

Florida Fish and Wildlife News



Florida Wildlife Federation

Keeping the Wild in Florida since 1936!

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Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

February 2018



Birds - Overall Winner

Environmental Egret by Meg Puente - Wakodahatchee Wetlands, FL

2017 FWF Photo Contest Winners

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FWF is pleased to announce the winners of the 2017 Photo Contest. This year, we were grateful to have Dean Jue of Tallahassee as our judge for the contest for the first time. Thank you to all of the photographers who entered, and to Dean for taking the time to review over 800 photos that were entered. You will find other winning photos from the contest throughout FFWN. Visit www.snappiephoto.com to view the winners online and we hope you enter the contest in 2018.

Join us for FWF's Annual Celebration of the Wild and 81st Conservation Awards Banquet, Saturday, April 28, 2018 at the Safety Harbor Inn & Resort on Tampa Bay.

See the back page of this issue for all the details!

Legislative Session Commences

by Preston Robertson

The 2018 Florida Legislative Session started on Tuesday, January 9, 2018. The Session is early this year as it is an election year. Election year sessions generally mean a lessening of legislative activity, and this year your elected leaders also have to deal with improper behavior issues that have claimed the careers of two State Senators (Latvala and Clemons).

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Get Involved

FWF members, volunteers, staff and our lobbyists will be heavily engaged during the Legislative session. We need our grassroots members to be involved and make your voices heard to affect policy. Here are some ways you can stay informed and let legislators know what you think about key bills during the session:

JOIN THE FWF ACTION ALERT LIST: FWF's email list will be a crucial tool during the legislative session for sharing information about key bills and votes. Sign up for the list at www.fwfonline.org.

FOLLOW FWF ON SOCIAL MEDIA: We will post regular updates on Facebook and Twitter.

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATORS: Contact your legislators and tell them about the wildlife and conservation issues that matter to you. A little relationship building goes a long way. It is much easier to ask your elected officials to cast a vote or take a stand when they know you. Go to www.flsenate.gov and www.myfloridahouse.gov to find out who represents you.

SHOW UP: There are many opportunities to get involved in the legislative process by giving testimony and meeting with legislators. There may also be rallies and events during the session to give you a voice.

If you would prefer to receive this publication via email instead of print, contact dannygs@fwfonline.org. Please include your name and address with your request.

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CHAIR'S MESSAGE

by Rick Abbott



Living in Florida

Wow! I can't believe I am so fortunate to live in Florida.

Two weeks ago I was sitting in my tree stand deer hunting in 22 degree weather. Not cold at all! I was wearing heavy-weight wool long underwear tops and bottoms that were made in Sweden, a country familiar with cold weather.

Last week I was relaxing in a boat on a bow-mounted pedestal seat fishing for speckled trout on the St. Marks River. The temperature was 70 degrees.

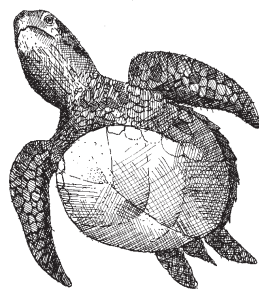
Both adventures were very productive. My hunting consisted of watching from an elevated

position all types of wildlife. I witnessed three gray foxes, five deer and one bobcat all in a four hour period. Not one had any idea I was spying on them. Viewing these animals in their core living space, undisturbed, was a treat.

The fishing trip was spectacular. It was 70 degrees with not a cloud in the sky and the water was smooth as glass. I wore sneakers, long pants and a short-sleeved shirt. It was the total opposite of the previous week's journey. I caught so many trout, 20 to 30 with four keepers, that I quit fishing and started day dreaming about my next Florida adventure.

Two different "worlds" I visited within a week in the same state! This is the reason that I thank the good Lord every day for letting me live in Florida and for being the Chair of Florida Wildlife Federation – the top organization working every day for the future of Floridians and the outdoors.

-- Rick



FWF Board of Directors Meeting

The FWF Board of Directors and House of Delegates held their winter meeting in Clermont, February 2-4. The weekend began with a group dinner on Friday evening at Lily on the Lake. The Saturday, February 3rd meeting took place at the Oakland Nature Preserve (ONP) in Oakland where the board was surprised and excited to spend a short time with Jim Thomas, a former FWF Board member and ONP honoree. The day ended with another group dinner at Calabria Ristorante & NY Style Pizza. The Board of Directors, with a quorum present, met in executive session for several hours on the morning of Sunday, February 4th to discuss topics concerning the future and direction of the FWF.



Farewell Diane Hines

A big thank you to Diane Hines for her 26 years of hard work, dedication and service to the Florida Wildlife Federation! We threw her a send-off with many old friends and coworkers. You will be missed and we wish you all the best with your new job!



Lynn Jones and Diane Hines
in the year 2000.



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Manley Fuller



Dear Florida Wildlife Federation members,

Thanks for your ongoing support; we had a very good year end appeal response. I also want to share with you a brief film titled "Keeping the Wild in Florida since 1936" about Florida Wildlife Federation (www.youtube.com/FIWildFed) by Elam and Nic Stoltzfus. Please view it and share with friends and contacts. We want to increase our membership base and by reaching out to your conservation-minded friends you can help spread the word about the work of FWF. We constantly promote fish and wildlife habitat, conservation and sustainable outdoor experiences and want to use the film to help spread the message.

We are working hard in the legislative process; please see my colleagues' comments on that. One of the most important legislative matters this session is the implementation of last year's **Senate Bill 10**. Senate President Negrón is leading the effort to move forward with a new reservoir in the Everglades Agricultural Area with increased dynamic storage, treatment and conveyance capacity. Once in place, the new reservoir will help better manage lake levels, reducing the damaging discharges to the east and west coast estuaries and moving treated water south to benefit Everglades habitats, Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. The final configuration and technical aspects of the de-

sign of the reservoir are being deliberated right now but we tip our hat to Senator Negrón in seeking the best reservoir possible in 2018.

The state of Florida and the Trump administration are pursuing a course which will reduce federal jurisdiction and changing regulations concerning wetlands by transferring authority under the **Clean Water Act** to the state of Florida. We are concerned that these changes will ultimately result in less protection of wetlands across Florida, particularly non-tidal wetlands. We do not agree that the state wetlands permitting program is the equivalent of the federal Section 404 program. The state program does not provide the same level of protection to Florida wetlands as the existing federal Section 404 program.

I want to sing out a big thank you to FWF regional director, Martha Musgrove who did excellent legwork for the Lake Okeechobee panel I moderated at the recent Everglades Coalition meeting. The panel was well attended and there were numerous questions before we had to adjourn for the next session. Our panel consisted of Brandon Tucker (South Florida Water Management District Board Member), Lt. Colonel Jennifer Reynolds (US Army Corps of Engineers), Ramon Iglesias (Martin Marina, Lake Okeechobee) and Dr. Paul Gray (Audubon of Florida). The presentations were well received and focused on a number of key issues for the Lake, its tributaries and downstream areas: the need to repair the levee/dike as a matter of public safety, the heavy phosphorus load in the lake's mud, continuing nutrient inputs that threaten water quality, algal blooms and the importance of the lake's marshes for the ecosystem, fish and wildlife habitat and economic values. Fishing is a huge draw for tourism. One point was clearly made: stacking more water in the Lake once the levee repairs are completed will not work from an engineering or ecological basis. The dike repairs will allow changes to improve lake management, helping ensure a healthy littoral zone. However, stacking additional water in the lake (i.e., raising lake levels above 16 feet NGVD) would in-

crease the risk of levee failure and endanger people's lives. Raising Lake Okeechobee stage levels above the current schedule would destroy the large marshes of the lake, threatening to force destructive discharges into east and west coast estuaries. The need to reduce nutrient inputs into the Lake was discussed. The vital role the lake plays in the overall **Everglades Restoration Story** was a consistent theme. The questions the panel received were numerous and wide-ranging. The panel could easily have taken many more questions.

Another Everglades Coalition Conference session, moderated by FWF's Nancy Payton, focused on habitat connectivity and listed species. Various efforts to create a contiguous conservation network across South and Central Florida for wide-ranging species including panthers were presented. The challenges of site-specific Everglades species and geographically limited species such as Key deer and grasshopper sparrow were discussed. These species will not directly benefit from habitat links as do more widely dispersed species. This panel served to remind attendees that it is native wildlife that truly makes the Everglades wild and alive. The work of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Florida Panther Recovery implementation Team Transportation SubTeam, chaired by Nancy Payton, was reviewed in detail. This group is identifying road segments that bisect conservation land and recommending wildlife crossing locations.

FWF believes it is absolutely critical to address invasive species issues as early as possible as they

pose a serious threat to native species and their habitats. Florida has many invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic, animal and plant. The **Burmese python** is perhaps the best known of Florida's invasive animals. These animals are spreading in southern Florida and threaten native species because they consume a wide variety of animal food sources. It is necessary to lawfully destroy these animals and it is not easy because they are so good at vanishing from sight in our native habitats. With any invasive species control or eradication program it is critical to begin control efforts before the animal's population increase reaches a rapid growth rate called an inflection point. Beyond that point control measures may not be successful. This is a national and international problem and a worsening one. There

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Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer A. Reynolds, Deputy District Commander for South Florida U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Manley Fuller, Florida Wildlife Federation President.



Panel Discussion "Lake Okeechobee: Connecting the Northern and Southern Everglades," moderated by Manley Fuller (back). Left to right are Dr. Paul Gray, Lt. Colonel Jennifer Reynolds, Brandon Tucker and Ramon Iglesias.

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REPORT

by Nancy Anne Payton, Southwest Florida Field Representative



and connect wildlife habitat, an integral part of the Southwest Florida Office's program is getting more wildlife underpasses. The Southwest Office has secured nine wildlife crossings under public roads designed to accommodate Florida panthers and is working with transportation officials and private landowners on 14 underpasses in various planning stages. One of the nine existing underpasses was privately funded at a cost over \$1 million dollars and is now maintained by Collier County.

Collisions with vehicles are the major cause of Florida panther mortality. **Thirty-four panthers were injured or killed in 2016 on Florida's highways along with unknown numbers of other native wildlife. Where fencing and underpasses are installed, the deaths drop to almost zero.** In 2017, 24 panthers were injured or killed as a result of collisions with vehicles.

This noticeable drop in panther-vehicle collisions is due in part to the recently installed wildlife exclusionary fencing along Alligator Alley I-75 and accompanying new "cat walks" under two bridges. Until 2017, one of the deadliest highways for Florida panthers was the nine-mile stretch of I-75 Alligator Alley immediately east of the Naples (Collier County) toll booth. It was the only segment of I-75 Alligator Alley without wildlife exclusionary fencing.

In response to the Federation's 2015 study and letter petitioning action, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced that wildlife exclusionary fencing will be installed on both sides of the highway from the Naples (Collier County) toll booth east to the FakaUnion Canal Bridge. In addition to the exclusionary fencing, FDOT reset the existing rubble riprap under the west side of the FakaUnion Canal Bridge and both sides under the Miller Canal Bridge to create pathways for terrestrial wildlife.

It is important to maintain habitat connectivity under Alligator Alley I-75 for panthers and other wildlife.

2017 Highlights

With member support and foundation grants, the Southwest Office works exclusively on behalf of the endangered Florida panther and other native wildlife living in Southwest Florida. This includes promoting the importance of uplands and the needs of terrestrial species.

The Florida panther was placed on the U.S. Endangered Species List in 1967. They once roamed across the entire southeastern United States, but due to direct human persecution and habitat loss were eventually confined to remote Southwest Florida. When the Southwest Florida Office opened in 1994, biologists estimated the **Florida panther** population at less than thirty inbred and unhealthy individuals.

Today the wild breeding population is estimated at 230 adult and subadult animals. This estimate is based on "Southwest Florida's primary panther habitat" and does not reflect a complete picture of the growing wild population of Florida panthers. Confirmation of female panthers and kittens north of the Caloosahatchee River is a sign of the burgeoning breeding population in Central Florida.

Transportation and Conservation Planning

In 24 years, the Southwest Florida Office has helped to forever protect more than more than 250,000 acres of wildlife habitat in Collier, Lee, and Hendry counties. As the Federation works to protect



Photos via FGCU Panther Posse



Picayune Strand State Forest/Picayune Strand Everglades Restoration Project is on the south side and Collier County's North Belle Meade Natural Resource Protection Area is on the north side of this exposed stretch of Alligator Alley I-75.

The Federation is continuing to work with FDOT, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Collier County, and private landholders to identify locations to build additional Alligator Alley I-75 underpasses that connect North Belle Meade and Picayune Strand State Forest.

The Federation was also successful in securing terrestrial wildlife ledges in the design of new county bridges in eastern Collier County. The bridges are in the OK Slough section of the Big Cypress Area of Critical State Concern. This important wildlife habitat links the Big Cypress National Preserve (Collier County) and the OK Slough public conservation lands network (Hendry County). Five Collier County bridges are identified for wildlife ledges and three additional bridges are under review. Collier County relied upon the Federation-sponsored 2006

Eastern Collier Wildlife Movement Study. <https://goo.gl/nTCkQH>

Wildlife Science and Education

Southwest Florida Field Representative Nancy Payton continues to serve as chair of the Florida Panther Recovery Implementation Team, Transportation SubTeam. In 2017 the SubTeam issued a detailed report identifying road hot spots in Southwest Florida and offering solutions. The report and related information can be found at <https://www.fws.gov/verobeach/FloridaPantherRITTransportation.html>.

To complement the 2006 Eastern Collier Wildlife Movement Study, the Federation engaged Dr. Daniel Smith, University of Central Florida, to do a similar evaluation of Keri Road in Hendry County and Corkscrew Road through Lee and Collier counties. The year-long study involves computer modeling and field work. The final report will highlight gaps in the regional conservation network and will pinpoint locations for wildlife underpasses. The goal is to have these studies join the Eastern Collier Wildlife Movement Study as

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REPORT

by Nancy Anne Payton, Southwest Florida Field Representative

an important resource for transportation and land use planners, wildlife agencies, landowners, and advocates. Keri Road was identified by the Transportation SubTeam as a hot spot for panther-vehicle collisions.

Dr. Daniel Smith was also contracted through UCF to undertake a detailed study of Central Florida, Caloosahatchee River north to I-4, to identify gaps in the existing public and private conservation lands network, and pinpoint road segments that bisect that habitat.

Although focused on Central Florida, this project is developing an efficient tool that can be used anywhere by transportation and land use planners, environmental professionals, wildlife advocates, and others to determine the extent existing and proposed roads constitute a threat to wildlife in a region.

Much of the biological research to date, as well as most engineering and construction expenditures by Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and county transportation departments, have considered the location and design of wildlife crossing structures on a case by case basis. Only this effort and a few other studies are addressing wildlife crossing structure needs within the context of animal movements and population viability across the broader landscape. The second phase of this project will be ground-truthing the conservation gaps and potentially deadly road segments identified by the modeling.

This work is particularly important in light of the 2017 confirmation of female Florida panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River. **The female sighted on Babcock Ranch, Charlotte County, was traveling with kittens. Before 2017, the last female documented north of the Caloosahatchee River was in 1973.**

The Southwest Florida Office continues to support the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) Wings of Hope Florida Panther Posse program through printing of educational materials and providing buses so Panther Posse junior biologists can explore the Corkscrew Regional

Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) public conservation lands and experience panther habitat firsthand with knowledgeable trail guides.

The year-long program educates over 5,000 children and involves hundreds of FGCU students as mentors and guides. The program begins in the fall with a visit to FGCU and its interactive Florida Panther classroom. The program culminates with the CREW field trip.

<https://www2.fgcu.edu/cas/wingsofhope>

Every year the Federation co-sponsors the Florida Panther Festival. This year the festival was held at the Naples Zoo.

<http://www.floridapantherfestival.com>

Promoting Private Conservation Efforts

Through the Florida Panther Protection Program, the Federation is working with farmers, ranchers, and conservation partners to protect working lands in rural Southwest Florida. These lands provide important wildlife habitat and connections among the region's public conservation network.

The importance of private landowners to the recovery of the Florida panther cannot be underestimated. The majority of wildlife underpasses built in the last ten years connect privately owned conservation lands. All underpasses in planning also connect privately owned conservation lands.

The Southwest Florida Office's strategy of combining science, education, and advocacy on well-defined campaigns is resulting in significant wins for Florida panthers and other native wildlife.

Thank you to the individuals, foundations, and companies who continue to support the Southwest Florida Office and the Federation's wildlife programs.

Right: Southwest Florida Field Representative Nancy Payton (center with hat) and Federation Board Member Franklin Adams (left with cap) receiving a field briefing on Collier Enterprises' restoration plans for Camp Keais Strand, Collier County. Camp Keais regionally connects Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

2018 Southwest Florida Ongoing Campaigns and Looming Issues

- FDOT planning projects under consideration to widen SR29 through Collier and Hendry counties and FDOT's pledge for additional wildlife crossings most notably at Owl Hammock Curve (Collier County) and OK Slough Spirit of the Wild (Hendry County)

- FDOT's proposed two wildlife crossings on SR82 east and west of the intersection with Corkscrew Road

- FDOT's I-75 Alligator Alley ongoing evaluation of locations for additional underpasses to connect North and South Belle Meade/Picayune Strand State Forest

- Proposed new Wilson-Benfield Highway (Collier County) through North Belle Meade and Picayune Strand State Forest to US 41

- Renewed funding for Conserva-

tion Collier's land acquisition, management, and restoration programs

- Collier County's review of growth plans including the Rural Fringe Mixed Use District, North Golden Gate Estates, and Rural Lands Stewardship Area

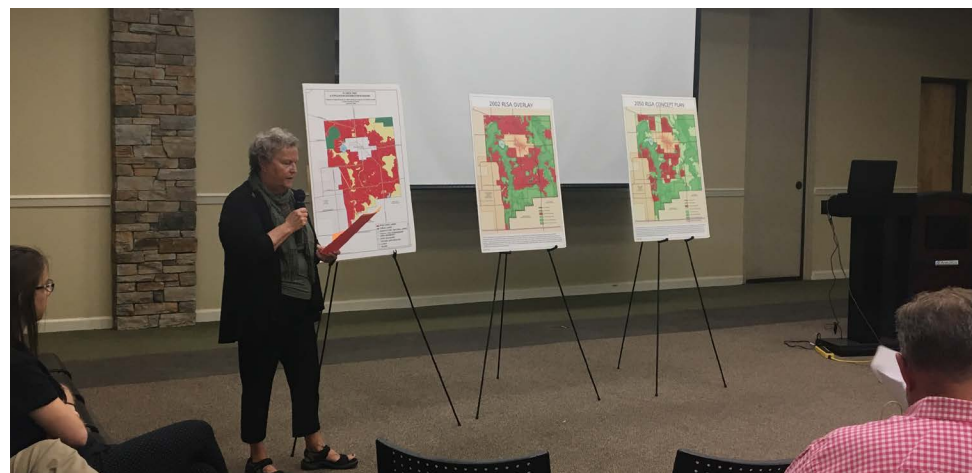
- Eastern Collier Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan which involves 152,000 acres in rural Collier County and immediately north of the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge and includes forever protection/management of 107,000 acres of strategically located panther habitat

- Lee County's Traffic and Wildlife Movement Study for Corkscrew and Alico Roads east of FGCU

- Applications for mines, transportation projects, and development in wildlife habitat

- Collier County's interest in rehydrating North Belle Meade and South Belle Meade/Picayune Strand State Forest, RESTORE project

- FGCU Panther Posse youth conservation education programs

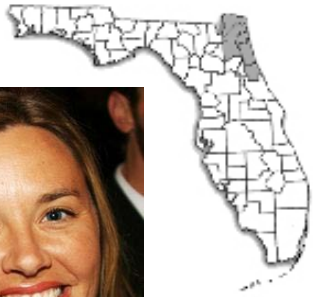


Above: Southwest Florida Field Representative Nancy Payton explaining the conservation benefits of Collier County's Rural Lands Stewardship Area Program. Red on the maps represents rooftops, dark green represents public and private conservation lands, and light green represents agricultural preservation lands. The left map, commonly called the "blood map," is the county's buildout under base density of 1 unit on 5 acres. The middle map is the current program with 50% protection (green) at buildout. The right map represents Florida Wildlife Federation and the Florida Panther Protection Program's vision of 75% land protection at buildout. Collier County is currently reviewing proposed amendments that if adopted can result in the third map becoming reality.



NORTHEAST FLORIDA REPORT

by Sarah Owen Gledhill, FWF's Planning Director



Gopher Tortoise Upland Signage

Thanks to St. Johns County naturalist, Ayolane Halusky, the first batch of upland gopher tortoise signs have been installed. St. Johns County now has several signs in their local parks, such as Vaill Point Park and Canopy Shores. Palm Beach County has requested 10 of both signs – the upland and aquatic signs.

If you are interested in helping the Federation get these signs into more local parks, please donate at the following link or call the office.

[Donate directly to this campaign!](#)

Freshly installed signs in St. Johns County's heavily utilized recreational parks!



Is Offshore Oil Drilling Off the Table in Federal Waters of Florida?

In 2016, the Obama administration announced its intent to abandon its plan to allow new offshore oil drilling on the Southeast coast of the U.S., including Florida. Conservationist, tourism interests and citizens around the state celebrated the announcement.

Fast forward to the Trump administration and Florida is back on the table amongst the other states. The Federation and its partners submitted comments in opposition to reopening the work plan process that would have allowed this harmful activity. We watched vigilantly for any move by the administration. Right before the holiday season a statement from the White House came through announcing a “break” from the proposal to reopen the plan.

However, once the calendar flipped to January, plans to reopen the Southeast coast to off-shore oil drilling were strong and persistent. A swell in bi-partisan support to

protect Florida's coastline grew and everyone became watchful.

Most recently, Governor Rick Scott announced that he was able to convince Department of Interior Secretary Zinke to remove Florida from the administration's plans for off-shore oil drilling. Zinke reiterated with a statement saying Florida was too unique. Unfortunately, these statements were made with zero legally binding formality, and therefore are misleading to Floridians. Moreover, seismic airgun testing was not “exempt,” therefore the industry would still explore for oil and gas while undertaking an activity which has severe impacts on our marine wildlife.

The Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management (BOEM) will be holding one public meeting per state in their respective capitals. Florida's will be conducted February 8 in Tallahassee. The Federation and coalition partners are working to rally our bases and the public to attend the meeting and voice our opposition. We must stand together to protect Florida's estuaries, marine life and tourism economy. Please stand with us! Contact us at news@fwfonline.org to find out more information.





Preston Robertson
Vice-President for Conservation &
General Counsel

Plant Longleaf Pines!

Prior to European settlement, Florida was 2/3 covered by the majestic longleaf pine (*pinus palustris*), a species that is fire resistant; indeed, it loves fire. Over past millennia, fires started from frequent lightning strikes, creeping across hundreds of thousands of acres, only being stopped by rivers and marshes. Over time, frequent fires inspired species that could survive the flames and still thrive. The longleaf-wiregrass ecosystem arose from this situation, and includes not only our native wiregrass, but a multitude of other plant and animal species.

Today, due to development, agricultural conversion and urbanization, the longleaf ecosystem is only a remnant of its former glory. That said, there has been a concerted effort over the past few years to reestablish this important tree, especially on our public lands. Individuals can help also. If you have a space in your lawn that gets sunlight, think about purchasing a longleaf. It is an amazing tree, which starts out in the grass

At present, Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) is focusing on:
*SB = Senate Bill, HB = House Bill, CS = Committee Substitute

- SB 370 (Bradley) – \$100 million to Florida Forever Trust Fund. FWF is taking a wait and see position on this bill, as we are in litigation to ensure that Florida Forever, per Amendment 1 passed by 75% of voters in 2014, is fully funded - \$300 million annually. That said, we are very pleased Senator Bradley is focusing on this critical issue.
- CS/SB 204 (Bradley) – \$50 million for projects to restore St. Johns River and Keystone Lakes region
- HB 237 (Peters)/SB 462 (Young) – Prohibits fracking in Florida **FWF supports**
- SB 292 (Rodriguez) – Solar power can be sold to private users on same property **FWF supports**
- SB 348 (Rodriguez) – Pilot project to determine impact of plastic bags **FWF supports**
- SB 168 (Steube)/HB145 – Pilot project to slow spread of invasive animals **FWF supports**
- SB 574 (Steube)/HB 521 (Edwards) – Legislative preemption of local tree ordinances **FWF opposes**

Other bills of interest:

- HB 53 – Establishes Southeast Florida Coral Reef Conservation Area
- HB 145/SB 168 – Directs FWC to establish pilot programs to eliminate non-native species
- HB 319/SB 550 – Supports present moratorium on drilling in Eastern Gulf of Mexico
- SB 786 – \$50 million for Indian River Lagoon projects
- HB 1247 – Oppose federal effort to lift moratorium of oil drilling off coasts of Florida
- SB 1402 – State assumption of federal Section 404 (Clean Water Act) Dredge and Fill permitting

FWF supports the revival of our coral reefs, full finding for Florida Forever and a moratorium on drilling off Florida.

Please contact your elected Senators and Representatives and tell them your opinion!

To contact your State Senator, go to www.flsenate.gov

To contact your State Representative, go to www.myfloridahouse.gov

stage (like a clump of grass) as its tap root reaches straight down for a water source. Once established, it will grow into a beautiful and long-lived pine, providing shade and habitat.

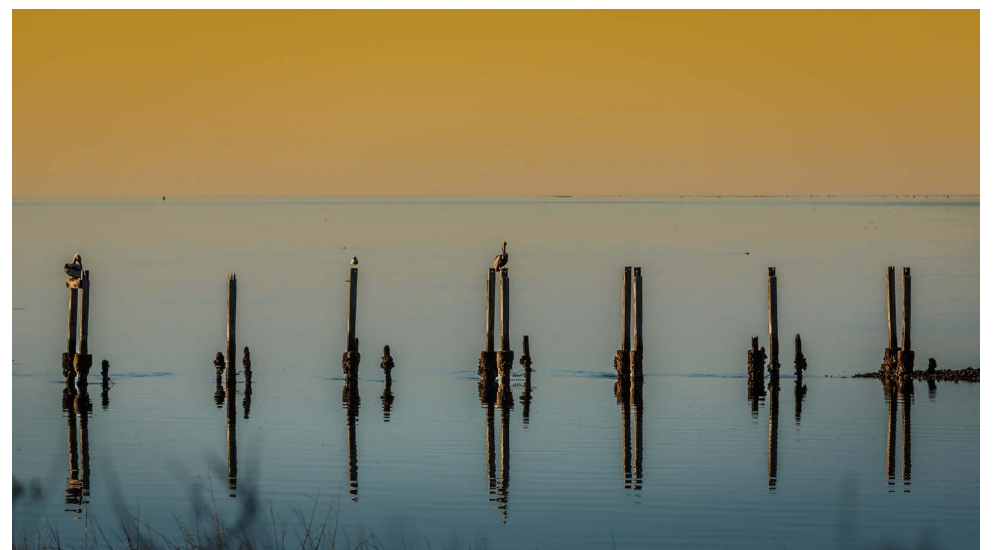
If you plant longleaf, you will be helping to preserve native Florida.

Thanks!

Preston T. Robertson



Planting longleaf pine seedlings with a dibble – it's fun!



Sunset-Sunrise - Overall Runner-Up

New Day by Michael Johnson - St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, FL

**Love Florida,
Don't Litter**



Claudia Farren
Education Consultant

FWF Celebrates Arbor Day with the Trees for Wildlife Program

The Florida Wildlife Federation partnered again this January with the Wakulla County Garden Club (WCGC) and the National Wildlife Federation to give away more than 1,000 young trees in Crawfordville, a small town south of Tallahassee. On January 20, at the WCGC's annual Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway, kids and their families came to a downtown park to choose a tree to plant in their yards. Everyone was allowed to take home one free tree in a pot, and then pay a requested \$4 donation for additional trees. Also, the National Forest Service distributed 1,000 longleaf pine seedlings and the Milkweed Project at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge passed out 375 milkweed plants.

This year's National Wildlife Federation grant enabled the WCGC to distribute 19 species of small trees including Sand Live Oak, Southern Red Cedar, Rusty Blackhaw, Wild

Olive, Redbud, Southern Magnolia, Fringe Tree, American Beech, Big-flowered Silver Bell, Southern Crabapple, Bigleaf Magnolia, and Flatwoods Plum, plus a few trees left over from the 2017 Giveaway. All the seedlings were bought from a Florida wholesale nursery that specializes in native plants, then planted in one-gallon pots with potting soil by volunteers of the Wakulla County Garden Club and local school children.

"I think this was our best Arbor Day ever," said Jeannie Brodhead, one of the WCGC coordinators. "We had great native trees, nice weather, and a huge crowd."

"NWF's Trees for Wildlife Program aspires to educate youth about the role of trees in our environment, how individuals can take action to plant trees, and teaches the unique connection wildlife have with trees," says Luisa Grant, Community Programs Senior Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation. "The program strives to teach kids and their parents about the life cycle of a tree from seed to seedling to mature tree to snag to decaying log, and how wildlife benefit from all these stages of life."



All the seedlings were bought from a Florida wholesale nursery that specializes in native plants, then planted in one-gallon pots with potting soil by volunteers of the Wakulla County Garden Club and local school children.



At the Wakulla County Garden Club's 14th Annual Arbor Day Celebration and Tree Giveaway hundreds of families came to a downtown park to choose a tree to take home and plant in their yards. The Florida Wildlife Federation partnered with the WCGC and the National Wildlife Federation to give away more than 1,000 trees on January 20, 2018.



By planting trees, children and their families can help to ensure that wildlife thrive for many years to come.



FWF assisted with the National Wildlife Federation grant, publicity and participated in the January 20 tree giveaway.



The Milkweed Project at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge contributed three species of native milkweed. Volunteer Sophia Fonseca passed out 375 plants.

are many examples of other invaders, like the ambrosia beetle from Asia, which is destroying native red bay, a key species in many Florida forests, and threatening the related avocado trees, or the red lion fish from the Pacific which consumes a wide variety of reef and other salt water fish from the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic coasts and beyond. We must deal aggressively with science-based control or eradication efforts of current invasives and dramatically increase regulatory controls on the importation of species of both plants and animals. We also need more funding to address these serious problems before they worsen.

We wanted to reach out to you, our members, requesting those with the time, resources or inclination to assist FWF as volunteers. If you would like to directly engage with us as a volunteer, please contact us at www.fwfonline.org. We are looking for volunteers who can help us at festivals around the state, placement of wildlife signage, reaching out to potential donors, helping with quality field trips to Florida's outstanding natural areas and restoration projects, speaking at important meetings relating to Florida's natural areas, etc. We would appreciate your letting us know of your interests and

we will work with you in matching your skills and wishes and FWF's conservation work in the most meaningful and impacting way possible. Thank you.

Your support of Florida Wildlife Federation's work is, has been and always will be critical for our successful conservation work. Sometimes the gains are slow, such as the lengthy period that sometimes occurs when we are forced to litigate, like with our challenge to the mis-spending of a substantial portion of the Water and Land Legacy Amendment funds. Sometimes the road is long but we don't quit working for wildlife and their habitats using all the tools available to us. We all care deeply about such matters. We always welcome your support. In this message we are asking if you have time or resources to work with us, please do so. That is much needed and welcomed. Volunteering is a great way.

Lastly, if you are preparing your will or estate planning and would consider including the Florida Wildlife Federation, which as you know is a tax exempt 501(c)3 charitable organization, please let me know and we can work with you.

Yours in conservation,

Manley



Flowers

Cigar Orchid at Sunset by Prem Subrahmanyam - Everglades National Park, FL

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

There are approximately 11 million acres of wetlands in Florida, with about 90 percent of those wetlands being freshwater wetlands. Florida has the highest wetland acreage of the lower 48 States. Approximately 28 percent of Florida's land area is wetlands. **Over 45 percent of Florida's historic wetland acreages have been eliminated by agricultural, industrial, commercial & residential development.** The State wetland delineation method is NOT equivalent to the Federal wetland delineation method, in that vast acreages of wet pine flatwoods and other interior freshwater wetlands are not regulated by the State ERP (Environmental Resource Permits) program.

EPA will make the decision as to whether Florida can assume the Section 404 Program and the COE (Corps of Engineers) will be involved with this process as well.

The federal environmental criteria that the COE evaluates in making all wetland permitting decisions are the Section 404 (b)(1) Guidelines that were established by the EPA and the COE in 1980. Central tenets of the 404 (b)(1) Guidelines are that wetlands are ecologically valuable and important and should be protected. Proposed development activities that don't require access to or location in wetlands (ie. non-water dependent activities), should not be permitted in wetlands and certain proposed activities that would cause significant ecological damage to wetlands and other waterbodies (rivers, ponds, estuaries, etc.) should not be authorized.

The existing State wetland permitting rules are NOT as protective as the federal Section 404(b)(1) Guidelines and in practice the FDEP/Water Management Districts that implement the State ERP permit program seldom actually deny wetland impact permit applications. The widespread use of privately-owned wetland mitigation banks, and the State's "out provision" in the State wetland permitting

rules does NOT require minimization and avoidance of wetland impacts by developers.

The Florida Legislature is considering two proposed bills, SB 1402 and HB 7043, to facilitate State 404 assumption by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), possibly in 2018.

FWF is concerned that state assumption of this type of permitting will mean more wetland destruction.



Joint Sportsmen Letter Opposing Riders

January 31, 2018

Re: Conservation groups oppose attacks on clean water safeguards in FY 18 budget negotiations

Dear Senator,

The undersigned conservation and sportsmen's organizations urge you to oppose the inclusion of harmful Clean Water Act-related riders in a final spending package for Fiscal Year 2018. In particular, the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill released in November 2017 includes three policy riders that would undermine Clean Water Act protections for streams and wetlands nationwide:

Section 424 would allow polluters to more easily dump dredged or fill material into our streams and wetlands, destroying fish and wildlife habitat and flood storage capacity and degrading water quality downstream.

Section 433 would resurrect the Yazoo Backwater Pumps Project in

SPORTSMAN con't page 10

Mississippi, essentially reversing the Bush administration's "veto" of this project and would lead to the unacceptable damage of 200,000 acres of ecologically-rich wetlands.

Section 434 is particularly pernicious. It attempts to cut out the public's ability to have a voice in the actions of their government, encouraging the agencies to ignore Clean Water Act and Administrative Procedure Act requirements that they meaningfully consider public comment. It could also interfere with the courts' ability to review if the repeal is "arbitrary or capricious."

This Clean Water Act rider is not only irresponsible; it is downright undemocratic. Any Clean Water Rule rider that allows the federal government to sidestep the Administrative Procedures Act would be completely unjustified. Changing the rule of the law to enhance the prospects for a measure designed to weaken the nation's premier clean water law is a disturbing tactic. There should be no place in a funding bill for a rider that would allow the administration to avoid public comment as it takes steps to lift protections for our nation's water that provide fish and wildlife habitat and deliver clean drinking water supplies.

Our organizations and other partner groups have repeatedly ex-

pressed our support for the Clean Water Rule and urged Administrator Pruitt not to repeal it. We have filed extensive public comments. We have filed an amicus brief. We have communicated our concerns to our members of congress, including the leaders of the Senate Appropriations Committee. We support this rule because it conserves our nation's critical headwater streams, shields communities from flooding, supplies drinking water to one in three Americans, and provides essential fish and wildlife habitat that supports a \$887 billion outdoor recreation economy. We expect our voices to be heard in accordance with the law.

We urge you to reject all policy riders attacking safeguards for the streams, wetlands, lakes, and rivers that our families, communities, and economy depend on. We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts regarding possible Clean Water Act riders. We look forward to working with you to ensure that conservationists have a voice in shaping the future of our nation's water resources.

****Note** – The National Wildlife Federation, Florida Wildlife Federation and many other state affiliates are signing onto this letter. The sign-on list is not complete at the present time.



Jay Liles
FWF Policy Consultant

Will Florida's Beaches Become Private Play Grounds?

A walk along the beach is at the essence of what it means to be a Floridian. It is also the quintessential Florida experience for most visitors. And now it is the stuff of political games in the Florida Legislature. A small section of an otherwise innocuous bill (**SB 804/ HB 631**) would prohibit any local government from adopting ordinances designed to protect the historic "customary use" of our beaches. This debate arises out of enactment of a local ordinance in Walton County that protects the right of beach-goers to use the shoreline for recreation. Walton County won a lawsuit filed by property owners who object to the ordinance. The County prevailed. The case is now on appeal. Rather than wait until a ruling from the courts, the bill's sponsors want to preempt local control and require that the courts establish where the boundaries for public access to beaches occurs on a property-by-property basis.

It is our opinion that such a legal remedy would be unenforceable and place an undue burden on county taxpayers. A patchwork of property-by-property decisions will only lead to more conflicts between beach goers and property owners. We would prefer that the Legislature refrain from taking action until the Walton County case is resolved. Then we will know the legal framework upon which to debate further legislation or

maintain the status quo.

The term "customary use" describes a pattern of public access to the waterfront based on ancient, peaceful, and reasonable use of the beach by the public. A hodge-podge of surveys to establish metes and bounds has led to conflict between property owners and the public who rightly assume the beach is open to the public. **The Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) maintains that our beaches are of a unique and important value for public access.** Imagine the blight if property owners resorted to fencing and "No Trespass" signage to protect property lines on the open beach? This is exactly what was occurring in Walton County and why the Board of County Commissioners felt compelled to establish an ordinance protecting beach access and prohibiting the use of barricades to keep people off of private property.

FWF supports private property rights; however, we see coastal waterfront as a unique interface between property owners and the public. Tides, storms and shifting sand can radically alter the landscape overnight. Public access to the beach must remain. Too many of Florida's beaches have become inaccessible. We will continue to work for opportunities for public use of the beachfront.

What can you do to help? If you believe FWF is right in our efforts to protect and expand public access to our beaches, please offer your financial assistance. Successfully defending the public's right to use our beaches is expensive and time consuming and we are up against well-heeled opposition.

Tell your representatives in the Florida Legislature to vote "no" on SB 804/HB 631. Let them know that providing for public beach access is important to you and our tourist economy.



Recreation

Filming the Big Guy by Kay Wells
West Palm Beach, FL

Florida Constitutional Revision Commission considers ban on near-shore oil and gas drilling in Florida's marine waters

Each decade the Florida Constitution is reviewed and revised to reflect an ever-changing Florida. 2018 is no exception and this year's proposed revisions include a ban on oil and gas drilling and exploration off Florida's coast. **The proposal, as offered by Commissioner Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, would ban further gas and oil exploration within Florida's territorial waters (9 nautical miles in the Gulf and approximately 3 nautical miles in the Atlantic).** The Florida Wildlife Federation was instrumental in getting Commissioner Thurlow-Lippisch to offer the amendment and has been a vocal advocate for passage at hearings on the measure thus far.

Recent conflicting news reports indicate just how critical an issue offshore drilling remains. The Trump Administration first announced their intentions to open all coastal waters to oil and gas exploration. That was quickly followed by an announcement out of Governor Scott's office that he had received assurance from Secretary of the Interior Zinke that Florida's moratorium on drilling would remain in effect. The latest word on that is that President Trump was not happy with the Secretary's statement and that it was **not** an official act of the Department, merely a statement of the Secretary indicat-

ing a desire to see Florida exempted. When interviewed by the Orlando Sentinel, Senator Bill Nelson was quoted as saying, "This confirms what we all suspected: there is no deal to protect Florida from drilling. What we saw last week was just political theater, and the people of Florida should be outraged." (For the full story go to: <https://goo.gl/9s9hKY>).

With such confusing signals coming out of the Trump Administration, it is now more critical than ever to protect Florida waters from the impacts of oil and gas exploration. Our tourism economy was severely impacted in 2010 with the Deepwater Horizon disaster in the Gulf. Even though very little tar washed up on our shores, vacationers looked elsewhere for their travel plans. Can we afford to put at risk our gulf and ocean waters, the fish and wildlife they provide, and the critical economic engine that tourism is for Florida's economy?

We need your help to make sure this proposal is included on the ballot in 2018. If approved by at least 60 % of voters, the ban enters our state constitution and will prohibit drilling in Florida Territorial Waters. Please take a moment to offer your help once again. Use this link <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/donate-to-fwf/> to **send**

your contribution to the Florida Wildlife Federation, for the drilling ban campaign. Share this email with others you think may want to also help.

If you have any questions please contact Florida Wildlife Federation by email at news@fwfonline.org or call FWF at 850-656-7113.

Oil and gas interest will mount a large and expensive campaign to fight this initiative. We need your help today! Please make your contribution now. Thank you for helping protect what makes Florida a great place to live, work and play.

On December 13, 2017 the proposal gained committee approval and moves to the next phase of the Constitutional Revision process - public hearings. See flcrc.gov/Meetings/PublicHearings for a public hearing near you).

Below is the language currently being considered by the Constitutional Revision Commission. To see the amendment in its entirety and to follow the process, go to: flcrc.gov/Proposals/Commissioner/2017/0091/ProposalText/c1/HTML

Proposed Amendment P0091:

"To protect the people of Florida and their environment, drilling for exploration or extraction of oil or natural gas is prohibited on lands beneath all state waters which have not been alienated and that lie between the mean high water line and the outermost boundaries of the state's territorial seas. This prohibition does not apply to the transportation of oil and gas products produced outside of such waters."



Waterscape

Early Morning Raiders by Mike Shields
Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge, FL



FLORIDA KIDS' QUIZ

by Pat Pearson



1. What is a "wildlife habitat garden?"



2. Why is recycling becoming more important than ever?



3. What funny thing happens when you gently press on the sides of a snapdragon flower?

See page 14 for answers and more information.



Call For Director Nominations

If you are interested in helping strength the Florida Wildlife Federation as a director during the September 2018 to September 2019 term, or if you wish to nominate someone to fill one of these positions, please write to the Florida Wildlife Federation Nominating Committee, P.O. Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870; FAX (850) 942-4431.

Nominations must be submitted by

April 6, 2018.

To be eligible, a candidate must be a resident of Florida and a member in good standing of the Florida Wildlife Federation. District and Regional Directors must reside in the region or district for which they would serve. Officers and At-Large Directors may reside anywhere within the state.

Federation Directors are expected to

regularly attend Federation meetings, participate in Federation activities, assist in building Federation membership, be actively involved in fund-raising efforts, attend public workshops, act as a liaison with other conservation organizations, and generally promote and lead state-wide conservation activities through the Florida Wildlife Federation. Being an FWF Director requires a substantial

commitment of time and resources but will give the individual an opportunity to be a conservation leader in Florida.

Also, if you are interested in assisting the directors in your region, or in serving on one of the Federation's committees, please contact Michelle Forman at the Federation office in Tallahassee at (850) 656-7113 or michelle@fwfonline.org.

Northwest Region

District I

Escambia, Santa Rosa, Walton, Holmes, Bay, Okaloosa, Washington

District II

Jackson, Calhoun, Gulf, Franklin, Liberty, Gadsden, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson

Northeast Region

District III

Madison, Taylor, Hamilton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Columbia, Union, Bradford, Gilcrest, Alachua

District IV

Baker, Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Putman, Flagler, Volusia

Central Region

District V

Marion, Lake, Seminole, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Brevard, Indian River, Sumter

District VI

Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Hillsborough, Pinellas, Levy

Southern Region

District VII

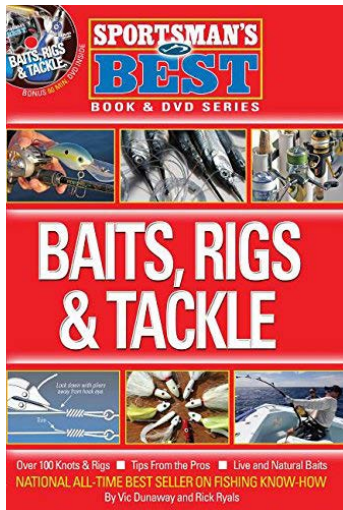
Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Hardee, DeSoto, Highlands, Glades, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Lee

District VIII

Hendry, Collier, Broward, Dade, Monroe

Go to www.fwfonline.org for these items and more great merchandise!

Sportsman's Best: Baits, Rigs & Tackle Book & DVD



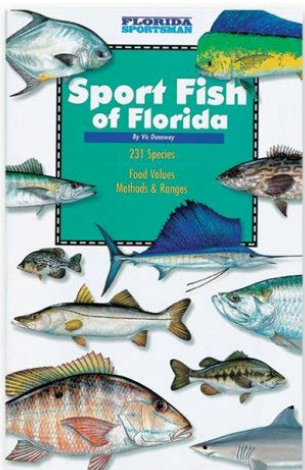
by Vic Dunaway

The latest in rods, reels, lines and terminal tackle. The hottest in rigged baits, live baits and lures. The strongest and easiest knots, leaders and rigs and much, much more. The book and DVD provide all the important angling know-how you'll ever need to fish freshwater or saltwater, bream or bass, spinning or baitcasting, flyrod or canepole, boat or shore.

Paperback, 285 pages. **FP - 309**

Price \$9.95 (Retail Price \$21.95)

Florida Sportsman Sport Fish of Florida



by Vic Dunaway

This excellent book not only has detailed art of just about any species of fish that an angler might catch or use for bait in Florida, but also includes specific tips, hints and biological information compiled by Vic Dunaway in over 50 years of Florida fishing.

Paperback, 253 pages. **FP - 343**

Price \$9.95 (Retail Price \$16.95)

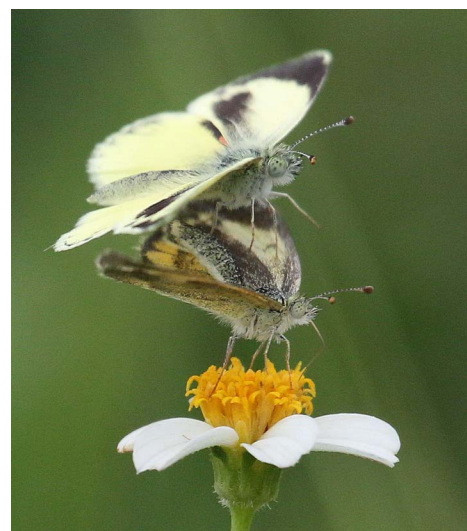


FWF Shopper-Tote

Shopper Tote with a stylish rope handle. Conveniently laminated, this eco-friendly produce is made from 100% natural jute fiber. You'll conserve resources while you're shopping and show your support for FWF!

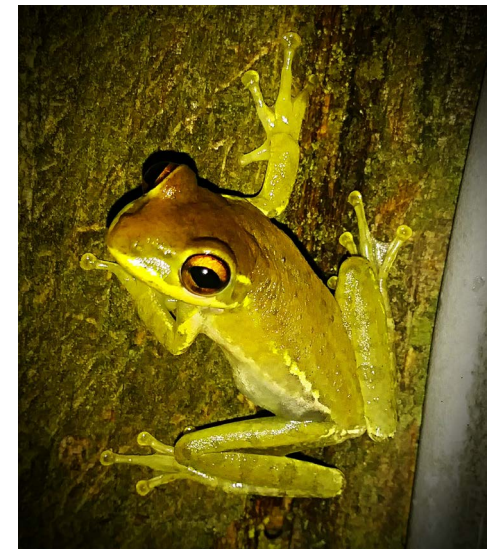
FP - 553

Price \$7.95



Wildlife

Dainty Sulphurs Courtship
by Barbara Richie
Tamarac, FL



Mobile Category

Tree frog
by Keven Williams
Fort Ogden, FL



Portrait

Love Birds by Dave Berman
St. Augustine, FL



Landscape

Swamp by Camille Coffman
Lakeland, FL



Kids Category

Palm Beneath the Stars by Jonah Parker-Hanson
St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge, FL

New Wildlife Legacy Club Member:
Kitson & Partners, Palm Beach Gardens

New Life Members:

George Jones, Port St. Lucie

Bob Walker, Tallahassee

Susan Riordan, Naples

Judy Rasmuson, Madison

David Rauschkolb, Santa Rosa Beach

Deborah Boylan, Crystal River

Thank you for your generous support!

**Legacy Club Members are those who have donated \$5,000 or more in a single gift.
Eagle Club Members are \$2,500 donors and Life Members are \$1,000 donors.*



**IN
MEMORIAM**

**Donations have been received in
memory of:**

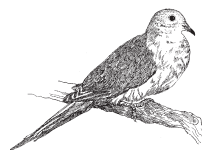
Laura Kammerer

by David Ferro



Charles L. Rue, Jr.

by Charles M. Rue, Ttee



Toy D. Savage, Jr.

by Mr. & Mrs. Thomas B. Evans, Jr.

*The Federation thanks you for your thoughtful contributions. We express
our sympathy to family and friends of those who have passed away.*

Answers to Florida Kids' Quiz

1. *A wildlife habitat garden is a place at home or school that is planned so that native wild birds or animals can find food, water, and safety when they come there to visit.*

2. *Recycling is more important than ever because we are running out of space to put our trash. Many of the things we throw away are nonbiodegradable, which means they don't ever rot and go back to natural materials that can be absorbed back into the earth. This is particularly true of plastics, including plastic bags which can kill sea critters when they swallow them. So please compost organic material and recycle what you can!*

3. *Snapdragons are annual flowering plants that grow on a high spike with many individual flowers on one tall stem. They come in many colors. The flowers are thought to look like the faces of tiny dragons. The funny thing that happens when you press gently on the sides of an individual flower, about an inch back from the front, is that the petals open up, and it looks like a dragon is opening its mouth! Then you can stick a finger from your other hand in the dragon's mouth and yell "Ouch, this flower is biting me!"*

How did you do, Florida Kid??!!

Remembering the Federation

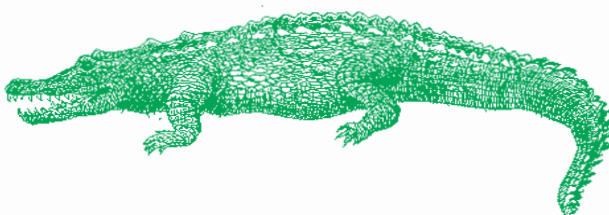
If you wish to name Florida Wildlife Federation in your will or estate plan, please use the following language:

The Florida Wildlife Federation, a nonprofit cooperation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of Florida, with principal business address of PO Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870.

Our federal tax identification number is 59-1398265.

Help Us Plan

If your plans already include a gift for Florida Wildlife Federation, please let us know. We will honor all requests for anonymity, and you can always modify your gift if your circumstances change. For more information please contact **Tim Bachmeyer**, FWF Development Consultant, at **561-801-5752** or **Preston Robertson** at **850-656-7113**.



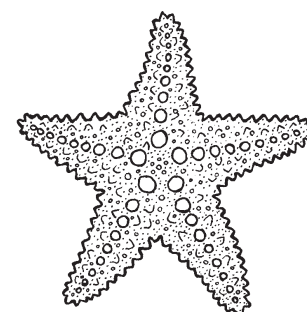
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Smile

You shop. Amazon gives.

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Florida Wildlife Federation whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

When you Start With a Smile, we can facilitate Wildlife Crossings statewide which protect wildlife and humans.

Visit <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1398265> to sign up!



Florida Wildlife Federation asks:

Do you want to make sure that your children and grandchildren have a healthy environment and can enjoy quality outdoor recreation in Florida?

Do you want to ensure our lands and waters are conserved and available for resource-based public recreation?

If you agree that we must protect the future of well-managed outdoor recreation by acquiring public conservation lands, encouraging private-lands conservation, and restoring habitats and populations of fish and wildlife through sound management, then we would like you to become a member of the Florida Wildlife Federation.



By joining with us, you will become part of a dynamic, statewide organization with the goal of conserving Florida's fish, wildlife, water and plant life in the face of rapid loss of habitat statewide. **It is only with the financial support of our members that we may continue to pursue these goals. Please join or donate today!**

We need your support to conserve Florida's wildlife and habitat for today and the future!

Don't forget about a gift membership!

Yes! I want to join the **Florida Wildlife Federation** to conserve, protect, and restore Florida's natural treasures such as springs and water bodies, fish & wildlife habitats, and to enhance the public's enjoyment of resource-based, outdoor recreation in Florida. With your membership you will receive the FWF publication, *Florida Fish and Wildlife News (FFWN)* by mail or email (please select your choice below).

- ☐ Student..... \$15
- ☐ Associate..... \$35
- ☐ Family..... \$50
- ☐ Sustaining..... \$100
- ☐ Sponsor..... \$250
- ☐ Wildlife Steward..... \$500
- ☐ Life Member..... \$1,000
- ☐ Eagle Club Member..... \$2,500
- ☐ Wildlife Legacy Club... \$5,000

Please send completed form with check, money order, or credit card information to:
Florida Wildlife Federation
PO Box 6870
Tallahassee, FL 32314
or
Join or Donate Online at:
www.fwfonline.org

Enclosed is my payment for \$ _____
Please charge my payment to:
☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover
Card # _____ Exp. Date _____
Signature _____ Sec. Code _____
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Please send me my *FFWN* by _____ Mail _____ E-mail _____
_____ Please add me to your list to receive occasional e-mail updates.

☐ This is a gift membership from: _____

A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL-FREE (800-435-7352) WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE OF FLORIDA. THE REGISTRATION NUMBER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES TO THE FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION IS: CH-499.

2017 Boating Sweepstakes Winner

Congratulations to the winner of the 27th Annual Boating Sweepstakes. Florida Wildlife Federation's sweepstakes helped raise funds to pursue vital wildlife and fish programs that ensure that we all continue to enjoy Florida's wondrous outdoors.



Frank Scott, Jr., of Altamonte Springs, winner of the 27th Annual Boating Sweepstakes, accepting his Grand Prize certificate from Claudia Farren, FWF Sweepstakes Coordinator.

**The 28th Annual
Boating Sweepstakes
will begin in March.**

**Watch for your tickets
in the mail! Or, go to:
www.fwfonline.org**



FWF's 27th Annual Boating Sweepstakes Drawing was held on December 14, 2017 at 3 pm at Federation Headquarters. The drawing was supervised by Carroll and Co., Inc., Certified Public Accountants. Attending the drawing were: (back row from the left) Danny Gwynn-Shapiro, Florida Fish and Wildlife News Producer and Editor; Stephen Roeder, CPA, Carroll and Company; Jeannie Scruggs, Bookkeeper/CPA; Claudia Farren, Sweepstakes Coordinator; Manley Fuller, FWF President; (front row from the left) Lynn Jones, Membership Coordinator; Officer John Beeman, Tallahassee Police Department; and Ashleigh Serfozo, Administrative Assistant. Photo by Michelle Forman, FWF Operations Manager.

Claudia Farren, Sweepstakes Coordinator, with Stephen Roeder, CPA, Carroll and Company, who pulled the Grand Prize Boating Sweepstakes ticket at Federation Headquarters in December.



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Conservation Calendar

January 9 - March 9, 2018
Florida's Legislative Session

March 14-16, 2018
The Endangered Apalachicola: A National River Conference
apalachicolariverconference.com

April 25-26, 2018
FWC Commission Meeting
Ft. Lauderdale
www.MyFWC.com/Commission

April 27-29, 2018
FWF Annual Awards Banquet
And Board of Directors meeting
Safety Harbor Inn & Spa
michelle@fwfonline.org

June 19-20, 2018
FWC Commission Meeting
Sarasota
www.MyFWC.com/Commission

Florida Wildlife Federation's Celebration of the Wild and 81st Annual Conservation Awards Banquet

*Saturday, April 28, 2018 at Safety Harbor Resort and Spa
105 North Bayshore Drive, Safety Harbor, FL 34689*

We cordially invite you to attend the Florida Wildlife Federation's Celebration of the Wild and 81st Annual Conservation Awards Banquet and silent auction fundraiser, being held at the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa. The evening events include a delicious dinner, the awards ceremony and our famous silent auction, as well as, an art exhibit by Peter R. Gerbert. You don't want to miss this opportunity to meet the 2018 Conservation Award Winners and to bid on items including fine art, trips and more in the silent auction. We sincerely hope to see you in Safety Harbor for a fun evening.

Saturday, April 28th

5:30 pm

Cocktail Reception + Silent Auction

Baranoff Room
Hors d'oeuvres & Cash Bar
Silent Auction and Art Exhibit
Featuring: Peter R. Gerbert

7:00 pm

FWF's 81st Annual Conservation Awards Banquet

Baranoff Room
Dinner & Presentation of Awards
(\$100 per person)



On Saturday, April 28th, the Florida Wildlife Federation Board of Directors and House of Delegates will hold the spring board meeting in the Bayshore A&B meeting rooms of the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. For further information, contact Michelle Forman at: 850-656-7113 or michelle@fwfonline.org.

Safety Harbor Resort and Spa



In 1539 Hernando Desoto reached the shores of Old Tampa Bay and discovered the natural springs (later named "Es-piritu Santo Springs") believing he had found the legendary "Fountain of Youth" missed by Ponce De Leon. In 1964 the U.S. Department of the Interior recognized and designated the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa a Historical Landmark and in 1997 it became a Florida Heritage Landmark. Built on the site of the natural mineral springs believed to restore youth and vitality, the spa treatments and three swimming pools use the healing powers of the water to help you achieve your own personal serenity. Stunning views of Tampa Bay, spacious guestrooms, historic ballrooms and award winning spa facilities await your visit.

To make your room reservations, call 1-888-237-8772 and ask for In-house reservations. You can identify yourself with the "Florida Wildlife Federation Group" or refer to Group #39G9HO to receive the group rate of \$119.00 per night. The cut-off date to receive this rate is April 6th. Availability and room rate not guaranteed after April 6th.

Registration Form For Banquet and Silent Auction

*You may also register online at
<https://FWFawards2018.eventbrite.com>*

Saturday, April 28th

Celebration of the Wild and 81st Annual Conservation Awards Banquet

Safety Harbor Resort and Spa, \$100.00 per person.

Enclosed is \$_____ for _____ people.

Event includes cocktail reception, cash bar, awards banquet and silent auction.

Special Dietary Requests must be noted in advance: _____

Please enter the names of all persons attending with you: _____

Total amount: \$_____

Checks payable to Florida Wildlife Federation

Please reserve your tickets no later than **April 16th!**
Attn. Michelle Forman, Florida Wildlife Federation
P.O. Box 6870, Tallahassee, FL 32314-6870
Questions? Email: michelle@fwfonline.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Discover, AMEX, VISA, MC #: _____

Exp. Date: _____ Security Code: _____ Total charged: _____

Signature: _____ Phone #: _____

Email: _____