

Returning to the outrageous corruption evident in the state's \$83 million purchase of 4-acres of land in Destin with no meaningful conservation value under the guise of "conservation land acquisition;" from [Jason Garcia's essential "Seeking Rents" newsletter](#): records show a lobbyist wrote a law enabling a controversial land deal in which Florida will pay more than \$20 million an acre to buy a tiny parcel of property from a politically connected seller.

More: "In mid-June, just a few hours before Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature finalized this year's state budget, GOP leaders in Tallahassee slipped a sentence into the spending plan authorizing state officials to acquire a piece of property in the Panhandle through a popular land-preservation program.

"That sentence buried deep inside the budget — the line that enabled Florida's top politicians to pull off a land deal that a [longtime conservation leader called "a sham"](#) — came, emails show, from a lobbyist for the developer."

The best government money can buy.

LINK: [https://jasongarcia.substack.com/p/florida-lawmakers-took-instructions?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://jasongarcia.substack.com/p/florida-lawmakers-took-instructions?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

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Critically endangered [North Atlantic right whales are headed back our way](#) for their calving season which occurs off the coast of northeast Florida and Georgia up into the Carolinas.

LINK: [https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/georgia/stories-in-georgia/north-atlantic-right-whales/?en\\_txn1=e.ch\\_fl.eg.x.gpn.1105.n.sas.loc\\_fl&en\\_txn8=NewSch.WJEMSA2511NPNZNZZE02Z00-ZZZZ-ST00&lu=72cbb21b-3a33-4505-b2f6-1dc548534a04&customer\\_id=19567367](https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/georgia/stories-in-georgia/north-atlantic-right-whales/?en_txn1=e.ch_fl.eg.x.gpn.1105.n.sas.loc_fl&en_txn8=NewSch.WJEMSA2511NPNZNZZE02Z00-ZZZZ-ST00&lu=72cbb21b-3a33-4505-b2f6-1dc548534a04&customer_id=19567367)

As endangered as North Atlantic right whales are, the Rice's whale found in the Gulf of Mexico is even more imperiled. Scientists only discovered the species four years ago and – optimistically – maybe 100 or so are believed to be in existence.

New proposals for oil drilling in the Gulf by the Trump administration could be a nail in the species' coffin.

This is what war on nature looks like.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/10/30/expanding-offshore-oil-drilling-will-imperil-rare-whales-who-live-near-florida/>

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The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has been [drawing down the Rodman Pool](#) – the artificial lake resulting from the damming of the Ocklawaha River. This is required regularly in order to flush out the polluted water and sediment that builds up behind the dam. When the drawdown occurs, it reveals a cemetery of dead tree stumps. The dam’s construction flooded over 7,500 acres of forested wetlands and buried more than 20 springs under water.

During the drawdown, the public will have a unique opportunity to see what the river looked like when it flowed naturally. Visitors will be able to paddle, visit bubbling springs, fish, walk the exposed shoreline and imagine that this is how the river could look.

All of that forest land – all of those trees and native plants and lost habitat for bears and birds and bobcats – along with the springs – which would go a long way to supporting the state’s precarious manatee population – would be returned to life if the Rodman/Kirkpatrick Dam were removed as conservationists have been asking for ever since its construction in the 1960s.

Another good story here on all of the environmental benefits that would occur instantaneously if the Dam were breeched and the river returned to a free-flowing condition. This will again be among the top priorities for conservation organizations around the state during the 2026 legislative session. Advocates were finally able to push the legislature to begin funding the process in 2025, only to have the governor veto it.

LINK: <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/revealing-the-river-through-drawdown/?nvep=&hmac=&emci=61433815-c9b5-f011-8e61-6045bded8ba4&emdi=ea000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&ceid=>

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Sarasota’s Audubon Society chapter along with residents took on the nation’s largest homebuilder... [and won!](#)

The developer wanted to put a new neighborhood adjacent to a beloved bird sanctuary.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/11/06/bird-defending-audubon-chapter-defeats-florida-development-planned-by-nations-largest-homebuilder/>

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Cool story here on [Florida’s pine lilies](#).

LINK: [https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/pine-lilies-fireflowers-of-floridas-flatwoods/?mc\\_cid=b58404df87&mc\\_eid=e70d4d1c83](https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/pine-lilies-fireflowers-of-floridas-flatwoods/?mc_cid=b58404df87&mc_eid=e70d4d1c83)

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I mentioned the Georgia Public Service Commission race in last week’s newsletter. Elections for commissioners on the statewide board managing Georgia’s public utilities were held on Tuesday with surprising, and potentially important results for conservation

across the southeast. [A pair of Democrats upset a pair of incumbent Republicans](#) echoing national election trends.

While both candidates ran primarily on affordability and bringing utility prices down, their presence could be beneficial to clean energy and a bulwark against data centers. Georgia has a massive amount of aging fossil fuel energy infrastructure being propped up by pro-dirty energy federal policy and the state's need to power its growing number of data centers.

Georgia has become a national epicenter for artificial intelligence running data centers, so much so, it's had to import dirty power from Mississippi to supplant the dirty power it already produces, but not in quantities great enough to feed the power (and water) craving data centers.

While Democrats can be just as bad as Republicans when it comes to supporting fossil fuel production and data centers – [Michigan's Democratic governor just shamefully OK'd an enormous one](#) – both of the new Georgia commissioners are at least more friendly to the idea of clean energy and regulating data centers than their predecessors.

LINK: <https://georgiarecorder.com/2025/11/04/democrat-alicia-johnson-appears-to-defeat-longtime-georgia-utility-regulator/>

Michigan story: <https://www.lansingcitypulse.com/stories/whitmer-multi-billion-dollar-saline-township-data-center-largest-investment-in-michigan,162987>

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It is believed the University of California San Diego is the first major public university in the country to require all undergraduate students to take [a class on climate change](#) to earn their degree.

LINK: [https://grist.org/solutions/climate-change-is-the-new-liberal-arts-colleges-build-environmental-lessons-into-degrees/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=daily](https://grist.org/solutions/climate-change-is-the-new-liberal-arts-colleges-build-environmental-lessons-into-degrees/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily)

Hopefully those students – and the rest of us – will learn to approach climate change and climate solutions as a class issue. Since 1990, the share of carbon emissions of the richest 0.1% has increased by 32%, while the share of the poorest 50% has fallen by 3%.

[New research finds this “carbon gap” increasing](#) alongside the wealth disparity in the US and around the world. The US's super-rich are burning through carbon emissions at 4,000 times the speed of the world's poorest 10%. The wealthiest 0.1% emit an average of 2.2 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> every day.

LINK: [https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/29/americas-super-rich-running-down-planet-safe-climate-spaces-oxfam?utm\\_term=69020fd314409d3b5362c9483b523825&utm\\_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing\\_email](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/29/americas-super-rich-running-down-planet-safe-climate-spaces-oxfam?utm_term=69020fd314409d3b5362c9483b523825&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email)

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In Nebraska, zoo animals from Africa are [eating a steady diet of invasive trees and shrubs](#) removed from a native prairie restoration project in nearby Iowa.

LINK: <https://people.com/nebraska-zoo-feeds-invasive-species-to-its-animals-11832013>