

Three stories this week perfectly encapsulating the catastrophic condition of conservation around Florida:

Ron DeSantis signed into law a measure [removing references in state law to climate change](#). In doing so, he fully commits the state to continued dependence on fossil fuels, a rejection of clean energy, and makes an unlivable planet for future generations more likely – if not a certainty. Remember, DeSantis initially [ran for governor as an environmental candidate](#).

He also outlawed off-shore wind generation in Florida which is more anti-clean energy political theater from him as the winds off Florida aren't strong enough to power municipal grade windmills, but this action plays well on FOX News and with right wing donors and fossil fuel companies.

Removing the words “climate change” from state documents is a throwback to the Rick Scott climate denial gubernatorial administration which previously removed mention of climate change from state documents.

LINK: <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/politics/2024/05/15/desantis-erases-climate-change-from-fl-laws-strikes-blow-at-windmills/73591696007/>

LINK: <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/05/28/ron-desantis-florida-environment-00099085>

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Meanwhile, the state's Agriculture Commissioner, Wilton Simpson, a strong candidate to replace DeSantis as governor when DeSantis times out, [wants to sell what he considers “surplus” public lands](#) to farmers and ranchers. Here's another throwback to Rick Scott's disastrous tenure as governor for the environment when he proposed selling land in the state park system.

Simpson's so-called “surplus” public land exists in our state parks and state forests and beaches.

The climate and biodiversity crises are so acute, and development pressure in Florida so great, not even a single acre of undeveloped public land here should be considered “surplus.”

Simpson's motivations are driven by a particularly menacing faction of the right-wing political spectrum which [doesn't believe in public lands at all](#). Given their way, they would sell off hundreds of millions of acres of public lands – National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, etc. – to the highest bidder. The highest bidder would generally be rich, white, men and big corporations, the entities which have always held the most power and property in America.

Absent from this group's catalogue of public lands to sell off are the hundreds of millions of acres housing military installations across the country. But weapons manufacturers and tanks and bombers, and construction projects on bases, are big business. Big donations. Parks aren't profit centers, so they are of no value to this faction.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2024/05/16/ag-commissioner-wilton-simpson-wants-to-sell-off-lots-of-florida-preserve-land/>

LINK: <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/the-far-right-campaign-to-destroy-our-national-monuments/>

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A proposed project putting [nearly 400 homes on undeveloped land – habitat - in St. Johns County](#) received a green light from the Planning and Zoning agency last week. The development will ironically be called “The Preserve at St. Augustine Lakes.”

Curiously, St. Johns county commissioners [just voted down](#) a plan to build 288 affordable apartments citing traffic concerns. I guess all those single-family homes don’t contribute to traffic, or maybe it has something to do with who tends to live in affordable apartments as opposed to who tends to live in new single family homes in St. Johns County, but I’ll let you figure that one out.

LINK: <https://www.bizjournals.com/jacksonville/news/2024/05/17/residential-community-with-almost-400.html>

LINK: <https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2024/05/07/st-johns-county-commissioners-vote-down-proposed-plan-to-build-288-affordable-apartments-over-traffic-concerns/>