October 2020 ~ Volume 137

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The Happy Paddler

October and November Trip Updates

Suwannee River Wilderness Trail
Trip dates: October 16-21, 2020

We are extending the deadline for our 13th annual Suwannee trip to October 9th. Please join us this month and get outdoors! Register here

Ten Thousand Islands Paddling Festival
Trip dates: November 12-15, 2020

Join us as we spend three nights at Collier-Seminole State Park. Daily self-shuttled trips allow us to explore the wonders of this paddlers' paradise in Southwest Florida. Register here

Because of the pandemic we will be adhering to special Covid-19 protocols which include the following:

- Temperature checks;
- Social distancing of 6 feet;
- Participants will be required to wear masks at campsite and buffs 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.

We are following guidance and recommendations of the Florida Society for Ethical Ecotourism as well as local counties and the State of Florida. As these change, we will incorporate those changes.

We also wanted to remind our readers of our increased presence on social media, as we are now posting every day on both Facebook and Instagram. Please 'like' and follow us for great photos and stories. Also, we want to encourage everyone to visit Paddle Florida's YouTube Channel where you will find 22 videos that illustrate trips we have done over the years and across the Sunshine State. You will also find videos from our entire Summer Music Series featuring Grant Peeples, Rod MacDonald, Katherine Archer, Bing Futch and Tom Shed. We want to thank all these great artists for giving their time, talents, and music this summer in support of Paddle Florida!

Florida Needs Better Water District Boards

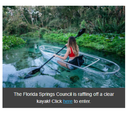
By Ryan Smart

Executive Director, Florida Springs Council

As a paddler, there is a good chance that you, like me, love Florida's springs. You want springs to flow naturally and clearly. Like me, you might be frustrated that the water that should be flowing from our springs is being siphoned away to fuel development, fill disposable water bottles, and support wasteful agricultural practices.

It's my job to keep a close eye on the decisions that affect our springs, and I'm hearing more and more from paddlers and nature lovers who are concerned. Why are these things allowed to happen? How are these decisions made?

Water use decisions are made by Florida's five water management districts (WMDs). In their current form, water management districts were created by the 1972 Florida Water Resources Act and are roughly drawn along hydrologic boundaries. The South Florida Water Management District covers most of the historic Everglades. The other four districts – St. Johns, Suwannee River, Northwest Florida, and Southwest Florida – cover the rest of Florida, including Florida's springs. [Read more...]



The Florida Springs Council is raffling off a clear kayak! Click here to enter.

Breaching dam would bring ecotourism benefits

By Editorial Board, Florida Times-Union

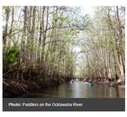


Photo: Paddlers on the Ocklawaha River

What if there were a win-win scenario for breaching the dam on the Ocklawaha River?

What if the current wave of ecotourism could produce an increased interest in Putnam County?

What if the environmental benefits of infusing fresh water into the St. Johns River were documented and compared to other methods of preserving the river?

After all, the Ocklawaha River is the largest tributary of the St. Johns River.

Damming it as part of the failed Cross-Florida Barge Canal resulted in stopping up at least 18 springs and preventing fresh water from entering the river.

But it also created a reservoir for bass fishermen and a critical piece of the Putnam County economy.

Efforts to breach the Kirkpatrick Dam and infuse fresh water into the St. Johns have run into powerful political opposition based on the fear of losing its economic potential. [Read more...]

The March of the Mangroves

By Lianne D'Arcy, Education & Communications Intern / UF Thompson Earth Systems Institute

Straddling the land and sea, mangroves have long been a fixture of Florida's coastline. At 469,000 acres of red, black, white and buttonwood mangrove forests are considered some of Florida's true native species.

Within the state, mangroves were once distributed exclusively throughout Florida's southern region, providing vital services to their marine and estuarine environments. A mangrove's roots prevent erosion by binding soils, provide critical habitat for other plants and animals, filter pollutants and store carbon, a process that helps mitigate climate change by reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Today, climate change and coastal development have altered the mangrove's traditional geographic span, extending its range farther north and more inland. Red and white mangroves can now be found as far north as Cedar Key, an island off the coast of Florida's Big Bend, about two hours north of Tampa. Black mangroves can even be found northward of Jacksonville. Between 1984 and 2011, mangroves have doubled their range of expansion along Florida's northeast coast. A mangrove's southern territory is now expanding farther into the Everglades, where intruding saltwater provides room for them to grow.

While this march of mangroves opens the door to new hope for Florida's future, their expansion simultaneously poses a threat to many current ways of life. [Read more...]

New Climate Maps Show a Transformed United States

By Al Shaw, Abrahm Lustgarten, ProPublica, and Jeremy W. Goldsmith, Special to ProPublica

According to new data from the Rhodium Group analyzed by ProPublica and The New York Times Magazine, warming temperatures and changing rainfall will drive agriculture and temperate climates northward, while sea level rise will consume coastlines and dangerous levels of humidity will swamp the Mississippi River valley.

Taken with other recent research showing that the most habitable climate in North America will shift northward and the incidence of large fires will increase across the country, this suggests that the climate crisis will profoundly interrupt the way we live and farm in the United States. [Read more...]

Animal Populations Fell by 68% in 50 Years and It's Getting Worse

By Eric Roston, Bloomberg Green

The world is losing its mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish, and with them, the security of ecosystems that have supported humanity since it first emerged.

That's the conclusion of the *Living Planet Report 2020*, a biannual assessment by World Wildlife Fund and the Zoological Society of London, which records the decline in vertebrate life. This year's report, released Wednesday, shows that these animal communities shrunk on average 68% between 1970 and 2016. Parts of the world are much worse off. The tropical Americas have seen animal populations decline 94% in the same period. The size of observed animal communities in or near freshwater globally have fallen by 84%.

The authors put half the blame on changes to how we use land and the sea, citing such things as clearing ecologically important forest and freshwater use. Overfishing and hunting, invasive species, pollution and climate change round out the main causes of the global animal population crash. [Read more...]

It's Safer Outdoors

paddle florida

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

Suwannee River Wilderness Trail
October 16-21, 2020
Celebrate Florida's version of autumn on its most famous river. The trip spans 70 miles of the upper Suwannee and a portion of the (northern) Withlacoochee, from Madison Blue Spring to Branford. This section features dozens of clear springs, great fishing, swimming and snorkeling. *Register by: October 9th*

Ten Thousand Islands Paddling Festival (NEW)
November 12-15, 2020
Paddle Florida's newest addition to our spring paddling festival features three days of exploring the magic kingdom of the Ten Thousand Islands. Our basecamp for this adventure is Collier-Seminole State Park, one of the best state parks in the region. It is within driving distance of all the paddling tours we will undertake. This is a first-time event in our November time slot. We hope to make the Ten Thousand Islands Paddling Festival an annual event in this paddlers' paradise. *Register by: October 30th*

Treasure Coast Paddling Adventure (NEW)
December 2-6, 2020
Come explore this Treasure Coast, named for the profusion of shipwrecks and treasure hunters who have been searching for gold, silver and other valuable cargo since the 1500s. It starts in St. Lucie County at Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park and follows a route to the north through Indian River County, finishing in Sebastian. We'll spend two days and three nights at Indian River County Parks and two nights at the Environmental Learning Center. This will be an excellent example of what we try to achieve on every trip: Place-based learning in the Great Outdoors. *Register by: November 18th*

The Great Calusa Blueway
January 15-21, 2021
Back in the history, culture and beauty of Southwest Florida. Over 100 miles of Lee County's rivers, bays, creeks, mangrove tunnels, aquatic preserves, Calusa shell mounds and pristine white sand barrier islands. *Register by: January 2nd*

Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee
February 9-14, 2021
Beginning at Lake Panasoffkee, paddlers will flow down and through karst landscapes and spring-fed tannic streams on a 93-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico. The adventure includes a side trip to the colorful Rainbow River and its world class first magnitude spring. *Register by: January 25th*

Springtime on the Chipola (NEW)
March 17-21, 2021
This will be our 4th different trip in Florida's panhandle. We will be paddling through the Chinchahatchee, and the Perdido. Given the right conditions, this river will be suitable for all paddlers and paddlecraft. Florida Caverns State Park is the basecamp for this exciting event next March, when spring will be blooming in the panhandle. This is going to be a great experience! *Register by: February 28th*

Suwannee River Paddling Festival
April 2-4, 2021
With camping atop the bluff overlooking two beautiful springs, this weekend paddling festival takes place at the 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 Saturday night Paddle Florida's favorite musicians, and educational presentations from regional waterway experts. *Register by: March 19th*

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:
Basic Kayak Strokes

When on the water, you need to do three basic things in your boat. Go forward in a straight line, stop or go backwards, turn. There's a stroke for all three. [Read more...]

Like us on Facebook
33,000+ 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 lives to adapt to the new reference and shelter-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 a long-sleeved, dri-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 a check 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.

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