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Trip Spotlight: Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee

January 2020 ~ Volume 128

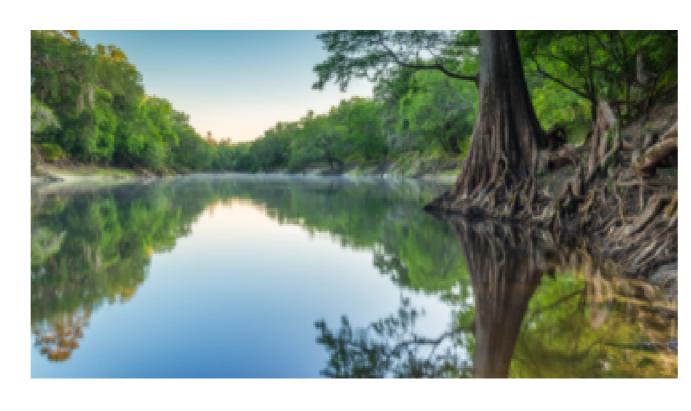


Join us for the Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee in February, as we begin at Lake Panasoffkee in Sumter County. Paddlers will thread their way through hardwood swamps and tannic streams on a 60-mile journey to the Gulf of Mexico traveling through Citrus, Marion and Levy counties. The adventure includes a side trip to the colorful Rainbow River and its world class first-magnitude spring. Register <u>here</u> by February 1st.



Storytelling and Learning Makes Paddling Trips Truly Special

Eric Draper, Florida State Parks



great note from Bill Richards, Paddle Florida executive director. Bill told me how delighted his paddling group was to meet with rangers and park staff on their trip down the Suwannee River Wilderness State Trail. The Suwannee River Wilderness Festival group journeyed 65 miles in five days while camping at the state park facilities along the trail. At Suwannee River State Park, the trip members heard

While speaking with park managers recently, I shared a

about the area's history from ranger Rianna Elliot, who has deep roots in Suwannee County. Two nights later, they heard from Dennis Parson, who manages several parks along the paddling trail, as well as Joanna Lemmon from Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park. According to Bill, they did an outstanding job of storytelling about the natural history of the Suwannee River's many springs. [Read more...



Breaching Rodman dam will reveal 20 lost springs of the Ocklawaha River By Dr. Robert Knight

Executive Director,

Howard T. Odum Florida

Springs Institute

governors and senior agency staff have called for the restoration of the Ocklawaha River and springs. But, in an unfathomable twist of modern society, the will of

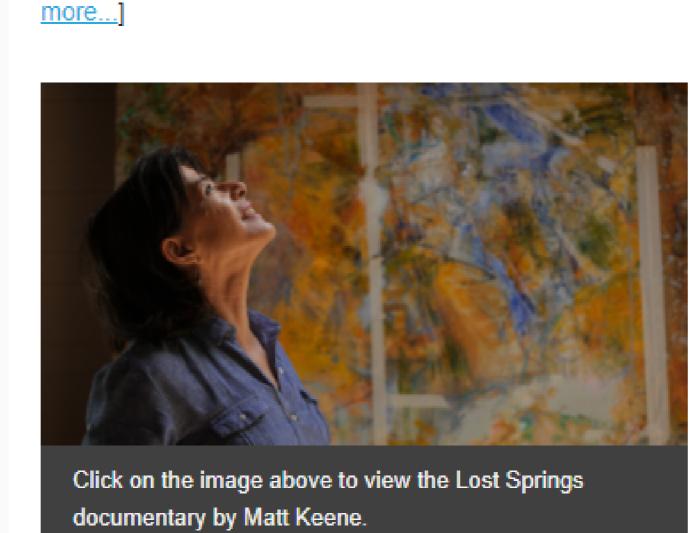
these powerful leaders has been stymied by a small but

During the past 50 years, a long list of former Florida

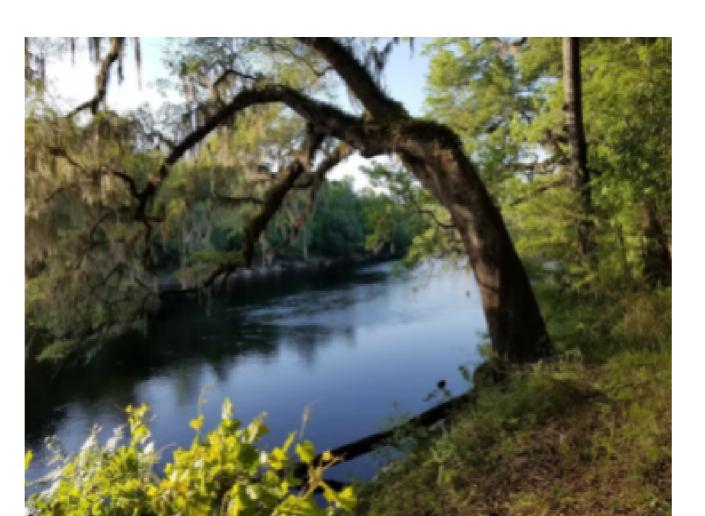
vocal group of bass fisherman who oppose restoration. Breaching the antiquated barge canal dam and returning the river to its natural channel is not only the most costeffective future for the river, but is most beneficial with regards to downstream water quality and water quantity, regional economic benefits, public use of the river for

recreational boating and fishing, and the ecological health

of the St. Johns, Ocklawaha, and Silver Rivers. [Read



Water is hidden crisis for Florida and the world Mike Clark, The Florida-Times Union



As Floridians, we are surrounded by some of the world's most beautiful waters.

However, we are currently facing a hidden water crisis that risks ruining our beautiful state and the entire global community.

Floridians can expect to feel the impacts of a water crisis as sea levels rise, our fisheries are threatened and our aquifers are depleted.

By 2050, as many as 6 billion people worldwide will face water insecurity, leading to disease, conflict and the death of those most vulnerable, especially children. A global water crisis is on the horizon and, for the sake of our generation's future, action must be taken now. [Read more...

Florida Flora & Fauna Spotlight

Non-native Fish invading Florida's freshwaters By Karl Schneider, Naples Daily News



Usually, when there's news about escapees from medical research facilities, freshwater fish are not the obvious fugitives.

But that was the case with the pike killifish when researchers released about 50 of the fish into agricultural canals in the late 1950s.

Now, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission has identified up to 22 non-native fish in

Florida's fresh waters. [Read more...]





2019-20 Season

Florida Keys Challenge (Registration deadline extended to January 8) January 15-22, 2020 Paddle the azure coastal waters of the Middle Florida

Keys, including the length of the famed 7-Mile Bridge, explore mangrove tunnels, and watch sea turtle surface beside your kayak, and enjoy a snorkeling trip out to Looe Key. Register by: January 8

Wild, Wonderful

Withlacoochee (Date change) February 11-16, 2020 Beginning at Lake Panasoffkee, paddlers will thread their way through hardwood swamps and tannic streams on a 60-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: February 1

Challenge March 13-19, 2020 Get away from it all into the heart of the Panhandle as

Choctawhatchee

we paddle 86 miles of the mighty Choctawhatchee. This is a journey into Wild Florida where wildlife far outnumber humans, and paddlers can stumble upon spectacular springs. Register by: February 28

Festival

Suwannee River Paddling

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 April 11-16, 2020 Paddling the Florida/Alabama border,

Register by: March 20

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. Register by: March 28

Springtime on the **Ochlockonee** April 18-22, 2020 From wild Tupelo honey to fresh Gulf oysters, experience the Panhandle's Ochlockonee River which winds through state and national forest lands on 76 miles of Florida's most remote wilderness river trail. Register by: April 2

Earth Day Celebration:

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

How To: Dressing for cold weather paddling



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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

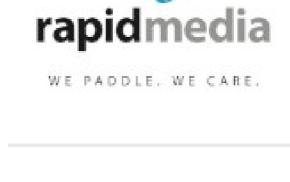
Up to now Paddle Florida has been able to cover 95% of its overhead through registration fees. This is no longer the case, and we need to find another way to generate revenue. Our initiative to

reduce registration fees has allowed us to increase participation. We want to expand our visibility and introduce many more people to the issues related to our natural environment and why it matters. 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.

are doing, please consider making a donation this holiday season. 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.

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