July 2020 • Volume 134

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The Happy Paddler

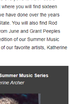
Continuous monthly issues since June 2009!

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.

Looking Back

Paddle Florida is nothing if not a future facing organization, but for this month's issue, Donald Forgione, the former director of the Florida Park Service, writes of his memories concerning the beginnings of the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail and Paddle Florida, thirteen years ago. We also wanted to remind our readers of our increased presence on social media, as we are now posting every day on both Facebook and Instagram. Please 'like' and follow us for great photos and stories. Also, we want to encourage everyone to visit Paddle Florida's YouTube channel, where you will find sixteen videos that illustrate trips we have done over the years and across the Sunshine State. You will also find Rod MacDonald's great show from June and Grant Peeples show from May. The July edition of our Summer Music Series will feature another of our favorite artists, Katherine Archer.

Paddle Florida Summer Music Series
Katherine Archer



Date: July 23, 2020
Time: 7 PM

Click here to read Katherine's bio.

To access by computer:

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URL: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86119619627?pwd=MDNKLlpFJFJTUFJKdk8BNlNZYT09
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Password: 894600
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Katherine Archer and Linda Thornburg have just released their Book, Review McCrickle and the Coral Flower, an Eco Adventure with 7 original songs, for kids and their parents!

Available at the Apple bookstore for download. Coming soon in print to Amazon!

If you can't make the show, please consider making a donation to our non-profit organization. There are links in the right column which describe the really cool thank you gifts you will receive for your donation. At the $25 level, you get a PF buff, which can be particularly useful during this time of COVID-19. At the $50 level, you get a PF dry bag, which every paddercamper can use. At the $75 level, you get a super cool, long-sleeved, white dri-fit PF shirt, which will be great sun protection for the coming summer. At the $100 level, you get two Fraction glass printed images of our favorite Paddle Florida photos.

An Idea

By Donald Forgione
Executive Director, Syngate-Tarra
and co-author of The Ecotourism Provider's HANDBOOK: 180 Techniques for an Exceptional Park, Preserve, or Nature-based Attraction

From 2005 to 2010, I was the District Manager for The Florida Park Service in the Northeast Region of Florida. I had the responsibility of managing 40 state parks and a new concept we called the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail. I had experience with managing linear parks and blueways but in those situations, the state owned the uplands and it had defined boundaries. This new concept was not tangible and based on combining, in spirit, several state, county, and city parks along the Suwannee River as well as water management district land and private property without management control, but rather with an idea.

I visited each site and met with community leaders in the hope that they would buy into the concept and help make it a reality. Some were more supportive than others and the building of a coalition began. We established monthly meetings with all the stakeholders invited to the table. I remember some holidays would not attend so we had the next month's meeting in their community. Hitting a couple of years, each entity would request to host a monthly meeting. They would act be so proud of their part of the river and of the program they were a part of. This delicately assembled group of partners were now dedicated to the concept. [Read more...]

Florida's Lost Springs

By Keith Williams, Earth Island Journal

Cannon Springs on the Ocklawaha River.

Last year, right around the time of the winter solstice, I found myself standing alone on the crest of the Kirkpatrick Dam in north-central Florida looking upstream at the almost empty Rodman Reservoir. The reservoir had been drawn down about ten feet a month earlier, exposing a wasteland of waterlogged grey tree stumps, ghosts of the forest that used to be before the dam was built. The reservoir bottom was exposed in places, dried white like a salt flat. Remaining water was choked with green mats of nonnative plants. As a chill wind blew across the water on this overcast December day, I couldn't help but think that the reservoir looked more like a desolate wasteland than a river.

The Kirkpatrick Dam sits atop the Ocklawaha River, a twisting 74-mile tributary of the St. Johns River that is fed in part by clear freshwater springs. Behind me, downstream, the Ocklawaha still runs free, a shadowy flood plain filled with a range of live oak, cypress, gum, maple, and saline palm, with bottleneck trunks draped in Spanish moss. A primal wild forest. A reminder of what used to be. [Read more...]

Prevent further damage to our imperiled springs

By Dr. Robert Knight
Executive Director, Howard T. Odum Florida Springs Institute

Science tells us that it has been about 6.5 billion years since the Earth cooled from a cloud of primordial gases. Earliest life appeared on this rocky planet sometime after the appearance of liquid water — about 3.5 billion years ago.

The first humans came into the picture less than 2 million years ago.

Earth has always had ups and downs – volcanoes, comet strikes, ice ages and extinctions. These cataclysmic events came and went, and each time nature established a new harmony and stability. Life on Earth was humming along just fine, as evidenced by millions of plant and animal species that were in balance, air not suited by smog, and waterways and oceans free of plastic and other pollutants.

The first sign of people living in this land we call Florida was less than 30,000 years ago. For most of that time humans and their environment were compatible. [Read more...]

EPA Removes Protections For Some Wetlands and Streams

By Jessica Mazzanzi, WUSF

Sweetwater Wetlands Park. Photo Credit: Hillsborough, FL

Protections for some wetlands and streams have been rolled back by the Environmental Protection Agency, under the Trump Administration. The affected areas are ephemeral streams, which only flow part of the year, and isolated wetlands, which are not directly connected to larger bodies of water.

They are no longer considered 'waters of the United States', under the Navigable Waters Protection Rule within the Clean Water Act. Advocates came up with their own name for this: The Dirty Water Rule. [Read more...]

Flora & Fauna Spotlight

In a Nutshell: Getting along with gators on a lazy river

By Brian Thompson, The St. Augustine Record

Alligator at Silver Springs State Park.

Only in Florida do you float along next to one of nature's most dangerous predators and think to yourself, "Hey, look at that … now, where did we put the pretzel chips?"

And it was upon that realization that I started to wonder if we're alright. We Floridians.

There we were, kayaking along Silver Springs. Paddling through the turquoise waters and lazy river grass, lily daughter had asked if I thought we would see any alligators. My wife had warned us both. She had a bit of a dream about it. Not a good one. More of a nightmarish premonition. I think it somehow involved us being devoured by a gator on some kind of fancy cracker. [Read more...]

paddle Florida

Inspiring. Meaningful. Adventure.

Place-based Learning in the Great Outdoors

2020-21 Paddle Florida Season

Suwannee River Wilderness Trail
October 10-21, 2020
Celebrate Florida's version of autumn as its most colorful time. This trip covers 65 miles of the iconic Suwannee and a portion of the (northern) Withlacoochee, from Madison Blue Spring to Branford. This section features dramatic cypress blue springs, some of our most remote and challenging. *Register by: October 2nd*

Ten Thousand Islands Paddling Festival (NEW)
November 12-15, 2020
Southwest Florida's answer to Paddle Florida, this festival features three days of exploring the magic kingdom of the Ten Thousand Islands. Our basecamp for this experience is Collier Seminole State Park, one of the best state parks in the state. We will be utilizing distance of all the paddling tours we will undertake. This is a first time event in our November time slot. We hope to make the Ten Thousand Islands Paddling Festival an annual event in this paddlers' paradise! *Register by: October 30th*

Treasure Coast Paddling Adventure (NEW)
December 2-4, 2020
Come explore the Treasure Coast, named for the shipwrecks, pirate lore and treasure hunters who have been searching for gold, silver and other valuable and hidden bounty. The trip starts in St. Lucie County at Ft. Pierce Inlet State Park and paddles south to the north through Indian River County. Finishing in Sebastian. We'll spend two nights at state parks, two nights at Indian River County Parks and two nights at the Environmental Learning Center. This will be a challenging adventure, what we try to achieve on every trip. Place-based learning in the Great Outdoors. *Register by: November 15th*

January 2021 – To Be Announced

Wild, Wonderful Withlacoochee
February 9-14, 2021
Beginning at Lake Panasoffkee, paddlers will thread their way through Florida's most famous tannic streams on a 65-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 25th*

Springtime on the Chipola (NEW)
March 17-21, 2021
This will be our 8th different trip in Florida's panhandle, joining the Ochlockonee, Econfina and Suwannee in the Panhandle. Given the right conditions, this river will be suitable for all paddlers and paddlecraft. Florida Caverns State Park is the starting point for staging this event mid March, when spring will be blooming in the panhandle. This is looking 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. This event will be 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 15th*

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

How To:
Safely Transport a Paddleboard

In this article, we'll go over a few of the methods you can use to get your SUP to the put-in. [Read more...]

Like us on Facebook

25,300+ 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 mitigate 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 support, you will receive a special gift:

Make a $25 donation HERE **and receive a Paddle Florida Buff,** *A one of lightweight, stretchy material. Can be worn as a face mask, a hat, to protect your head, neck or around neck as scarf.*

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 one small (L5 x L4 with stand) and one medium (L2 x 5.5) glass print with images captured by Matt Keene.**

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.*

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WEAR A MASK
TO SAVE LIVES
"IT GOES ON YOU BEFORE YOU GO OUT"

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