

Wonderful news this week, BIG news, as The Florida Department of Transportation – due to overwhelming and organized local opposition, and only for that reason – has abandoned its latest effort to create a completely [unnecessary northern turnpike extension](#) through rural parts of the western middle of the state. This was the last remnant of the M-CORES/Roads to Ruin project jammed through the legislature in 2019 by an outgoing politician in bed with the construction/roadbuilding/development industry

LINK: <https://noroadstoruin.org/no-roads-to-ruin-coalition-statement-regarding-potential-nte-discontinuation-from-fdot/?emci=74da98c3-e014-ed11-bd6e-281878b83d8a&emdi=d402c724-0e15-ed11-bd6e-281878b83d8a&ceid=2102299>

Good news in Jacksonville as the mayor’s proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year includes roughly \$300 million for improvements to the north bank of the St. John’s River. This would include the previous Jacksonville Landing site, what is known as the Shipyards, Metropolitan Park as well as sections of the Emerald Trail which connect to the river. This money would/could go toward upgraded parks, resiliency, shoreline restoration, landscaping, public art, facilities improvements as well as development.

Much of this is federal money from the post-covid American Rescue Plan, so the amount is an anomaly, and the city probably won’t be able to spend that much because it doesn’t have the projects its aspiring to undertake ready to start, but it’s a dramatic statement of priority about the north bank from an administration that hasn’t cared much about it in the past.

The best way to stay informed on the effort to create a world class system of connected parks along the north bank of the St. John’s River is by following [Riverfront Parks Now](#).

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

More good news. Federal authorities overturned a Trump era ruling allowing for an expansion of [“fishing” with trawl nets](#) over a sensitive area of coral reef about 20 miles offshore from St. Lucie, Indian River and Brevard counties. Any type of trawling devastates marine ecology as it involves dragging heavy nets indiscriminately along the ocean floor, destroying everything in its path.

Fishing with trawl nets is like lumberjacking by carpet bombing.

LINK: https://www.tcpalm.com/story/sports/fishing-boating/2022/08/04/noaa-fisheries-bans-rock-shrimp-trawlers-oculina-bank-ivory-coral-south-atlantic-fishery-management/10184987002/?utm_source=tcipalm-DailyBriefing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily_briefing&utm_term=list_article_headline&utm_content=PTCN-1267CN-E-NLETTER65

Duval Audubon Society has been working with [Never Endanger Sea Turtles](#) on a balloon and sky lantern release ban for in Jacksonville and Jacksonville Beach. They are the last holdouts along the NE FL coast for this type of ordinance, which is already in place in Flagler County, St. Johns County, Neptune Beach, Atlantic Beach, and Fernandina Beach.

Last week, Jacksonville council member Rory Diamond introduced [ordinance #2022-0573](#), which would completely ban the release of balloons and sky lanterns in Jacksonville. It will be open for input from the public at Tuesday's regular City Council meeting on 8/9.

Jacksonville residents looking to keep balloons and sky lanterns out of the throats of sea turtles can attend the 8/9 council meeting in support of the ordinance, which would also protect seabirds, shorebirds and other wildlife.

Temperature determines the sex of sea turtle egg hatchlings. Global warming has resulted in almost all of Florida's sea turtles being [hatched as females](#).

LINK: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/04/florida-sea-turtles-female-global-heatings?CMP=share_btn_tw

Why does Florida Conservation Voters give Ron DeSantis an F- grade for his handling of the state's water crisis? [Many, many reasons](#).

LINK:

https://prod.cdn.everyaction.com/images/van/AV/AVLCV/1/72154/images/Water/2022%20Blue%20Green%20Algae_EN.pdf?emci=90cf869f-3c14-ed11-bd6e-281878b83d8a&emdi=930cece1-4214-ed11-bd6e-281878b83d8a&ceid=2102299