

Another week, another crisis. Welcome to Florida.

Environmental organizations uncovered a land swap being proposed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection through a public notice sent Wednesday morning calling for an unscheduled meeting of the state Acquisition and Restoration Council on Wednesday, May 21.

In the typically sneaky fashion these proposals happen, according to Audubon Florida:

“After close of business, the meeting’s agenda link quietly went live on the website, revealing an unremarkable agenda with the exception of one item, proposing to swap a choice piece of state-owned real estate in the heart of St. Johns County’s Guana River Wildlife Management Area for a constellation of parcels across the state ([see agenda item and map here](#)). While the proposed swap would provide five new acres for every one currently owned, the proposal is light on details and the applicant is nebulous—an ‘Uplands LLC’ that is not available in a search of Florida business registry SunBiz.”

You can imagine the swapped land in the Wildlife Management Area would be used for development. And it’s not just a little bit, either, but 600 acres! What would be returned to the state by the private developer would be various parcels scattered about. As we all know, contiguous conservation land is the most valuable conservation land,

These proposed “swaps” of conservation land have become trendy in Florida in recent months. So called “protected conservation land” doesn’t really mean that anymore.

In this proposal, and others like it, primo conservation land is being offered by the state – your land and my land – to developers, in exchange for land they own which may be larger in acreage, but is often degraded and of much less conservation value.

Audubon is asking concerned citizens to send this automated email to FDEP opposing the proposal. Do your good deed for the day.

EMAIL: <https://act.audubon.org/a/arclandswap>

One more action item and this comes from the Florida Native Plant Society state office related to (another) proposed highway extension, this one in Polk County west of Orlando.

Florida’s Turnpike Enterprise, an arm of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), is conducting an Alternative Corridor Evaluation (ACE) for an extension of the Central Polk Parkway. The proposed toll road would extend from SR 60 near Lake Wales to US 17-92 near Davenport and all the proposed Alternative Corridors threaten sensitive natural areas and the native plants and wildlife that inhabit them. The road is being billed as a high-speed alternative to US 27 and the solution to preventing future congestion caused by population

growth and rampant development. Focusing that development in already developed areas, concentrating on higher density, and getting away from our addiction to cars are debates for another day.

Construction of the toll road would obliterate the only known habitat for the endangered Blushing Scrub Balm (*Dicerandra modesta*) and impact more than a dozen imperiled plant species.

FNPS has submitted a letter to FDOT objecting to the proposed highway and recommending a “no build” alternative that FDOT has already rejected. FNPS is asking concerned citizens to email Project Manager Jazlyn Heywood at Jazlyn.Heywood@dot.state.fl.us and copy FDOT Secretary Jared Perdue (Jared.Perdue@dot.state.fl.us) and Turnpike Enterprise Executive Director Nicola Liquori (Nicola.Liquori@dot.state.fl.us) before the May 19 deadline for public comments stating your preference for a “no-build” option for the Central Polk Parkway East Extension because Florida does not need this highway.

An 89-year-old man in rural southwest Florida was [mauled to death by a black bear](#) earlier this month. Details of the attack are sparse online.

A skeptic might find it coincidental that with the state proposing another black bear hunt – a wildly unpopular black bear hunt – it just so happens that the state experiences its FIRST EVER recorded black bear mauling death. An amazing coincidence.

I’m not saying it didn’t happen, it did; I am curious about the circumstances.

Needless to say, this attack will provide tremendous ammunition for the villains seeking another bear hunt.

LINK: <https://www.naplesnews.com/story/news/environment/2025/05/09/florida-bear-ided-in-attack-fwc-confirms-263-pound-male-mauled-man/83541537007/>

While coming conversations about the bear hunt will surely center on this freak attack and hysteria about “[crack bears](#)” – as a state representative recently raved – conservation organizations are pleading for [a science and reason-based approach to the issue](#), which would surely result in such a hunt not happening.

LINK: <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/our-call-for-science-and-transparency/?emci=0dcbc69b-1525-f011-8b3d-6045bded8cca&emdi=26d1ffc0-5d27-f011-8b3d-6045bded8cca&ceid=17966252>

At its upcoming meeting in Ocala on May 21, the FWC is expected to consider the move to allow trophy hunting of black bears. Here’s information on the meeting if you’re able to

attend and speak for the bears: <https://myfwc.com/about/commission/commission-meetings/may-2025/>

Fun look at [gopher tortoise monitoring](#) at Archbold Biological Station...

LINK: https://floridawildlifecorridor.org/gopher-tortoise-monitoring-with-archbold-biological-station/?mc_cid=96c0fde5c4&mc_eid=e70d4d1c83

... and [goliath grouper](#).

LINK: <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/goliath-grouper-floridas-giant-of-the-reef/?emci=0dcbc69b-1525-f011-8b3d-6045bded8cca&emdi=26d1ffc0-5d27-f011-8b3d-6045bded8cca&ceid=17966252>

Is Greenpeace a terrorist organization? What about the Audubon Society? What about the Florida Springs Council or your other favorite conservation organizations?

Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives have returned the “nonprofit killer” provision into their draft budget bill. This clause would give the federal government the ability to revoke the tax-exempt status of any group the Treasury Department says is a supporter of terrorism.

One man’s terrorist is another man’s activist, and this provision would give the federal government the ability to target any non-profit working against its agenda. That would surely include conservation organizations. If this were to become law, the environmental non-profits most likely to be targeted first as “terrorists” would include the most aggressive on the ground among our ranks, like Greenpeace, and those challenging the administration in court like Defenders of Wildlife and the Center for Biological Diversity.

If successful, the effort would surely spread from there.

LINK: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/articles/nonprofits-under-threat-whats-house-tax-bill-and-how-you-can-help>

Here’s [a thought-provoking podcast episode](#) about how the U.S. “war on terror” has been corrupted at home and abroad to target environmental organizations:

<https://drilled.media/podcasts/drilled/10/philippines>

What has the Trump administration been up to lately?

The [Justice Department is suing Michigan and Hawaii](#) for bringing climate lawsuits against Big Oil.

LINK: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/01/justice-department-lawsuit-climate-hawaii-michigan>

[Eliminating USAID](#) has eliminated important funding for conservation projects in Africa and South America.

LINK: https://grist.org/international/usaid-cuts-are-hitting-global-conservation-projects-hard/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

The administration is fast-tracking another [Liquid Natural Gas terminal](#) on the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana, a project the previous administration had slowed. Environmental groups describe Liquid Natural Gas as a “climate bomb.”

LINK: https://grist.org/energy/louisiana-already-has-4-lng-terminals-it-just-added-another/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

The administration is also [fast-tracking a uranium mine in Utah](#), giving the agency responsible for the proposed mine’s environmental assessment 14 days to complete that work instead of the year it usually takes. In other words, there will be no environmental assessment. No opportunity for community input. No opportunity for tribal input.

There’s a word for governments that operate this way and it isn’t “democracy.”

The administration believes this speed-up is legal based on its declaration of an “energy emergency” in the U.S. that is a complete fabrication. I called out in the newsletter how dangerous that language would be when Trump signed the executive order declaring it hours after assuming office. Here we are.

LINK: https://www.landdesk.org/p/trump-emergency-fast-tracks-utah?utm_source=post-email-title&publication_id=258189&post_id=163486373&utm_campaign=email-post-title&isFreemail=true&r=g2ims&triedRedirect=true&utm_medium=email

The EPA illegally rescinded \$18 million in funding already allocated by Congress to [support a massive composting project](#) in Rhode Island. I guess composting is “woke” now, too.

LINK: https://grist.org/food-and-agriculture/trump-epa-community-change-grants-program-food-waste/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Not surprisingly, the “[advanced recycling](#)” and “[chemical recycling](#)” fantasies being pitched by the petrochemical industry (Big Oil) and bottling companies (Coca-Cola) are complete scams. These companies want us to think we can continue making and consuming plastics like we have been and recycle our way out of it. Nope.

Just like the fantasy of “carbon sequestration,” the technology doesn’t exist and the only solution is to stop using these products.

LINK: https://grist.org/accountability/fraud-advanced-chemical-recycling-report-center-climate-integrity/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Is climate change a class issue?

The world’s wealthiest 10% are responsible for two-thirds of global heating since 1990, driving droughts and heatwaves in the poorest parts of the world, [according to a study](#).

When thinking about the wealthiest 10% of the people in the world, that almost surely includes everyone reading this, including myself. Our American super-consumer lifestyles are not compatible long-term with a livable planet.

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/07/two-thirds-of-global-heating-caused-by-richest-study-suggests?utm_term=681b443927c697a7188fd5f964e3cb14&utm_campaign=USMorningBriefing&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=usbriefing_email

Interesting. How scientists are [using mushrooms](#) to clean polluted landscapes.

LINK: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/can-scientists-harness-the-magic-of-mushrooms-to-clean-up-polluted-landscapes-180986561/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=beacon