June 2021 ~ Volume 145

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The Happy Paddler

Many Thanks!

We want to take this chance to say THANK YOU to all our paddling friends and donors who helped us get through the COVID-shortened season this past year. Without the support of those who donated and/or registered for trips, we wouldn't have made it to our 14th season. As it stands, we are working on details for our 2021-2022 season schedule and hope to have our best season yet!

Also, today marks the beginning of the 2021 hurricane season, which is predicted to be an 'above average' year for gulf and Atlantic storms. Have a look at the article below which outlines what we might expect. So be careful as we move into another hot and stormy summer.

We are also working on updating the Paddle Florida website, so stay tuned for that. Have a great summer everyone!

Update on FSC's Work to Protect Rainbow and Santa Fe Rivers

By Ryan Smart

Executive Director, Florida Springs Council

In my first article for the Happy Paddler back in September of 2020, I wrote about the Florida Springs Council's (FSC) battle to stop a proposed Westgate Resort along the banks of the Rainbow River in Dunnellon and the legal fight over the Seven Springs/Nestle consumptive use permit along the Santa Fe River. Recently, there have been developments on both of these important campaigns to protect Florida's springs and rivers.

Last Summer, the Florida Springs Council joined with Rainbow River Conservation to oppose a comprehensive plan amendment that would have permitted Westgate Resorts to develop 90 acres of sensitive land along the Rainbow River on property owned by Westgate Executive Vice President Jim Glass. FSC implemented a targeted public relations campaign to inform Dunnellon residents about the dangers of the proposed development and brought together a team of attorneys to challenge the development in court. Unfortunately, faced with overwhelming public opposition, Mr. Glass kept his word and withdrew the proposed comprehensive plan amendment.

The ultimate goal of the Florida Springs Council and Rainbow River Conservation was to see this land placed into permanent conservation. Now that goal is one step closer to reality. [Read more...]

NOAA predicts above-normal 2021 Atlantic hurricane season

From CBS News

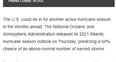

Photo Credit: NOAA

The U.S. could be in for another active hurricane season in the months ahead. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration released its 2021 Atlantic hurricane season outlook on Thursday, predicting a 60% chance of an above-normal number of named storms.

The NOAA outlook predicts a likelihood of 13 to 20 named storms with sustained winds of at least 39 mph. It says six to 10 of those are likely to become hurricanes, and three to five may become major hurricanes of Category 3 or higher.

Those numbers range higher than the newly adjusted "normal" figures of 14 named storms, seven hurricanes and three major hurricanes in a typical season. NOAA raised its assessment of the "normal" number of storms due to the significant uptick in activity in recent decades, up from the previous level of 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes.

Forecasters at NOAA's Climate Prediction Center said several factors contributed to the higher outlook this year, including an enhanced West African monsoon, meaning more atmospheric disturbances emerging off the African coast, less wind shear, and warmer ocean temperatures providing more fuel for storms [Read more...]

Climate: World at risk of hitting temperature limit soon

By David Shukman, *BBC*

Photo Credit: Reuters

It's becoming more likely that a key global temperature limit will be reached in one of the next five years.

A major study says by 2025 there's a 40% chance of at least one year being 1.5C hotter than the *pre-industrial* level.

That's the lower of two temperature limits set by the Paris Agreement on climate change.

The conclusion comes in a report published by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

The analysis is based on modelling by the UK Met Office and climate researchers in 10 countries including the US and China.

In the last decade, it was estimated that the chance of any one year reaching the 1.5C threshold was only 20%. [Read more...]

USF Releases New Information About Water Quality Near Piney Point

By Casey Attefitch, *CBS Tampa Bay*

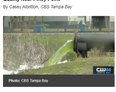

Photo: CBS Tampa Bay

The University of South Florida held a press conference releasing new information on the Piney Point reservoir least. Two months after the initial leak, researchers say water quality is improving.

Scientists say images show a heavy amount chemicals and nutrients in the water at the beginning of the Piney Point leak, but an image taken on May 20 shows those Chemicals have been diluted significantly since then.

Tom Frazer with the USF College of Marine Science says "The values that we are seeing today are much more typical of what we see in historical records."

University of South Florida experts say since their initial research samples taken on April 7, the water around Piney Point is looking healthier.

"The concentration of chlorophyll, which is a proxy for phytoplankton in abundance, were fairly localized and short-lived," said Frazer.

Researchers say the Piney Point leak created phytoplankton blooms, groups of tiny marine organisms that are at the very bottom of the food chain, and while they are little, they can become dangerous. Scientists say the blooms near Piney Point only live about ten days, compared to other blooms that can last several months. [Read more...]

Apalachicola Slough Restoration: Getting More Water to Swamps, Bay

By Rob Dietz *On Vitrages, MFSU Ecology Blog*

Photo Credit: MFSU

"The head of the East River right ahead of us," Says Dan Tonsmeire. We're creeping towards the mouth of the slough, which is mostly hidden behind a fallen willow tree. Dan, the retired Apalachicola Riverkeeper, is shuttling folks to a work site here for a Riverkeeper project.

"The willows and the grass here have built up on this kind of berm," says Mark Jones, "that has migrated of the side and is starting to close- watch your head." I duck under a willow branch as we enter the slough. Kim continues- "that's closing this [slough] off. You can see all the sediment on this sort of plateau."

Kim's an engineer managing a slough restoration project with the Riverkeeper. He's here today to look at the sediment at the mouth of the East River, and for a couple of miles upstream. Other engineers, decades ago, sent river sand into the muck typically found in places like this. Those Army Corps of Engineers dredging projects have somewhat clogged the mouths of sloughs all along the river, cutting off connections to wetlands. Or, in this case, a major connection between the river and Apalachicola Bay.

Kim is pointing out that here, willows and reeds have taken root in the sediments clogging the opening. They roots, in turn, gather more sediment around them. Plant roots have always played an important role in building and maintaining land; here, they're likely extending a mainmade mass. [Read more...]

Flora & Fauna Spotlight: The Importance of Coastal Salt Marshes

From the Florida Wildlife Federation

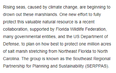

Photo Credit: NOAA

Salt marshes are coastal wetlands that are flooded and drained by saltwater brought in by the tides. They are marshy because the soil is comprised of deep mud and peat (decomposing plant matter that is often several feet thick). This peat is waterlogged, root-filled, and very spongy with very low oxygen levels.

Rising seas, caused by climate change, are beginning to drown out these marshes. Come new effort to help protect this valuable natural resource is a recent collaboration, supported by Florida Wildlife Federation, many governmental entities, and the US Department of Defense. To plan on how best to protect one million acres of salt marsh stretching from Northeast Florida to North Carolina. The group is known as the Southeast Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS).

Occurring worldwide, salt marshes are particularly important to Florida and the Gulf coast, where approximately half of the nation's salt marshes exist. These areas are essential for healthy fisheries as they provide essential food, refuge and nursery habitat for more than 75 percent of marine species, including shrimp, blue crab and a multitude of finfish, such as redfish and sea trout. [Read more...]

It's Safer Outdoors

paddle Florida

Inspiring Stewardship Adventure

Place-based Learning in the Great Outdoors

Paddle Florida welcomes paddlers from all races, gender, and sexual orientations. We will continue to strive to promote diversity among the paddling community and work to make it safe space for all to enjoy our natural waterways.

2021-22 Paddle Florida Season

Suwannee River Wilderness Trail
October 15-20, 2021
Enjoy the fall color version of autumn on its most famous river. The trip spans 65 miles of the iconic Suwannee and a portion of the (northern) Withlacoochee River. Between Blue Spring to Branford, this section features dozens of clear blue springs perfect for swimming and snorkeling. *Register by: October 1, 2021*

Treasure Coast Paddling Festival
November 3-6, 2021
Come explore the Treasure Coast, named for the profusion of shipwrecks and treasures that have been searching for gold, silver and other valuable and historic boards. The trip starts in St. Lucie County at Ft. Pierce Inlet and paddles Indian's route to the north through Indian River County, finishing in Sebastian. We'll spend two nights at state parks, Jaycee Park, Indian River County Parks and two nights at the Environmental Learning Center. This will be an excellent example of what Paddle Florida's Place-based learning, in the Great Outdoors. *Register by: October 22, 2021*

Black Creek Paddling Festival
December 10-12, 2021
The 2nd Black Creek Paddling Festival will take place at Camp Chowanoca Park in Green Cove Springs. We will explore the scenic waters of Black Creek and Peter's Creek in 10 and 6 mile segments on Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, Florida's favorite entertainers will perform a benefit concert. Saturday - Proceeds will support continuing our mission in Northeast Florida. This weekend will also feature hiking through nearby trails, and an opportunity to have from local experts discussing and exploring Peter's Creek's rivers, springs and water-sheds. Our price includes camping for the weekend, the Freehouse and Saturday night dinner (have been made available to paddlers (at their own cost) for our event. *Register by: November 26, 2021*

Ten Thousand Islands Wilderness Trail
January 17-20, 2022
Southwest Florida's answer to paradise features five days of exploring the magic kingdom of the Ten Thousand Islands. Our taxonomy for this experience is Collier-Seminole State Park, one of the best state parks in the region. It is a place that paddlers can do all the paddling tours we will undertake. This is a first time event for our January time slot. We hope to make this ten-day, nine-night experience an annual event in this paddlers' paradise. *Register by: January 3, 2022*

Wild Waterfall Wilderness Trail
February 19-26, 2022
Beginning at Lake Panasoffkee, paddlers will thread their way through Florida's Wild Waterfall terrain: streams on a linear journey to the Gulf of Mexico. The adventure includes a side trip to the Withlacoochee River and to world class first magnitude spring. *Register by: February 1, 2022*

Springtime on the Chipola
March 19-24, 2022
This will be our 4th different trip in Florida's panhandle, this time in Jackson County, the C ourtemanche and the Perdido. Given the right conditions, this river will be suitable for all paddlers. Complement Florida Caverns State Park is the clarion point for staging this event next March, when spring will be blooming. Springtime on the Chipola promises to be a great experience! *Register by: March 4, 2022*

Suwannee River Paddling Festival
April 1-3, 2022
With camping along the Gulf Hammock's most beautiful miles, our season-opening festival takes place at Manatee Springs State Park near Cow Mat. The festival will offer supported 6-12 mile paddling options on both the Suwannee and Manatee Springs, a concert featuring Paddle Florida's favorite musicians, and educational presentations from regional waterway experts. *Register by: March 10, 2022*

Note: Many of Paddle Florida trips have historically been on a first-come-first-reservation deadline, so to ensure you have a spot, please register early.

How To: Logistics and Gear for Faraway Trips

If you are wanting to travel to and explore kayaking destinations farther than a car ride away, here are a couple of logistical and gear considerations that might help you to travel and kayak far away from home. [Read more...]

Like us on Facebook

36,852+ 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. Also, we are posting photos 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 support our programs, place-based learning in the great outdoors, we are counting on the Paddle Florida family to help us through this difficult time.

Please consider making a donation to show your support for our mission of connecting people to nature and each other.

In appreciation of your support, 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** Paddle Florida Buff and Paddle Florida shirt.

Make a $100 donation HERE **and receive an** 11x14 watercolor paper giclée print "A Sea of Paddles", 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

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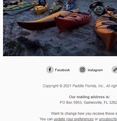

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