

LAKE to LAGOON

A Partnership for Conservation in East Central Florida



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

PROJECT AT A GLANCE

PROJECT TITLE Lake to Lagoon Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

FUNDING \$25,000,000 awarded from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) RCPP, and over \$25,000,000 from 12 partner organizations. This includes a \$20,000,000 commitment from Volusia County, and more than \$5,000,000 from other organizations.

PROJECT SUMMARY The RCPP promotes conservation of working farms, forestlands, and natural areas in the **Lake to Lagoon** region of central Florida by accelerating land protection and providing new financial assistance programs for management of privately owned forests and agricultural lands. The RCPP compliments existing conservation programs and advances regional conservation goals, with emphasis on protecting and restoring resilient and connected landscapes.

PROJECT TIMELINE 2024 to 2029

The LAKE to LAGOON

The **Lake to Lagoon** region includes all or parts of Volusia, Lake and Flagler counties. This rapidly developing region of central Florida depends on sustainable natural resources and is susceptible to sea level rise, groundwater depletion and increasingly intense storms and hurricanes.

Much of the Lake to Lagoon is a patchwork of privately owned rural areas, large wetland areas and public conservation lands. These landscapes mitigate catastrophic storm and flooding effects. Conservation and land management activities promote regional resiliency in the face of the changing environment.

The East Central Florida Regional Planning Council has identified land conservation as central to the East Central Florida Regional Resiliency Action Plan, including green infrastructure, connectivity of natural lands, protection of surface waters and natural systems to mitigate flooding and storm damage, and groundwater resources.

What is RCPP?

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a Farm Bill program implemented by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Together, the NRCS and partners leverage resources to expand conservation programs that address regional natural resource concerns.

What is the Lake to Lagoon Partnership?

The Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) leads the partnership of 13 public agencies and private organizations, centered on this new program to accelerate conservation in the Lake to Lagoon region. The partnership facilitates collaboration between county and state programs and the NRCS to expand conservation resources for the region. Furthermore, the partnership promotes education, outreach, and science based assessment. Specific goals are:

- More funding for land protection, from federal, state and county programs.
- New opportunities for financial and technical assistance to private landowners for land management practices.
- Implementation of the outreach and education components of the East Central Florida regional resiliency action plan to promote public awareness of climate change mitigation.





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How will this RCPP help advance the goals?

- Dedicate federal program funding to match Volusia Forever program funding for purchase of conservation easements.
- Leverage state conservation programs in the Lake to Lagoon.
- Facilitate land acquisitions critical for floodplain and wetland protection.
- Dedicate funding for land management on private forest and working lands.
- Provide capacity funding to partner organizations to implement RCPP and partner programs.
- Provide resources for measuring and reporting outcomes.
- Leverage resources and expertise from nonprofit and academic partners for conservation implementation, program management, and quantifying outcomes.

The RCPP helps landowners reach their land conservation and management goals through:

- Enhanced landowner outreach for greater participation in NRCS and county programs.
- Targeted land conservation programs for historically underserved landowners.
- Dedicated funding for private land management facilitating better stewardship of wildlife habitat and natural resources.

The Lake to Lagoon RCPP award from NRCS includes:

- Nearly \$21 million to supplement conservation easements acquired by county and state land acquisition programs.
- Nearly \$1 million for cost share assistance to private landowners for land management.
- About \$3 M for program implementation and outcomes assessment.

Contributing Partner Organizations:



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