**STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2018**

Ban Inappropriate Oil Drilling Techniques in Florida

* The Conservancy **supports** the immediate passage of legislation that would *ban all types of well stimulation* including hydraulic fracturing, acid fracturing or matrix acidizing in Florida’s unique hydrology and geology.
* The ban of these treatments would not affect routine well cleaning operations, and it does not prohibit access to mineral rights through conventional means.
* Peer-reviewed literature evaluating well stimulation treatments has grown significantly, and a majority of these studies show risk or actual impacts to water, public heath, and air quality from use of these techniques.
* The state’s oil reserves are only about 1/10th of 1% of the total US oil reserves. Further, the quality of the oil in the Sunniland Trend is poor and not typically used for gasoline. It is not worth the risk to drinking water supply and other water resources to utilize these techniques in Florida.

Protecting Environmentally Sensitive Lands

* The Conservancy **supports** full funding for the Florida Forever state land acquisition program. This program is a crucial avenue to provide landowners choices and opportunities for conserving their environmentally sensitive lands and to provide an alternative to development or other types of land use intensification.
* The Conservancy **supports** legislation to annually dedicate a significant portion of funds in the Land Acquisition Trust Fund to conservation land acquisition for the duration of the Water and Land Legacy Constitutional Amendment passed in 2014 (Amendment 1).

Restoring the Caloosahatchee River and the Western Everglades

* The Conservancy **supports** implementation of SB10 which accelerates the planning and construction of the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir to reduce harmful discharges to the Estuaries and restore flows to the Everglades and Florida Bay.
* The Conservancy **supports** the C-43 Reservoir project to help ameliorate insufficient flows to the Caloosahatchee during dry periods. The completion of this critical project is being delayed to 2022 due to insufficient state funding. The Conservancy **supports** and requests the legislature to appropriate additional funds to complete the project during the original plan schedule by 2020.
* The Conservancy also **supports** the legislature directing the SFMWD to begin planning and development of a water quality component to cleanse C-43 reservoir water before it is rereleased into the river.

Protecting Waters Used for Public Recreation and Drinking

* The Conservancy **supports** and asks the legislature to increase funding to DEP for water quality monitoring and watershed assessment.
* The Conservancy **supports** and asks the legislature to increase funding to DEP for development and implementation of water quality pollution limits and restoration plans (Total Maximum Daily Loads and Basin Management Action Plans), in order to address pollution problems in a timely manner.
* The Conservancy recognizes the potential water conservation benefits of expanding the use of reclaimed water in Florida; however, reclaimed water is nutrient rich and therefore must be handled appropriately to not degrade water quality of nearby surface waterbodies. Therefore, the Conservancy **supports** appropriate safeguards be added to any reclaimed water legislation, to ensure that waterways are not impacted by reclaimed water discharges or runoff from irrigation using reclaimed water. The Conservancy **opposes** any legislation which would undermine water (including reclaimed water) remaining a public resource under the “waters of the state” protections and regulations.

Provide Legislative Authorization for Statewide Stormwater Rule Development

* The Conservancy **supports** and requests the legislature to provide specific legislative authority to DEP to resume rulemaking and adopt updated stormwater standards for new development to sufficiently protect downstream receiving waters.
* Current stormwater treatment standards are scientifically demonstrated to not achieve the 80% minimal pollution reduction standards required in existing Florida Administrative Code. This amount of treatment is necessary to prevent downstream water quality degradation. This deficiency was recognized by the DEP when it began to update those standards in 2008. This update needs to be completed.

Protect Local Government’s Authority from Pre-emption

* The Conservancy **supports** the State’s authority to implement statutes designed to set the minimum standards necessary to protect the citizens of Florida. The Conservancy also **supports** local government’s authority to act in the best interest of their community by adopting regulations more stringent than those statewide minimum standards. Therefore, we **oppose** any form of pre-emption that would prohibit or penalize local governments from implementing regulations more restrictive than State standards.