



Trip Spotlight: NEW! Florida Keys Challenge - February 9-15, 2019

Don't forget to register by January 26th!



Join us in the Florida Keys for a wonderful warm weather escape. Spend a week paddling through turquoise waters and visiting white sand beaches. Come and enjoy paddling, snorkeling, campfires, camaraderie and sunsets. Staying at state parks for four nights and Camp Wesumkee for 2 nights. We will paddle 51 miles, including the length of the Seven-Mile Bridge. This year's trip includes a snorkel trip to Looe Key, a presentation by the Turtle Hospital in Marathon, a presentation on the history of Flagler's Railroad, and an evening session of ACA/USCG kayak 'conditions' training. Our final night's entertainment will be provided by Grant Peoples (on Valentine's Day!) Click [here](#) to register.



Upcoming Trips

Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee
January 17-22, 2019
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: January 4

Florida Keys Challenge
February 9-15, 2019
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 26

Flor-Rama Expedition on the Perdido River
March 10-15, 2019
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.
Register by: February 24

Suwannee River Paddling Festival
April 5-7, 2019
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.
Register by: March 22

We are currently entertaining proposals and ideas about where to host paddling events next season. [Contact us](#) with your suggestions!

Focus on Florida Musicians

[The Williamsons](#) of Gatorbone



Lis Williamson & The Gatorbone Band performing "Deep" live at the Flagler College Auditorium in St. Augustine, Florida. Lon Williamson-Bass, Gabe Valia-Guitar, Jason Thomas-Violin.

Lon and I always look forward to our engagements with the paddlers and meeting folks who find inspiration in Florida's natural beauty as we do. Happy paddling and we'll hope to see you again soon! Here's a little more about us....

Lon and Lis Williamson have been musical partners and sweethearts for over 40 years, are well known around the Sunshine State and the Southeast for their artistry, blending eloquent harmonies with accomplished musicianship and award-winning songwriting. Their instrumentation includes upright bass, guitar, tenor guitar and banjo. Add to that their dynamic repertoire of award-winning originals, old-time, jazz, swing, and bluegrass tunes and you'll have a show that you're not likely to soon forget. Lon and Lis are also members of The Driftwoods out of St. Augustine, as well as The Gatorbone Band with Gabe Valia and Jason Thomas, The Gatorbone Trio with Gabe Valia and The Starlight Trio with Rick Kuncicky.

When not on the road, the Williamsons spend time at their home in the Florida sandhills, where they write and record their own music, build mandolins and make ribbon flowers, greeting cards and prints.

'Cold-stunned' New England Sea Turtles Are Thawing Out in the Keys

By David Goodhue, *Miami Herald*

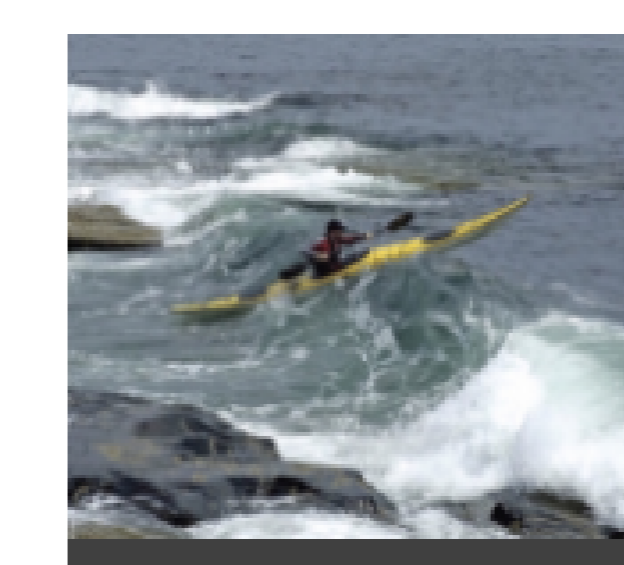


Photo: Lairy Benvenuto / Florida Keys News Bureau

The Keys and South Florida may feel a little cool to the people used to living here, but they're still warm enough to thaw out more than 30 critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtles found in the frigid New England ocean waters off Cape Cod recently.

The 32 reptiles were flown by private plane to the Marathon International Airport by all-volunteer general aviation pilots at a group called Turtles Fly Too. [\[Read more...\]](#)

How To: 7 Most Important Skills for Sea Kayakers



Click [here](#) to learn about the key skills to stay safe and have fulfilling kayaking adventures.



Traditional Qajaqs of the South (TRAQS) Festival

Lake Placid, FL: March 21-24, 2019

We are very excited to announce the fourth annual Traditional Qajaqs of the South (TRAQS) festival. Our event will be held from March 21-24 at the Lake Placid Camp and Conference Center on beautiful Lake Placid in Central Florida. This will be an immersive Greenland kayaking weekend that includes paddling and rolling skills, presentations, morning yoga, kayak games and exposure to Inuit culture. We will be joined by several prominent instructor/mentors including internationally known mentors Cheri Perry, Alison Sigelby and Greg Stamer. Our special guest this year will be Mia Kanstad Kulseng from Norway. We will also include a full day Greenland paddle making class led by Benjamin Fontenot.

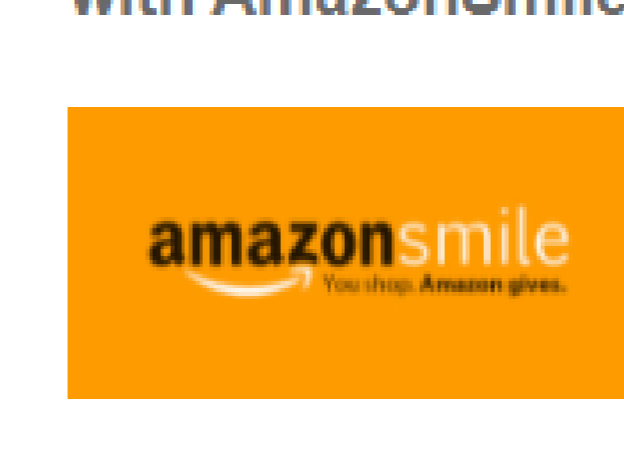
All event information, fees and registration are available on our [website](#). Hope you can join us.

Like Us on Facebook

26,500 fans 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 This Holiday Season with AmazonSmile



As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Paddle Florida is dedicated to promoting water conservation, wildlife preservation, springs restoration, and waterways protection across Florida. You can help us meet our water conservation missions by (1) joining us on one or more paddling adventures scheduled annually on Florida's wild and scenic rivers and coastlines, or (2) donating to Paddle Florida via our secure PayPal connection or through AmazonSmile.

If you're an Amazon shopper, you can sign up for AmazonSmile at [this link](#) and confirm your desire to support us. Amazon will then donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases to Paddle Florida.



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 6,375 (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.

How to Paddle Into Old Age

By Cliff Jacobson, *Paddling.com*



A not-so-funny thing happened this year. I turned 77. That's seventy-seven! Which is really old! Well, maybe not. The positives are: I feel great, my canoeing and camping skills have not deteriorated, my judgment (regarding river/wilderness dangers) may be sharper, and I continue to paddle and camp at every opportunity. Admittedly, there are a few downsides to being a "senior citizen": my balance (which never was very good) has become "less good". Nonetheless, I can still paddle my Bell Yellowstone solo canoe for short distances from the standing position. And my whitewater skills are as sharp as ever. But carrying heavy stuff on big, bad portages is another matter. When I was 60 I could single-handedly shoulder my 75 pound RoyaleX, Dagger Venture canoe—from my off-side! No longer. But I can do it alone from my "on-side" if you bet me enough money!

The point is that getting old doesn't have to shut down your trips into the wild outdoors. I've learned that even the most rugged trips are possible at my age if I just slow down a bit (heck, I never was very fast!) and take it easy. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Déjà vu all over again: Why Florida's waters are fouled year after year

By Holly Parker, *Surtrider Foundation*



Photo: Jaqueli Thurlow Lippison

Florida's southwest coast is grappling with the largest, longest red tide in more than a decade. Dead fish, sea turtles and manatees are littering the sugar sand beaches of Lee and Collier counties. Last weekend nearly 4,000 dead fish were counted on Sanibel beaches. Florida's southeast coast is similarly struggling with massive blue-green algae blooms. A recent news report stated that at least 15 people were treated at emergency rooms in St. Lucie County after making contact with the algal blooms.

I hesitated to write this blog post, because what I really wanted to do was copy and paste the post I wrote on algal blooms in Florida two years ago. That post explained the hydrology of Florida's famed River of Grass, how we carved up the wetlands in South Florida for flood control and development, and why the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries were being decimated by nutrient pollution. The summer of 2016, we dubbed Martin, St. Lucie and Palm Beach counties the "guacamole coast." Countless manatees, dolphins, fish, and birds washed up dead on our beaches. Coastal businesses closed, homes were shuttered, people were sickened, and we were outraged. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Florida Flora & Fauna Spotlight

Scallops Absorb Billions of Microplastics in Just 6 Hours

By Olivia Rosane, *Ecowatch*



Photo: Damien Meyer / AFP / Getty Images

One of the biggest concerns surrounding the proliferation of microplastics in the world's oceans is how they might move up the food web from smaller to larger marine life, eventually ending up in our stomachs. Now, a first-of-its-kind study has shown just how quickly the tiny particles can accumulate in the bodies of shellfish under current levels of marine plastic pollution. The answer? Billions in just six hours. [\[Read more...\]](#)