A bill to be entitled

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An act relating to land management; creating s. 259.1053, F.S.; creating the Babcock Ranch Preserve Act; providing purposes for which the preserve is established; providing definitions; creating Babcock Ranch, Inc., a not-forprofit corporation incorporated in the state; providing that the corporation is subject to the provisions of chs. 119 and 286, F.S., requiring public records and meetings; providing for the corporation to be governed by the Babcock Trustees; providing for the appointment of trustees and terms of office; prohibiting a trustee from voting on any measure that constitutes a conflict of interest; providing for the trustees to serve without compensation but to receive per diem and travel expenses; requiring that each trustee obtain a surety bond of a specified amount; authorizing the trustees to appoint officers and hire employees; authorizing state agencies to provide state employees for purposes of administering the Babcock Ranch Preserve; providing certain powers and duties of the trustees; providing for the corporation to establish and manage an operating fund; requiring an annual financial audit of the accounts and records of the corporation; requiring annual reports by the corporation to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, the Legislature, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission; requiring that the corporation prepare an annual budget; specifying a goal of self-sustaining

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operation within a certain period; providing for the corporation to retain donations and other moneys; authorizing the corporation to sue and be subject to suit; requiring that the corporation adopt articles of incorporation and bylaws; requiring insurance; providing for the exclusive use of a certain title; authorizing the corporation to appoint advisory committees; providing requirements for a comprehensive management plan; specifying the procedures by which the corporation shall assume management authority of the Babcock Ranch Preserve; prohibiting the corporation from taking certain actions without the consent of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund; requiring that the corporation be subject to certain state laws and rules governing the procurement of commodities and services; authorizing the corporation to assess fees; providing for reversion of the management responsibilities to certain agencies upon the dissolution of the corporation; providing for management of the Babcock Ranch Preserve until expiration of a current management agreement; providing an effective date. Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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Section 1. Section 259.1053, Florida Statutes, is created

54 to read:

259.1053 Babcock Ranch Preserve; Babcock Ranch, Inc.; creation; membership; organization; duties.--

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(1) This section may be cited as the "Babcock Ranch Preserve Act."

- (2) (a) The Babcock Ranch comprises the largest private undeveloped single-ownership tract of land in Charlotte County and contains historical evidence in the form of old logging camps and other artifacts that indicate the importance of this land for domesticated livestock production, timber supply, and other bonafide agricultural uses.
- (b) The careful husbandry of the Babcock Ranch, including selective timbering, limited grazing and hunting, and the use of prescribed burning, has preserved a mix of healthy range and timberland having significant species diversity and providing a model for sustainable land development and use.
- (c) The Babcock Ranch must be protected for current and future generations by continued operation as a working ranch under a unique management regime that protects the land and resource values of the property and the surrounding ecosystem while allowing and providing for the ranch to become financially self-sustaining. It is in the public's best interest that the management regime for the Babcock Ranch include the development of an operational program for appropriate preservation and development of the ranch's land and resources. This management regime will best be provided through the creation of a nonprofit public-private entity that is capable of developing and implementing creative methods of public land management that will prove to be cost-effective and environmentally sensitive.
  - (3) As used in this section, the term:
  - (a) "Babcock Ranch Preserve" and "preserve" mean the lands

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and facilities acquired in the Babcock Ranch Florida Forever Acquisition.

- (b) "Babcock Ranch, Inc.," and "corporation" mean the notfor-profit corporation authorized and created under this section to operate and manage the Babcock Ranch Preserve.
- (c) "Babcock Trustees" and "trustees" mean the governing board of the not-for-profit corporation created under this section.
- (d) "Commission" means the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
  - (e) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Agriculture.
- (f) "Department" means the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
- (g) "Executive director" means the executive director of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- (h) "Financially self-sustaining" means management and operation expenditures that are equal to or less than the revenues derived from fees and other receipts for resource use and development, interest, and invested funds.
- (i) "Management and operating expenditures" means expenses of the Babcock Trustees, salaries and benefits of staff, administrative and operating expenses, improvements to and maintenance of lands and facilities of the Babcock Ranch

  Preserve, and other similar expenses. Funds directly appropriated by the Legislature to Babcock Ranch, Inc., and funds appropriated by the Legislature to the Babcock Ranch, Inc., through the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission or the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services are not

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management and operating expenditures.

- renewable surface resources of the Babcock Ranch Preserve to best meet the needs of the public, including the use of the land for some or all of the renewable surface resources or related services over areas large enough to allow for periodic adjustments in use to conform to the changing needs and conditions of the preserve while recognizing that some of the land will be used for less than all of the renewable surface resources available on that land. The goal of multiple use is the harmonious and coordinated management of the renewable surface resources, each with the other, without impairing the productivity of the land and considering the relative value of the renewable surface resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses providing the greatest monetary return or the greatest unit output.
- (k) "Sustained yield of the renewable surface resources"
  means the achievement and maintenance of a high-level annual or
  regular periodic output of the various renewable surface
  resources of the Babcock Ranch Preserve without impairing the
  productivity of the land.
- (4) (a) Upon the date of acquisition of the Babcock Ranch, there is established the Babcock Ranch Preserve, which shall be managed in accordance with the purposes and requirements of this section.
- (b) The preserve is established to protect and preserve the environmental, agricultural, scientific, scenic, geologic, watershed, fish, wildlife, historic, cultural, and recreational

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values of the preserve and to provide for the multiple use and sustained yield of the renewable surface resources within the preserve consistent with this section.

- (c) Except for the powers of the commissioner as enumerated in this section and the powers of the commission as enumerated in s. 9, Art. IV of the State Constitution, the preserve shall be managed by the Babcock Ranch, Inc.
- (d) This section does not preclude Babcock Ranch, Inc., before assuming management of the preserve and thereafter, from allowing the use of common varieties of mineral materials such as sand, stone, and gravel as necessary for construction and maintenance of roads and facilities within the preserve.
- (e) This section does not affect the constitutional responsibilities of the commission with respect to fish and wildlife, including the regulation of hunting, fishing, and trapping within the preserve.
- (f) This section does not preclude the maintenance and use of roads and trails or the relocation of roads in existence on the effective date of this act, or the construction, maintenance, and use of new trails, or any motorized access necessary for the administration of the land contained within the Babcock Ranch Preserve, including motorized access necessary for emergencies involving the health or safety of persons within the preserve.
- (5)(a) The Legislature finds that the public interest of this state will be served by the creation of a not-for-profit corporation the primary mission of which is the management and operation of the Babcock Ranch Preserve. The purpose of the

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corporation is to provide management and administrative services for the preserve, to establish and implement management policies that will best achieve the purposes and requirements of this section, to cooperate with state agencies to further the purposes for which the preserve was created, and to establish the administrative and accounting procedures for the operation of the corporation.

- (b) There is created a not-for-profit corporation, to be designated as "Babcock Ranch, Inc.," which shall be registered, incorporated, organized, and operated in this state and in compliance with chapter 617, and which shall not be a unit or entity of state government. The Legislature determines, however, that public policy dictates that the corporation operate in a manner that is consistent with its public purpose and specifically declares that the corporation and its governing board and advisory committees or similar groups created by the corporation, including any not-for-profit subsidiaries, are subject to the provisions of chapter 119, relating to public records, and those provisions of chapter 286 relating to public meetings and records for any meetings of the corporation. The corporation may be dissolved only by an act of the Legislature.
- (c) The corporation shall be governed by the Babcock
  Trustees, a nine-member governing board, whose members shall be
  appointed to staggered terms by the Board of Trustees of the
  Internal Improvement Trust Fund; the executive director of the
  commission; the Babcock Florida Company, a corporation
  registered to do business in the state, or it successors or
  assigns; the President of the Senate; and the Speaker of the

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House of Representatives, in the following manner:

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- The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund shall appoint five voting members, at least one of whom must be a resident of Charlotte County and at least one of whom must be a resident of Lee County. An appointee may not be an employee of any governmental entity. One appointee must have expertise in aspects of domesticated livestock management, production, and marketing, including range management and livestock business management. One appointee must have expertise in the management of game and nongame wildlife and fish populations, including hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. One appointee must have expertise in the sustainable management of forest lands for commodity purposes. One appointee must have expertise in financial management, budget and program analysis, and small business operations. One appointee must be active in a not-for-profit conservation organization concerned with the activities of the ranch.
- 2. The executive director shall appoint one voting member who has expertise in hunting, fishing, nongame species management or wildlife habitat management, restoration, and conservation.
- 3. The Babcock Florida Company, or its successors or assigns, shall appoint one voting member who has expertise in the activities and management of the Babcock Ranch as of the date of acquisition by the state.
- 4. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
  House of Representatives shall each appoint one voting member,
  who shall be a member of the public having expertise in any area

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of ranch operations.

(d) A trustee may not be an officer, a director, or a shareholder in any entity that contracts with or receives funds from the corporation or its subsidiaries.

- (e) A trustee may not vote in an official capacity upon any measure that would inure to his or her special private gain or loss; that he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of any principal by whom he or she is retained or to the parent organization or subsidiary of a principal by which he or she is retained; or that he or she knows would inure to the special private gain or loss of a relative or business associate of the trustee. Such trustee shall, before the vote is taken, publicly state the nature of the trustee's interest in the matter from which he or she is abstaining from voting and, no later than 15 days after the vote occurs, disclose the nature of his or her interest as a public record in a memorandum filed with the person responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting, who shall incorporate the memorandum in the minutes.
- (f) The Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement
  Trust Fund and the executive director shall make the initial
  appointments of the Babcock Trustees no later than 90 days after
  the initial acquisition of the Babcock Ranch by the state. Four
  trustees initially appointed by the Board of Trustees of the
  Internal Improvement Trust Fund shall each be appointed to a 4year term. The remaining initial appointees shall each be
  appointed to a 2-year term.
- (g) Each trustee appointed after the initial appointments made by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust

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Fund and the executive director shall be appointed to a 4-year term. Any vacancy among the trustees shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment, and any trustee appointed to fill a vacancy shall be appointed for the remainder of that term. However, a trustee may not serve more than 8 years in consecutive terms.

- (h) A member of the Babcock Trustees may be removed for cause by the official who appointed that member. Absence from three consecutive meetings results in automatic removal.
- (i) A majority of the trustees constitutes a quorum for the purpose of conducting business, and the governing board may take official action by a majority vote of the members present at any meeting at which a quorum is present.
- (j) The trustees shall serve without compensation, but are entitled to receive from funds of the corporation reimbursement for per diem and travel expenses as provided by s. 112.061.
- (k) There shall be no liability on the part of, and no cause of action shall arise against, any member of the Babcock Trustees, or the employees or agents of the corporation, for any action taken in the performance of powers and duties under this section.
- (1) Each trustee, no later than 30 days after accepting an appointment, must give the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund a good and sufficient surety bond in the sum of \$5,000, the cost thereof being borne by the corporation, conditioned on the trustee's faithful performance of his or her duties as a member of the governing board of Babcock Ranch, Inc.
  - (m) The trustees shall elect a chair from among their

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membership, and may appoint and fix the compensation and duties of an executive director of the corporation and such other officers and employees as the trustees consider necessary.

Except as provided in this section, officers and employees of the corporation are not employees of the state but are private employees. At the request of the trustees, the state may provide state employees for the purpose of implementing this section.

Any state employee provided to assist the trustees of the corporation in implementing the requirements of this section for more than 30 days shall be provided on a reimbursable basis.

- (n) The trustees shall meet, at the call of the chair, at least three times per year in Charlotte County or Lee County in sessions that are open to the public.
- (o) Except for the constitutional powers of the commission as provided in s. 9, Art. IV of the State Constitution, the trustees of the corporation have all necessary and proper powers for the exercise of the authorities vested in the corporation, including, but not limited to, the power to solicit and accept donations of funds, property, supplies, or services from individuals, foundations, corporations, and other public or private entities for the purposes of this section. All funds received by the corporation shall be deposited into the operating fund authorized under this section unless otherwise directed by the Legislature.
- (p) The trustees may, with the written approval of the commission and in consultation with the department, designate hunting, fishing, and trapping zones and establish additional periods when hunting, fishing, or trapping are not permitted for

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reasons of public safety, administration, and the protection and enhancement of nongame habitat and nongame species, as defined in s. 372.001.

- (6) (a) The corporation may establish and manage an operating fund for the purposes of addressing the corporation's unique cash-flow needs and facilitating the fiscal management of the corporation. The corporation may accumulate and maintain in the operating fund at any time a cash balance reserve that is equal to not more than 25 percent of its annual operating expenses. Upon dissolution of the corporation, any remaining cash balances of funds shall revert to the General Revenue Fund, or such other state funds consistent with any appropriated funding, as provided by law.
- (b) The corporation shall provide for an annual financial audit of its accounts and records to be conducted by an independent certified public accountant in accordance with rules adopted by the Auditor General under s. 11.45. The audit report shall be submitted no later than 9 months after the end of the fiscal year to the Auditor General, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the appropriate substantive and fiscal committees of the Legislature. The Auditor General, the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability, and the substantive or fiscal committees of the Legislature to which legislation affecting the Babcock Ranch Preserve may be referred may require and receive from the corporation or from the independent auditor any records relative to the operation of the corporation.
  - (c) By January 15 of each year, the corporation shall

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Submit to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement
Trust Fund, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
House of Representatives, the department, and the commission a
comprehensive and detailed report of its operations, activities,
and accomplishments for the prior year, including information
concerning the status of ecological, cultural, and financial
resources being managed by the corporation, and benefits
provided by the preserve to local communities. The report must
also include a section describing the corporation's goals for
the current year.

- The corporation shall prepare an annual budget with (d) the goal of achieving a financially self-sustaining operation within 15 full fiscal years after management of the preserve begins. The department shall provide necessary assistance, including details as necessary, to the corporation for the timely formulation and submission of an annual budget request for appropriations, if any, to support the administration, operation, and maintenance of the preserve. Any request for appropriations shall be submitted to the department and shall be included in the agency budget request as a line item appropriation. Requests for appropriations shall be submitted to the agency in time to allow the agency to meet the requirements of s. 216.023. The department may not deny a request or refuse to include in its annual legislative budget submission a request for appropriations from the corporation.
- (e) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all moneys received from donations or from the management of the preserve shall be retained by the corporation in the operating fund and

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shall be available, without further appropriation, for the administration, preservation, restoration, operation and maintenance, improvements, repairs, and related expenses incurred with respect to properties being managed by the corporation. Except for the reversion of funds appropriated to the corporation or as otherwise provided by the Legislature, moneys received by the corporation from the management of the preserve are not subject to distribution to the state. Upon assuming management responsibilities for the preserve, the corporation shall optimize the generation of income based on existing marketing conditions to the extent that activities do not unreasonably diminish the long-term environmental, agricultural, scenic, and natural values of the preserve, or the multiple-use and sustained-yield capability of the land.

- (f) The corporation may sue and be sued in its own name.

  For purposes of such suits, the residence of the corporation

  shall be the state. The corporation shall be represented by the

  Attorney General in any litigation arising out of activities of
  the corporation, except that the corporation may retain private
  attorneys to provide advice and counsel.
- (g) The corporation shall adopt articles of incorporation and bylaws necessary to govern its activities.
- (h) All parties in contract with the corporation and all holders of leases from the corporation that are authorized to occupy, use, or develop properties under the management jurisdiction of the corporation must procure insurance of an amount as is reasonable or customary to insure against any loss in connection with such properties or with activities authorized

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in such leases or contracts.

(i) The corporation has the sole and exclusive right to use the words "Babcock Ranch, Inc.," and any seal, emblem, or other insignia adopted by the trustees. Without the express written authority of the corporation, a person may not use the words "Babcock Ranch, Inc.," as the name under which that person does or purports to do business or for the purpose of trade or advertisement, and may not, in any manner, suggest any connection with the corporation.

- (j) The corporation may from time to time appoint advisory committees to further any part of the provisions of this section. The membership of an advisory committee shall be reflective of the expertise necessary for the particular function for which the committee was created and may include public agencies, private entities, and not-for-profit conservation and agricultural representatives.
- (7)(a) A comprehensive management plan for the management of the preserve and amendments to a comprehensive management plan may be developed only with input from the department and the commission and may be implemented only by the corporation upon expiration of the management agreement executed by Babcock Ranch Management LLC, a limited liability company incorporated in the state, the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Lee County. Any final decision of the trustees to adopt or amend a comprehensive management plan or to approve any activity related to the management of the land or renewable surface resources of

the preserve shall be made in sessions that are open to the public. The trustees shall establish procedures for providing adequate public information and opportunities for public comment on proposed comprehensive management plans for the preserve or for amendments to any comprehensive management plan adopted by the trustees.

- (b) Not less than 2 years before the corporation assumes management responsibilities for the preserve, the corporation, with input from the commission and the department, must begin developing a comprehensive management plan for the management of land, renewable surface resources, and facilities within the preserve to carry out the purposes of this section. To the extent consistent with such purposes, the comprehensive management plan must provide for:
  - 1. The operation of the preserve as a working ranch;
- 2. The protection and preservation of the environmental, agricultural, scientific, scenic, geologic, watershed, fish, wildlife, historic, cultural, and recreational values of the preserve;
- 3. The promotion of high-quality hunting experiences for the public, with emphasis on deer, turkey, and other game species;
- 4. Multiple use and sustained yield of renewable surface resources within the preserve;
- 5. Public use of and access to the preserve for recreation; and
- 6. Renewable resource use and management alternatives
  that, to the extent practicable, benefit local communities and

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small businesses and enhance the coordination of management objectives with those on surrounding public or private lands.

Use of renewable resources and management alternatives should provide cost savings to the corporation through the exchange of services, including, but not limited to, labor and maintenance of facilities, for resources or services provided to the corporation.

- (c) The corporation shall assume all authority provided by this section to manage the preserve upon a determination by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund which, to the maximum extent practicable, shall be made no later than 60 days before the termination of the management agreement specified in paragraph (a), that the corporation is able to conduct business and that provision has been made for essential management services on the preserve.
- (d) Upon assuming management of the preserve, and with input from the commission and the department, the corporation shall manage the land and resources of the preserve and the use thereof, including, but not limited to, such activities as administration and operation of the preserve; preservation and development of the land and renewable surface resources of the preserve; interpretation of the preserve and its history on behalf of the public; management, public use, and occupancy of facilities and lands within the preserve; and maintenance, rehabilitation, repair, and improvement of property within the preserve.
- (e) Upon assuming management of the preserve, the corporation may develop programs and activities related to the

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management of the preserve and may negotiate directly with and enter into such agreements, leases, contracts, and other arrangements with any person, firm, association, organization, corporation, or governmental entity, including entities of federal, state, and local governments, as are necessary and appropriate to carry out its authorized activities or fulfill the purposes of this section. The corporation shall establish procedures for entering into lease agreements and other agreements for the use and occupancy of the facilities of the preserve. The procedures must ensure reasonable competition and set guidelines for determining reasonable fees, terms, and conditions for such agreements.

The corporation may not dispose of any real property in the preserve, may not enter into any contract, lease, or other agreement related to the use of ground or surface waters on or through property titled in the name of the state without the consent of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, and must obtain any permits that are required by the Department of Environmental Protection and the appropriate water management district under chapters 373 and 403. The corporation may not convey any easements, and may not enter into any contract, lease, or other agreement related to the use and occupancy of the property within the preserve, for a period of greater than 10 years. Any easements to be conveyed for the use of, access to, or ingress and egress across state property within the preserve must be executed by the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund as the owners of the state property within the preserve.

(9) State laws and rules governing the procurement of commodities and services by state agencies as provided in s. 287.057 apply to the corporation.

- (10) Upon assuming management of the preserve, the corporation may assess reasonable fees for admission to, use of, and occupancy of the preserve in order to offset the costs of operating the preserve as a working ranch. These fees are independent of fees assessed by the commission for the privilege of hunting, fishing, or pursuing outdoor recreational activities within the preserve and shall be deposited into the operating fund established by the corporation under the authority provided in this section.
- (11) Upon dissolution of the corporation for any reason, the management responsibilities provided in this section shall revert to the managing agencies designated in the Babcock Ranch Florida Forever Act.
- (12) Babcock Ranch, Inc., and its officers and employees shall participate in the management of the Babcock Ranch

  Preserve in an advisory capacity only until the management agreement executed by Babcock Ranch Management LLC and the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Lee County is terminated or expires.
- (13) On or before the date on which title to the Babcock
  Ranch Florida Forever Acquisition is vested in the Board of
  Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, Babcock Ranch
  Management LLC shall provide the commission and the department
  with the management plan and business plan in place for the

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operation of the ranch as of November 22, 2005, the date on which the board of trustees approved the acquisition.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

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