

Florida officials have voted to create [the state's first new state park](#) in seven years. Nearly 2,500 acres for the park was acquired in Walton County in the panhandle, property with long-leaf pines and rare foliage like the red pitcher plant and the white-top pitcher.

LINK: <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2024/12/17/upper-shoal-florida-forever-project-to-become-florida-newest-park/77044190007/>

At the same time, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission officials are [hampering efforts to better protect](#) the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary citing jurisdictional concerns.

LINK: <https://www.wlrn.org/environment/2024-12-17/keys-sanctuary-restoration-blueprint>

The North Florida Land Trust has expanded conservation land within the Ocala to Osceola (O2O) Wildlife Corridor by acquiring 1,109 acres in Bradford County. This is the nonprofit land conservation organization's largest single acquisition that it will own and manage in its 25-year history.

NFLT purchased the property for \$7,301,427 from Rayonier Forest Resources, LP, which had previously managed the land for timber production.

A significant portion of the acquisition was funded through the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program and the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) program. These initiatives are dedicated to preserving land surrounding Camp Blanding to ensure it remains compatible with aerial and ground military training operations.

Additionally, the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds at the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida contributed \$100,000 toward the purchase price. This contribution is part of a transformative \$1 million grant established last year by the Delores Barr Weaver Legacy Funds to support conservation land purchases over a ten-year period.

The O2O Corridor is a 1.6-million-acre network of public and private lands connecting the Ocala and Osceola National Forests.

It's not easy being green in Florida. Just ask Alachua County/Gainesville where local efforts to combat the impacts of climate change and improve resiliency and sustainability [routinely run in opposition from a state government](#) that has removed the words "climate change" and "global warming" from most state laws and new schoolbooks.

LINK: https://grist.org/politics/alachua-county-gainesville-climate-agenda-florida/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Miami-Dade County is in the process of picking a site for what will become [the nation's largest trash incinerator](#). This is, of course, a political hot potato. Wealthy residents want the project placed as far away from them as possible, and advocacy groups are sticking up for poorer, less politically connected neighborhoods where these kind of projects, and the negative human health impacts they always bring, always seem to land. That historic practice is known as "environmental racism."

Did you know Florida burns more trash than any other state and Miami-Dade county produces nearly double the national average per person of garbage, in part due to one of the region's major industries: tourism.

LINK: <https://grist.org/equity/in-florida-officials-and-communities-clash-over-where-to-build-the-nations-largest-trash-incinerator/>

On Dec. 10, 2024, following litigation by the Florida Springs Council, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection proposed "Springs Harm Rules" (62-41.400 - 62-41.402) for adoption after nearly nine years of ignoring the law. This is an important step towards the agency finally adopting rules that protect Outstanding Florida Springs from harmful water withdrawals.

Unfortunately, FDEP's proposed rules are the same as the weak draft rules previously published.

The Florida Springs Council is asking folks to speak up on behalf of stronger rules [online here via automated email](#) or in person during a special public hearing January 6 at 9 a.m. in Tallahassee. (Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building, Room 137; 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard).

FDEP is accepting comments on the proposed springs harm rule until December 31, 2024. Tell FDEP to improve the proposed rule to meet the minimum requirements of the law (373.219(3), F.S.), prior to adoption.

LINK: <https://floridaspringscouncil.good.do/springsharmrule/ProposedSpringsHarmRule/>