



Florida's Lake Okeechobee region and the Everglades offer a unique social, economic and environmental system to the people of Florida. Their history and significance as environmental and agricultural centers of excellence make them a national resource treasured well beyond Florida's borders

The Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative (LORI) came into existence in 2009 to facilitate economic diversification along the southern rim of Lake Okeechobee.

The mission of LORI is to bring together those diverse communities, that share common challenges and opportunities. LORI's focus is on strong regional leadership, clear regional priorities and effective regional communication.

LORI comprises local representation from both the public and private sectors. Working with the citizens of the region and stakeholders across the state, LORI will establish a regional framework for economic development in affected areas of Glades, Hendry and Palm Beach counties. LORI will collect and communicate accurate information pertaining to economic development in the region.

Work groups will develop projects and initiatives known as "doable deeds" that can be accomplished with existing external resources. These initiatives will be coordinated and consistent with the overall vision for economic development of the region. LORI will develop legislative and commercial strategies to bring resources to the region.

The Collins Center thanks the following for their help in shaping LORI:

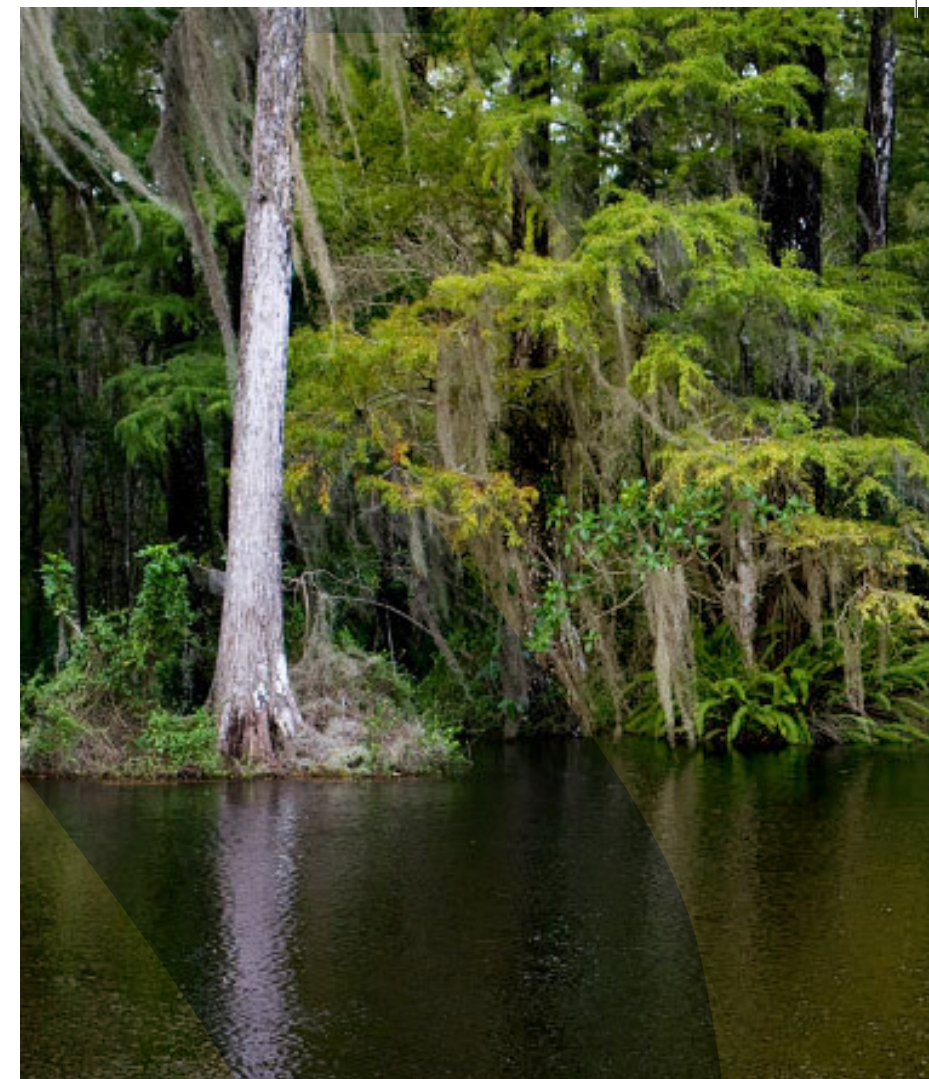
- E. Thom Rumberger**, Esq. Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell, PA
 - Parker Thomson**, Esq. Hogan & Hartson LLP
 - Kirk Fordham**, CEO, the Everglades Foundation
 - Russ Echols**, Commissioner, Glades County
 - Jeff Koons**, Commissioner, Palm Beach County
 - Kevin McCarthy**, Commissioner, Hendry County
 - Mali Chamness**, Mayor, City of Clewiston
 - Wayne Whitaker**, Mayor, City of Pahokee
 - Wendell Taylor**, County Manager, Glades County
 - Steve McKown**, City Manager, City of Clewiston
 - Corey Alston**, City Manager, City of South Bay
 - Lomax Harrelle**, City Manager, City of Belle Glade
 - Lynn Topel**, Executive Director, Florida Heartland Rural Economic Development Initiative
 - Tommy Perry**, Johnson-Prewitt and Associates, Inc.
- The South Florida Water Management District Governing Board

We have created an online community for stakeholders and encourage you to sign up for updates and submit your ideas. For more information and to participate:

<http://LORI.collinscenter.org>



www.collinscenter.org/



Lake Okeechobee Regional Initiative

An economic development initiative

FACT SHEET - OCTOBER 2009

About the Initiative

So far, LORI has identified the following areas of interest and has created committees to address them:

Infrastructure: Improve State Highway 80. Develop industrial and commercial parks. Increase facilities for recreation on or near the lake.

Health and public safety: Ensure adequate infrastructure for the delivery of health care, public works, fire protection and emergency medical services.

Education: Improve public schools and strengthen the role of education in workforce development.

Broadband: Ensure that the region has quality access to the Internet. Advocate for programs and services that improve the ability of residents to use the Internet.

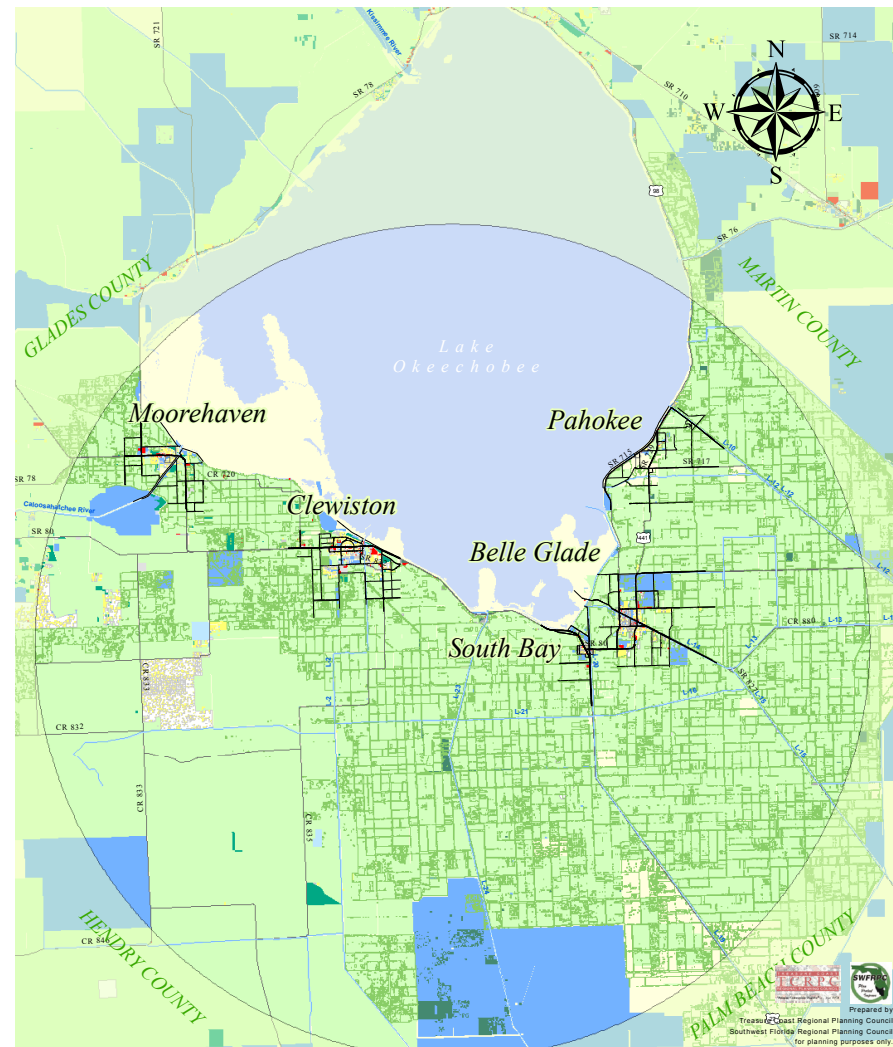
Agriculture: Keep at the forefront the linchpin role of agriculture and its contribution to the region's economy. Seek diversification in agricultural practices and marketing.

Phil Bacon

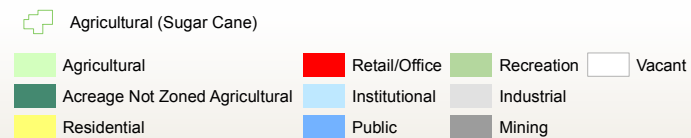
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The Collins Center for Public Policy, an independent, Florida-based public policy organization, is advising the LORI teams. Currently, participants include public officials from Glades, Hendry and Palm Beach counties. Actively supporting LORI and participating in this important initiative are the South Florida Water Management District and the Everglades Foundation.



Glades Area Existing Land Use



Locations Targeted by LORI

BELLE GLADE

(pop. 16,739)

is located in Palm Beach County on the southeastern shore of Lake Okeechobee. About half the sugarcane in the nation is grown in the plains around Belle Glade and nearby Clewiston.

CLEWISTON

(pop. 7,173)

is a city in Hendry County. Incorporated in 1925, the city would become noted for its sport fishing, particularly of largemouth bass. Home to U.S. Sugar Corporation, the dominant manufacturer in Clewiston, the city became known as "America's Sweetest Town."

MOORE HAVEN

(pop. 1,726)

is located in Glades County. Moore Haven is located on the southwest shoreline of Lake Okeechobee and is the county seat of Glades. In the 1920s, Moore Haven was often called "Little Chicago," reflecting its status as a significant boom town.

PAHOKEE

(pop. 6,459)

is located in Palm Beach County. Pahokee is associated with the Florida Heartland. It was once known as the "Winter Vegetable Capital of the World."

SOUTH BAY

(pop. 4,506)

a city in Palm Beach County. While the incorporated city's population is less than 5,000 people, surrounding areas increase the population figures to 54,000 people in a 25-mile radius and more than 1.4 million in a 50-mile radius.