

By the Committee on Agriculture; and Senator Peaden

575-2356-06

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the restoration and
3 conservation of bobwhite quail habitat;
4 providing definitions; directing the Fish and
5 Wildlife Conservation Commission and the
6 Division of Forestry of the Department of
7 Agriculture and Consumer Services to encourage
8 landowners to participate in voluntary habitat
9 assistance programs for restoring and
10 conserving bobwhite quail habitat offered by
11 the United States Department of Agriculture and
12 other federal and state agencies; providing
13 powers of the commission; authorizing the
14 commission to acquire, by gift, title to lands,
15 including easements, on behalf of the Board of
16 Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust
17 Fund; authorizing rulemaking by the commission;
18 directing the Institute of Food and
19 Agricultural Sciences at the University of
20 Florida to conduct research and extension
21 activities and report to the Legislature;
22 providing appropriations; providing an
23 effective date.

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25 WHEREAS, the national population of the northern
26 bobwhite quail has declined significantly from approximately
27 20 million in 1980 to fewer than 6 million currently, and

28 WHEREAS, Florida had a bobwhite quail population of
29 approximately 2.5 million in 1980 and currently has a
30 population of fewer than one-half million, and
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1 WHEREAS, urbanization, changing land-management
2 practices, and land development have contributed to the loss
3 of suitable habitat for bobwhite quail and other declining
4 wildlife species dependent upon upland habitats, and

5 WHEREAS, the Institute of Food and Agricultural
6 Sciences at the University of Florida, the Fish and Wildlife
7 Conservation Commission, the Division of Forestry of the
8 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the United
9 States Geological Survey, and Tall Timbers Research Station
10 have been working together in researching ways in which to
11 restore bobwhite quail habitat and implement effective
12 restoration practices, and

13 WHEREAS, the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
14 is aimed at recovering bobwhite quail habitats and populations
15 across the southeastern United States, and several Florida
16 agencies and organizations, including the Institute of Food
17 and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida, the
18 Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Division of
19 Forestry of the Department of Agriculture and Consumer
20 Services, the United States Geological Survey, and Tall
21 Timbers, are working together to develop a statewide plan to
22 implement this initiative in Florida, and

23 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture
24 has established certain landowner-assistance programs that
25 recognize the importance of restoring lands to help achieve
26 the goals of the Northern Bobwhite Conservation Initiative by
27 working to restore land across the southeastern United States
28 for the purpose of increasing bobwhite quail populations, and

29 WHEREAS, the education of private landowners concerning
30 the creation and maintenance of suitable habitat is essential
31 to increasing the bobwhite quail population, NOW, THEREFORE,

1 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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3 Section 1. Bobwhite quail habitat protection.--

4 (1) As used in this section, the term:

5 (a) "Bobwhite quail habitat" means land suitable for
6 or having the potential for sustaining a wild bobwhite quail
7 population in this state, including lands identified as
8 eligible for habitat assistance programs identified under the
9 Bobwhite Quail Initiative.

10 (b) "Bobwhite Quail Initiative" means the Northern
11 Bobwhite Conservation Initiative and may include voluntary
12 habitat assistance programs such as the Conservation Reserve
13 Program of the Farm Service Agency of the United States
14 Department of Agriculture by which eligible landowners may
15 receive financial and technical assistance in managing
16 bobwhite quail habitat.

17 (c) "Commission" means the Fish and Wildlife
18 Conservation Commission.

19 (d) "Division" means the Division of Forestry of the
20 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

21 (2) In order to preserve and restore bobwhite quail
22 habitat in this state, the commission and the division shall
23 undertake activities to enhance the voluntary participation of
24 landowners in this state in the Bobwhite Quail Initiative. The
25 commission and the division shall prioritize such efforts
26 based on the importance of a parcel of property as bobwhite
27 quail habitat and the willingness of the landowner to make his
28 or her lands part of the Bobwhite Quail Initiative. In
29 undertaking such activities, the commission and the division
30 may:

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1 (a) Encourage eligible persons to participate in the
2 Bobwhite Quail Initiative through education, marketing, and
3 other promotional efforts.

4 (b) Work with potentially eligible landowners as to
5 the terms for participating in the Bobwhite Quail Initiative.

6 (c) Provide incentives for landowners who participate
7 in the Bobwhite Quail Initiative, subject to the appropriation
8 of funds for such incentives.

9 (d) Provide advice to landowners who participate in
10 the Bobwhite Quail Initiative regarding the management of
11 bobwhite quail habitat, including the provision of bobwhite
12 quail management or related services.

13 (e) Acquire by gift the fee simple title or any lesser
14 interest in bobwhite quail habitat, including easements,
15 deeded to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement
16 Trust Fund, to the extent such acquisition is consistent with
17 the Quail Initiative.

18 (f) Adopt rules as necessary to administer this
19 section.

20 (g) Enter into agreements with any federal, state, or
21 local governmental agency, or any other entity as necessary to
22 administer this section.

23 (h) Receive or accept grants from any legal source for
24 the purpose of providing or improving bobwhite quail habitat
25 or maximizing participation in the Bobwhite Quail Initiative
26 in this state.

27 (3) The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at
28 the University of Florida shall, in consultation with the
29 commission, conduct research and submit annually, no later
30 than January 1, to the chair of the Senate Committee on
31 Environmental Preservation and the chair of the House of

1 Representatives Committee on Water and Natural Resources a
2 report on the best ways to increase the population of bobwhite
3 quail in this state and shall conduct extension activities to
4 provide landowners with practical scientific information
5 regarding the most appropriate and effective practices for
6 restoring habitat for bobwhite quail.

7 Section 2. The sum of \$20,000 is appropriated from the
8 General Revenue Fund to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
9 Commission's State Game Trust Fund for the purpose of
10 implementing section 1 of this act during the 2006-2007 fiscal
11 year. The sum of \$20,000 is appropriated from the General
12 Revenue Fund to the Institute of Food and Agricultural
13 Sciences at the University of Florida for the purpose of
14 conducting research and extension activities as specified in
15 section 1 of this act during the 2006-2007 fiscal year. The
16 sum of \$20,000 is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund
17 to the Division of Forestry of the Department of Agriculture
18 and Consumer Services for the purpose of implementing section
19 1 of this act during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

20 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2006.
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STATEMENT OF SUBSTANTIAL CHANGES CONTAINED IN
COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
Senate Bill 1804

Committee Substitute/Senate Bill 1804 is different from SB 1804 in that it:

1. Clarifies that the bill applies to the "northern bobwhite" quail habitat and initiative.
2. Adds the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Sciences Division of Forestry as an entity that will share responsibilities with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for implementing the Initiative.
3. Clarifies that easements which are acquired by gift include those which are deeded to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund.
4. Clarifies that the reports are to be submitted to the chairs of the Senate Environmental Preservation Committee and the House Water and Natural Resources Committee.
5. Increases from \$20,000 to \$60,000 the amount of money appropriated for the fiscal year 2006-2007 from the General Revenue Fund for the purposes of implementing the act.