

The governor and legislature have proved a devastating 1-2 punch to the environment through the state's budgeting process.

From the Florida Springs Council:

“Overall, the budget passed by the Legislature moved environmental restoration and preservation funding backwards with significant cuts to Florida Forever, the defunding of the water quality grant program, and the repeal of legislation passed unanimously just last year allocating Seminole Gaming Compact funds for key environmental priorities. On top of the Legislature's weak budget, Governor DeSantis used his line-item veto power to slash additional key projects for Florida's springs and rivers.”

Springs advocate Ryan Smart considers this the worst state budget for conservation projects in 15 years. He [co-hosts an outstanding podcast](#) about the intersection of politics and the environment in Florida and went deep on the budget in a recent episode.

LINK: <https://theasbadasisitispodcast.buzzsprout.com/2439025/episodes/17339394-how-to-limit-polluting-our-water-with-urban-fertilizers-and-the-legislature-s-about-face-on-conservation-funding>

As if what the legislature did wasn't bad enough, DeSantis made it even worse by using his line-item veto to remove a small amount of funding to begin the process of deconstructing the Rodman Dam to free the Ocklawaha River.

Breaching the Rodman Dam and restoring the Ocklawaha River would revive 20 lost springs, enhance Silver Springs and the St. Johns River, open up critical manatee habitat, and provide increased recreational opportunities for fishing and paddling, among myriad benefits. Its unlikely this project will ever move forward with DeSantis in the governor's mansion.

Here's a closer look at how the governor and legislature [disregarded and defunded conservation work](#).

LINK: <https://mailchi.mp/6e7c007e5ed0/restoretheocklawaha-6422258?e=4a4314895e>

Fortunately, a bill prohibiting oil and gas drilling within 10 miles of the Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve was signed.

More details on [bills signed and not by the governor](#) related to the environment.

LINK: <https://audubon.stagecoachdigital.com/web-view/1696697?emci=b825954a-9956-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&emdi=5099d40a-a556-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&ceid=7011912>

How the legislature made it harder for Florida citizens to pass the laws they're most passionate about through constitutional amendments, amendments like [the Right to Clean Water](#).

LINK: <https://www.theinvadingsea.com/2025/06/16/florida-right-to-clean-water-ballot-initiative-state-constitution-amendment-legislature-hb-1205/>

Read why the Sierra Club Florida Chapter [opposes a black bear hunt in the state](#). The Fish and Wildlife "Conservation" Commission will vote on this proposal in August and is almost certain to vote in favor of it.

Included in the letter is contact information to voice your disapproval of the hunt.

LINK: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/17GMygR9BQFBKPieevSmQZLIINvyjCK2E/view>

While most conversation about Everglades conservation and restoration focuses on the eastern Everglades by Lake Okeechobee and Palm Beach County – the new immigrant concentration camp and planned rock mine there as two examples – the western Everglades are equally threatened by development.

The Rural Lands West (RLW) development, known as Rivergrass and Longwater Village, has faced opposition since 2008 due to its harmful location and environmental risks. Now, it seeks a federal wetland permit under the Clean Water Act, its final major hurdle. The project spans 4,400 acres in eastern Collier County, threatening critical panther habitat and over 270 acres of wetlands in the Camp Keais Strand flowway, upstream of the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge.

Wetlands and a critical linkage for the endangered Florida panther would be fragmented if this project is approved. [Send an email in opposition here](#).

LINK:

https://secure.conservancy.org/site/Advocacy;jsessionid=00000000.app30101a?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=193&NONCE_TOKEN=253AA830932FC034AA970631A593D538

Anytime [Florida politicians stand up to developers](#) in favor of their constituents is noteworthy. Just such a thing happened recently in Manatee County. Why did it happen there when it happens so infrequently? Because Manatee County voters threw out their pro-development county commissioners in the last election.

Once eco-villains take office, it's typically too late.

LINK: <https://floridaphoenix.com/2025/07/03/powerful-florida-developer-hears-a-rare-response-from-manatee-county-no/>

A recent “bio-blitz” on [the Indian River Lagoon](#) revealed numerous surprises.

The Everglades ecosystem gets all the love in Florida, and it deserves every ounce of attention paid to it, but that attention often comes at the expense of Florida’s other unique ecosystems like the Indian River Lagoon and our freshwater springs which are equally important and remarkable.

LINK: <https://www.theinvadingsea.com/2025/06/27/indian-river-lagoon-bioblitz-environmental-dna-smithsonian-biodiversity-algal-blooms/>

Good documentary on [the Florida grasshopper sparrow](#), the most endangered bird in the continental U.S.

LINK: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Da2IERW5-O4>

I liked this article about [shade favoring Florida native plant species](#). Remember, conditions vary WIDELY across the state from north to south, beach to inland, saltwater inundation, freshwater inundation, wind, etc., etc., etc. Do your research to find the “right plant for the right place” in your yard, but this is a good starting point.

For me in Fernandina Beach, I also have success with scarlet sage, giant ironweed, coontie palms, firebush, saw palmetto, and stokes aster in my shady yard.

LINK: <https://floridawildlifefederation.org/florida-native-plants-for-shady-spaces/?emci=cf8c46a8-014b-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&emdi=fe80e3d7-6e56-f011-8f7c-6045bdfe8e9c&ceid=17966252>

At the federal level, the spending bill has been passed and signed into law. The League of Conservation Voters considers it [“the most anti-environmental bill of all time.”](#)

LINK: https://grist.org/politics/senate-republicans-just-voted-to-dismantle-americas-only-climate-plan/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

Instead of bludgeoning you with every nefarious fossil fuel handout and conservation rollback – like new benefits for private jet ownership – I’d like to focus on handouts to Big Ag.

For starters, the most recent episode of [my “Welcome to Florida” podcast](#) touched on how Big Ag is every bit as responsible for the climate and extinction crises as Big Oil. This upsets our notions of farmers as protective “stewards of the land,” but that’s just never been true by and large, with exceptions, of course.

LISTEN: <https://welcometoflorida.buzzsprout.com/1169570/episodes/17418337-episode-262-could-a-super-tree-replace-florida-citrus>

The bill includes a “[climate wrecking corn ethanol payout.](#)” Turns out burning corn to fuel our cars is even worse for the planet than burning oil to do so. The podcast explains why.

LINK:

<https://americanprospect.bluelena.io/index.php?action=social&chash=a36b598abb934e4528412e5a2127b931.3401&s=8ecd049a3ea01bfcd44917c11180855c>

How [the bill favors Big Ag over small farmers](#) and pretty much everyone else.

LINK: https://grist.org/food-and-agriculture/trump-tax-bill-win-for-big-ag-everyone-else-not-so-much/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=newsletter&utm_campaign=daily

How does this happen?

Because Big Ag has more lobbyists and political heft than any other sector of the economy – BY FAR – even dwarfing Big Oil. Every single state in the country, to one extent or another, has a powerful agriculture lobby be that farming or ranching or both. Florida, with Big Sugar, the cattle people, and vegetable growers is obviously no exception.

To understand the climate and biodiversity catastrophes the planet faces, you must understand the leading role agriculture plays in both.

One attack citizens and conservationists were able to fend off in the bill: the public lands sell-off.