

Fish & Wildlife News



**Florida
Wildlife
Federation**
Since 1936

Volume 38, Issue 2

Summer 2023

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Chair's Message

Dave Preston



A Florida Worth Fighting For

I hope everyone is having a great summer. At FWF there is much good news to report. As you know, in January, by unanimous vote, the Board of Directors elected our new President and CEO Sarah Gledhill, and we have since been hard at work finalizing a newly updated strategic plan that will lay out the goals for the coming years and a roadmap to achieving them. In a state with no shortage of challenges, we have our work cut out for us - but we believe deeply that our efforts will be rewarded with a better future for the next generation of Floridians.

As we set bold goals and

progress benchmarks for the growth of the Federation, we have the utmost confidence that our team will continue to grow our impact and make a difference across the entire state - from the Panhandle and North Florida, south to Lake O and the Everglades, and all the way down to Florida Bay and Key West.

There is much natural beauty remaining in this state worth saving, and you can count on us to be at the front lines, fighting for the things that matter the most to every one of you.



Photographer: Steven Oliemuller; Title: Mr. Alligator; Location: Venice

Cover Photo

Title: Curiosity

Photographer: Dominick Blaszkiewicz

Location: Delray Beach



Florida Fish & Wildlife News

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Title: Curiosity Artist: Dominick Blaszkiewicz Location: Delray Beach

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President's Message

Sarah Gledhill, President and CEO



Your Support Energizes Our Work

This summer has been the hottest year in modern history - globally. This heat we are feeling is from the inaction of governmental leaders to address human-caused climate change. We no longer think about how climate change will affect future generations – climate change is here now, impacting people, animals, and plants. As the planet is warming, our natural systems are struggling to keep up.

The Federation is deeply concerned about how climate change impacts Florida's native wildlife. Wildlife depends on healthy habitats. They need the right temperatures, fresh water, food sources, and places to raise their young. When these critical elements are altered, wildlife's survival and natural resources are in jeopardy. For example:

- Higher temperatures will lead to longer, drier conditions across Florida. This creates a **loss of functional wetland habitat** for fish and aquatic species.
- **Sea-level rise** will inundate beaches and marshes and cause erosion on both coasts, diminishing habitat for birds, invertebrates, fish, and other coastal wildlife.
- Higher average temperatures and changes in rain will enable some **invasive plant and animal** species, as well as diseases, to move into new areas.

In 2022, with your voice, we successfully urged Governor DeSantis to veto the anti-solar rooftop bill, that would strip the financial incentives of homeowners who elect to have rooftop solar. This was a great win to help everyday Floridians who step up and do their part to curb climate change with clean, renewable energy.

With Florida now the nation's fastest-growing state for the first time since 1957, we recognize that uncontrolled development of our wild lands produces more roads, cars, and parking lots, with fewer trees and wetlands — which only exacerbates the impacts of climate change. This is why the Federation has always held conservation of wildlife habitat as the foundation of our work. We believe land conservation is the best growth management tool and a mission-grounded strategy to address climate change.

The Federation is a leader in the land conservation advocacy space. From the 1979 Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program to the 1990 Florida Preservation 2000 program, the Federation has been right there at the table, working across the aisle to implement these funded programs.

As Florida has had the country's premier land conservation buying program, we continue to advocate for consistent and meaningful funding.

This past legislative session, we celebrated the 2024 budget including \$850 million to acquire lands in the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor in North Central Florida and the Caloosahatchee Big Cypress Corridor in Collier and Hendry counties. However, this single-year funding still ignores the will of 75% of Florida voters who approved Amendment 1 (2014), the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative, to fund Florida Forever with upwards of \$900 million annually for 20 years. Furthermore, a bill was signed into law creating a ceiling of \$100 million for Florida Forever.

Since we still do not have

dedicated and substantial funding for the next ten years, we will be in the halls of Tallahassee every year to educate our decision-makers about the importance of land conservation and secure their commitments to fully fund Florida Forever.

Will we have Senate and House leaders as supportive as this year's leadership? Will they pass new legislation that generates robust funding, maybe \$900 million? We do not have the answers to these questions now, but we are working with state leaders and partners to address them.

We are still in a lawsuit against the legislature as to the misspending of hundreds of millions of dollars from Amendment 1, as described above. We anticipate a decision this Fall.

I want to convey how important your support is to the Federation. The Legislature has spent untold public money on private attorneys to fight us on Amendment 1. As the litigation continues, we continue to incur legal expenses and costs. Your financial support helps us keep fighting for Florida's wildlife and wild lands. We are determined to make the legislature honor the will of 75% voters and deliver critical acquisition and protection of conservation lands across the state.

For the Wild,



How Many Tree Species?

I teach a lot of tree identification classes and I always like to start out with this question: How many trees are there in the world? That way, we will know how many we must learn so that we will feel accomplished in the field of tree identification. *LOL*.

The best answer I have for this question comes from an organization called Botanical Gardens Conservation International (BGCI). BGCI has been working for a few years by consulting over 500 published sources and connecting with experts all over the world to find the number of tree species. BGCI has been the center of a global network of around 2,500 botanic gardens and arboreta.

Their current estimate is 60,065 tree species in the world. While some species have well established numbers, some are down to as low as four known individuals. You can find more on BGCI by visiting their web page at:

https://tools.bgci.org/global_tree_search.php

BGCI has also been looking into which country has the most species?

Not surprisingly, the large country of Brazil with its diverse Amazon rain forest has the greatest number of tree species. The latest count is 8,715.

In the contiguous United States, there are an estimated 641 tree species. Surprisingly, Florida's Torreya State Park and the surrounding area is second only to the Smokey Mountains in tree species. Torreya State Park is located about one hour west of Tallahassee. It is an unusual place in Florida. Besides



Blooming parsley hawthorn (Crataegus marshallii) Wakulla Springs State Park. Photo by Stan Rosenthal

being bordered on the west side by the scenic Apalachicola River, it also is unusually hilly. One of its bluffs rises 300 feet above the Apalachicola River. This unusual landscape includes many rare species in its many plant communities from upland pine to floodplain forests and everything in-between.

A good map showing tree diversity in the contiguous United States has been created by BiodiversityMapping.org. Their map can be found on the web at:

<https://biodiversitymapping.org/index.php/usa-trees/>

If you look at this map, you will see that the area around Torreya State Park is loaded with many different types of trees. Tree diversity decreases as you go down our peninsula, but along our coastlines, the diversity picks up again.

Florida is currently estimated to have more than 17 million acres of

forest. That's around half of the state being covered by forest.

Florida is also unique in that we span subtropical to tropical climate zones. This greatly expands the different tree species we can see in this state. The West Indian tropical hardwood hammocks at Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park look a lot different than the longleaf pine-bluestem forests of the northwestern panhandle.

There are many exciting areas in Florida where you can see our many different types of trees. Suggestions would be our state parks, greenways and state and national forests.

Stan Rosenthal is Forest Advocate with the Florida Wildlife Federation and Extension Agent Emeritus with UF/IFAS Leon Extension.



Photographer: Shania Campbell; Title: Resting Turtles; Location: Melbourne

FWF Swamp Tromp in the Northern Everglades

After the Federation's quarterly Board of Directors meeting in April, some board and staff went tromping around in the marshes of the northern Everglades – at night!

Check out some of the incredible and unique species the FWF team encountered:



FWF President Sarah Gledhill holds a two-toed amphiuma (*Amphiuma means*), one of the seldom encountered species of giant salamander that dwells in these habitats.



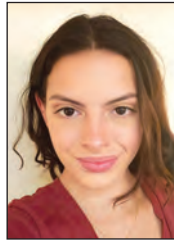
Tasman Rosenfeld holds an Everglades dwarf siren (*Pseudobranchius axanthus belli*), which is found nowhere else in the world but the Florida Everglades!



Board Vice Chair Matt Erpenbeck found an old striped mud turtle (*Kinosternon baurii*) out hunting for dinner.

Manatees/Los Manatíes

Manatees can be found in Florida, especially during the winter. This is because manatees need warm water to survive. Manatees feed on vegetation such as algae and seagrass. They are typically nine to ten feet long and about 1,000 pounds. These creatures are intelligent. Many manatees use their long-term memory to migrate to the same place yearly. Manatees are beautiful animals. Unfortunately, they are in danger.



Allison Ramos

Over the last thirty years, the manatee population had significantly increased. As a result, in 2017, manatees were no longer considered endangered. Instead of endangered, manatees were considered a threatened species. However, manatees are dying at alarming rates in Florida. Since 2020, more than 2,000 manatees have died. One would expect boats to be the cause of these deaths, but most of these manatees are dying due to pollution caused by humans and poor water quality. Pollutants such as fertilizer, which contain phosphorus and nitrogen, cause microalgae growth. This blocks the sunlight from reaching the seagrass, killing one of the main foods that manatees eat. Manatees are now starving and dying quickly due to poor water quality and a lack of food.

Florida is blessed to have manatees in our state. We must protect these gentle giants and push for cleaner water, more regulation of pollutants, and projects that will help bring back manatees to the population they once were.

Los manatíes se pueden encontrar en Florida, especialmente durante el invierno. Esto se debe a que los manatíes necesitan agua tibia para sobrevivir. Los manatíes se alimentan de vegetación como algas y pastos marinos. Por lo general, miden de nueve a diez pies de largo y pesan alrededor de 1,000 libras. Estas criaturas son inteligentes. Muchos manatíes utilizan su memoria de largo plazo para migrar al mismo lugar cada año. Los manatíes son hermosos animales. Desafortunadamente, están en peligro.

Durante los últimos treinta años, la población de manatíes ha aumentado significativamente. Como resultado, en 2017, los manatíes ya no se consideraban en peligro de extinción. En lugar de estar en peligro de extinción, los manatíes se consideraban una especie amenazada. Sin embargo, los manatíes están muriendo a un ritmo alarmante en Florida. Desde 2020, han muerto más de 2,000 manatíes. Uno esperaría que los barcos fueran la causa de estas muertes, pero la mayoría de estos manatíes mueren debido a la contaminación causada por los humanos y la mala calidad del agua. Los contaminantes como los fertilizantes, que contienen fósforo y nitrógeno, provocan el crecimiento de microalgas. Esto impide que la luz del sol llegue a la hierba marina, matando uno de los principales alimentos que comen los manatíes. Los manatíes ahora se mueren de hambre y mueren rápidamente debido a la mala calidad del agua y la falta de alimentos.

Florida tiene la suerte de tener manatíes en nuestro estado. Debemos proteger a estos gentiles gigantes e impulsar un agua más limpia, una mayor regulación de los contaminantes, y proyectos que ayuden a que los manatíes regresen a la población que alguna vez fueron.



Photographer: Dan Mele; Title: Light on Manatee; Location: Fanning Springs



Florida Wildlife Federation President and CEO, Sarah Gledhill, joins other affiliate leaders from across the country and National Wildlife Federation staff for a Farm Bill fly-in. They had over 60 meetings with various members of congress to urge them to protect the nearly \$20 billion dollar earmark from the Inflation Reduction Act to promote private land conservation.



Vote for District Directors

- District 1 -
Matt Aresco
(Panhandle)
- District 2 -
Pepper Uchino
(Tallahassee region)
- District 3 -
Ray Carthy
(Big Bend)
- District 4 -
Adam Morley (NE)
- District 5 -
Mason Theurer
(Eastern CFL)
- District 6 -
Rene Brown
(Greater Tampa area)
- District 7 -
Jon Turner
(PB to St Lucie)
- District 8 -
Jennifer Rehage
(SE FL)

Please vote online at
floridawildlifefederation.org/vote/

Only current members may vote. **Voting ends September 8, 2023.**

“Eight District Directors (one for each district) shall be elected by the Individual Associate and Corporate or Business members. Nominations for those eight District Directors shall be published to the Individual Associate and Corporate or Business members in the form of a ballot at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Such ballots shall be received by the Federation’s principal place of business no later than fifteen days prior to the annual meeting; otherwise, the votes on such ballots shall not be counted. The ballots shall be tabulated by the Federation’s employees, verified by the Organizational Affairs Committee, and announced at the conclusion of the other elections. The eight District Directors s elected shall be the nominees who received the most votes and neither decline their nomination nor were elected to another office or directorship.” – FWF Bylaws, article XI, section B – as amended September 2005



Gardening for Wildlife in Florida

Conservation can happen on a small scale. Looking just as far as our gardens, we can see a place to have a remarkable impact as individuals.

We are losing species at an alarming rate, and habitat loss is a primary cause. Hundreds of people move to Florida every day. Every new resident uses about one half acre of land for housing, roads, schools and more - land that was home to birds, insects, rabbits, racoons, frogs, salamanders, and many other creatures. With development, we lose native plants needed for food and shelter for wildlife, as well as streams and creeks that provided water sources.

Native plants and animals are essential to our natural ecosystems. These natural lands in turn support us by providing clean air and storing water, reducing runoff, shading and cooling our landscapes, and sequestering carbon. We all depend on healthy ecosystems for quality of life.

As gardeners we can make a difference. All our yards and gardens together make up a vast amount of land. We can build gardens and landscapes that conserve wildlife and support ecosystems. With a place to dig in the soil at home, neighborhood schools or places of worship, at



"Gardening for Wildlife in Florida" eBook is available online.

local parks or businesses, this is a crucial time to move quickly to make these spaces into habitats that support wildlife.

Gardening for Wildlife in Florida is a new e-booklet available online from the Federation. Created in collaboration with Canvas of the Wild, this free guide is an introduction to gardening with native plants in the Sunshine State with suggestions for plants to attract butterflies, other pollinators, and birds throughout the state. The booklet offers ideas and first steps for creating a beautiful garden to provide wildlife habitat and support the local ecosystem. It includes family activities for exploring yards for wildlife, sketching a garden plan, and creating designs with coloring pages.

Urban gardens can boost biodiversity significantly, especially if people plant primarily native

species. The research has found urban gardens can be productive ecosystems with abundant pollinators and support a diversity of native wildlife. Bees love urban gardens, especially with lots of flowers - and they prefer a garden that might seem a little "messy" compared to some landscapes we've grown accustomed to.

Gardens and yards that mimic nature can host a range of wildlife, while the turf grass and non-native ornamental plants that have been mainstays of gardens and landscaping offer little to support native insects and other critters.

A Florida garden or yard with diverse native plants can conserve water, reduce runoff and pollution, and eliminate pesticides and fertilizer. Using a variety of mostly native species, we can choose the right plants to thrive in our outdoor spaces. In gardens large or small, our choices of plants and groundcover can help conserve and restore biodiversity.

You can find *Gardening for Wildlife in Florida* at <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/gardening-in-florida/>. We hope you enjoy it.



Leave a Wildlife Legacy



Photographer: Brian Kamprath; Title: Family Outing; Location: Orlando

Did you know you can create your own lasting wildlife legacy with a planned gift? Establishing a planned gift is a commitment to the future of Florida's wildlife and habitat.

By considering the Florida Wildlife Federation in your giving strategy, you will:

- Conserve Florida's remaining wild places and iconic species
- Advocate for the protection of Florida's natural resources
- Promote sustainable outdoor recreation
- Deliver environmental education for generations to come

To make a bequest to the Florida Wildlife Federation, contribute through a retirement account or life insurance policy, or discuss your legacy giving options, please call our office at (850) 656-7113.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE Kids' Quiz

by Marney Richards

1. Do you know a large florida bird of prey that is also called a fish hawk?



2. Have you seen an orange and black butterfly that looks similar to both monarch and queen butterflies?



3. This native hibiscus has a showy, red flower and can be found in wet to moist areas.



See page 10 for answers
and more information.



Thank You to Our Donors

Thank You for Your Generous Support!



IN MEMORIAM

Donations Have Been Received in Memory of:

—————*Memorial Gift:*—————

Steve O'Hara

By Frederick Carroll III

Bonnie Rodan

By Daniel F. Goldstein

John Gummo

By Mara Hause, Erin Ball,
Michelle Gummo

Tom Reese

By Lessons with Renee LLC
and Friends of Brooker Creek
Reserve

—————*Honorary Gift:*—————

**Roger A. Shell
(Happy Birthday!)**

By Alyssa Tilhou

**“ FWF's mission is to conserve
Florida's wildlife, habitat,
and natural resources through
education, advocacy and
science-based stewardship.”**

**Join or Renew with
FWF today**

Please go to
floridawildlifefederation.org
or call **(850) 656-7113** to
JOIN or RENEW today
Thanks!

Answers to **FLORIDA WILDLIFE Kids'** Quiz

1. Osprey are large hawks with slender bodies, brown above and white below with a brown stripe through the eye. They fish in fresh and saltwater habitats, diving feet first to grab fish, carrying them back to a nest in their talons. Osprey sometimes build their large stick nests in the tops of large trees, but their nests are often seen on utility poles and artificial platforms.

2. Viceroy butterflies have orange wings with black borders and white spots. They are smaller than the monarch or queen butterflies. Like both these species, they are distasteful to birds. Viceroy habitat is swamps, pond and stream edges, and wet roadside ditches. Willows are the larval host plants for viceroy caterpillars.

3. Scarlet rosemallow, or scarlet hibiscus, grows 5-8 feet tall and blooms spring-summer. It attracts butterflies, native bees and hummingbirds and is a larval host for several species of butterflies and moths.

How Did You Do, Florida Kid?

Welcome Becky Dotson

Please join us in welcoming our newest Federation team member, Rebecca “Becky” Dotson, filling the role of Operations Manager. Becky comes with over 30 years of experience in sales, business management, real estate, and customer service. She is excited to use her skillset to help the organization grow and advance our mission to keep Florida wild.



Becky Dotson

Originally from Maryland, Becky now lives in the panhandle area. You can find her on the weekends with her family enjoying one of her favorite places, Apalachicola. One of her family members, Lola, a yellow lab, has been trained to pick up litter and throw it away.

Becky, you are a great addition to the team.
Welcome aboard!



Photographer: Prashant Kankaria; Title: Another Paparazzi, Sure!; Location: Cape Coral; Species: Burrowing Owl



Marney Richards, FWF Education Coordinator, engaged with conservationists of all ages at the Jubilee Festival in Tallahassee. The annual event promotes healthy farming and sustainability through exhibits, presentations, and more.

We're Social!



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Photographer: Bonnie Masdeu; Title: Anhinga In The Morning Light; Species: Anhinga