



PRESS RELEASE

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Florida Forever Coalition to Gov. Rick Scott: Take a Hike ... with Us!

The coalition dedicated to outdoor recreation, land protection and long-term prosperity in Florida says it would be honored to join Gov. Scott on a hike on one of Florida's public trails or greenways.

TALLAHASSEE, FL – C'mon, Gov. Scott, let's take a hike!

Responding to the governor's stated interest, reported in the press, in enjoying a hike on a Florida trail, the Florida Forever Coalition has offered to help him find just the kind of trail he's looking for.

In a March 21 letter, the coalition of more than 200 organizations, agencies and businesses also invited Scott to join a coalition hike on the annual "Take a Hike, Florida!" day, this Saturday, March 26. (See attached letter.) The coalition has set up 19 hikes throughout the state, from Miami-Dade to Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Two hikes are scheduled in Leon County, home to the governor.

"Take a Hike, Florida!" is a celebration of Florida's natural heritage and the great work Floridians have done to preserve it," said Andy McLeod, director of government affairs for The Nature Conservancy.

"We can't think of a better guest for one of these hikes than the governor of this state that we all adore, particularly at a time when the future of environmental conservation is in question," McLeod said. "We hope a few hours enjoying natural Florida will help convince Governor Scott of the long-term environmental – and economic – importance of parks, trails, all of the special natural places protected for Floridians."

Florida Forever was created in 2001 to succeed the extremely successful Preservation 2000 conservation program. Under the two programs, Florida has protected more than 2.4 million acres of land.

Under Gov. Scott's proposed budget for the upcoming year, Florida Forever faces unprecedented challenges. Scott has proposed eliminating funding for the program in 2011, as well as a restructuring of the agencies that support the program in a way that would make it next to impossible to resurrect funding in the future.

The Florida Forever Coalition includes more than 200 organizations, agencies and businesses with environmental, recreational, cultural and community missions. The coalition steering committee includes The Nature Conservancy, 1000 Friends of Florida, Audubon of Florida, Defenders of Wildlife, Florida Wildlife Federation, Everglades Trust, Florida Recreation & Park Association and The Trust for Public Land.