

A measure in the State Senate that would have prevented local governments from limiting the use of single use plastics was removed from its bill providing another major victory to citizens and conservation groups in this legislative session. A House bill still includes the measure.

The senate bill defeat comes on the heels of environmentalists stopping what many considered the most dangerous potential legislation being considered this term, a provision requiring litigants challenging Florida Department of Environmental Protection rules enforcement – generally citizens and non-profits – to pay the legal expenses of defendants – generally the state and big corporations – in the case of a courtroom loss.

At the same time, quick action prevented the legislature from fooling with land acquisitions in the Florida Wildlife Corridor, a land swap provision snuck in at the 11th hour that was successfully booted.

Conservation minded citizens and organizations, including the Florida Native Plant Society, have thus far defeated all of the worst environmental schemes being considered this legislative session.

Leading the way in those efforts has been the Florida Springs Council, a group, obviously, concerned with protecting Florida's springs and fresh water, but whose purview extends to most environmental challenges around the state because the springs are directly impacted by so many of them.

The executive director of the Florida Springs Council was a guest last week on "The Florida Spectacular" podcast and he discussed how the group works to protect the springs while serving as a counterbalance to a legislature mostly in bed with developers.

LINK: <https://floridaspectacular.buzzsprout.com/1527562/14462328-episode-139-florida-springs-politics-and-the-profanity-manatee>

Kathrynn Abbey Hanna Park is hosting its first fishing line clean-up event. The event will take place on Saturday, February 24th at 9am. Each year the park hosts a wading bird colony with tri-colored herons (state-threatened), little blue herons (state-threatened), great egrets, and snowy egrets.

The purpose of this event is to remove any monofilament or debris from the nesting area to prevent entanglement. Anyone who walks the beach knows how nasty this stuff is.

On a global scale, what's known as "ghost tackle" – trashed, lost and discarded line, etc. from commercial fishing vessels – is one of the greatest dangers to marine animals.

If you'd like to participate and have any questions, contact Jenny Decker (JDecker@coj.net).

Citizens interested in learning more about Amelia Island's dune ecosystem can do so on February 12th at 3:00 at the Story and Song bookstore in Fernandina Beach when resident and coastal geomorphologist Frank Hopf will present on the subject.

Attendance is free.

Could native plants be [the top gardening trend of 2024](#)? Perhaps.

LINK: <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/duvalco/2024/01/24/garden-trends-for-2024/>