



### Trip Updates



The COVID-19 pandemic has really hit us hard this season. We had to cancel our event in November and now we have had to cancel our December event. Many paddlers have eschewed their travel plans to Florida amid the pandemic. We are fortunate to have several paddling groups and clubs that join us each season. Clubs in Cincinnati, Chesapeake Bay, Kansas City, NYC and Georgia have deferred travel plans until February, March and April when we WILL stage our events. In fact, the Suwannee River Paddling Festival is almost sold out. We are hoping that our Great Calusa Blueway trip will go on as scheduled. But there is a bright spot for us too. We have been working with the nice folks in Clay County to stage the Black Creek Paddling Festival, January 29 - 31 at a beautiful venue in Green Cove Springs, Camp Chewenaw Park. The festival will mirror our Suwannee River Paddling Festival, with the same format, Friday afternoon check in, and paddling on Saturday and Sunday. We look forward to seeing paddlers explore Black Creek and Peter's Creek on the last weekend in January.

### 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

#### The Great Calusa Blueway January 15-21, 2021

Back in the history, culture and beauty of Southwest Florida as we explore 57 miles of Lee County's rivers, bays, creeks, mangrove tunnels, aquatic preserves, Calusa shell mounds and pristine white-sand barrier islands.

Register by: January 2nd

#### Black Creek Paddling Festival (NEW) January 29-31, 2021

Our inaugural Black Creek Paddling Festival will take place at Camp Chewenaw Park in Green Cove Springs. Join us as we explore the scenic waters of Black Creek and Peter's Creek in 10 and 5 mile segments on Saturday and Sunday. One of Paddle Florida's favorite entertainers will perform a benefit concert Saturday. Proceeds will support continuing our programs at Paddle Florida. The weekend will also feature hiking through nearby trails, and an opportunity to hear from local experts dedicated to preserving North Florida's rivers, springs and water-sheds.

Register by: January 15th

#### Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee February 9-14, 2021

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 26th

#### Springtime on the Chipola (NEW) March 17-23, 2021

This will be our 4th different trip in Florida's panhandle, joining the Ochlockonee, the Choctawhatchee, and the Perdido. Given the right conditions, this river will be suitable for all paddlers and paddlesport. Florida Caverns State Park is the starting point for staging this event next March, when spring will be blooming in the panhandle. This is going to be a great experience!

Register by: February 28th

#### 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.

Register by: March 19th

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

**Paddle Florida COVID-19 Trip Protocols**

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

Finally, today is Giving Tuesday. Please consider a contribution of any amount. Your donations are more important than ever.

#GIVINGTUESDAY  
December 1, 2020

Donate today and be part of a community that is helping to protect Florida's waterways!

[Donate here](#)

**Springs Advocates Adapt and Overcome in 2020**  
By Ryan Smart

Executive Director, Florida Springs Council

For many, 2020 has been the most difficult year in recent memory. The non-profit organizations dedicated to protecting Florida's springs are rivers are no exception. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced Florida Springs Council member groups to change the way they fundraise, meet, organize, and advocate during a time of unparalleled importance for the future of our waters. Despite these obstacles, FSC member groups have been more active than ever fighting for clean and healthy springs and rivers.

During the past year, I have been impressed over and over again by the ingenuity and tenacity of Florida's springs and rivers advocates. FSC member groups fought multinational corporations and giant developers, conserved vulnerable lands, advocated for better rules and laws, and formed new coalitions. Following are just a few examples of the advocacy work done by FSC member groups in 2020. [\[Read more...\]](#)

### Opinion: If Florida takes over permitting, its life-giving wetlands will be lost to development

By Richard Baker, Miami Herald

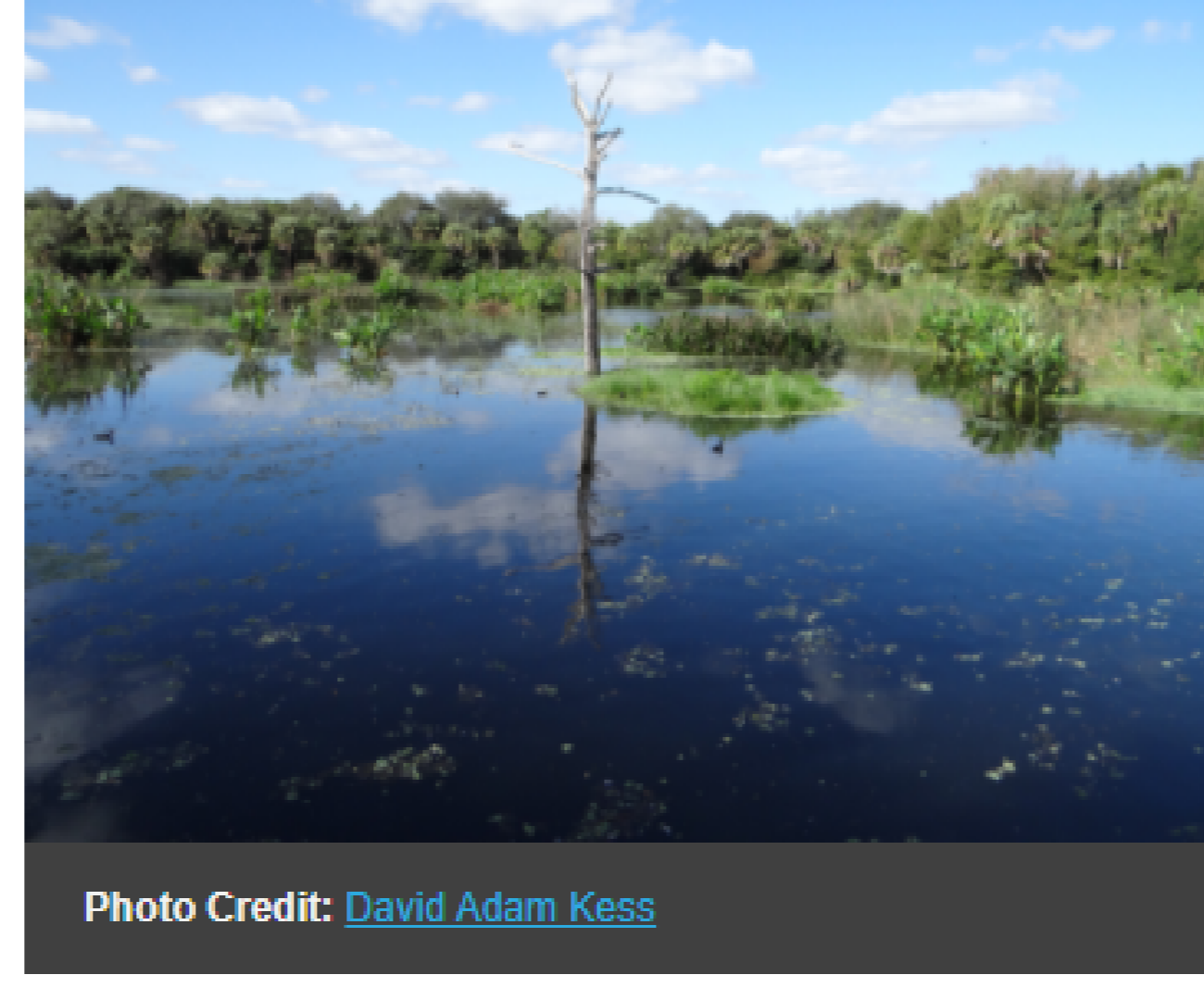


Photo Credit: David Adam Kins

Florida's Department of Environmental Protection wants to take over wetlands permitting from federal agencies such as the Army Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Fisheries Service and Environmental Protection Agency.

Under this new plan supported by Gov. Ron DeSantis, the state will take over the longstanding federal program that for decades has protected marshes, cypress forests, ponds and other wetlands under the Clean Water Act.

This plan fast-tracks development permits for powerful special interests that want to exploit Florida's wetlands for profit, degrade and ruin our natural landscapes and harm our wildlife.

Unfortunately, the state DEP has been weakened by recent legislative and administrative actions. As a result, Florida's environmental laws have been poorly enforced. Handing over federal responsibilities to the state leads to a less thorough review process and greater wetlands loss. [\[Read more...\]](#)

### Location, extent of coral reefs mapped worldwide using advanced AI

By Heather D'Angelo, Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science

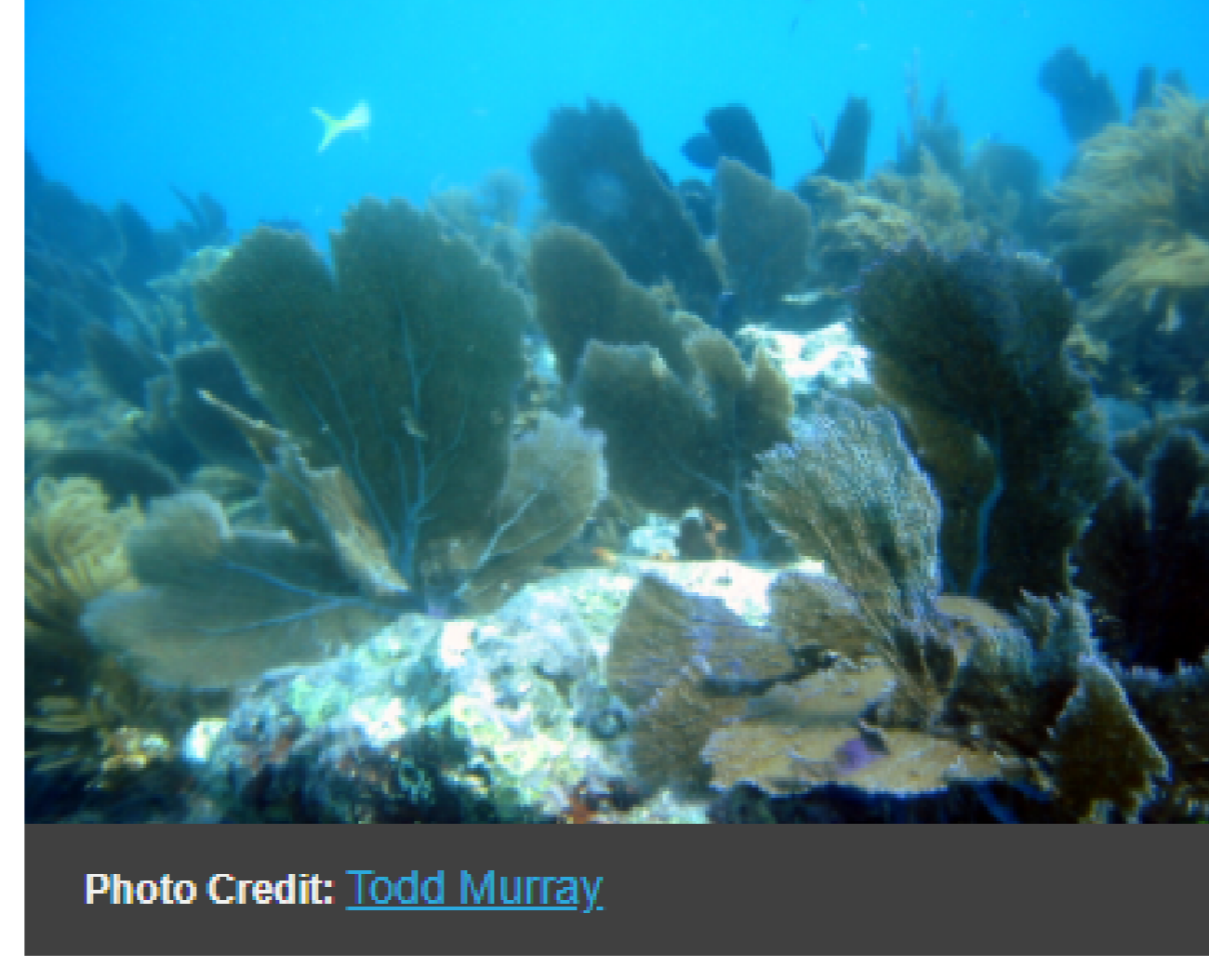


Photo Credit: Todd Murray

Nearly 75% of the world's coral reefs are under threat from global stressors such as climate change and local stressors such as overfishing and coastal development. Those working to understand and protect coral reefs are building the know-how to mitigate the damage, but doing so requires first knowing where reefs are located.

Many approaches, such as diver-based observation and satellite imagery, have been used to estimate the distribution of coral reefs around the world, but past approaches have led to inconsistent accuracy because the underlying data are derived from disparate sources and varying methodologies.

Now, researchers from the Arizona State University Center for Global Discovery and Conservation Science have generated a global coral reef extent map using a single methodology capable of predicting the location of shallow coral reefs with nearly 90% accuracy. The study was published in the journal, Coral Reefs. [\[Read more...\]](#)

### Flora & Fauna Spotlight

Florida Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)  
by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

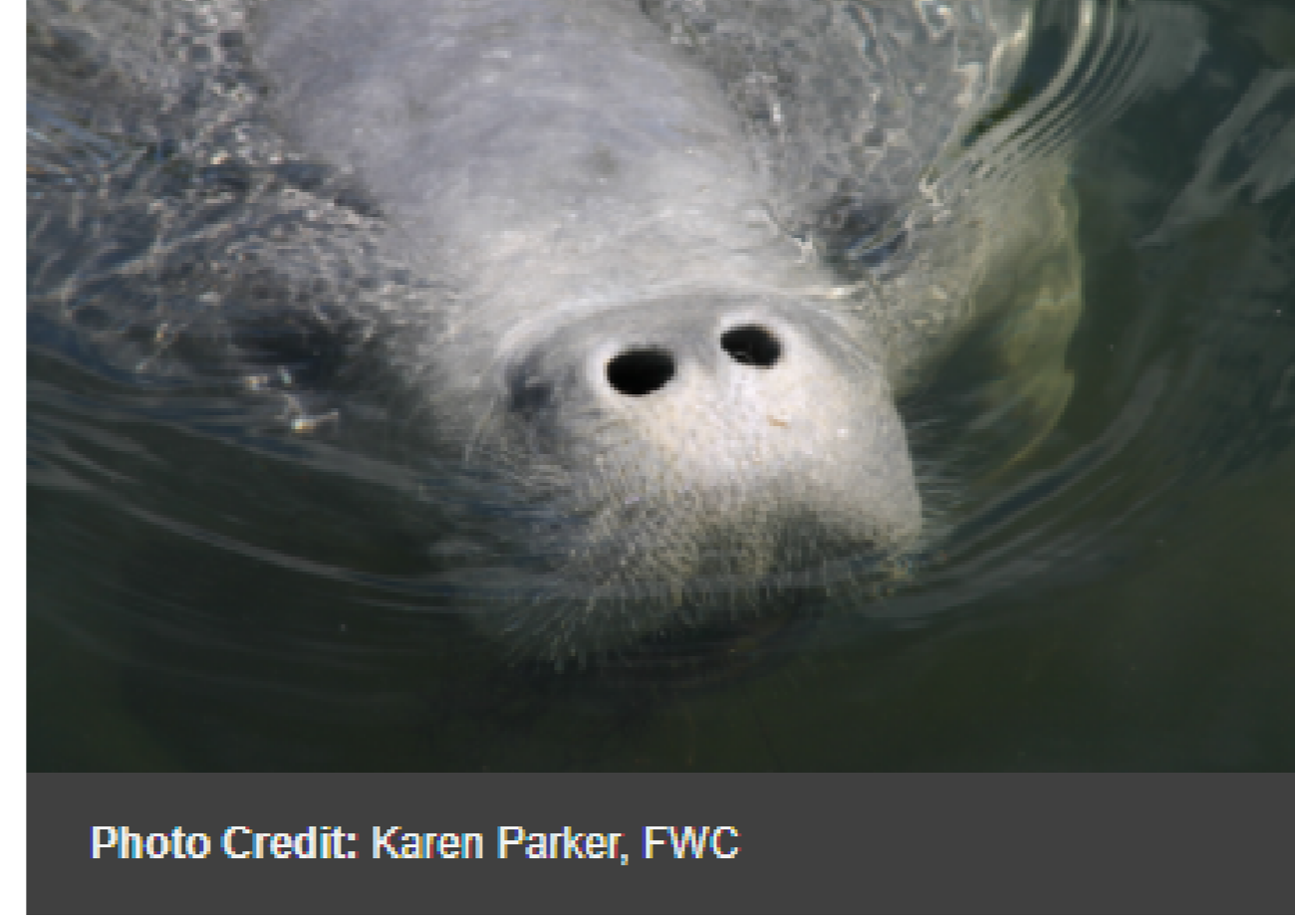


Photo Credit: Karen Parker, FWC

Florida manatees are large, aquatic mammals that are native to Florida. Adult manatees are typically 9-10 feet long from snout to tail and weigh around 1,000 pounds, however, they may grow to over 13 feet long and weigh more than 3,500 pounds. Manatees have two fore limb flippers that they use for steering movements and to hold vegetation while eating. A large, round, flattened paddle-shaped tail is used for swimming.

Manatees have finely-wrinkled, leathery looking thick skin that continuously flakes off. Algae often grows on the backs and tails of manatees, which makes their skin color appear green or brown. Barnacles (found mostly on coastal dwelling manatees) often leave round scars from attachment sites; movement from saltwater to freshwater habitats clears the animals of these saltwater hitchhikers. The manatee's flaky skin adaptation also helps keep the algae and barnacles from building up on the animals. These unique aquatic creatures definitely have some highly specialized features. [\[Read more...\]](#)

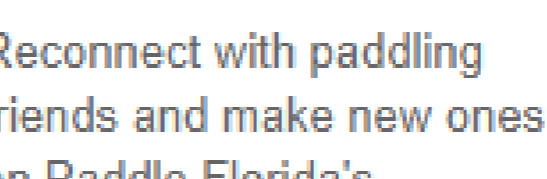


### How To: Is a Double Blade Paddle Good in a Canoe?

Is using a double blade paddle for your canoe considered blasphemy? Watch this first responder of canoe paddling a double blade to learn when to consider using one. [\[Read more...\]](#)

### Like us on Facebook

20,085+ 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"

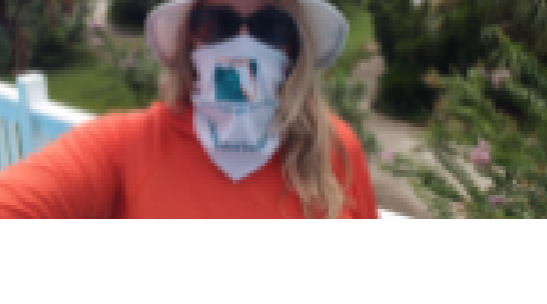
### Support Paddle Florida

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.



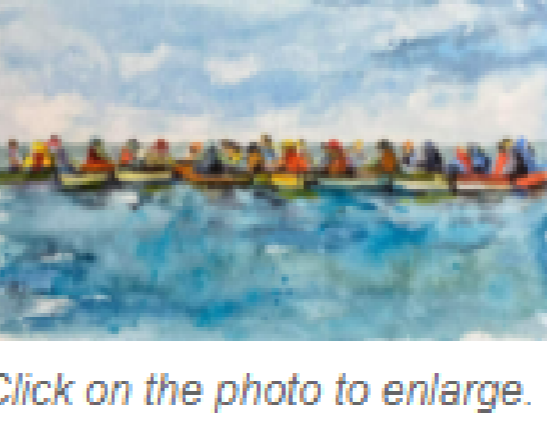
Make a \$50 donation [HERE](#) and receive a Paddle Florida dry bag.



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 graphic 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](mailto:bill@paddleflorida.org)

\*The CARES Act allows taxpayers to deduct up to \$300 in charitable donations made in 2020 without itemizing.



WE PADDLE, WE CARE.

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Do you provide a paddling oriented product or service? Consider placing an ad in our monthly newsletter. You can reach over 6,984 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](mailto:bill@paddleflorida.org) for details.

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