

Florida is one of the States which stands to benefit most from a substantial acceleration of the land and water conservation fund program. This is so not because any change in the distribution formula would be expected, but rather because outdoor recreation, of all the areas of Federal financial assistance to the States, is of such vital importance to Florida. Outdoor recreation is a virtual mainstay of the Florida economy, and a way of life for the Florida people. This is an area of governmental responsibility which has been too long neglected, but which has received a real impetus in recent years from such encouraging developments as the land and water conservation fund program. To have this program falter now, at such a critical point, would be a serious blow to our efforts at the State level.

As if the very importance of outdoor recreation were not alone sufficient reason for supporting the land and water conservation fund program, Florida's situation is made drastically more urgent by the constant diminution of our natural areas, seashores, and other outdoor recreational resources. We are truly caught in a two-way squeeze between increasing demand and decreasing supply, the likes of which are known in few other places in the country. Whatever Florida is to do in preserving high quality outdoor recreation areas for its posterity must be done in the relatively immediate future.

Florida's rapid, almost rampant, population growth over the past two decades is a matter of record. The often overlooked corollary to this growth is the dynamic and irreversible impact it has on land and water resources. For each new industry and each new resident, a few more acres will be cleared of their natural growth, subdivided, paved and covered with structures. As a secondary effect, much of the surrounding land—although unneeded immediately—is subjected to speculation and priced out of reason. Sometimes the land, in a defensive reaction by owners who have no desire to sell, is fenced, posted, and denied to casual users who have enjoyed it for years. In either case, the problem is essentially the same.

Prior to the establishment of Florida's present outdoor recreation program by the 1963 legislature, the State had acquired some 560,000 acres for State parks, forests, and game management areas. The total monetary investment was only \$1,921,000, as much of the land was received by donation or purchased at only token prices. While this may appear to be a substantial amount of land for public recreational use, it unfortunately is not distributed throughout the State in a pattern well suited to meet the public need. Consequently, the emphasis of the current program since 1963 has been placed on the acquisition of new lands at highly desirable locations. Some 5,061 acres have been purchased so far, at a cost of \$9,318,000. The city of Miami recently paid \$100,000 per acre for a choice site on the Biscayne Bay. That is roughly a five times increase in the amount of capital outlay for only 1 percent of the amount of land, so this is the problem we face.

These figures merely serve to point up, in sobering fashion, the magnitude of the task facing the State of Florida in implementing an adequate outdoor recreation land acquisition program.

Although the States and local governments are confronted with possibly a more serious problem because of the limited availability and high cost of lands they seek in more urbanized areas, we do not argue that the grants-in-aid program of the land and water conservation