



Continuous monthly issues since June 2009!

Moving Forward



Last month on the Choctawhatchee River.

As we all struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, many sectors of our society are shut down. Because Florida State Parks have closed, we have had to cancel the rest of our events in April, thereby depriving us, and you, of the 8th Annual Suwannee River Paddling Festival and the Flori-Bama Expedition on the Perdido River. In preparation for our 2020/2021 season, we have been taking this time to scout new trips. As we cannot predict when this plague will make it safe to paddle again, that schedule will be published here next month in the hopes that we will be able to continue with our mission soon.

Just before the shutdown, we were able to host a very successful Choctawhatchee Challenge event last month, where 35 paddlers traveled 76 miles over 6 days. Many thanks to all of those who attended this epic trip. We look forward to seeing everyone back on the water when our schedule resumes in October on the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail. Stay tuned for more info in our next newsletter.



Inspiring Meaningful Adventure.

2019-20 Season

[Suwannee River Paddling Festival \(Canceled\)](#)
[April 3-5, 2020](#)

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.

[Earth Day Celebration: Flori-Bama Expedition on the Perdido River \(Canceled\)](#)
[April 11-16, 2020](#)

Paddling the Florida/Alabama border, enjoy beach camping along a cozy meandering river to the more open waters of Perdido Bay as we explore the most diverse set of ecosystems of the season.

Florida Poised to Protect Gulf of Mexico's Largest Seagrass Bed

By Holly Binns, *PEW*



Photo: Charlie Shoemaker

Florida's west coast is home to vast seagrass beds where fishing, scalloping, and ecotourism form the backbone of coastal economies.

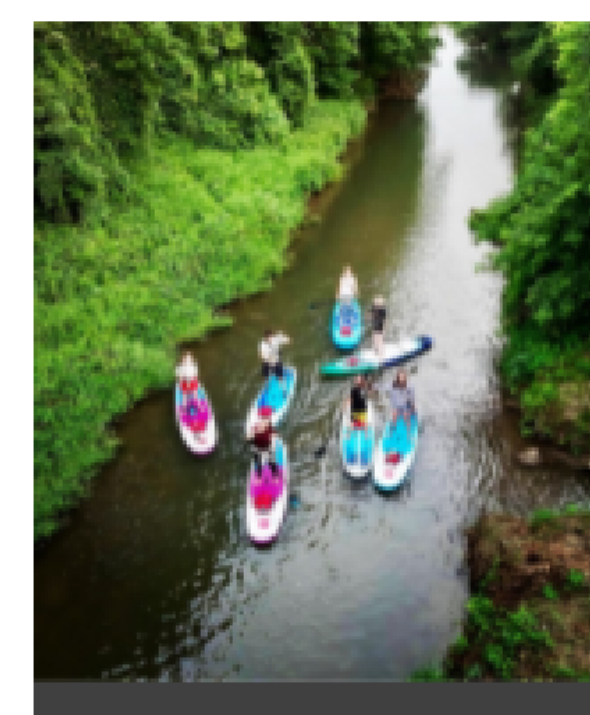
Some 400,000 acres of those beds moved a critical step closer to protection during the Florida legislative session when lawmakers approved bills to create the Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve off the coasts of Citrus, Hernando, and Pasco counties. The legislation now awaits signature by Governor Ron DeSantis (R).

With his approval, the area would become the first new preserve designated in more than 30 years and the 42nd in a state system designed to maintain water quality and biological value to ensure healthy ecosystems. The preserve, which covers part of the Gulf of Mexico's largest seagrass bed, would still allow traditional activities such as boating, fishing, and scalloping. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Have an idea for a Paddle Florida trip?

Contact us at bill@paddleflorida.org with recommendations for waterways in your community that might serve as a good location for the next Paddle Florida event!

How To: 5 Secrets for a Successful SUP Camping Trip



Five rules for packing and outfitting your board for overnight adventures. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Conservationists set the record straight on COVID-19's wildlife links

From Focusing on Wildlife



Photo: Pangolin by Priyan Perera

The World Health Organization has categorized the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic in light of its spread around the world. Ever since the first cases emerged in the Chinese city of Wuhan last December, there's been much speculation — and misinformation — about the origins of the virus. And while scientists suspect it may have come from a market in Wuhan when a diseased animal was consumed or butchered, spilling over into the human population from there, the issue is far from settled.

To give a better understanding of the origin of the coronavirus and what can be done to stop the future spread of disease from animals to humans, the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Global Wildlife Conservation have partnered on a series of new infographics. [\[Read more...\]](#)

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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

Amid this horrible plague, all of us have had to adapt our behavior in order to stay safe. The COVID-19 virus has caused us to cancel the remainder of our 2019/2020 season. Our next challenge is to make it through the summer and continue our mission in October. Nobody else is doing what we do. It would be a tragedy if we were unable to continue our non profit mission. So we are asking our Paddle Florida Community to help us during this difficult time. We know that it is not just us who will suffer, but all the outfitters, musicians, caterers and other vendors who will be without the revenue we pay to them. We do these events in the hope that our participants might share our message AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO JOIN US, while improving engagement in their communities.

If you believe in what we are doing, please consider making a donation. 100% of your donation will help us increase the impact we can make toward our non-profit mission of promoting water conservation, wildlife preservation, restoration of springs and protection of waterways in Florida.

Donate



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 6,990 (and growing) 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.

Flora & Fauna Spotlight

Living with Alligators and Crocodiles

From FWC



Photo: National Park Service.

Alligators

Alligators have inhabited Florida's marshes, swamps, rivers and lakes for many centuries, and are found in all 67 counties. In recent years, Florida has experienced tremendous human population growth. Many residents seek waterfront homes, and increasingly participate in water-related activities. This can result in more frequent alligator-human interactions, and a greater potential for conflict.

Crocodiles

American crocodiles primarily are found in south Florida living in brackish and saltwater habitats such as ponds, coves and creeks of mangrove swamps. Recently crocodiles have moved northward within their range and even inland into freshwater areas of southeast Florida. The American crocodile is an endangered species success story. Since 1975 their numbers have increased from less than 300 to more than 1,500 adults. Today, they are classified as a threatened species. [\[Learn more...\]](#)