

Wonderful news out of Fernandina Beach where the city will not allow Rayonier Advanced Materials (RYAM) to [construct and operate a bioethanol plant](#). The plant would have consumed astronomical amounts of water for the processing while emitting toxic chemicals into the air – on a good day. On a bad day, an accident would prove catastrophic to the community and local environment.

Don't expect Rayonier to go away quietly. With its influence and money and a state legislature and governor bankrolled by polluting industries, this fight is not over. Great news this week, however.

LINK: <https://www.fernandinaobserver.org/stories/city-rejects-ryam-bioethanol-plant-project,44304>

A North Atlantic right whale with ninth calf [spotted recently of Amelia Island](#).

LINK: <https://environmentamerica.org/updates/right-whale-mother-grand-teton-gives-birth-to-her-ninth-known-calf/>

Amazing photos here from biologists who [saved 1,200 cold-stunned sea turtles](#) last month in St. Joseph Bay near Panama City Beach.

https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2025/01/29/florida-sea-turtle-rescues/?trk_msg=NDLMOOLRV0D4H19PSKJ8HHFH4C&trk_contact=MKJ3NR92BNJ26R436KMC00O62G&trk_sid=NMRPL3OBNPA383I56A5O77B3LC&trk_link=ANOS0G5L6LMKHAGOHL9A9POAPC&utm_email=cb04c7623fff167e78e52e4e556986141f99c549b13bc49f736453d765c42d2a&utm_source=TheRundown&utm_medium=MG2_Newsletter&utm_term=In+an+%e2%80%98impressive%e2%80%99+rescue%2c+more+than+1%2c200+sea+turtles+saved+from+cold+Florida+waters&utm_campaign=Florida+orange+growers+prepare+for+another+low+harvest

96% of shrimp labeled locally caught and served in restaurants in Tampa and St. Pete is actually farm raised in foreign countries.

LINK: https://www.nwfdailynews.com/story/entertainment/dining/2025/01/28/seafood-restaurants-in-this-florida-city-falsely-labeled-shrimp/77971085007/?utm_source=northwest-florida-daily-news-daily-briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=dailybriefing&utm_term=Content%20List%20-%20Stacking%20-%20optimized&utm_content=nnwf-fortwalton-nletter65

For the first time since 1997, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is [updating its regulations, marine zones and management plan](#) — a critical opportunity to safeguard these resources. This plan will provide additional safeguards for the Sanctuary's reefs, seagrass meadows and island habitats.

LINK: <https://www.theinvadingsea.com/2025/01/22/florida-keys-national-marine-sanctuary-restoration-blueprint-coral-reef-marine-zones-seagrass/>

The public comment period for monarchs to be listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act is currently open and will remain open through March 12th, 2025. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing would enhance efforts to restore and protect this iconic pollinator. [You can comment in favor of the protected status here](#).

Considering the Trump Administration's war on nature, and its mania in dismantling the federal government, particularly agencies concerned with the environment like the Fish and Wildlife Service, I'd rank it as highly unlikely the monarch, or any other species, receives increased protections while he's in office.

LINK:

https://act.biologicaldiversity.org/skARqbW72EGepXy4L6YYgw2?sourceid=1010293&utm_source=action&utm_medium=email&contactdata=%7b%7bContactData%7d%7d&emci=9c68caee-a6dd-ef11-88f8-0022482a9579&emdi=62b65544-d3df-ef11-88f8-0022482a97e9&ceid=1955550

Which takes us to the greatest volume of news related to conservation and the environment impacting Florida and the rest of the nation coming out of the White House. It's as bad as it gets.

The Environmental Protection Agency has [updated its priorities](#), abdicating its responsibility to protect the environment, instead promising to slash regulation, fire longtime, professional staff and replace them with lobbyists from polluting industries, speed up approvals for oil and gas drilling projects, and focus on supporting efforts to bolster the U.S. as a capital for Artificial Intelligence.

Why the focus on Artificial Intelligence?

As I've mentioned in previous newsletters, the supercomputers required to run AI [require massive amounts of power and water](#). It is an environmentally devastating industry. By stating as a priority support for AI, the EPA can absolve the industry from environmental regulations for consumption and pollution it would be subject to under a different administration.

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/06/trump-epa-lee-zeldin?utm_term=67a4aa21f552f54b333e53e26aee407c&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/06/trump-epa-lee-zeldin?utm_term=67a4aa21f552f54b333e53e26aee407c&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email

The Trump Environmental Protection Agency withdrew a pending Biden administration plan that would have protected public health from the chemical manufacturing sector by setting [discharge limits](#) on the toxic "[forever chemicals](#)" known as PFAS.

The decision is a significant setback for efforts to address the growing public health crisis caused by industrial PFAS pollution of the water supply. The conservation newsletter has been filled recently with stories of Florida food, water and people being full of forever chemicals.

So much for "Make America Healthy Again."

LINK: <https://www.ewg.org/news-insights/statement/2025/01/trump-epa-withdrawal-pfas-effluent-limits-setback-public-health-ewg>

Speaking of "Make America Healthy Again," its leader, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., is suspected of bilking \$67 million from a conservation organization.

LINK: https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2025/01/robert-f-kennedy-jr-waterkeeper-alliance-nygard-bacon-bahamas/?utm_source=mj-newsletters&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-newsletter-01-14-2025

Meanwhile, Donald Trump Jr. is accused of [shooting a protected duck](#) on a hunting trip in Venice, Italy.

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/04/donald-trump-jr-accused-of-killing-protected-bird-in-venice-lagoon?utm_term=67a4a57095f499be4b3c5715827ebd0f&utm_campaign=DownToEarth&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email

Trump Sr.'s immediate efforts upon returning to the White House to [kill the offshore wind industry](#) have already proven successful.

LINK: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/money/markets/trump-s-plan-to-kill-offshore-wind-is-paying-off/ar-AA1ynllb?ocid=winp2fptaskbarhover&cvid=844ee604c03645beefc9a100fc54b79d&ei=6>

Newly confirmed Interior Secretary Doug Burgum issued an [order](#) late Monday directing all assistant secretaries to take numerous actions to implement President Trump's executive order on energy. Taken together, the actions would dramatically weaken protections for endangered species, public lands and climate solutions.

"Burgum is on his way to becoming the worst Interior Secretary in history with this mindless attack on America's endangered plants and animals and our irreplaceable wildlands," said Noah Greenwald, endangered species director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "This order will fan the flames of the extinction crisis. Americans don't want to wipe out wildlife or pour gasoline on the climate emergency, but Burgum and Trump seem determined to burn it all down anyway."

The order calls for revoking three Endangered Species Act regulations that were finalized under the Biden administration, as well as a rule protecting migratory birds from unintentional killing. It also directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to revise protected critical habitats for endangered and threatened species.

LINK: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/burgum-order-undermines-protections-for-nations-land-wildlife-2025-02-04/?utm_source=eeo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=eeo1283&utm_term=EndangeredSpecies&emci=6eae409f-3cdf-ef11-88f8-0022482a9579&emdi=c74ff958-cde4-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=1955550

Trump [shutting down the USAID office](#) has dire consequences for global climate goals.

The 90-day foreign aid freeze and shutdown of the agency have paralyzed global efforts to relieve hunger, leaving \$340m worth of food to rot.

https://grist.org/politics/usaids-elon-musk-trump-climate/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Data scientists are scrambling to [save invaluable climate and environmental justice research](#) purged from federal databases by the new administration. Decades worth of work.

LINK: https://grist.org/politics/the-scramble-to-save-critical-climate-data-from-trumps-war-on-dei/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Only a partial accounting, but I'll stop there for this week.