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Florida Wildlife Federation Honors 2025 State Parks Champions

Senator Gayle Harrell and Representative John Snyder celebrated for their leadership in protecting Florida public lands from inappropriate development.

PALM BEACH, Fla. (October 23, 2025) — The Florida Wildlife Federation (FWF) gathered Tuesday with conservation leaders, community members, and elected officials to honor Senator Gayle Harrell and Representative John Snyder as recipients of the *2025 State Parks Champion Award*.

“This victory reflects what Floridians can achieve when we work together to protect what we love,” said Sarah Gledhill, FWF President and CEO. “Our state parks are part of who we are: places where families connect with nature and wildlife thrives. Thanks to overwhelming public support and the dedication of Senator Harrell and Representative Snyder, these incredible wild spaces will remain part of Florida’s future.”

The recognition celebrates their leadership in the landmark State Park Preservation Act, passed unanimously by the Florida Legislature on April 30, 2025, and signed into law by Governor Ron DeSantis on May 22, 2025. It was introduced following public concern over proposed golf course and resort-style developments within nine state parks. The new law safeguards Florida’s 175 state parks from incompatible uses and guarantees public participation in any future management changes.

Harrell, who championed the bill in the Senate, shared her own connection to state parks and how this was echoed across the state: “Florida’s state parks are treasures that belong to all of us. I’m proud of how quickly we came together to keep these special places unspoiled and accessible for everyone who loves the outdoors.”

Snyder, who led the effort in the House, highlighted the bipartisan collaboration that made the legislation possible: “Protecting our parks is something that transcends politics. Floridians from every corner of the state made their voices heard, and together we acted to keep our parks wild for everyone to enjoy.”

The afternoon reception was hosted by FWF Board Member Bobbie Lindsay and her husband Douglas Buck, bringing the community together to celebrate a defining victory for Florida’s environment.

While the FWF and its supporters paused to celebrate, Gledhill noted that their advocacy continues as the organization prepares for the 2026 Florida Legislative Session.

Photos from the event are available [at this link](#).

About Florida Wildlife Federation

The Florida Wildlife Federation is a statewide non-profit dedicated to safeguarding Florida’s water, wildlife, and wild spaces by taking action today to prevent irreversible loss tomorrow. Since 1936, we’ve united conservationists, anglers, hunters, recreationists, and wildlife enthusiasts to protect Florida’s ecosystems. From the halls of legislature to the homes of everyday Floridians, we’ve achieved milestones such as securing protections for iconic species like the Florida panther and constitutional amendments for land and water conservation. With a steadfast commitment to tackling challenges like pollution and unchecked development, we envision a future where Florida’s natural resources are fiercely protected by and for all. Learn more at floridawildlifefederation.org.

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