



We Continued Our Non-profit Mission This Season, Even Amid the Pandemic



Photo Credit: Inaugural Springtime on the Chipola trip 2021

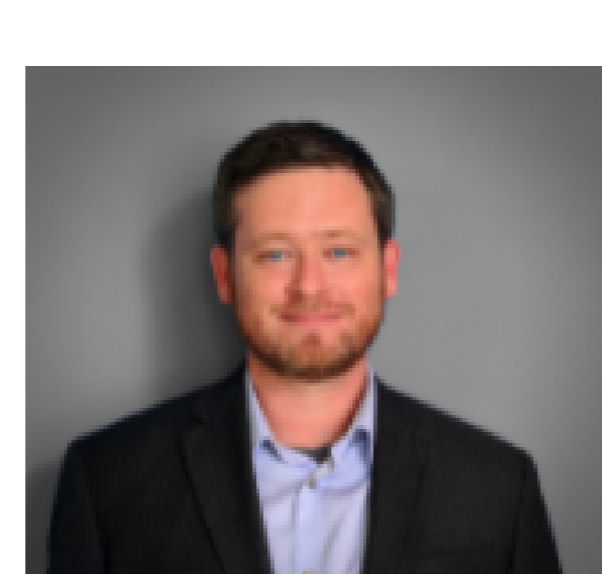
Our 2020-2021 season comes to a close this weekend at Suwannee River State Park as we stage our Suwannee River Paddling Festival. Camping is limited to 50 participants, so it will be a bit more subdued than in years past. We will hear from Ryan Smart, the director of the Florida Springs Council on Friday and Americana artist Grant Peeples on Saturday, with paddling on Saturday and Sunday.

We are fresh off our inaugural Springtime on the Chipola and need to thank the 50 paddlers who joined us, as well as Florida Caverns State Park and especially Explore Northwest Florida, who made it possible to travel through Jackson, Calhoun and Gulf counties. In all, we paddled 72 miles over 6 days, and, as far as we know, a group this large has never done it before. Kudos to all involved!

As we move into our 14th season, we are working with communities and stakeholders across the state and plan to announce our 2021-2022 season in this space on May 1st. Although Covid-19 forced us to cancel three events this past season, we are on target to have a full schedule of 7 events next season from October thru April. So be on the lookout for that, and let us know where we might consider staging a different trip, or what else you would like to see us cover in this monthly newsletter (in continuous publication for 12 years next month).

Paddle Florida COVID-19 Trip Protocols

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



FSC Active in Courts and Capitol

By Ryan Smart

Executive Director, Florida Springs Council

March was a busy month for springs advocates.

Seven Springs/Nestle Legal Challenge

On March 16th the Florida Springs Council (FSC) and Our Santa Fe River (OSFR) filed a legal challenge seeking to overturn the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) Governing Board's approval of a consumptive use permit for Seven Springs Water Co. to provide nearly a million gallons of water per day to Nestle's bottled water operation. FSC and OSFR have put together a talented team of attorneys and advisors to represent us, and you, in this important legal challenge.

Our petition argues that the SRWMD was required to deny the Seven Springs/Nestle consumptive use permit for two reasons:

First, Seven Springs Water Co., who applied for the permit, does not own or control the bottling facility where the water use will occur. Nestle does, and under District rules Nestle must be the applicant. Why does this matter? Because without Nestle being on the permit the SRWMD has no way to assure the water will be used efficiently or to make Nestle follow the rules. Can we really trust Nestle to use our water responsibly and follow the rules?

Second, the SRWMD Governing Board failed to consider whether issuing the consumptive use permit was "consistent with the public interest" as required by SRWMD rules and Florida Statute. The SRWMD rules define "public interest" as the "broad based interests and concerns that are collectively shared by members of a community or residents of the District or State." [\[Read more...\]](#)

Could satellite-based technology save coral reefs?

From the Coral Reef Alliance

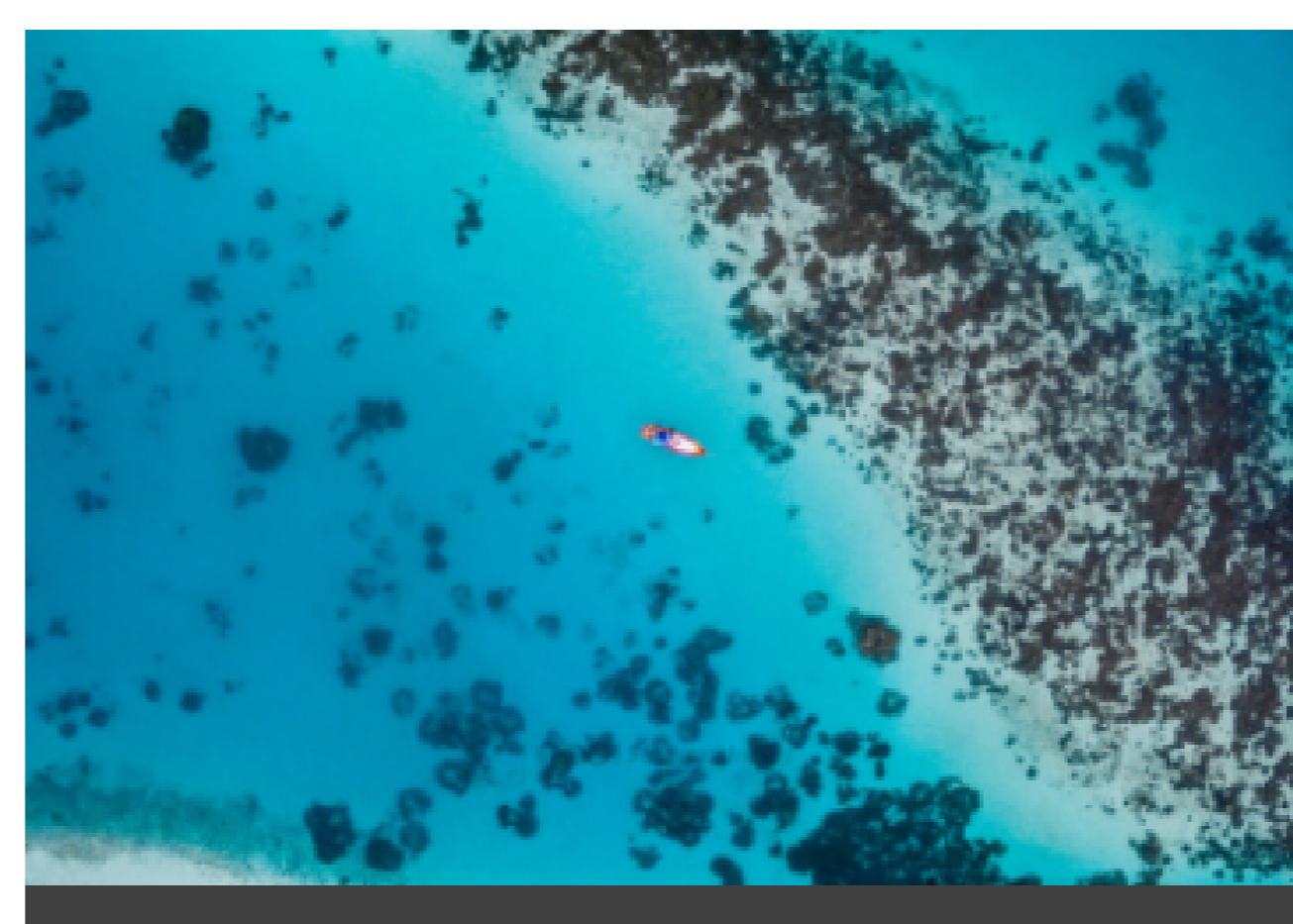


Photo Credit: Ishan @seefromthesky on Unsplash

Atlases and maps are helpful for planning trips and exploring geography, but researchers believe they may also serve another, more important purpose. Identifying priority coral reef conservation areas.

With a new three-year \$300,000 grant from Lyda Hill Philanthropies, the Coral Reef Alliance (CORAL) and partners can begin to test their hypothesis that satellite-based imagery and high-tech maps of the world's coral reefs can help inform conservation decision-making processes and actions.

More specifically, researchers will use maps to remotely investigate and identify coral reefs that are in locations with high levels of habitat and thermal diversity, characteristics that help the corals adapt to rising ocean temperatures and other impacts of global climate change. Conservation can then be targeted to those key locations where the focus is on reducing local stressors to keep corals as healthy and resilient as possible. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Flora & Fauna Spotlight: Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*)

From the Florida Wildflower Foundation



Photo Credit: Mary Keim

Pickerelweed is a long-lived, perennial aquatic wildflower that occurs naturally in open, aquatic habitats such as pond, lake or river edges, marshes and swamps. It typically blooms in spring through summer and is pollinated primarily by bees, but is visited by many butterflies and other insects. Its seeds are eaten by birds. Ducks are known to eat the entire plant.

Pickerelweed's conspicuous blooms are born in erect, showy spikes. Flowers are tubular with deep purplish-blue petals that often bear yellow and white markings that may serve as nectar guides for bees. Flower spikes extend above all but one leaf. Leaves are sagittate with a long, tapering blade and a cordate base (hence the species name cordata). They are dark green and alternately arranged. The fruit is an achene that bears a single inconspicuous seed. [\[Learn more...\]](#)

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

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.](#)

How To: Upgrade To A High-End Paddle

High-end paddles, we've all been there. Should we upgrade? Which? What type? Here's a few things to consider if you're currently considering getting a new paddle. [\[Read more...\]](#)

Like us on Facebook 30,403+ 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, 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 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.



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 6,852 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 @paddlefloridainc



www.PaddleFlorida.org