

If you'd like to contact your local representative in support of the two state parks protection bills working through the Florida House and Senate, [you can do so here](#).

Personalized letters do best.

Write your own subject line like "Strengthen SB 80/HB 209" or "Amend State Park Preservation Act."

Use these talking points:

To be truly protective of Florida State Parks, lawmakers must amend and strengthen SB 80 and HB 209 to ensure state parks are managed to preserve natural lands and prohibit development and activities that disrupt wildlife and ecosystems.

Highlight

Reinforce conservation intent

Eliminate vague language that weakens protections

Remove pro-development language for 'disturbed' uplands

Set clear limits on private development proposals

LINK: <https://floridaspringscouncil.good.do/2025legislativesession/Amend-SB-80-HB-209/>

Alcoholic womanizer and climate denier U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth wants to eliminate "so-called 'climate change'" programs from U.S. defense budget. [Many of these projects are in Florida](#).

The military hosts a surprising number of conservation initiatives because it owns a great deal of land and doesn't like neighbors.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/02/27/new-defense-secretary-doesnt-recognize-the-danger-climate-poses-for-floridas-military-bases/>

Donald Trump and shadow president Elon Musk's indiscriminate firing of civil service employees in the federal government [hit the Crystal River Wildlife Refuge particularly hard](#). This wildlife refuge is tasked with protecting manatees and educating the public about them.

LINK: https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2025/02/21/crystal-river-wildlife-refuge-layoffs-florida-trump/?trk_msg=27UM8M0762D4PEM458SDUBEA7C&trk_contact=MKJ3NR92BNJ26R436KMC00O62G&trk_sid=3BNB2TC371KV6UIM1H0RNUKV8K&trk_link=9QO0UEPB6N7K99FKOJ73T7E8OK&utm_email=cb04c7623fff167e78e52e4e556986141f99c549b13bc49f736453d765c42d2a&utm_source=TheRundown&utm_medium=MG2_Newsletter&utm_term=These+park+rangers+oversaw+Florida%e2%80%99s+only+manatee+refuge.+Then+they+were+fired.&utm_campaign=Bring+on+spring%2c+and+strawberries

More stories of National Park Service employees nationwide, from biologists to rangers, [fired by Trump and Musk without cause](#).

If you visit a national park this year and the experience is a bad one caused by long lines, trash everywhere, dirty bathrooms, unavailable staff, broken facilities, and general shabbiness, you know why. If you hear your friends complaining about such experiences, inform them why.

LINK: <https://www.npca.org/articles/6911-lost-jobs-broken-hearts-and-harms-to-national-parks>

Former National Park Service staff [hung a 30x50-foot American flag upside down](#) – a signal of distress – on the face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park.

LINK: https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/climbing/yosemite-climbing-layoffs/?utm_term=ool&utm_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz--3RVG5Zr_JUAOKtHVriMyXRtzA3JalVXqCd7_gg76g0CVcWZ2sEfsptcqjriw1QFTBxLQK9cPocyeRGB0a80pMw_XbzA&_hsmi=349173608&utm_source=newsletter%3Futm_term%3Dool&utm_source=newsletter

New legislation to [stifle lawsuits targeting phosphate-mining companies](#) is part of a broader effort by Florida Republicans to support the Mosaic Co., a Fortune 500 fertilizer giant.

LINK: https://jasongarcia.substack.com/p/florida-lawmakers-may-help-a-mining?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=687064&post_id=157705701&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=false&r=g2ims&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

Donald Trump's endorsement for Florida's next governor held [a secret summit meeting for polluting industry](#) leaders last year.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2024/09/05/secret-florida-water-summit-lets-polluters-talk-to-government-without-press-or-public-present/>

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission met to discuss the [reopening of Apalachicola Bay's oyster beds](#) to harvesting. They collapsed in 2013 and have been closed to harvesting since 2020.

LINK: <https://eu.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/2025/02/26/apalachicola-oystermen-push-for-fair-reopening-plan-of-bay/80238879007/>

Documentary on the [great horned owls](#) of St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge wins award.

LINK: <https://flamingomag.com/2025/02/10/ian-weir-tigers-of-the-sky/>

Audubon Society needs [volunteers in northeast Florida](#) to serve as beach monitors during the upcoming shorebird nesting season.

MORE INFO: [https://act.audubon.org/a/audubon-florida-coastal-stewardship-volunteer-interest-nefl?contactdata=WsRRKZil15AL9m30ZV4ijbweJOSfbhUoWMisrWOF4nd9OKkV0rkWJyKQH6NpxHoBQ5fUo+fYhpXszlhNvZUA2dx%2fmmC2Vm%2f+y3jeAaaUCXdQXi5oIh6C0XRxpp3mYg5auQgmhJDJL4GP9tnvzfP7BvsyUnilqgf5xsWjpQli806e0VjHckODhQyoSmfPmZWsjnOMJ4pH+qStj9kFN8yjKzVs%2f3dCLfY4MLxfaOiCtHNjAf6fnSMhoZ5XC0tvuoMoitu%2fI8bM5lslkSkoxXtzZQ%3d%3d&ms=aud-email-advocacy_\(fl\)_volunteers_-_ne_florida_](https://act.audubon.org/a/audubon-florida-coastal-stewardship-volunteer-interest-nefl?contactdata=WsRRKZil15AL9m30ZV4ijbweJOSfbhUoWMisrWOF4nd9OKkV0rkWJyKQH6NpxHoBQ5fUo+fYhpXszlhNvZUA2dx%2fmmC2Vm%2f+y3jeAaaUCXdQXi5oIh6C0XRxpp3mYg5auQgmhJDJL4GP9tnvzfP7BvsyUnilqgf5xsWjpQli806e0VjHckODhQyoSmfPmZWsjnOMJ4pH+qStj9kFN8yjKzVs%2f3dCLfY4MLxfaOiCtHNjAf6fnSMhoZ5XC0tvuoMoitu%2fI8bM5lslkSkoxXtzZQ%3d%3d&ms=aud-email-advocacy_(fl)_volunteers_-_ne_florida_)

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90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=907790](https://fl.audubon.org/sites/default/files/jaywatchreport2025_v5_web.pdf?ms=aud-email-advocacy%20(fl)%20jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=advocacy%20(fl)%20jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&emci=988b18d9-bcf2-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&emdi=ab17eebc-faf2-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=907790)

Deep dive on [Florida scrub jay populations](#), also from Florida Audubon.

LINK: [https://fl.audubon.org/sites/default/files/jaywatchreport2025_v5_web.pdf?ms=aud-email-advocacy \(fl\) jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=advocacy \(fl\) jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&emci=24143be9-aef3-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&emdi=0471d851-30f5-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=907790](https://fl.audubon.org/sites/default/files/jaywatchreport2025_v5_web.pdf?ms=aud-email-advocacy%20(fl)%20jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=advocacy%20(fl)%20jay_watch_summary_of_the_2024_season&emci=24143be9-aef3-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&emdi=0471d851-30f5-ef11-90cb-0022482a94f4&ceid=907790)

Last week, the Army Corps reclassified [700 pending wetland permits](#) for projects from Alaska to Florida, which will now be reviewed under their emergency procedures. [This action violates the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act](#). The notice comes as the Trump administration prepares to announce a list of oil, gas and other energy infrastructure projects to be fast tracked.

If you recall last week’s Conservation Newsletter, this action stems from Trump declaring a nationwide energy “emergency” upon resuming office, a technical distinction giving the president sweeping power to have the government disregard regulation. This is why he did that. There is no energy “emergency” in the United States, but declaring one allows his government to disregard regulation in the support of new fossil fuel extraction projects.

Of course, being the “good soldiers” they are, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers doesn’t question these permit reclassifications, they just follow orders, no matter what those orders ask of them.

LINK: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/lawsuit-launched-to-stop-us-army-corp-from-nationwide-wetlands-destruction-2025-02-20/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

Nearly 600 Starbucks stores nationwide began replacing their cold drinks cups — typically made out of polypropylene, a type of rigid plastic — with paper versions lined with a thin layer of bioplastic for liquid resistance last week.

https://grist.org/accountability/why-some-starbucks-locations-are-switching-from-plastic-to-paper-cups/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Adding 8,000 trees to an under resourced urban neighborhood adjacent to an interstate in Louisville, KY, improved health conditions linked to heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer among residents there. Are you listening Miami, Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa?

Planting trees is the simplest, easiest, most cost-effective way to improve the livability of neighborhoods.

https://www.nature.org/en-us/magazine/magazine-articles/tree-planting-human-health-louisville/?en_txn8=NewSch.WJEMSA2502NPNZNZZE02Z00-ZZZZ-ST00&lu=72cbb21b-3a33-4505-b2f6-1dc548534a04&en_txn1=e.ch_fl.eg.x.gpn.0211.n.sas.unv

Near the top of the list for communities following devastating wildfires: [plant native trees and plants](#).

LINK: https://grist.org/wildfires/what-it-takes-to-regrow-a-community-after-wildfire/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

The Trump administration plans to all but eliminate the office that oversees America's recovery from the largest disasters, raising questions about how the United States will rebuild from hurricanes, wildfires and other calamities made worse by climate change.

The Office of Community Planning and Development, part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, pays to rebuild homes and other recovery efforts after the country's worst disasters, such as [Hurricane Helene in North Carolina](#) and Hurricane Milton in Florida.

The administration plans to cut the staff in that office by 84 percent, according to a document obtained by The New York Times. The number of workers would be cut to 150, from 936 when Mr. Trump took office last month.

Those cuts could slow the distribution of recovery money to North Carolina and other recent disasters, depending how quickly they happen.

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/20/climate/trump-cuts-hud-disaster-recovery.html?unlocked_article_code=1.yk4.eyc.BfHRhOUNLk5W&smid=url-share

Climate scientists around the world came to the conclusion years ago that a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperatures was the top end of warming at which the planet could continue functioning as it has been in human history without experiencing catastrophic and unpredictable fluctuations. Scientists this summer agreed that limiting warming to 1.5 C is no longer feasible.

Now, one leading climate scientist says that even limiting global warming to a 2.0 C increase is "dead."

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/04/climate-change-target-of-2c-is-dead-says-renowned-climate-scientist?utm_term=67a360d216c31db9d3ac167301d752b0&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email

A woman in England tried [eliminating her consumption of single use plastics](#) and found the effort essentially impossible.

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/12/my-no-plastic-life-i-tried-to-cut-out-single-use-items-for-a-month-and-it-almost-broke-me?utm_term=67ac990aa6de120893fac1c6ae235411&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email