



Finishing Strong



Photo Credit: Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee 2021 by Cleo Fogal

Despite the disruptions to all our lives due to COVID-19, we are set to finish the 2020-2021 paddling season strong. Last month we had great weather and conditions as we completed our 8th Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee trip with a great group of paddlers . . . maybe our best trip yet! A big shout out to the Cincypaddlers who joined us for this memorable event. This month we will undertake a first-time trip, Springtime on the Chipola. The event has been sold out for months, as paddlers signed up early for this one, hoping the worst of the pandemic would be behind us. We hope they were right. Our annual Suwannee River Paddling Festival, April 2 - 4 will finish the season. On Friday night we will hear from Ryan Smart (see his column below) of the Florida Springs Council, and on Saturday Grant Peoples will perform at the benefit concert. That night we will also present our annual Environmental Leadership Award. This event has also been sold out since 2020.

All trips this season have strictly followed COVID safety protocols. It seems to have worked. As we begin to return to a life with a bit more normalcy, we hope that everyone will take the opportunity to get outside and enjoy this time of year in Florida, especially North Florida, where spring is already bursting out all over.

Paddle Florida COVID-19 Trip Protocols

- Temperature checks;
- Social distancing of 6 feet;
- Participants will be required to wear masks at campsites and bufs on the water when closer than 6 feet;
- COVID-19 safe rescue practices;
- Paddlers to distance a paddle length from each other;
- Hand sanitizer;
- Food will be served so participants will not touch utensils; and
- Disposable eco-friendly plates will be provided.



Nestle: What Happened and What You Can Do
By Ryan Smart

Executive Director, Florida Springs Council

On February 23rd, Governor Ron DeSantis's appointees to the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board (District) unanimously approved the controversial water use permit by Seven Springs Water Company, owned by the operators of the Ginnie Springs campground, to provide nearly 1 million gallons of water per day to be bottled and sold by Nestle.

The Board's decision comes after the District lost a legal battle in the Division of Administrative Hearings (DoAH). The permit was approved under "protest" - which allows the District the option of appealing the DoAH ruling - although it appears unlikely the District will appeal following yesterday's Board comments.

In approving the water use permit, the District neglected their responsibility to represent the interests of North Florida, violated the rules they put in place, and exposed serious flaws in the work of District permitting staff. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Faulty economic thinking makes destroying nature profitable

By David Suzuki with contributions from Senior Editor and Writer Ian Hanington, *David Suzuki Foundation*



Photo Credit: gryffyn m. [Unsplash](#)

Everything we need to survive — food, water, air, shelter — comes from nature, of which we are a part. Fuelled by the sun's energy, this planet is amazing in its ability to replenish and recycle the basic elements of life.

Now people are outpacing Earth's ability to maintain these essential services. Our economic systems not only ignore this unsustainable plunder, they encourage it. That's led to a 70 per cent decline in mammal, bird, fish, reptile and amphibian populations over the past 50 years. One million plant and animal species — one-quarter of the global total — now face extinction.

A big part of the problem is that destroying nature is more profitable than protecting it, and tools such as gross domestic product are not fit for assessing real economic health. GDP is "based on a faulty application of economics," according to an independent review on the economics of biodiversity by University of Cambridge professor Sir Partha Dasgupta. [\[Read more...\]](#)

U.S. Supreme Court to hear Florida-Georgia 'water wars' dispute

From Florida Politics

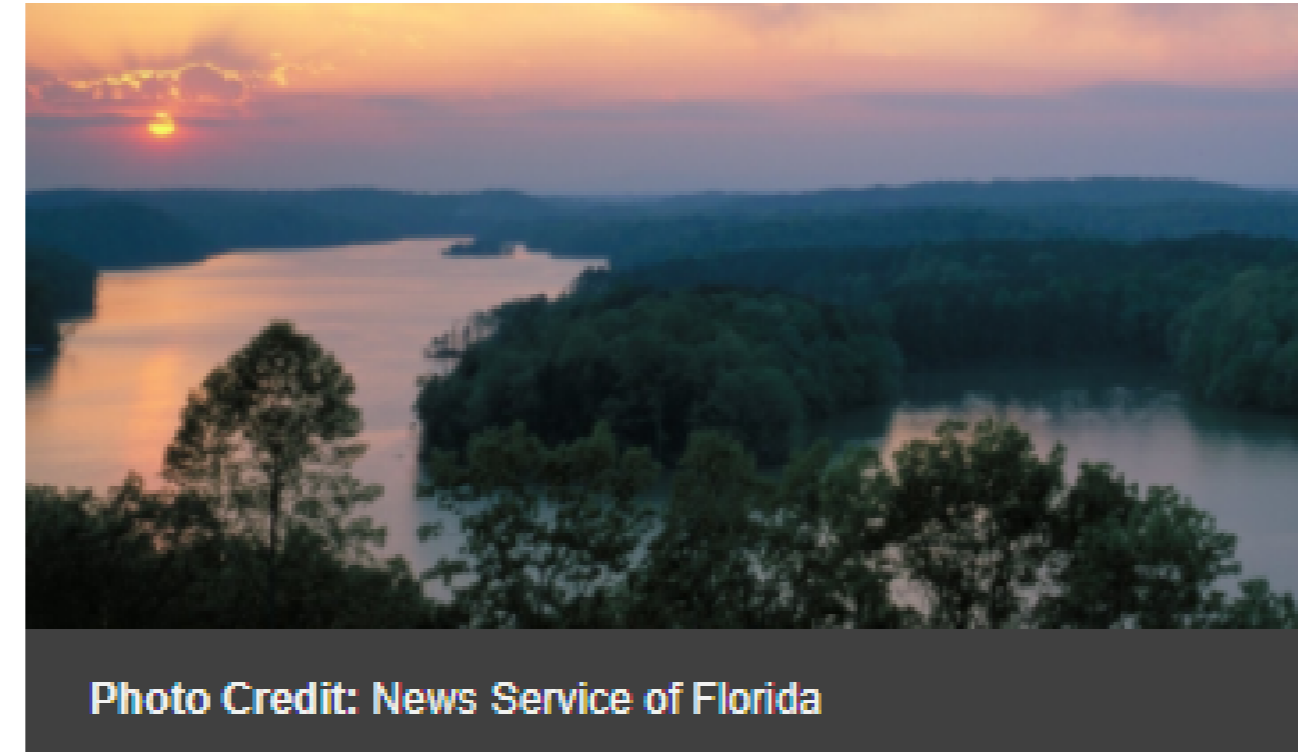


Photo Credit: News Service of Florida

In the latest chapter in years of battling between Florida and Georgia, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments Monday in a dispute about divvying up water in a river system shared by the states.

Florida filed a lawsuit in 2013 arguing that Georgia is using too much water from the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river system, which starts in northern Georgia and ends in Apalachicola Bay in Franklin County. Florida contends that the situation has caused damage to the Apalachicola River and Apalachicola Bay's signature oyster industry.

But federal appellate Judge Paul Kelly, a special master appointed by the Supreme Court, ruled in December 2019 that Florida had not adequately shown that Georgia's water use caused problems in the Apalachicola River and Apalachicola Bay.

Kelly's recommendation went to the Supreme Court, which has final say in the dispute. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Flora & Fauna Spotlight: Manatee Deaths on the Rise and Researchers are Concerned

By Nicole Griffin, News 13



Photo Credit: U.S. Geological Survey

Manatees in the Indian River Lagoon are in trouble.

The Save the Manatee Club claims so many are dying that it is a state of emergency.

At Blue Spring State Park, Save the Manatee Club researchers like Cora Berchem keep close watch over the manatees. And while most manatees are doing well there, Berchem says that's not the case towards the coast.

"In the seven years I have worked here, I have never seen mortality rates like this," Berchem said.

According to the Save the Manatee Club, since December 1, 2020, more than 300 manatees have died on the Atlantic Coast of Florida, with 200 or more of those from the six Florida counties that make up over 150 miles of the Indian River Lagoon. The director of the club says many of those deaths happened in Volusia and Brevard especially. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Flora & Fauna Spotlight: New Florida road: Key to future or death knell for panthers?

By Jeff Butera, ABC 7

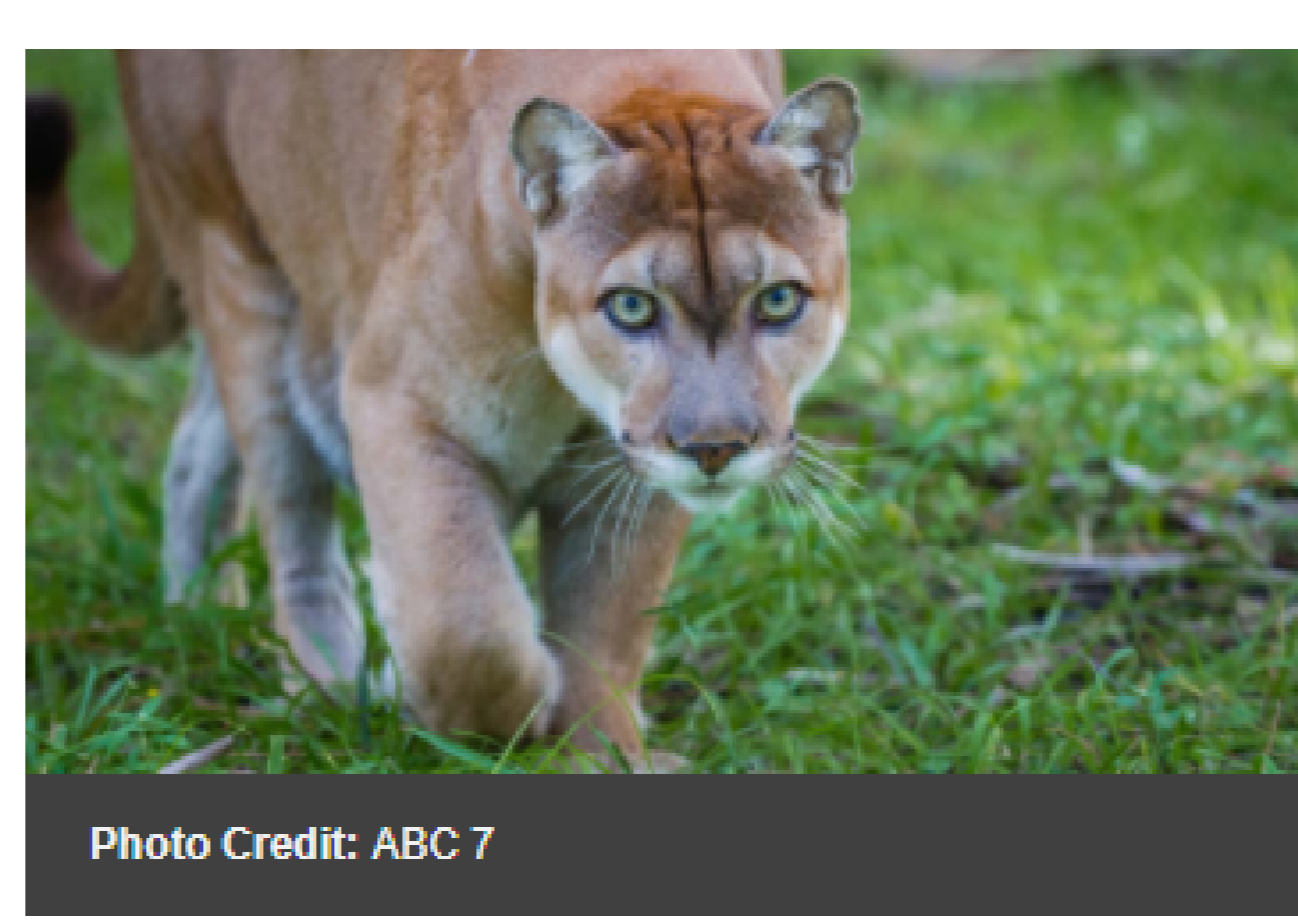


Photo Credit: ABC 7

Florida lawmakers will likely decide during this upcoming legislative session whether to move forward with a controversial toll-road building plan, after the project or terminate it completely.

The M-CORES project would entail 330 miles of new toll roads through mostly rural parts of West and Southwest Florida. That includes a 140-mile toll road that would link Collier County to Polk County built through the central portion of the state. The exact route and which counties the road would cut through has not been decided yet.

Proponents say it's crucial infrastructure, allowing Florida to be ready to handle an influx in population over the next few decades. Opponents say it'll damage environmentally sensitive land and negatively impact wildlife. [\[Read more...\]](#)

It's Safer Outdoors



Inspiring. Meaningful. Adventure.

Place-based Learning in the Great Outdoors

Paddle Florida welcomes paddlers from all races, genders, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to create a safe space for all to enjoy our paddling adventures.

2020-21 Paddle Florida Season

[Subscribing on the Chipola March 17-23, 2021](#)
This will be our 4th different trip in Florida's panhandle, joining the Ochlockonee, the Chattahoochee, and the Perdido. Given the right conditions, this river will be suitable for all paddlers and paddlecraft. Florida Caverns State Park is the starting point for staging this event next March, when spring will be blooming in the panhandle. This is going to be a great experience! The registration deadline for this trip has passed.

[Suwannee River Paddling Festival](#)

April 2-4, 2021
With camping atop the bluff overlooking two beautiful rivers, our season-capping festival takes place at Suwannee River State Park near Live Oak. The weekend will offer supported 8-12 mile paddling options on both the Suwannee and Withlacoochee Rivers, a concert featuring Paddle Florida's favorite musicians, and educational presentations from regional waterway experts. Registration for this event is full.

Note: Many of Paddle Florida trips have historically sold out before the registration deadline, so to ensure you have a spot, please register early.

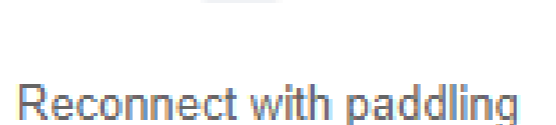
How To: Heel Hook Kayak Assisted Rescue



One of the most important things we have to be able to do is to get back into the kayak. I'm just going to show you a way to do that using the heel hook, a fundamental rescue move worth practicing until it's second nature. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Like us on Facebook

30,286+ followers and counting!



Reconnect with paddling friends and make new ones on Paddle Florida's Facebook page. Our daily feeds provide updates on the news impacting Florida's waterways and wildlife as well as our upcoming trips. Send us your favorite photo depicting paddling in Florida and it might be selected as our "Picture of the Day!"

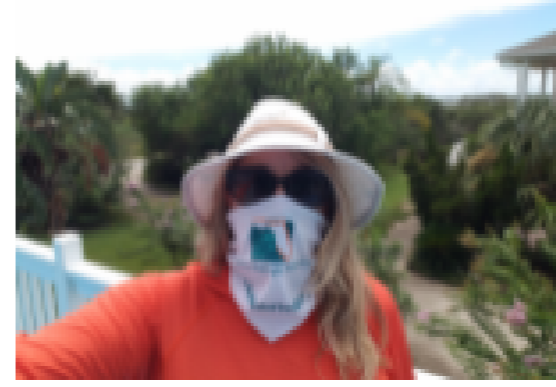
Support Paddle Florida

During this challenging time, we are all changing our daily lives in order to minimize and shorten the impact of this awful virus. To continue our programs of place-based learning in the great outdoors, we are counting on the Paddle Florida Community to help us through this difficult time.

Please consider making a donation* to show your support of our mission of connecting people to nature and each other.

In appreciation of your donation, you will receive a special gift:

Make a \$25 donation [HERE](#) and receive a Paddle Florida buff that can be worn as a face mask, hat, scarf, or to protect face from the sun.



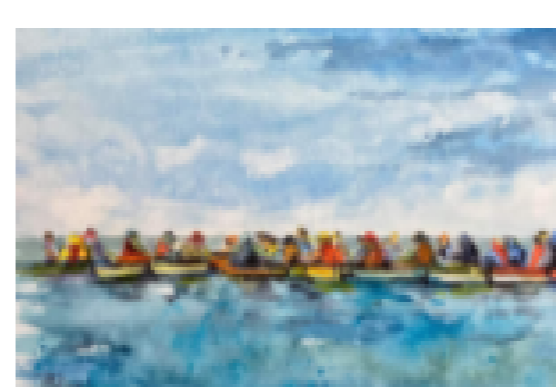
Make a \$50 donation [HERE](#) and receive a Paddle Florida dry bag.



Make a \$75 donation [HERE](#) and receive a long-sleeved, dirt-fit Paddle Florida shirt.



Make a \$100 donation [HERE](#) and receive an 11x14 watercolor paper giclée print "A Bevy of Paddlers" painted by one of our own paddlers, Peggy Perry



Click on the photo to enlarge.

We are all in this together.

To donate online using your debit or credit card, please click the links above.

To donate by check, please send an email with your name and address to bill@paddleflorida.org

*The CARES Act allows taxpayers to deduct up to \$300 in charitable donations made in 2020 without itemizing.



For Sale



Gorgeous 18' Arctic Hawk for sale (Mahogany and fiberglass—Chesapeake Light Craft) Click here for larger photo.

Carefully maintained. Fast, fun, nimble, stiff and lightweight - 44 lb. Large keyhole cockpit ready to customize for your personal fit. Turns and tracks well. Proven Greenland design. Carves nicely - "Shallow" V" hull with hard chine for great secondary stability. Beam 22", draft 4". Front and rear waterproof storage areas allowing maximum payload of 350 lb. including paddler. Just refinished - \$2250.

Click [here](#) for larger photo.

Email: ictwast1@ameabayr.com

Your ad can appear here!

Do you provide a paddling oriented product or service? Consider placing an ad in our monthly newsletter. You can reach over 6,842 monthly subscribers for \$75/month, or get two months free by promoting your product or business over 12 months for \$750! Contact Bill Richards at (352) 377-8342 or bill@paddleflorida.org for details.



Support Paddle Florida when you shop on Amazon. You can select Paddle Florida as your AmazonSmile charity at this link or in the Amazon App. Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to Paddle Florida!



Tag Us In Your Paddling Posts!

Facebook: [@paddleflorida](#)
Instagram: [@paddlefloridanc](#)
Website: www.PaddleFlorida.org