

Along with many of you, I'm mourning the loss of the mature oak trees uprooted and lost due to the saturated ground we're experiencing after the historic rainfall this month. Driving around Fernandina Beach where I live, I've seen numerous 50, 100-year-old trees lying on their sides.

These losses to the tree canopy and habitat will never be made up. Remember, big, old trees like these have far greater value to air and water quality, carbon capture, and supporting biodiversity, than smaller trees. A 100-year-old oak, 5-feet around, is more valuable than 1000 newly planted twigs from a nursery.

If development wasn't taking so many trees down, these natural losses wouldn't be a huge deal, but with the accelerated pace of man-made tree removal, losses from weather events are compounded.

Of course, in a functioning ecosystem, this would all be part of the natural process, and the trees would be left lying and create habitat and cover as they decompose and return to the soil, but that's not the situation here as they're quickly sawed up, hauled off, and disposed of.

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I received an automated text message this week seeking my support for an amendment to the state constitution that will appear as a ballot initiative in the upcoming election. Amendment 2, the so-called "right to hunting and fishing," seems like a good idea as, generally speaking, hunting and fishing are positive. Generally speaking.

Amendment 2, however, is bad news and [being opposed by conservation organizations](#) around the state because it doesn't so much protect the right to hunt and fish in Florida – neither of which is in any jeopardy of being limited – as it dictates that... "Fishing, hunting and the taking of fish and wildlife, including by the use of traditional methods, shall be preserved forever as a public right and *preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife.*"

No one associated with the Amendment can define what "traditional methods" means, but the more troubling passage is "preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife."

It's ludicrous to consider hunting and fishing as the "preferred means" of managing animal populations on public land. Most of Florida's wildlife species are not game species. Where does that put managing non-game species, such as the Florida grasshopper sparrow or painted buntings?

Hunting and fishing have a place in Florida, a big one, that place, however, is not as the primary wildlife management tool statewide in lieu of science and scientists.

LINK: <https://www.theledger.com/story/opinion/columns/2024/09/08/amendment-2-if-it-aint-broke-dont-fix-it-tom-palmer/75076646007/>

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The fight between citizens and Rayonier/Ryam's proposed bioethanol plant in Fernandina Beach is heating up again. Despite outside legal opinions stating that the toxic chemical emitting plant would violate the city's land use and zoning codes, and overwhelming public opposition, [the stooge mayor](#) – who works for Rayonier, Bradley Bean (U.S. House of Rep Aaron Bean's son; Aaron Bean,

[enemy of clean water in Florida and conservation](#)) – and the giant global corporation are attempting to push it through.

Details and community organizing around the topic evolve daily and the best way to keep informed is by visiting [the noethanolfernandina.com](http://the.noethanolfernandina.com) website and by following the [No Ethanol Fernandina group on Facebook](#).

LINK: <https://fernandinaobserver.com/stories/ryam-moving-forward-on-bioethanol-as-residents-lambast-mayors-endorsement,30987?>

LINK: <https://floridapolitics.com/archives/667003-aaron-bean-pursues-congressional-override-of-decision-denying-florida-permitting-authority/>

LINK: <https://www.noethanolfernandina.com/>

LINK: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2218756615150475>

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Good look at the massive construction project and ecological potential of “[uncovering](#)” [McCoy’s Creek](#) in Jacksonville being undertaken by Groundwork Jacksonville.

LINK: <https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/local/2024/09/06/mccoys-creek-project-in-jacksonville-will-help-recreation-and-flooding/74682942007/>