

## AMAZING NEWS HERE!!!

The Okefenokee Swamp has been saved!!

For now.

Twin Pines Minerals has ended its years-long effort to place a titanium mine on the Okefenokee's doorstep, miles from the Florida border, a move that would have brought certain devastation to the Swamp and, quite likely, the St. Mary's River that has its headwaters there.

Not only that, but in an announcement made Friday afternoon, the Twin Pines land has been purchased by [The Conservation Fund](#), a national land conservation organization, thereby preventing any other nefarious company from purchasing and exploiting the land.

LINK: [https://thebrunswicknews.com/breaking/twin-pines-abandons-okefenokee-mining-plans/article\\_ba9a7707-e530-4998-8a0c-e56a2b3ca55c.html](https://thebrunswicknews.com/breaking/twin-pines-abandons-okefenokee-mining-plans/article_ba9a7707-e530-4998-8a0c-e56a2b3ca55c.html)

LINK: <https://www.conservationfund.org/>

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With the state budget finalized, and conservation funding obliterated across the board (see last week's newsletter), there is one glimmer of hope: the restoration of the Ocklawaha River. The Florida Legislature has approved \$6.25 million in the 2025/26 state budget to begin the restoration of one of Florida's most iconic and impacted waterways – the first-time money has ever been dedicated to this conservation dream 50+ years in the making.

It's a detailed story and I'll include plenty of links for you to learn more, but if you ask me, removing Rodman Dam and restoring a mostly free-flowing Ocklawaha River would be a Top 5 most meaningful single action Florida could take to repair its environment. Taking down the dam, which has never served a useful purpose, would return roughly 10,000 acres of forest that is currently submerged, return about 20 springs to life that are likewise buried under too much water, providing a tremendous amount of expanded habitat to manatees... not to mention black bears, birds, butterflies, native plants, you name it.

This restoration would help reunite the Great Florida Riverway benefiting the St. Johns River, Silver Springs & River, Ocklawaha River, and the Atlantic Ocean.

A great number of the Florida conservation orgs are asking residents to contact Ron DeSantis and ask him to approve this funding. You can [learn more and comment here](#).

LINK: <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/fund-ocklawaha-restoration/?emci=7ab4de68-6c4c-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&emdi=3c6c27d7-ec4d-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&ceid=17966252>

A detailed look from the St. Johns Riverkeeper at [the myriad benefits removing the dam](#) and restoring the river would have.

LINK: <https://stjohnsriverkeeper.org/take-action/free-ocklawaha/>

Same thing from the [Florida Springs Council](#).

LINK: <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/free-the-ocklawaha>

A look at [who opposes removing the dam](#).

LINK: [https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2025/06/12/longtime-debate-over-rodman-dam-resurfaces/?utm\\_email=D433B512746134193427B5942B&lctg=D433B512746134193427B5942B&active=yesP&utm\\_source=listrak&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.orlandosentinel.com%2f2025%2f06%2f12%2flongtime-debate-over-rodman-dam-resurfaces%2f&utm\\_campaign=trib-orlando\\_sentinel-breaking\\_news-nl&utm\\_content=alert](https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2025/06/12/longtime-debate-over-rodman-dam-resurfaces/?utm_email=D433B512746134193427B5942B&lctg=D433B512746134193427B5942B&active=yesP&utm_source=listrak&utm_medium=email&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.orlandosentinel.com%2f2025%2f06%2f12%2flongtime-debate-over-rodman-dam-resurfaces%2f&utm_campaign=trib-orlando_sentinel-breaking_news-nl&utm_content=alert)

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DEEP DIVE from the “Miami Herald” about the city’s worsening flood problems. More flooding, worse flooding, sunny day flooding; the prevailing strategy to combat the problem is denial.

Land developers and residents seem to be operating on a “I’ll be dead before it gets really bad, so who cares” philosophy. I wish I were exaggerating.

LINK: [https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article307805065.html#campaignName=miami\\_weeklyrewind\\_newsletter](https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article307805065.html#campaignName=miami_weeklyrewind_newsletter)

LINK: [https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article307805040.html?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article307805040.html?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

LINK: [https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article303949086.html?utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/environment/climate-change/article303949086.html?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

Speaking of flooding and water quality in South Florida, an episode of my “Welcome to Florida” podcast recently focused on [Biscayne Bay](#)... which 100 years ago received so much fresh groundwater from the Everglades, fountains of fresh water would break the surface. Imagine that!

LISTEN: <https://welcometoflorida.buzzsprout.com/1169570/episodes/17296608-episode-259-biscayne-bay>

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[Seagrasses](#) could prevent billions of dollars in property damage by reducing storm surge – while providing critical habitat for sea life and sequestering large amounts of carbon – if we let them.

LINK: <https://www.theinvadingsea.com/2025/06/03/seagrass-climate-change-blue-carbon-sink-pollution-ocean-florida-international-university/>

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I liked this article about [25 easy and effective ways to help declining insect populations](#). Number 1 on the list is the absolute easiest solution anyone can take right now to meaningfully help the planet: turn your lights off at night.

Number 2 on this list is planting native plants.

LINK: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jun/17/insects-dying-25-easy-and-effective-ways-you-can-help-aoe>

While we're on the topic of turning lights off and the benefits of darkness, the administration appears poised to cut [the US Natural Sounds and Night Skies Division](#), a little-known office that works to rein in noise and light pollution in national parks.

LINK: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/13/night-sky-light-sound-pollution-trump?utm\\_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm\\_campaign=DownToEarth&utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight\\_email](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/13/night-sky-light-sound-pollution-trump?utm_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm_campaign=DownToEarth&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email)

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The Florida environmental groups are activated around the Ocklawaha; the national groups are urging their members to contact Senators in opposition to Senate Republican desires in the proposed spending bill to [sell off millions of acres of public land](#) to (most likely) real estate developers.

LINK: [https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/theres-a-new-plan-to-sell-off-public-lands-it-would-impact-millions-of-acres-in-western-states/?utm\\_term=ool&utm\\_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm\\_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm\\_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8zhcXBd2vPUvcYIN\\_P4-rFql5bpPhhnR\\_xyviLCvvNQVxZZtTd\\_aJhVXP6lnET-wVy-1y48XlFOuKXiXjnUY1F-YggyA&\\_hsmi=367160567&utm\\_source=newsletter%3Futm\\_term%3Dool&utm\\_source=newsletter%3Futm\\_term%3Dool&utm\\_source=newsletter](https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/environment/theres-a-new-plan-to-sell-off-public-lands-it-would-impact-millions-of-acres-in-western-states/?utm_term=ool&utm_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm_campaign=ool-dispatch&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=email&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8zhcXBd2vPUvcYIN_P4-rFql5bpPhhnR_xyviLCvvNQVxZZtTd_aJhVXP6lnET-wVy-1y48XlFOuKXiXjnUY1F-YggyA&_hsmi=367160567&utm_source=newsletter%3Futm_term%3Dool&utm_source=newsletter%3Futm_term%3Dool&utm_source=newsletter)

LINK: [https://grist.org/politics/public-land-sale-republican-senate-bill-mike-lee-trump/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=daily](https://grist.org/politics/public-land-sale-republican-senate-bill-mike-lee-trump/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily)

“If this scheme goes through, it’ll pave the way for mega-mansions, gated communities, mining, logging, and oil drilling in some of the West’s most spectacular places, all for the profit of a few,” writes the Center for Biological Diversity.

From WildEarth Guardians: “Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah), chair of the Energy & Natural Resources Committee, is putting up a smokescreen for this land grab by claiming that public lands need to be developed to fix the nation’s housing crisis. However, his amendment has no affordability requirement for housing, doesn’t actually require homes to be built, and says the land that’s sold can be used for anything after ten years.”

Much of the land is also in remote areas, not the sort of places people who need to work jobs would want to live anyway, because there are no jobs there, further exploding the “affordable housing” lie.

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The Senate spending bill gives [huge tax breaks to Big Oil](#).

Knock me over with a feather.

LINK: <https://prospect.org/politics/2025-06-18-senate-bill-gives-giant-tax-break-to-big-oil/>

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The only federal agency that investigates [industrial chemical explosions](#). is closing.

[https://grist.org/energy/trump-quietly-shutters-the-only-federal-agency-that-investigates-industrial-chemical-explosions/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=daily](https://grist.org/energy/trump-quietly-shutters-the-only-federal-agency-that-investigates-industrial-chemical-explosions/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily)

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An editorial on [who benefits and who suffers](#) from the rollback of pollution emissions from power plants.

Any guesses?

LINK: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/12/trump-epa-pollution-rules?utm\\_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm\\_campaign=DownToEarth&utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight\\_email](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/12/trump-epa-pollution-rules?utm_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm_campaign=DownToEarth&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email)

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Jane Goodall’s [chimpanzee conservation project](#) in Tanzania takes a big funding hit from the defunding of USAID.

LINK: [https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/17/jane-goodall-chimpanzee-conservation-project-tanzania-usaid-cuts?utm\\_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm\\_campaign=DownToEarth&utm\\_source=esp&utm\\_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight\\_email](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jun/17/jane-goodall-chimpanzee-conservation-project-tanzania-usaid-cuts?utm_term=6853edb89cad8b3b3a467ab971badf13&utm_campaign=DownToEarth&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=greenlight_email)

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A scientific study demonstrates how [plastic bag bans](#) lead to cleaner beaches.

LINK: [https://grist.org/science/plastic-bag-ban-beach-cleanups-ocean-conservancy-study/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=daily](https://grist.org/science/plastic-bag-ban-beach-cleanups-ocean-conservancy-study/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily)

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This is super cool: New York City has announced a \$30 million plan to [turn abandoned lots into public green spaces](#). It's estimated that there are currently as many as 40,000 vacant lots throughout the city. The lots will be acquired from willing private sellers, as well as transfers from government agencies.

Imagine if we did this in Florida. Imagine what tens of thousands of pocket parks with native plants and shade trees could mean to returning insect and bird populations, to combating urban heat islands, to groundwater runoff, to reducing noise pollution, to improving quality of life... imagine.

LINK:

[https://www.instagram.com/p/DKzNsrVTNGI/?img\\_index=3&igsh=MW9ibmFmNHp0N2MzNA==](https://www.instagram.com/p/DKzNsrVTNGI/?img_index=3&igsh=MW9ibmFmNHp0N2MzNA==)

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Similarly, in Los Angeles, one school is [planting trees to “supercharge” childhood development](#). It's also planting native plants on the campus and putting in a vegetable garden. Parks, trees and green spaces are critical to kids' health and wellbeing, not to mention an endless source of hands-on learning.

LINK: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/may/16/la-schools-green-spaces>