March 15, 2018

Senate President Joe Negron  
3500 Southwest Corporate Parkway  
Suite 204  
Palm City, Florida 34990

Senator Rob Bradley  
1279 Kingsley Avenue  
Suite 107  
Orange Park, Florida 32073

SUBJECT: Thank You for Demonstrating Strong Leadership on Florida Forever

Dear Senators Negron and Bradley:

The Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) is extremely grateful for the leadership you demonstrated in securing funding for Florida Forever during the 2018 Legislative Session. We know it was a very difficult session, marred by tragedy and with many competing demands for funding. It is under such difficult circumstances that good leadership truly distinguishes itself.

Senator Bradley’s SB 370 represented a big step forward for land conservation in Florida. It is unfortunate that the House did not move forward with its companion bill, and chose instead to advance Representative Caldwell’s HB 7063 as their vehicle to fund Florida Forever.

FNPS considered HB 7063 to be seriously flawed, especially given the provisions that would have amended how Florida Forever funding is distributed amongst the various land acquisition programs. Although we support all those programs (e.g., Florida Communities Trust and Rural and Family Lands) and believe each serves an important need, the acquisition projects that have been reviewed and approved by the Acquisition and Restoration Council (i.e., Florida Forever’s “ARC” projects) must be recognized as the highest priority for protection, and must be funded accordingly by receiving the great majority of Florida Forever funding.

By securing an appropriation of $100.8 million for Florida Forever, while resisting pressure to negotiate a compromise with the House that would have diminished the conservation value of the program, you preserved the integrity of Florida Forever while injecting much needed funding. In the process, you cemented an important legacy from your service to Florida.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Catherine Bowman, President
Florida Native Plant Society