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1
2 An act relating to funding for environmental resource
3 management; creating s. 380.095, F.S.; providing
4 legislative findings and intent; requiring the
5 Department of Revenue to deposit into the Indian
6 Gaming Revenue Trust Fund within the Department of
7 Financial Services a specified percentage of the
8 revenue share payments received under the gaming
9 compact between the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the
10 State of Florida; providing requirements for the
11 distribution of such funds; creating s. 260.0145,
12 F.S.; creating the Local Trail Management Grant
13 Program within the Department of Environmental
14 Protection for a specified purpose; providing for the
15 administration and prioritization of awards;
16 specifying the authorized and prohibited uses of grant
17 funds; requiring the department to submit an annual
18 report to the Governor and the Legislature by a
19 specified date; providing requirements for the report;
20 amending s. 259.1055, F.S.; authorizing the Fish and
21 Wildlife Conservation Commission to enter into
22 voluntary agreements with private landowners for
23 environmental services within the Florida wildlife
24 corridor; providing requirements for such agreements;
25 authorizing the use of land management funds;
26 requiring the Land Management Uniform Accounting
27 Council to recommend the efficient and effective use
28 of certain funds available to state agencies for land
29 management activities; providing requirements for such

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30 recommendations; requiring the council to adopt and
31 submit its initial recommendation to the Executive
32 Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a
33 specified date; requiring biennial updates; amending
34 s. 403.0673, F.S.; revising the projects the
35 department is required to prioritize within the water
36 quality improvement grant program; revising the
37 components required for the grant program's annual
38 report; providing appropriations; requiring the
39 department to coordinate with the Water School at
40 Florida Gulf Coast University for specified purposes;
41 requiring the Water School to conduct a specified
42 study; providing requirements for the study; requiring
43 the department to submit a report to the Executive
44 Office of the Governor and the Legislature by a
45 specified date; providing appropriations; requiring
46 the South Florida Water Management District to enter
47 into a contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf
48 Coast University to conduct a study of the health and
49 ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee; providing requirements
50 for the study; requiring that a report be submitted to
51 the Executive Office of the Governor and the
52 Legislature by a specified date; authorizing the
53 Department of Environmental Protection to submit
54 budget amendments for the release of specified funds;
55 providing a contingent effective date.

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57 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:
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59 Section 1. Section 380.095, Florida Statutes, is created to
60 read:

61 380.095 Dedicated funding for conservation lands,
62 resiliency, and clean water infrastructure.-

63 (1) LEGISLATIVE INTENT.-The Legislature recognizes that the
64 conservation and preservation of the land and water resources of
65 this state are essential to maintaining the quality of life
66 enjoyed by Floridians and to sustaining and growing a thriving
67 state economy, including legacy industries such as tourism,
68 agriculture, and fishing.

69 (a) The Legislature recognizes that historic investments in
70 land conservation have fostered and will continue to foster the
71 preservation of Florida's heritage, allow for the strategic
72 expansion and interconnectivity of the Florida wildlife
73 corridor, and promote the protection of crucial habitat
74 necessary for the survival, protection, and recovery of
75 threatened and endangered native species, including the Florida
76 panther.

77 (b) The Legislature further recognizes that as the state
78 acquires land, the state needs to be a good steward of the land,
79 which necessitates the need for a commitment to provide funding
80 at levels sufficient to ensure the proper management of such
81 lands. These investments provide opportunities for expanded
82 public access to state lands, including state parks, the Florida
83 Greenways and Trails System, and game lands, among others, for
84 recreation; and promote opportunities to protect such lands from
85 wildfire damage and the infiltration of dangerous nonnative
86 plant and animal species, among other benefits.

87 (c) The Legislature finds that the state is particularly

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88 vulnerable to adverse impacts from increases in the frequency
89 and duration of rainfall events and sea level rise. The
90 consequences of such events not only endanger human lives and
91 properties, but also threaten Florida's natural habitats and
92 biodiversity. The Legislature further recognizes that enhancing
93 the state's resiliency to storm events and sea level rise is
94 essential to Florida's economic stability and growth.

95 (d) Furthermore, the Legislature recognizes the need for
96 additional revenue sources to address the gap in funding that is
97 necessary to address water quality impacts, and that the
98 projections for significant population growth further exacerbate
99 such need.

100 (e) Therefore, the Legislature finds that it is in the best
101 interest of the residents of the State of Florida to dedicate
102 revenues from the gaming compact between the Seminole Tribe of
103 Florida and the State of Florida to acquire and manage
104 conservation lands, and to make significant investments in
105 resiliency efforts and clean water infrastructure.

106 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—Notwithstanding s. 285.710, the
107 Department of Revenue shall, upon receipt, deposit 96 percent of
108 any revenue share payment received under the compact as defined
109 in s. 285.710 into the Indian Gaming Revenue Clearing Trust Fund
110 within the Department of Financial Services. The funds deposited
111 into the trust fund shall be distributed as follows:

112 (a) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
113 fiscal year to support the Florida wildlife corridor as defined
114 in s. 259.1055, including the acquisition of lands or
115 conservation easements within the Florida wildlife corridor. To
116 be eligible for funding, the acquisition project must be

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117 included on a land acquisition priority list developed pursuant
118 to s. 259.035 or s. 570.71. The funds must be appropriated in
119 Administered Funds each fiscal year. Eligible state agencies
120 may, on a first-come, first-served basis, submit a budget
121 amendment to request release of funds pursuant to chapter 216.
122 Release is contingent upon approval, if required.

123 (b) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
124 fiscal year for the management of uplands and the removal of
125 invasive species. From these funds, amounts shall be applied as
126 follows:

127 1. The lesser of 36 percent or \$36 million to the
128 Department of Environmental Protection, of which:

129 a. The lesser of 88.889 percent of the funds available
130 pursuant to this subparagraph or \$32 million to the State Park
131 Trust Fund within the department for land management activities
132 within the state park system; and

133 b. The lesser of 11.111 percent of the funds available
134 pursuant to this subparagraph or \$4 million to the Internal
135 Improvement Trust Fund within the department for the purpose of
136 implementing the Local Trail Management Grant Program created
137 pursuant to s. 260.0145.

138 2. The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the
139 Incidental Trust Fund within the Department of Agriculture and
140 Consumer Services for land management activities.

141 3. The lesser of 32 percent or \$32 million to the State
142 Game Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
143 Commission for land management activities, including management
144 activities for gopher tortoises and Florida panthers.

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146 For sub-subparagraph 1.a. and subparagraphs 2. and 3., a land
147 manager may not use more than 25 percent of the distribution for
148 operation capital outlay or capital assets.

149 (c) The lesser of 26.042 percent or \$100 million each
150 fiscal year to the Resilient Florida Trust Fund within the
151 Department of Environmental Protection for the Statewide
152 Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan to be used in
153 accordance with s. 380.093.

154 (d) After the distributions pursuant to paragraphs (a),
155 (b), and (c), the remainder each fiscal year to the Water
156 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
157 Department of Environmental Protection for the Water Quality
158 Improvement Grant Program, to be used in accordance with s.
159 403.0673.

160
161 Allocations to trust funds shall be transferred monthly by
162 nonoperating authority to the named trust fund.

163 Section 2. Section 260.0145, Florida Statutes, is created
164 to read:

165 260.0145 Local Trail Management Grant Program.—

166 (1) The Local Trail Management Grant Program is created
167 within the department to assist local governments with costs
168 associated with the operation and maintenance of trails within
169 the Florida Greenways and Trails System. Funding for the program
170 is subject to appropriation.

171 (2) A local government may receive multiple grant awards
172 per application cycle.

173 (3) The department shall give priority to each of the
174 following:

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175 (a) A local government that provides cost share for the
176 costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the
177 trails, except for trails within fiscally constrained counties
178 or rural areas of opportunity.

179 (b) Trails within the Florida wildlife corridor as defined
180 in s. 259.1055.

181 (4) A local government may only use grant funds for the
182 operation and maintenance of trails, including, but not limited
183 to, the purchase of equipment and capital assets; the funding of
184 necessary repairs to ensure the safety of trail users; and other
185 necessary maintenance, such as pressure washing, bush pruning,
186 and clearing debris. A local government may not use grant funds
187 for the planning, design, or construction of trails.

188 (5) Beginning January 15, 2025, and each January 15
189 thereafter, the department shall submit a report to the
190 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
191 House of Representatives in accordance with s. 286.001 listing
192 the grants awarded pursuant to this section. The report must
193 include the following information for each grant award: the
194 grant recipient's name, a description of the individual
195 components of the trail, a description of the maintenance
196 activities funded, the total management cost for the trail
197 components, and the cost share, if any, provided by the
198 recipient.

199 Section 3. Present subsection (6) of section 259.1055,
200 Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (7), and a new
201 subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

202 259.1055 Florida wildlife corridor.—

203 (6) MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES.—The Fish and Wildlife

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204 Conservation Commission is authorized to enter into voluntary
205 agreements with private landowners for environmental services
206 within the Florida wildlife corridor.

207 (a) The agreements must require that the landowner protect
208 and restore water resources; improve management of wildlife
209 habitat, including the long-term conservation of forest and
210 grassland soils and native plants; manage the land in a manner
211 that keeps the desired ecosystem healthy for protected species,
212 such as the gopher tortoise and the Florida panther; or provide
213 other incentives to landowners to continue and improve land uses
214 that are both economically sustainable and beneficial to the
215 environment of this state.

216 (b) The commission shall ensure that any agreement for
217 environmental services entered into requires the landowner to
218 manage the land in a manner that improves or enhances the land
219 beyond what is required under any other agreement or contract
220 the landowner may have with the state.

221 (c) Subject to appropriation, the commission may use land
222 management funds received pursuant to s. 380.095 for this
223 purpose.

224 Section 4. (1) The Land Management Uniform Accounting
225 Council (LMUAC) shall recommend the most efficient and effective
226 use of the funds available to state agencies for land management
227 activities pursuant to s. 380.095, Florida Statutes. The
228 recommendations must be based on a review of the resources of
229 each land management agency to determine current expenditures,
230 including personnel costs, spent specifically on upland
231 management activities and invasive species removal. The
232 recommendations must include a calculation methodology to

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233 distribute the funds to the state agencies specified in s.
234 380.095(2)(b), Florida Statutes.

235 (2) The LMUAC shall adopt its initial recommendation and
236 submit it to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President
237 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
238 by January 3, 2027. Thereafter, the LMUAC shall update its
239 recommendation in the biennial report developed pursuant to s.
240 259.037, Florida Statutes.

241 Section 5. Subsections (3) and (7) of section 403.0673,
242 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

243 403.0673 Water quality improvement grant program.—A grant
244 program is established within the Department of Environmental
245 Protection to address wastewater, stormwater, and agricultural
246 sources of nutrient loading to surface water or groundwater.

247 (3) The department shall consider and prioritize those
248 projects that:

249 (a) Have the maximum estimated reduction in nutrient load
250 per project;

251 (b) Demonstrate project readiness;

252 (c) Are cost-effective;

253 (d) Have a cost share identified by the applicant, except
254 for rural areas of opportunity;

255 (e) Have multiyear project implementation schedules with
256 previous state commitment and involvement in the project,
257 considering previously funded phases, the total amount of
258 previous state funding, and previous partial appropriations for
259 the proposed project; ~~or~~

260 (f) Are in a location where reductions are needed most to
261 attain the water quality standards of a waterbody not attaining

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262 nutrient or nutrient-related standards; or

263 (g) Were determined eligible in a previous application
264 cycle and were able to demonstrate project readiness but were
265 not awarded a grant.

266

267 Any project that does not result in reducing nutrient loading to
268 a waterbody identified in subsection (1) is not eligible for
269 funding under this section.

270 (7) Beginning January 15, 2024, and each January 15
271 thereafter, the department shall submit a report regarding the
272 projects funded pursuant to this section to the Governor, the
273 President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
274 Representatives. The report must include a list of those
275 projects receiving funding and those projects not receiving
276 funding which were determined eligible by the department and
277 were able to demonstrate project readiness. The report must
278 include ~~and~~ the following information for each project:

279 (a) A description of the project;

280 (b) The cost of the project;

281 (c) The estimated nutrient load reduction of the project;

282 (d) The location of the project;

283 (e) The waterbody or waterbodies where the project will
284 reduce nutrients; ~~and~~

285 (f) The total cost share being provided for the project;
286 and

287 (g) The progress made in the implementation of multiyear
288 projects, including the funds spent, remaining costs, and
289 remaining timeline for full implementation.

290 Section 6. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$2

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291 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General
292 Revenue Fund to the University of Florida to update continually
293 both the Florida Wildlife Corridor plan and the Florida
294 Ecological Greenways Network plan.

295 Section 7. From the funds distributed to the Department of
296 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d), Florida
297 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$5
298 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Water
299 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
300 Department of Environmental Protection to the department to
301 coordinate with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast
302 University to conduct a study to identify and analyze potential
303 regional projects that meet the eligibility criteria set forth
304 in s. 403.0673, Florida Statutes. At a minimum, the study must
305 include the collection and consolidation of data regarding water
306 quality to identify potential regional projects, including
307 stormwater, hydrologic improvements, and innovative
308 technologies, which reduce nutrient loading to water bodies
309 identified in s. 403.0673(1), Florida Statutes. The department
310 shall submit a report to the Executive Office of the Governor,
311 the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of
312 Representatives by January 3, 2025.

313 Section 8. From the funds distributed to the Indian Gaming
314 Revenue Clearing Trust Fund within the Department of Financial
315 Services pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(a), Florida Statutes, and for
316 the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100 million in
317 nonrecurring funds is appropriated from trust funds to
318 Administered Funds for land acquisition pursuant to s.
319 380.095(2)(a), Florida Statutes.

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320 Section 9. From the funds distributed to the Department of
321 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida
322 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$4
323 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Internal
324 Improvement Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
325 Protection for the purpose of implementing the Local Trail
326 Management Grant Program created pursuant to s. 260.0145,
327 Florida Statutes.

328 Section 10. From the funds distributed to the Department of
329 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)1., Florida
330 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$32
331 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the State
332 Park Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
333 Protection for land management activities as specified in s.
334 380.095(2)(b)1.a., Florida Statutes.

335 Section 11. From the funds distributed to the Department of
336 Agriculture and Consumer Services pursuant to s.
337 380.095(2)(b)2., Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal
338 year, the sum of \$32 million in nonrecurring funds is
339 appropriated from the Incidental Trust Fund within the
340 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for land
341 management activities as specified in s. 380.095(2)(b)2.,
342 Florida Statutes.

343 Section 12. From the funds distributed to the Fish and
344 Wildlife Conservation Commission pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3.,
345 Florida Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of
346 \$32 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the State
347 Game Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation
348 Commission for control of invasive species and upland land

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349 management activities pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(b)3., Florida
350 Statutes, or s. 259.1055, Florida Statutes.

351 Section 13. From the funds distributed to the Department of
352 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(c), Florida
353 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$100
354 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Resilient
355 Florida Trust Fund within the Department of Environmental
356 Protection for the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise
357 Resilience Plan pursuant to s. 380.093, Florida Statutes.

358 Section 14. From the funds distributed to the Department of
359 Environmental Protection pursuant to s. 380.095(2)(d), Florida
360 Statutes, and for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$79
361 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the Water
362 Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund within the
363 Department of Environmental Protection for the Water Quality
364 Improvement Grant Program pursuant to s. 403.0673, Florida
365 Statutes.

366 Section 15. For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the sum of \$150
367 million in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund is
368 appropriated in the Aid to Local Governments - Grants and Aids -
369 South Florida Water Management District - Operations
370 appropriation category to the South Florida Water Management
371 District for operations and maintenance responsibilities under
372 the purview of the district. The funds must be placed in
373 reserve. From the funds, the district shall enter into a
374 contract with the Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University
375 to conduct a study of the health and ecosystem of Lake
376 Okeechobee. The study must take into account the health of
377 plants, fish, and wildlife to be used for future planning of

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378 invasive plant control, replanting of native vegetation, and
379 fish and game management. A report must be submitted by January
380 1, 2025, to the Executive Office of the Governor, the President
381 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.
382 The Department of Environmental Protection is authorized to
383 submit budget amendments to request release of funds pursuant to
384 chapter 216, Florida Statutes. Release is contingent upon the
385 submission of a spend plan and negotiated draft contract between
386 the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Gulf
387 Coast University Water School.

388 Section 16. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law
389 if SB 7080 or similar legislation is adopted in the same
390 legislative session or an extension thereof and becomes a law.