

What is the condition of conservation in Florida? One of our congressmen, Matt Gaetz, wants to [bomb a critically endangered whale in the Gulf of Mexico](#).

You read that right.

The environment used to be a bipartisan issue in Florida. Rick Scott's gubernatorial reign put an end to that and he effectively connected conservation and protection of the environment to the culture war, DeSantis has continued it by viewing clean energy and climate change as "the woke agenda."

Taken to its extreme, right-wing zealots like Gaetz want to put the military in one corner and conservation in the other and make people choose sides, then name-call anyone siding with the whales as anti-American, anti-national security, anti-military.

Matt Gaetz won his 2022 congressional district race – in the heavily militarized Panhandle – in a landslide.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2024/06/06/florida-congressman-matt-gaetz-wants-congress-to-ok-killing-rare-whale/>

[What is Greenwashing](#) and how to avoid it.

LINK: <https://www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-gear/gear-news/greenwashing-scams/>

I visited the first completed section of Jacksonville's Emerald Trail last week. This portion opened at the front of the Prime Osborne Convention Center. Park there if you'd like to see for yourself.

10 years in the making with many more to go, the Emerald Trail is a proposed 30-mile network of trails, greenways and parks connecting the urban core and historic neighborhoods in Jacksonville. Planting trees and using native plants are key components of the project, as well as the restoration of McCoy's Creek and Hogan's Creek, and other flooding/sea level rise/climate change resilience measures.

I give this section high marks for its use of native plants – the coreopsis, grasses, coonties and dune sunflower look great. Sadly, the black-eyed Susan and coneflower have been mostly burned up by this drought we've been struck with which hit right after the section opened on May 6.

Marks off as well for the use of tropical milkweed which has been a topic of heated discussion among native plant people. There's a lot of it along this section of the Emerald Trail proving that whoever designed this landscape plan didn't really know what they were doing when it comes to native plants.

It's clear no one has been regularly maintaining the section as it's full of dead plants, goose poop on the sidewalks, and overflowing trash bins.

The design also relied too heavily on palm trees and those palm trees are planted much too close together. Everyone loves the "tropical" look of the palms – and these are full grown and must have cost a fortune – but more shade trees should have been incorporated. There are some, but not enough.

It's for sure worth your time to check out when the weather is cooperative.

I love this headline: [Why Weeds are Finally Being Embraced by Gardeners.](#)

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/jun/02/a-sign-of-hope-why-weeds-are-finally-being-embraced-by-gardeners?CMP=tw_t_a-environment_b-gdneco

If you can bear the heat, participate in [the Florida Birding Trail's June Challenge.](#)

LINK: <https://floridabirdingtrail.com/june-challenge/>