

### **Initiative 3: Enhancing and conserving Florida's natural resources and environmental quality.**

Florida's natural resources and environment are vital to a strong economy and sustainable communities. The natural environment is directly connected to tourism, sustainable community development, human health, and jobs. Natural resources must be conserved and enhanced to develop and support a strong local economy. For communities to flourish, Florida must actively manage finite natural resources and develop strategies to minimize environmental impacts.

Pressure on our natural resources varies widely across Florida. Pressures include the loss of natural areas, an increase in urban development, the use of energy and water resources, and growing impacts on marine ecosystems. Florida Extension helps communities respond to all of these challenges. Educational programs teach Floridians about natural resource conservation, public issues, and community resource efficiency. Programs in this area provide in-depth training for volunteers to assist in our educational efforts. Florida Extension must focus on resource conservation and efficiency, community engagement and development, and BMP implementation. By doing so, Floridians will acquire a better understanding of their individual and collective role in the state's effort to enhance and protect natural resources.

Local governments must provide leadership on the issues that balance the needs of the people and the economy with environmental safeguards. Florida Extension provides science-based information for environmental quality issues involving water, soil, urban and agricultural lands, and aquatic systems. Florida Extension programs must educate Florida's diverse audiences about ways to address environmental impacts and assist local communities in improving environmental quality.

#### P1 – Informed Community Decision Making

Improve community decision-making relative to natural coastal resources and policies by providing scientific and economic information on the consequences of various options.

#### P2– Natural Resources Operations

Develop and sustain natural resource entrepreneur opportunities by teaching clientele how to start and maintain a business with focus on natural resources-related jobs.

#### P3 – Environmental Stewardship

Improve environmental quality by teaching citizens about the relevance and value of natural resources to Florida's economy.