

[Ron DeSantis vetoed a \\$500,000 measure](#) from the state budget that would have provided for the first study of the condition of the Kirkpatrick Dam since 1997 and the potential of freeing the Ocklawaha River. The river is located between Ocala and Palatka.

The \$500,000 appropriation for the UF study would have paid for “an updated, independent assessment of the science and economics of Ocklawaha restoration versus retention of the Kirkpatrick Dam and Rodman Reservoir.”

\$500,000 to the \$116.5 billion Florida state budget isn't even a rounding error, but the governor, who campaigned on being a conservationist, again has kicked the environment in the shins – if not about 3-feet higher.

The Kirkpatrick Dam has never served a useful purpose and was only built as part of the failed “Cross Florida Barge Canal,” one of the worst ideas in Florida history... and that covers some ground. It has now outlived its life, having been built in 1968.

The damage it creates, in part, is flooding 9,000 acres of the Ocala National Forest, burying 20 freshwater springs, and preventing the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers from connecting. Think of how those 20 freshwater springs and passageway to the St. Johns would help our struggling manatees?

The dam backs up all kind of sediment, destroying the riverine ecology, causing algae blooms, and fostering invasive plant and fish species.

It's a disaster, but, according to DeSantis' veto, it's our disaster and we're stuck with it.

[Conservation groups](#), including St. Johns Riverkeeper, have been fighting for the removal of the dam since it was built. Ask me, and removing Kirkpatrick Dam is the single biggest one-step action Florida could take to improve its environment – water quality, springs restoration, habitat for native plants and animals, carbon sinks, clean air, resiliency... you name it, the Ocklawaha could do it, if it were allowed to flow freely.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2024/06/20/desantis-veto-of-ocklawaha-river-rehabilitation-study-marks-a-first-for-the-issue/>

Free the Ocklawaha: <https://freetheocklawahariver.com/>

DeSantis also signed into law the bill making it easier for Floridians to shoot black bears and claim self-defense, another measure conservationists fought desperately to prevent with no avail. This bill was [supported 100% on lies](#) – on lies of an increased bear population, on lies of “crack bears” – the reason human/bear interactions have gone up is because of development sprawl and one county in the Florida Panhandle not having residential trash pickup with the result being bears nosing around the trash accumulated near these homes.

It has always been perfectly legally justifiable in Florida to defend yourself from animal attack – be that bear, alligator, dog, whatever – what this new law does is signal to gun nuts that the governor supports them, enable would-be poachers, and further devalue wildlife in Florida.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2024/06/11/conservationists-amp-up-the-intensity-in-calling-on-desantis-to-veto-bear-shooting-bill/>

Miami – and Florida’s – preferred strategy to climate change continues to be [denial](#).

LINK: <https://floodlightnews.org/miami-entering-a-state-of-unreality-adaptation-to-climate-change-cant-fix-the-citys-water-problems/>

LINK: https://www.nbcnews.com/science/science-news/extremes-collide-florida-summer-weather-desantis-agenda-rcna154664?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, running a gas-powered leaf blower for one hour generates the same carbon dioxide emissions as driving a car from Los Angeles to Denver. Small gas-powered engines create emissions out of all proportion to their size... not to mention the noise pollution.

The need for more native milkweed to restore populations of monarch butterflies is well known. So, how much milkweed will that take? According to the U.S. Geological Survey, 1.8 billion stems nationwide.

Is recycling a scam? [Take this quiz](#) and then think about that question.

LINK: <https://surveys.signforgood.com/greenpeace-may-recycling-facts-fiction-quiz-inc?>