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# Solar Stewardship

At Florida Power & Light Company, we are dedicated to providing reliable electricity, keeping bills as low as possible and being good stewards of our natural environment. For our solar facilities, we do this by focusing on practical ecological enhancements, smart land preservation and innovative agrivoltaics exploration.





# Solar Stewardship

## Leasing land

We lease land to farmers and ranchers for a variety of uses. The land is used for agricultural activities prior to solar development — and even on available land after development. In fact, we have over 50 land leasing agreements across our service area — Northwest Florida to South Florida. The farmers grow crops and the ranchers typically raise cattle.

## Ecological enhancements

At FPL, we are committed to being good stewards of the environment. We evaluate each solar site for its unique environmental attributes and develop a tailored stewardship plan to support or enhance them. Since 2017, we have partnered with Audubon Florida to promote wildlife coexisting at our sites through ecological enhancements that are compatible with solar generation.

These enhancements include preserving more than 4,000 acres of wetlands, planting over 35,000 pounds of native seed and over 300,000 native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. We have also created pollinator habitats on more than 13,000 acres of our solar sites.

As part of FPL's Solar Stewardship Program, we prioritize:

- » Restoring hydrology to wetlands;
- » Encouraging biodiversity by using appropriate native plant species;
- » Removing invasive species and implementing procedures to prevent regrowth;
- » Incorporating pollinator species into ground covers;
- » Installing artificial perches, nest boxes and platforms for wildlife use.



## Wildlife-friendly fencing

Installing wildlife-friendly fencing where feasible allows for continued wildlife use. Through camera studies, we have observed thousands of animals – including panthers, bears, deer, rabbits, raccoons, bobcats and coyotes – traversing our solar energy centers. Birds, including caracaras, sandhill cranes, herons and egrets, are able to fly around and perch on the fencing.



## Exploring agrivoltaics

Agrivoltaics is a concept that describes the co-location of solar energy infrastructure and agricultural activities on the same land. It involves the integration of solar panels or other solar technologies with agricultural systems to maximize efficient land use. Common agricultural activities co-located with solar infrastructure includes crops, animal husbandry, beekeeping, pollinator-friendly plantings and habitat enhancement.

### Utilizing “ewe-tility” workers

At FPL’s Blackwater River Solar Energy Center in Santa Rosa County, sheep help manage vegetation in a pilot project. The flock has nearly doubled over the past year, with approximately 100 sheep and lambs helping maintain vegetation onsite alongside traditional mowing.



### Solar-powered and grass-fed

We recently introduced a cattle grazing pilot at FPL’s Cattle Ranch Solar Energy Center in DeSoto County. This will help us explore the operational feasibility and economic viability of cattle grazing as a supplement to vegetation management at select solar sites.



### Harvesting the sun – and crops

In collaboration with the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), we have a pilot project at FPL’s Miami-Dade Solar Energy Center in Miami-Dade County. The pilot study includes an on-site cropping system with species including philodendron, vanilla, dragon fruit and hibiscus, planted beneath rows of de-energized solar panels. Researchers will measure how irrigation and shading impacts these crops. The study will help us explore the operational feasibility and economic viability of safely growing crops at solar sites.

## Regional considerations

Because different regions have different needs, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. There are wide regional differences in the places where our solar energy centers are located, and it’s important to note that agrivoltaics applications are very site-specific. The selected co-use must be compatible with many factors, including a site’s geography, soils, water availability and community needs. As with everything our company does, it has to benefit our customers by being efficient and cost-effective. We will continue to explore new ways of integrating agriculture into our solar energy centers.



# The many benefits of solar energy



**Solar energy centers have numerous benefits for the environment and the communities where they are located. They produce low-cost, emissions-free energy, preserve Florida's agricultural land and heritage for decades and protect Florida's environment today - and for generations to come.**

## Land stewardship

When agricultural activities are suspended during the life of a solar project, the project allows the soil to remain fallow. That means that during the operational life of a solar project the land will be given a "rest," which will help restore the soil's natural nutrient balance.

Solar energy centers also help maintain the land's agricultural designation for 35 years. They help protect against urban sprawl because unlike commercial developments, solar sites place little or no demand on public services. Importantly, they can easily transition back to their original state at the end of their life cycle.

Solar energy centers can coexist with Florida's native habitat. Their planted ground cover reduces potential for erosion, stabilizes soil and encourages biodiversity. Our solar energy centers also provide resources for native wildlife, including important pollinators.

## Protecting Florida's environment

Each universal solar energy center we build is capable of generating nearly 75 megawatts of clean, emissions-free energy. That's enough to power about 14,000 homes - without producing any air pollution or greenhouse gases.

Also, water is typically not needed for the operation of a solar energy center. Furthermore, no insecticides, fungicides or fertilizers are used at the sites. This reduces the potential infiltration of pollutants into groundwater and adjacent wetlands.

## Saving money for customers

Solar is among the most cost-effective sources of power generation FPL can invest in on behalf of customers. Solar energy centers provide reliable energy without the need for fuel, which helps keep customer bills as low as possible. Since 2009, we have saved customers approximately \$1 billion in avoided fuel costs, thanks in large part to FPL solar energy centers.

## Benefiting communities

A solar energy center generates hundreds of thousands of dollars in tax revenue annually for the county it operates in, which can be used by the county at its discretion for essential services, including first responders, schools and infrastructure.

These sites bring no additional traffic to the areas where they operate following construction. They also create jobs during construction, bringing a boon to local economies as crews use local goods and services, where applicable.

Our solar projects are welcomed by economic development leaders who recognize the important role renewable energy can play in job creation and creating a positive environment for other companies interested in moving to or expanding within Florida.

