

Let's start with some good news since there's so little. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed a revised critical habitat plan that would protect 1,904,191 acres of critical habitat for [the Florida manatee](#), as well as 78,121 acres for the Antillean manatee in Puerto Rico. Their habitat hasn't been updated since they were originally protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1976. More critical habitat area would mean greater protections for manatees against human interactions and require stricter environmental protection standards over the protected area.

Proposed, not enacted.

Remember, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a federal agency with federal officials. The agency would look and act completely different under a Trump Administration.

LINK: https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/florida-manatees-to-receive-nearly-2-million-acres-of-revised-protected-habitat-2024-09-23/?_gl=1*15zm0d7*_gcl_au*NDU1MTM5NDUyLjE3MjI4MTQzOTM.

North Florida Land Trust (NFLT) has purchased two properties in Clay County within the Ocala to Osceola Wildlife Corridor, or O2O, and in the military use buffer zone for Camp Blanding. The properties total nearly 70 acres and are near NFLT's Milam Preserve and Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. One is about 18 acres adjacent to Milam Preserve; the second is slightly more than 51 acres between the preserve and the state park.

The purchase price was nearly \$1 million combined.

In case you missed it, The Florida Native Plant Society has officially stated its opposition to the *Right to Fish and Hunt Amendment*, which will be listed as Amendment 2 on the 2024 election ballot and urges our members to vote against it.

FNPS does not oppose fishing or hunting. They are compatible, sustainable recreational activities when properly managed and regulated, and many FNPS members participate. However, Amendment 2 would designate hunting as the preferred method of wildlife management and enshrine that designation in the Florida Constitution. The most effective tools for managing wildlife are rooted in habitat management.

FNPS supports the use of prescribed fire, the control of invasive nonnative species, the maintenance or restoration of natural hydrology, and the prevention of physical destruction or degradation as central to the proper management of native plant communities, i.e., "wildlife habitat."

These are among the wildlife management measures that should remain at the forefront of wildlife conservation in Florida and could be deemphasized with passage of Amendment 2. Consider whether the red-cockaded woodpecker, flatwoods salamander, gopher tortoise, monarch butterfly, and a whole host of other native wildlife species realize any benefit from hunting as a management methodology.

Hurricane Helene wrought human tragedy across the west coast of Florida along with an astonishing degree of tree loss over much of the northern half of the state. Especially hard hit were mature live oak trees, arguably the most important tree in the state for carbon capture, water

filtration, shade, and animal habitat. Among the losses, [the University of Florida Norman Education Library's 92-year-old oak](#). The state isn't the same without them.

Flooding from Helene in Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee continues focusing on record rainfalls, and that's true, but the routine extent to which every part of America now experiences record flooding is also due to how much of the land near where people live is paved. Impervious surface. Concrete, asphalt, roads, parking lots, roofs, homes, businesses, shopping centers, etc., etc., etc.

Rainfall has fewer places to be absorbed into the ground than ever before, so it increasingly ends up in our homes and businesses.

If we are going to make our cities and suburbs more resilient to flooding, and the increased rainfall which comes from climate change and warm air being able to carry more water, a new approach to urban hardscaping is required. I believe I shared the story previously, it discusses the idea of ["sponge cities,"](#) cities intentionally designed to soak up more rainfall to mitigate flooding.

From the article, "concrete is the first villain to tackle. Everybody has got to stop using concrete. That is the worst material. It actually causes more flooding. If you look at urban flooding, the reason why it's becoming worse is because we've got concrete paving everywhere."

The production of concrete is also a leading cause of carbon emissions globally.

Remember that if you're putting in a driveway or pool decks. Permeable alternatives to concrete exist.

The second imperative: planting more native plants and trees to soak up the water – anywhere they'll fit. Even small plots – 10x10 feet – repeated on streetcorners, yards, medians, and at offices, if designed properly and scaled into the hundreds, then thousands, can make a tremendous difference.

LINK: <https://www.ft.com/content/1848fdf8-d9b0-4c32-82ee-fc6401b2c8ef>