

By Senator Brodeur

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Senate Resolution

A resolution affirming the importance of the Florida Wildlife Corridor and its significant environmental, cultural, economic, and tourism value as a unique natural resource and recognizing April 22, 2025, as "Florida Wildlife Corridor Day."

WHEREAS, the campaign to establish the Florida Wildlife Corridor began 15 years ago, and supporters saw their vision become reality with passage of the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act of 2021, and

WHEREAS, the Florida Wildlife Corridor establishes a geographic area of more than 18 million acres of land, of which 10 million acres are public conservation lands that could be permanently disconnected from each other without the additional conservation of nearly 8 million acres of opportunity areas connecting them, and

WHEREAS, Florida's population has grown from 21.8 million when the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act was signed to more than 23.4 million today, resulting in urban and suburban sprawl consuming rural and natural land within and adjacent to the corridor, and

WHEREAS, the nearly 8 million acres of opportunity areas still needing protection consist largely of working ranches, farms, and forests, the majority of which can be protected through conservation easements with willing landowners, thereby supporting the state's agricultural economy and contributing to the long-term food security of Florida and the nation, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has appropriated significant

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30 funding for the state's conservation programs, providing  
31 incentive for conservation and sustainable development while  
32 preserving the green infrastructure that is the foundation of  
33 this state's economy and quality of life, and

34 WHEREAS, since July 2021, more than 300,000 acres of land  
35 in the Florida Wildlife Corridor have been approved for  
36 protection by Governor Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet, including  
37 Commissioner of Agriculture Wilton Simpson, who made the  
38 corridor a priority during his term as Senate President, with  
39 funding appropriated by the Legislature from the Department of  
40 Environmental Protection's Florida Forever Program and the  
41 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Rural and  
42 Family Lands Protection Program, and

43 WHEREAS, a number of federal and local programs have  
44 increased their investment in Florida conservation, following  
45 the lead of the state in prioritizing the framework of the  
46 Florida Wildlife Corridor, and

47 WHEREAS, these programs share the state's goal of  
48 protecting an additional 600,000 acres in the Florida Wildlife  
49 Corridor by 2030, balancing this commitment to urgent  
50 conservation with the demand for development to accommodate the  
51 more than 2 million new residents projected to move to this  
52 state within the next 5 years, and

53 WHEREAS, public access to the Florida Wildlife Corridor was  
54 greatly expanded in 2023 with the Legislature passing, and  
55 Governor DeSantis signing, legislation that connects the  
56 corridor to the Florida Greenways and Trails System and the  
57 Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized (SUN) Trail Network, as well as  
58 additional pathways to heritage small towns throughout this

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59 state, and

60 WHEREAS, with the state's funding commitment in recent  
61 years to such projects, the Department of Environmental  
62 Protection and the Department of Transportation have coordinated  
63 the establishment of multiuse trails, including investment in  
64 the planning, design, and construction of the SUN Trail Network  
65 and the campaign to recognize various communities as "Trail  
66 Towns," in conjunction with Visit Florida's promotion of trail-  
67 based tourism, and

68 WHEREAS, connecting trails with the Florida Wildlife  
69 Corridor creates a means to preserve many natural areas and  
70 provides expanded access for Floridians and visitors to hike,  
71 run, and bike between trail destinations and see firsthand this  
72 state's unique natural habitat and picturesque small towns, and

73 WHEREAS, the Florida Wildlife Corridor provides strong  
74 protection of other tourism and recreation destinations, such as  
75 spring vents, rivers, estuaries, and wetlands, which are home to  
76 fisheries, carbon sequestration, nutrient capture and cycling,  
77 groundwater recharge critical to water supply, and water  
78 storage, and

79 WHEREAS, the Florida Wildlife Corridor is a nature-based  
80 solution that supports the state's resilience against  
81 strengthening storms and provides billions of dollars' worth of  
82 flood hazard protection by keeping the 10 million acres of the  
83 state's floodplains located within the corridor undeveloped,  
84 NOW, THEREFORE,

85  
86 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:  
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88           That the Senate affirms the importance of the Florida  
89 Wildlife Corridor and its significant environmental, cultural,  
90 economic, and tourism value as a unique natural resource and  
91 recognizes April 22, 2025, as "Florida Wildlife Corridor Day."