



## Hello O2O Partners,

*We wanted to touch base with you and share a couple of exciting updates. We hope you are all doing well, and we cannot wait to get together again via Zoom. Our next meeting date will likely be in early fall, so keep a look out for dates coming soon. Also, if you have a moment, please send me a quick email of things that have occurred on your end recently, within the O2O boundary. Burns, acquisitions, discoveries, anything you would like to share! I will pass it on to the group.*

### **Now, on to the exciting news updates:**

- **In April 2020, North Florida Land Trust was granted a second Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award. At nearly \$9.5 million, this award will help to fund the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife corridor (O2O) through 2025!**

This 2020 RCPP award includes seven O2O partner organizations, with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) as the lead partners.

This is the second award made by the NRCS in support of the O2O initiative and builds on the successes of the first RCPP which was initiated in 2018. In total, there will be over \$11 Million dedicated to O2O land protection under the RCPP, which compliments the \$33 Million already expended or committed by Partner programs. “I am delighted that NFLT and our Partners received a second RCPP award, which will allow us to continue building the O2O Wildlife Corridor and help landowners achieve their conservation goals” said Jim McCarthy, NFLT President. “The O2O is our most mature conservation initiative thanks to the NRCS and the O2O Partnership. The RCPP program is foundational to our ability to coalesce and leverage large scale conservation”.

This RCPP designates Farm Bill program funding specifically for purchase of conservation easements and financial support of conservation land management. NFLT will direct conservation programs within the O2O, with the assistance of contributing partners. The collaborative efforts of partners under the RCPP promotes greater outreach to conservation-minded landowners and producers to help them protect and manage their lands. As part of the RCPP, an estimated 7,500 acres will be protected in addition to 12,000 acres protected by other Partner programs by 2025.

To see more on the RCPP please follow this [link](#) to the NFLT website or see attached document.

- **In July 2020, North Florida Land Trust received a half-million-dollar grant, over two years, for the O2O Corridor Project. The gift and challenge grant are from the EJK Foundation of Houston Texas.**

North Florida Land Trust has been awarded a \$450,000 transformational grant from the EJK Foundation to help support its efforts in the Ocala to Osceola (O2O) Wildlife Corridor. The EJK Foundation supports efforts centered on landscape-scale conservation for wildlife habitat and ecological resiliency to climate change. The Foundation has also issued a challenge grant for additional funding for the project.

The \$450,000 grant over two years will help fund the operational needs of the O2O initiative. The grant will help with operating costs including salaries, due diligence, marketing, and increased fundraising capacity related to the O2O Corridor. It will also provide future sustainability for the landscape-scale initiative.

“This couldn’t come at a better or more exciting time for our O2O Corridor initiative,” said Jim McCarthy, president of NFLT. “By sustaining our program through capacity funding, we’re able to focus on achieving our ambitious conservation goals in the O2O with our partners.” In addition to the \$450,000 initial award, the Foundation has issued a challenge grant for \$75,000 to further fund the operational needs of the O2O Corridor initiative. NFLT has until August 31, 2021, to meet the challenge and is actively seeking funds to be matched 1:1 by the EJK Foundation. As of last week, July 24-31, 2020, NFLT received a \$10,000 donation toward the challenge grant!! So only \$65,000 to go!

To see more on the EJK grant please follow this [link](#) to the NFLT website or see attached document.

*These are huge positives for the O2O partnership and wildlife corridor initiative! We look forward to building on these opportunities with you, our O2O partners, in the coming years to achieve our combined goals of a connected green swath of conservation lands in North Central Florida!*

***Thank you,  
Kimberly Tillman  
O2O Partnership Coordinator***