

# The Florida Senate

## 2018 Florida Statutes

Title XXXV

AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, AND ANIMAL  
INDUSTRY

**Chapter 591**

**FOREST DEVELOPMENT**

### CHAPTER 591 FOREST DEVELOPMENT

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**591.15 Community forests; short title.**— The short title for ss. 591.16-591.26 shall be the “Florida Community Forest Law.”

**History.**—s. 2, ch. 20902, 1941.

**591.16 Community forests; purposes.**— The general purposes of this law are:

- (1) To encourage counties, cities, towns, and school districts to utilize idle lands for productive forest purposes.
- (2) To encourage reduction of taxation through producing income from wise use of such lands.
- (3) To encourage development and make available, in community forests, areas having desirable recreational features.
- (4) To encourage forestry education by establishing permanent forests for use of vocational agriculture departments, schools, and Boy and Girl Scout troops.

**History.**—s. 1, ch. 20902, 1941.

**591.17 Community forests; definitions.**— The terms hereinafter used, unless the text clearly indicates a different meaning, shall be as follows:

- (1) The term “governing board” shall mean county commissioners, city commissioners, town councils, school boards, or any other governing body of counties, cities, towns, or school districts.
- (2) The term “community forest” shall mean any forest area established under this law by a county, city, town, or school district.
- (3) The term “forestry committee” shall mean the appointed committee for directing the activities of community forests.
- (4) The term “counties, cities, towns” shall mean any recognized political subdivision of the state government.
- (5) The term “school district” shall mean individual school districts of a county or vocational agricultural departments located in these districts.
- (6) The term “forest products” shall mean any product produced from trees.
- (7) The term “contiguous sale” shall mean sale of like forest products from adjoining areas that normally would be in the same sale area as determined by the forester on the forestry committee.

**History.**—s. 3, ch. 20902, 1941; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 1, ch. 69-300; s. 253, ch. 71-377; s. 205, ch. 77-104; s. 69, ch. 2012-7.

**591.18 Community forests; purchase or establishment.**— All counties, cities, towns, or school districts, through their governing boards, are hereby empowered to establish, from lands owned by such county, city, town, or school district in fee simple, or to acquire by purchase or gift, lands at present covered with forest or tree growth, or suitable for the growth of trees, and to administer the same under the direction of the Florida Forest Service, in accordance with the practice and principles of scientific forestry, for the benefit of the said counties, cities, towns, or school districts. Such tracts may be of any size suitable for the purpose but must be located within the county embracing the county, city, town, or school district, provided that it shall be requisite for the governing board availing itself of the provisions of this law to submit to the Florida Forest Service, and secure its approval of the area and location of any lands proposed to be acquired or used for the purposes of county, city, town, or school district forests.

**History.**—s. 4, ch. 20902, 1941; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 70, ch. 2012-7.

**591.19 Community forests; tax delinquent lands.**— The Department of Revenue, the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, counties, cities, towns, school districts, or any other public agency holding fee simple or tax certificate lands are hereby empowered to, and may, upon application to them, transfer title of fee simple lands not in other public use to any county, city, town, or school district for forest purposes as described under this law, provided such lands are approved by the Florida Forest Service for this purpose.

**History.**—s. 5, ch. 20902, 1941; ss. 14, 21, 27, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 155, ch. 71-355; s. 71, ch. 2012-7.

**591.20 Community forests; forestry committee.**— The governing board of any county, city, town, or school district desiring to establish community forests after enactment of this law shall appoint a forestry committee, consisting of three members, as follows: one member of governing board, one member from the Florida Forest Service to be designated by the Florida Forest Service, and one taxpayer of the county, city, town, or school district not a member of the governing board. The first two members of such committee shall hold office until replaced in their respective official positions. The third member shall hold office for 3 years. Any vacancy shall be filled at the first regular session of the governing board after the vacancy occurs. The president of the committee shall be selected by the three members for a 1-year term at their first regular meeting. The representative of the Florida Forest Service shall not serve as an officer of the committee nor be responsible for making reports. All members shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

**History.**—s. 6, ch. 20902, 1941; s. 23, ch. 57-1; s. 19, ch. 63-400; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 72, ch. 2012-7.

**591.21 Community forests; duties of forestry committee.**—

(1) It shall be the duty of the forestry committee to advise the governing board in acquiring, developing and managing the forest and in making contracts, agreements, and permits for and with the forest, and, if desirable, in hiring a qualified forester and laborers and in making rules and regulations for operating the forest.

(2) For any sale in excess of \$100, the governing body shall ask for and receive open competitive bids and purchase from the lowest and best bidder. For sale of forest products in excess of \$500 for the total contract, the sale shall be advertised in one issue each of 2 consecutive weeks in a county newspaper of general circulation, and the highest and best bid accepted. Contiguous sales shall not be made.

**History.**—s. 7, ch. 20902, 1941.

**591.22 Community forests; appropriations.**— Counties, cities, towns, or school districts in which forestry committees have been appointed may appropriate money from available funds to be used by said committee to carry out the purposes of this law. The forestry committee shall each year make a budget of recommendation for acquisition and operation and management of the forest for approval by the governing board.

**History.**—s. 8, ch. 20902, 1941.

**591.23 Community forests; revenues, use.**— Revenue from the forests shall be credited to the general fund of counties, cities, towns, or school districts; provided, however, revenues from lands under land use agreements with youth organizations such as chapters of the Future Farmers of America, shall be disposed of subject to the terms of

such agreements. When the revenue from any forest other than these under such land use agreements, exceeds the necessary expenses of the forest, including desirable acquisition, the excess will be used by the governing board for regular purposes and in reduction of taxation.

**History.**—s. 9, ch. 20902, 1941; s. 1, ch. 57-790.

**591.24 Community forests; fiscal reports.**— A fiscal year report of expenditures, income, sales, development and management shall be made by the forestry committee to the governing board of the county, city, town, or school district, and a copy sent to the Florida Forest Service. All reports shall be audited by the regular auditor of the county, city, town, or school district.

**History.**—s. 10, ch. 20902, 1941; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 73, ch. 2012-7.

**591.25 Community forests; fire protection, etc.**— All lands entered or acquired under the provisions of this law shall be protected at all times from wildfire and shall be kept and maintained as a permanent public forest except as hereinafter provided. The timber growing thereon shall be cut in accordance with forestry methods approved by the Florida Forest Service and in such a manner as to perpetuate succeeding stands of trees. All such forest lands shall be open to the use of the public for recreational purposes so far as such recreational purposes do not interfere with, or prevent the use of, such lands to the best advantage as a public forest as determined by the forestry committee.

**History.**—s. 11, ch. 20902, 1941; ss. 14, 35, ch. 69-106; s. 74, ch. 2012-7.

**591.26 Community forests; sale upon referendum approval.**— If it becomes desirable to sell any community forest or portion thereof as determined jointly by the governing board and forestry committee, it shall be put to a vote of the people at any regular election and a majority of those voting must approve the action. Any funds received from such sale shall be deposited in the general fund of the county, city, town, or school district making the sale and used in consolidating existing community forests or in establishing another community forest.

**History.**—s. 12, ch. 20902, 1941.

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