

CHAPTER 2021-54

Senate Bill No. 524

An act relating to Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission trust funds; amending s. 379.205, F.S.; revising the sources of funds that may be used for specified purposes for the Florida Panther Research and Management Trust Fund; authorizing the funds to be used for commission administrative costs; amending ss. 379.208 and 379.209, F.S.; authorizing the commission to invest and reinvest funds and the interest thereof of the Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund and the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund, respectively; amending s. 379.211, F.S.; authorizing the commission to invest and reinvest funds and the interest thereof of the State Game Trust Fund; deleting a provision limiting the use of such funds; amending s. 379.213, F.S.; authorizing the commission to invest and reinvest funds and the interest thereof of the Save the Manatee Trust Fund; amending s. 320.08058, F.S.; revising the authorized uses for funds of the Save the Manatee Trust Fund collected from sales of the manatee license plates to include administrative costs; revising the use of such funds for the marketing of the license plates; amending s. 379.214, F.S.; authorizing the commission to invest and reinvest the funds and the interest thereof of the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund; authorizing such funds to be used for commission administrative costs; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Subsection (2) of section 379.205, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.205 Florida Panther Research and Management Trust Fund.—

(2) The commission shall spend money from the fund and all interest derived from its investments and reinvestments ~~shall be spent~~ only for the following purposes:

(a) To manage and protect existing Florida panther populations by increasing panther food sources where food is a limiting factor, determining conflicts between public use and panther survival, maintaining sufficient genetic variability in existing populations, and undertaking management and enforcement activities that protect panther habitat.

(b) To educate the public concerning the value of the panther and the necessity for panther management.

(c) To reestablish Florida panthers into areas of suitable habitat, where feasible, by assessing the necessity of a captive breeding program for purposes of reintroduction of the panthers into the suitable habitat; selecting potential sites for reintroduction and investigating associated

human sociological aspects; and assessing the potential for panther habitat acquisition.

(d) For Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission administrative costs and for the promotion to promote and marketing of market the Florida panther license plate as authorized under s. 320.08058.

Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 379.208, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.208 Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund; purposes.—

(1) The Marine Resources Conservation Trust Fund within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission shall serve as a broad-based depository for funds from various marine-related and boating-related activities. The commission may invest and reinvest the funds and the interest thereof of the trust fund and shall administer the trust fund ~~be administered by the commission~~ for the purposes of:

- (a) Funding for marine research.
- (b) Funding for fishery enhancement, including, but not limited to, fishery statistics development, artificial reefs, and fish hatcheries.
- (c) Funding for marine law enforcement.
- (d) Funding for administration of licensing programs for recreational fishing, saltwater products sales, and related information and education activities.
- (e) Funding for the operations of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.
- (f) Funding for titling and registration of vessels.
- (g) Funding for marine turtle protection, research, and recovery activities from revenues that are specifically credited to the trust fund for these purposes.
- (h) Funding activities for rehabilitation of oyster harvesting areas from which special oyster surcharge fees are collected, including relaying and transplanting live oysters.
- (i) Funding for boating research, boating-related programs and activities, and for law enforcement on state waters.
- (j) Funding for the stone crab trap reduction program under s. 379.365, the blue crab effort management program under s. 379.366, the spiny lobster trap certificate program under s. 379.3671, and the trap retrieval program under s. 379.2424.

Section 3. Paragraph (a) of subsection (2) of section 379.209, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.209 Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund.—

(2)(a) There is established within the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund. The fund shall be credited with moneys collected pursuant to ss. 319.32(3) and 320.02(8). Additional funds may be provided from legislative appropriations and by donations from interested individuals and organizations. The commission may invest and reinvest the funds and the interest thereof of the Nongame Wildlife Trust Fund. The commission shall designate an identifiable unit to administer the trust fund.

Section 4. Section 379.211, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.211 State Game Trust Fund.—The funds resulting from the operation of the commission and from the administration of the laws and regulations pertaining to birds, game, fur-bearing animals, freshwater fish, reptiles, and amphibians, together with any other funds specifically provided for such purposes shall constitute the State Game Trust Fund and shall be used by the commission as it shall deem fit, including the investment and reinvestment of the funds and the interest thereof, for the purpose of in carrying out this section. ~~The provisions hereof and for no other purposes, except that~~ annual use fees deposited into the trust fund from the sale of the Largemouth Bass license plate may be expended for the purposes provided under s. 320.08058(17). The commission may not obligate itself beyond the current resources of the State Game Trust Fund unless specifically so authorized by the Legislature.

Section 5. Subsection (2) of section 379.213, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.213 Save the Manatee Trust Fund.—

(2) The commission may invest and reinvest the funds and the interest thereof of the Save the Manatee Trust Fund. Funds to be credited to and uses of the trust fund shall be administered in accordance with ~~the provisions of~~ ss. 320.08058, 328.66, 328.72, 328.74, 328.76, and 379.2431. The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission may receive donations for deposit into the Save the Manatee Trust Fund.

Section 6. Paragraphs (b) and (c) of subsection (1) of section 320.08058, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

320.08058 Specialty license plates.—

(1) MANATEE LICENSE PLATES.—

(b) The manatee license plate annual use fee must be deposited into the Save the Manatee Trust Fund, created within the Fish and Wildlife

Conservation Commission, and may shall be used only for commission administrative costs and the purposes specified in s. 379.2431(4).

(c) Notwithstanding paragraph (b), up to 10 percent of the annual use fee deposited in the Save the Manatee Trust Fund from the sale of the manatee license plate may be used to promote and market the license plate issued by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles after June 30, 2007.

Section 7. Subsection (2) of section 379.214, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

379.214 Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund.—

(2) The commission may invest and reinvest the funds and the interest thereof of the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund. Funds to be credited to and uses of the trust fund shall be administered in accordance with ~~the provisions of~~ ss. 206.606, 328.76, 369.20, 369.22, 369.252, and 379.502 and may also be used for commission administrative costs.

Section 8. This act shall take effect July 1, 2021.

Approved by the Governor June 4, 2021.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 4, 2021.