From funds allocated to the trust, \$3 million 29 annually shall be used by the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan Land Authority specifically for the purchase of any real 30 31 property interest in either those lands subject to the Rate of

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Growth Ordinances adopted by local governments in Monroe 1 2 County or those lands within the boundary of an approved 3 Conservation and Recreation Lands project located within the Florida Keys or Key West Areas of Critical State Concern; 4 5 however, title to lands acquired within the boundary of an б approved Conservation and Recreation Lands project may, in 7 accordance with an approved joint acquisition agreement, vest 8 in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust 9 Fund. Of the remaining funds allocated to the trust after the above transfers occur, one-half shall be matched by local 10 11 governments on a dollar-for-dollar basis. To the extent 12 allowed by federal requirements for the use of bond proceeds, 13 the trust shall expend Preservation 2000 funds to carry out 14 the purposes of part III of chapter 380.

(d) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Department of Environmental Protection for the purchase of inholdings and additions to state parks. For the purposes of this paragraph, "state park" means all real property in the state under the jurisdiction of the Division of Recreation and Parks of the department, or which may come under its jurisdiction.

(e) Two and nine-tenths percent to the Division of
Forestry of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
Services to fund the acquisition of state forest inholdings
and additions pursuant to s. 589.07.

25 (f) Two and nine-tenths percent to the <u>Fish and</u>
26 <u>Wildlife Conservation</u> Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission to
27 fund the acquisition of inholdings and additions to lands
28 managed by the commission which are important to the
29 conservation of fish and wildlife.

30 (g) One and three-tenths percent to the Department of 31 Environmental Protection for the Florida Greenways and Trails

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Program, to acquire greenways and trails or greenways and
 trails systems pursuant to chapter 260, including, but not
 limited to, abandoned railroad rights-of-way and the Florida
 National Scenic Trail.

б Local governments may use federal grants or loans, private 7 donations, or environmental mitigation funds, including 8 environmental mitigation funds required pursuant to s. 9 338.250, for any part or all of any local match required for the purposes described in this subsection. Bond proceeds 10 11 allocated pursuant to paragraph (c) may be used to purchase lands on the priority lists developed pursuant to s. 259.035. 12 13 Title to lands purchased pursuant to paragraphs (a), (d), (e), 14 (f), and (g) shall be vested in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, except that title to lands, 15 16 or rights or interests therein, acquired by either the Southwest Florida Water Management District or the St. Johns 17 River Water Management District in furtherance of the Green 18 Swamp Land Protection Initiative's Authority's mission 19 20 pursuant to s. 380.0677(2)(3), shall be vested in the district 21 where the acquisition project is located. Title to lands 22 purchased pursuant to paragraph (c) may be vested in the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund or, except 23 that title to lands, or rights or interests therein, acquired 24 by either the Southwest Florida Water Management District or 25 26 the St. Johns River Water Management District, whichever is 27 most appropriate as determined by the Board of Trustees, in 28 furtherance of the Green Swamp Land Protection Initiative's 29 Authority's mission pursuant to s. 380.0677(2)(3), shall be vested in the district where the acquisition project is 30 located. This subsection is repealed effective October 1, 31

CODING: Words stricken are deletions; words underlined are additions.

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2000. Prior to repeal, the Legislature shall review the 1 2 provisions scheduled for repeal and shall determine whether to 3 reenact or modify the provisions or to take no action. Section 4. Paragraph (k) of subsection (9) of section 4 5 259.105, Florida Statutes, is amended to read: 259.105 The Florida Forever Act.--6 7 (9) The Acquisition and Restoration Council shall 8 develop a rule to competitively evaluate, select, and rank 9 projects eligible for Florida Forever funds pursuant to 10 paragraph (3)(b). In developing this rule the Acquisition and 11 Restoration Council shall give weight to the following criteria: 12 13 (k) The project may be acquired, in whole or in part, 14 using alternatives to fee simple, including but not limited to, purchase of development rights, hunting rights, 15 16 agricultural or silvicultural rights, or mineral rights; or obtaining conservation easements or flowage easements; or use 17 18 of land protection agreements as defined in s. 380.0677(5). 19 Section 5. Subsection (11) of section 380.507, Florida 20 Statutes, is amended to read: 380.507 Powers of the trust.--The trust shall have all 21 22 the powers necessary or convenient to carry out the purposes and provisions of this part, including: 23 24 (11) To make rules necessary to carry out the purposes of this part and to exercise any power granted in this part, 25 26 pursuant to the provisions of chapter 120. The trust shall 27 adopt rules governing the acquisition of lands by local 28 governments or the trust using proceeds from the Preservation 29 2000 Trust Fund and the Florida Forever Trust Fund, consistent with the intent expressed in the Florida Forever Act. Such 30 31 rules must include, but are not limited to, procedures for 15

appraisals and confidentiality consistent with ss. 125.355(1)(a) and (b) and 166.045(1)(a) and (b), a method of determining a maximum purchase price, and procedures to assure that the land is acquired in a voluntarily negotiated transaction, surveyed, conveyed with marketable title, and б examined for hazardous materials contamination. Land acquisition procedures of a local land authority or a land protection initiative created pursuant to s. 380.0663 or s. 380.0677 may be used for the land acquisition programs described by ss. 259.101(3)(c) and 259.105 if within areas of critical state concern designated pursuant to s. 380.05, subject to approval of the trust. Section 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.