



Photo by the Department of Defense, Tyndall Air Force Base

March 28, 2024

The Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape

A [Sentinel Landscape](#) is an area designated by the **U.S. Departments of Defense, Agriculture, and Interior**. Sentinel landscapes provide focus areas where these agencies work together with other public agencies and private partners. We strive to maintain compatible land uses that conserve listed species habitat and minimize encroachment threats and constraints to military missions. Northwest Florida was designated a Sentinel Landscape on February 15, 2022. Please visit our [web page](#) for additional information about the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape.

Federally funded projects by the Departments of Defense, Interior and Agriculture within Sentinel Landscapes may receive extra priority for funding. Through this designation, we are seeking to build partnerships upon

mutual objectives to foster and accomplish land conservation, private land stewardship, resiliency and sustainability initiatives in Northwest Florida.

NWFSL Partners' Wins and Success Stories

NWFSL Resilience Specialist Position Posted

Kent Wimmer and Ole Amundsen, NWFSL

As announced at our February 28 **NWFSL Partner Collaboration** virtual meeting, we are seeking a **Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Resilience Specialist** to collaborate closely with partners and supporters to identify, implement and accelerate collaborative projects to enhance climate resilience to protect military missions, community infrastructure and habitats. A link to the announcement may be found [HERE](#). We would appreciate your assistance in **sharing this announcement widely**. While we will be accepting resumes until the position is filled, we will start reviewing applications on **April 1st**.

In addition, to our NWFSL posting, **LegacyWorks Group** has also posted the **Resilience Specialist** position announcement for our sister sentinel landscape, the **Avon Park ARF Sentinel Landscape** which you may download [HERE](#) and circulate to those who may be interested.



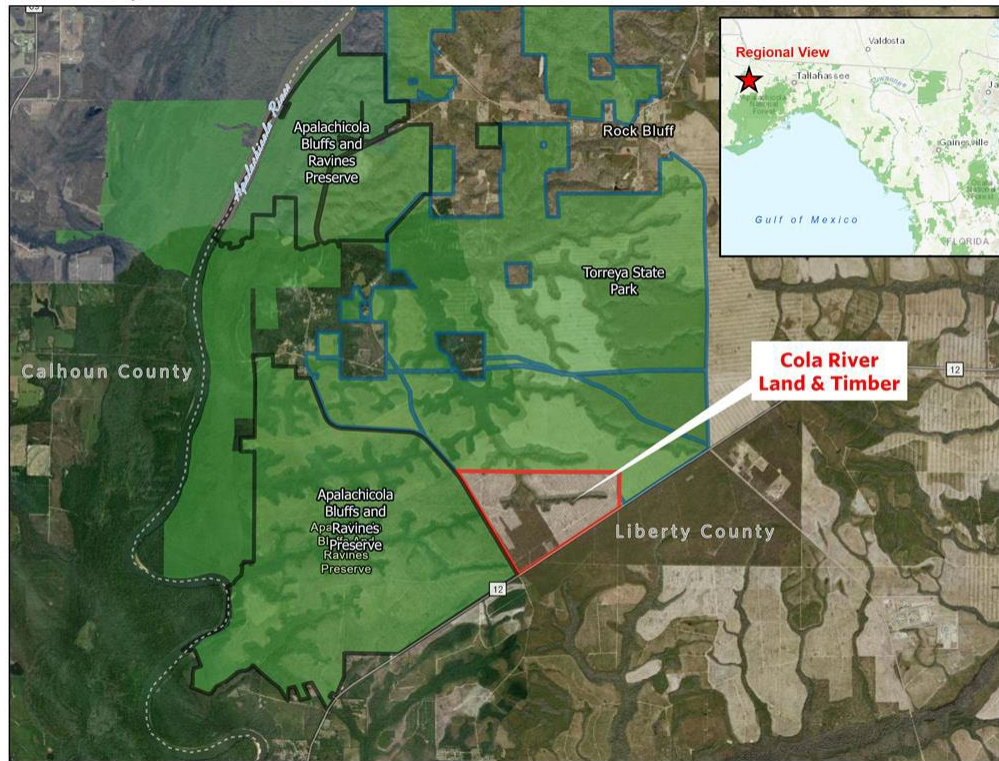
NWFSL Second Quarter Highlights

Kent Wimmer, NWFSL Coordinator

Defenders of Wildlife prepared and submitted our NWFSL second quarter report to the **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities**. Highlights from the report are captured in the above graphic. The quarterly report may be downloaded from [HERE](#).



- Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve (ABRP)
- Torrey State Park Boundary
- Cola River Land & Timber - 766 ac.
- Managed Lands



TNC and Partners Protect Critical Gap Between Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve and Torrey State Park

The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) in Florida and its partners purchased and protected of the **Cola River Land & Timber** property, approximately **758 acres**. This property joins a **22,000-acre** conservation hub along the upper portion of the **Apalachicola River**. The **Cola River property** includes the last remaining unprotected piece of **Sweetwater Creek**, a major steephead ravine tributary to the Apalachicola River. This newly protected property connects **TNC's Apalachicola Bluffs and Ravines Preserve** with the adjacent **Torrey State Park**, creating a continuous landscape that supports healthy habitats and safe pathways for wildlife and enables TNC to more efficiently partner with state park staff to conduct prescribed burns and controlling invasive species.

The acquisition and protection of the Cola River property were made possible through a partnership with the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection**, utilizing **Florida Forever** funds for the state's purchase of the land from **TNC** as an addition to **Torrey State Park**. **TNC** purchased the Cola property with TNC donor funds and private foundation funds from the **EJK Foundation, Felburn Foundation, Jelks Family Foundation, Knobloch Family Foundation and Spurlino Foundation**. [Visit HERE for photos, map, and the press release.](#)



Photo by Katie Bryden/Wildpath of the Avalon Florida Forever Project

Florida Forever Protects 11,700 Acres in the Eastern NWFL

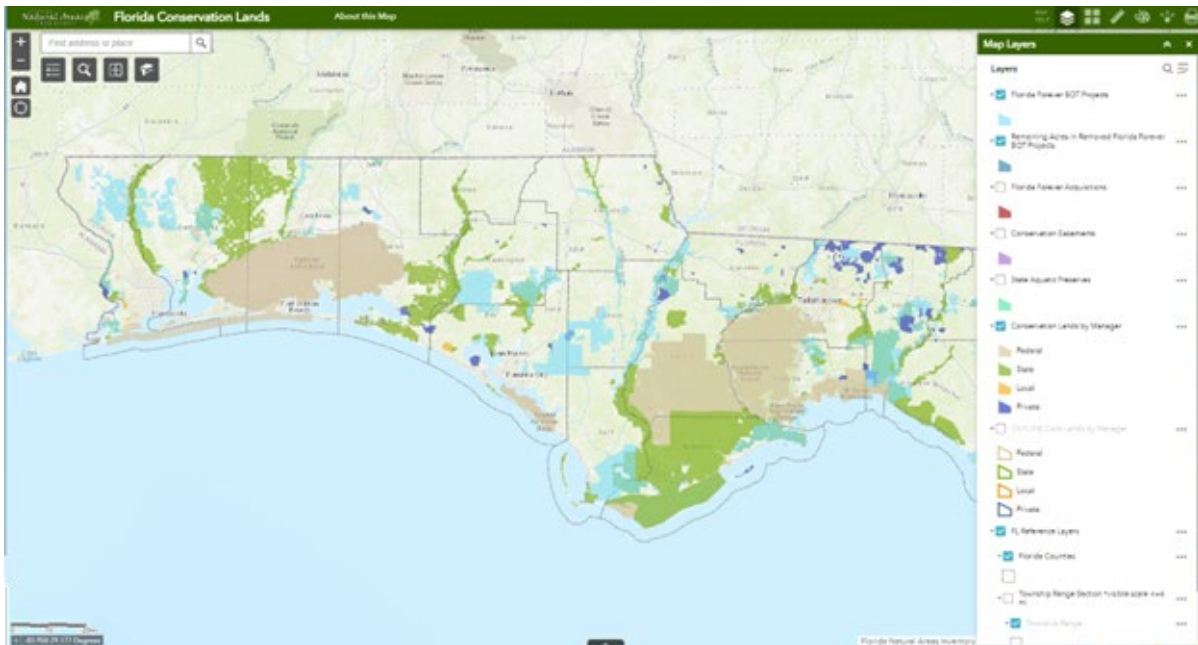
DEP's Florida Forever Program purchased **four** conservation easements within the **Avalon Florida Forever Project** totaling approximately **11,700 acres** in September, October, and November of 2023. These conservation easements provide long-term protection of the forestland and wetland systems characteristic of the **Red Hills region of Florida**. They also help

protect high-quality ecological communities that provide critical habitat for the region's rare wildlife and plant species, including the Florida black bear, gopher tortoise, southern fox squirrel, Bachman's sparrow, yellow fringed orchid, and Florida mountainmint. These southern Jefferson County lands are within the NWFSL and are part of the **Florida Wildlife Corridor**. Read the full **press release** [HERE](#).

NAS Whiting Field Wins Best Small Base Award With Help from Santa Rosa Community

Pensacola News Journal

Leaders from the **U.S. Navy Installations Command** named **Naval Air Station Whiting Field** as the **best small base** in the **Navy**. The **Commander Navy Installation Command 2024 Installation Excellence Award** program recognizes naval installations with outstanding performance throughout 2023, which includes management, program excellence and community outreach. In conjunction with this award, **NAS Whiting Field** was also nominated to represent the **Navy** for the **2024 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence** — the first nomination in the base's history. Part of **NAS Whiting Field's** ability to win the award is thanks to their partnership with **Santa Rosa County** and the surrounding community, according to the base's Community Planning and Liaison Officer **Randy Roy**. "The relationship that **Santa Rosa County** has with **NAS Whiting Field** is unique. We are a **\$1.6 billion economic impact** to them," **Roy** said. But the base needs the community, as well, he said. "The award and our achievements and our successes are absolutely tied to the **support and collaboration** that **Santa Rosa County** gives us," **Roy** added. "It allows us flexibility in our mission and capability to meet (the) mission." Read the full story [HERE](#).



Governor and Cabinet Approve NWFSL Land Conservation Projects

FDEP

On March 26th, **Governor Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet** approved projects protecting nearly **28,000 acres** of Florida's natural lands and linking existing conservation areas. Read the full [press release HERE](#) and the agenda item [HERE](#). The **Governor and Cabinet** approved the **2024 Florida Forever Priority List** which includes the projects in the **NWFSL** shown in **light blue** in the above map. They also approved additional acreage targeted for acquisition to the following **Florida Forever projects in the NWFSL**:

- 1,384 acres to **Avalon Phase II** in Jefferson County
- 1,098 acres to **Apalachicola River** in Jackson and Calhoun counties
- 305 acres to the **Aucilla/Wacissa Watershed** in Jefferson County
- 830 acres to the **Welanee Watershed** in Okaloosa County

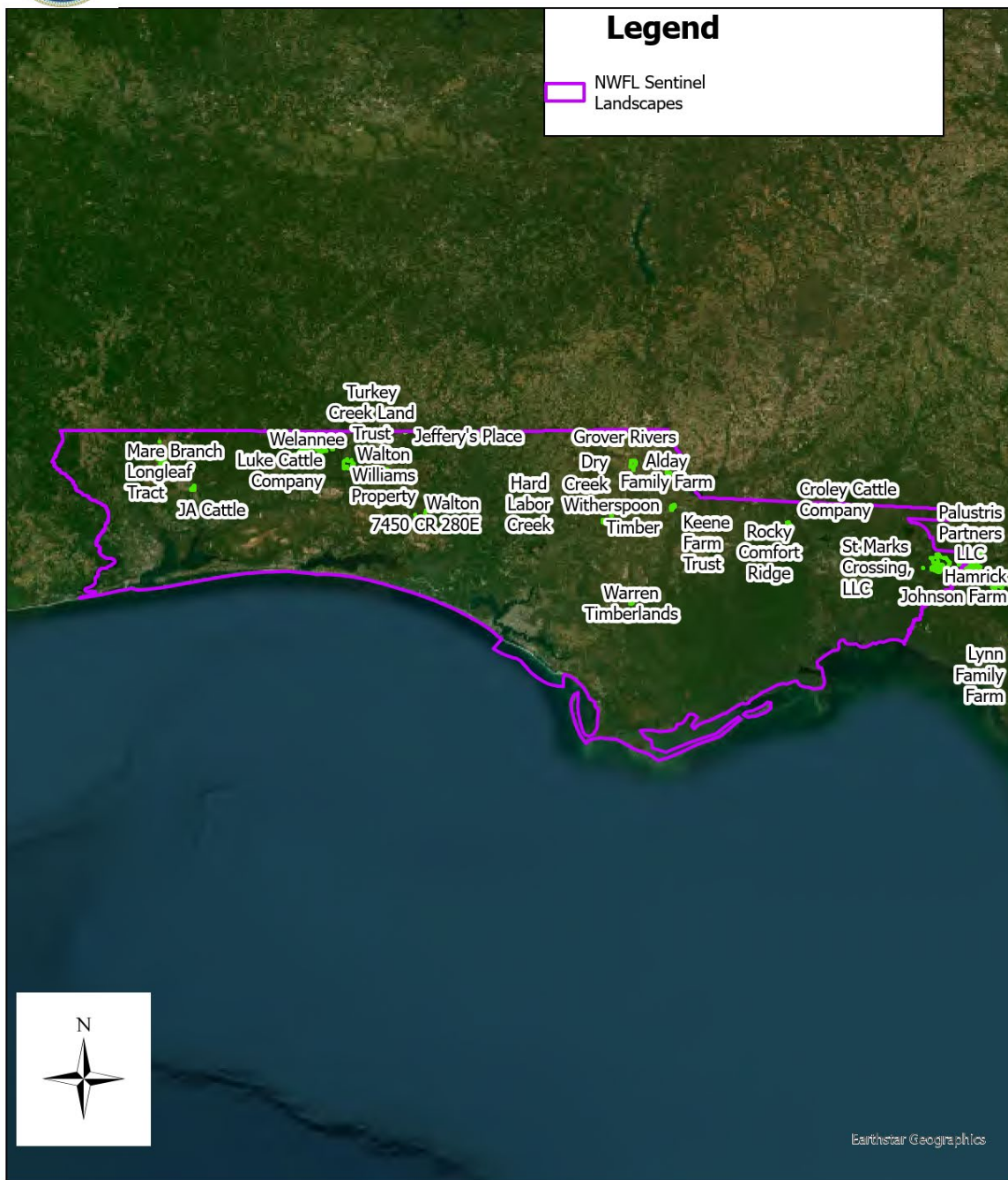
The **Governor and Cabinet** also approved:

- Adding via exchange a net of 8 acres to the **Blackwater River State Forest**

- Removed the **Telogia Creek** Florida Forever project in Liberty County as it was acquired in 2023.



RFLPP Projects



Rural and Family Lands Protection Program Projects in the NWFLSL

FDACS RFLPP

To date in the **NWFSL**, the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Service's Rural and Family Lands Protection Program** has conserved the 1955-acre **Natural Bridge Creek** project in **Walton County**, which closed in November 2023 for **\$2.2 million**. RFLPP has two **NWFSL** projects in the closing process now, including the **Adams Farm**, an 800-acre project in **Holmes County**, and **Gopher Hill**, an 887-acre project in **Walton County**. Together, those projects are expected to close in May for **\$2.28 million**. In the **NWFSL**, the **RFLPP** is working to conserve **35 projects** totaling more than **25,000 acres** through our new work plan approved by the **Governor and Cabinet** on March 26 (see above map and preceding story).

Funding Announcements



*Photo by Randy Traynor Photography
Little green heron, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge*

REPI Webinar Highlights Complementary Resilience Funding Opportunities

DOD REPI Program

On March 20, the **REPI Program** hosted an online seminar detailing complementary resilience funding opportunities. A recording of the webinar is available [HERE](#) and [HERE](#), and the slides from the presentation may be downloaded [HERE](#). Below are links shared during the presentation:

- [**Complementary Federal Resilience Funding Opportunities**](#) on repi.mil
- [**2024 National Coastal Resilience Fund Request for Proposals**](#) and [**NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund Program**](#)
- [**2024 America the Beautiful Challenge Request for Proposals**](#) and [**NFWF America the Beautiful Challenge Program**](#)

- [OLDCC programs](#) and [OLDCC DCIP](#).

Please note that the deadlines for submitting preproposals to **NFWF** are:

- **April 4** for the **America the Beautiful Challenge**
- **April 10** for the **National Coastal Resilience Fund**

2024 Defense Community Infrastructure Program Proposals Due June 17

DOD Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation

The **Notice of Funding Opportunity** for the **Fiscal Year 2024 Defense Community Infrastructure Program** is now open! Complete proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov by June 17, 2024. [Click here](#) for the full opportunity on [Grants.gov](#). The **Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation** will host an **informational webinar** at 3 p.m. EDT on **April 18, 2024**, to review the goals and objectives of the Notice of Funding Opportunity and answer questions from interested respondents. The webinar link goes live on April 18 [here](#). **Resources:**

- [Use this link](#) to review the notice and submit proposals.
- Link forthcoming to access a template to enter the cover page information requested.
- Link forthcoming to access a template to describe preliminary environmental compliance and National Environmental Policy Act information.
- For information on SAM and Grants.gov registration, please see the [Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation Grantee Guide](#).

\$145M Available to Help Landowners Access Climate Markets

USDA

The first round of funding for landowner participation in **emerging private markets** has been announced [HERE](#). This list of awardees is [HERE](#) excluding the project profiles. Proposals for projects **under \$2 million** continue to be accepted on a rolling basis through **August 2024**, and the **USFS** still has funding available for the program. The **USFS** expects the funding to continue through the next fiscal year as well. For more information, please [EMAIL Jackson Moller](#).

Gulf Partnership Project Assistance Fund Program Remains Open for Applications

Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation

The **Gulf Partnership's Project Assistance Fund (PAF)** program will remain open for potential applications year-round. The **PAF** is available to land trusts across the **Gulf States** to pay up to **\$35,000** for the scientific and legal review needed for the purchase of land and conservation easements. These **'due diligence' services** can range from appraisals, appraisal reviews, surveys, legal descriptions, title reviews, legal reviews, baseline documentation reports, recording fees, and environmental assessments, and ensure the Land Trust and the public are getting their money's worth. Members interested in applying should visit the [Gulf Partnership website](#) for more information, or [EMAIL Vance Crain](#).



*Photo by Randy Traynor Photography
Bald eagle, St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge*

Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Grants Available

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The **FDEP's [Division of State Lands](#)** announced the opening of the **Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Grant Program** through **[Florida Communities Trust](#)**. The **[Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Grant Program](#) FY 2023-24 Round 2 grant application cycle** will run from **March 1 through April 1, 2024**. The **Stan Mayfield Working Waterfronts Grant Program** provides funding for the acquisition of interests in land for the restoration and preservation of working waterfronts directly used for the purposes of the commercial harvest of marine organisms or saltwater products by state-licensed commercial fishers, aquaculturists, or business entities, including piers, wharves, docks or other facilities. The amount in grant funding available for this round is **\$4.3**

million. Visit the [DEP website](#) to [download the grant application forms and obtain additional information](#).

Apply by June 30 for Hurricane Idalia Silviculture Recovery

Florida Land Steward Update

The **Hurricane Idalia Silviculture Recovery Program** is designed to ensure the long-term viability of Florida's forest lands and restore the ecological and economic value of timberland damaged by Hurricane Idalia. The program offers landowners cost-share funding specifically **for site preparation and tree replanting** on classified agricultural lands. It is administered by the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Florida Forest Service** and funded by the **State of Florida**. The program is currently open for applications at the online portal or by mail. Please visit [HERE](#) to apply. Applications will be accepted until **June 30, 2024**.

Deadlines for Bridge Investment Program Established

Wildlands Connectivity

Click here for the [snapshot guide](#) to **wildlife-related funding opportunities** within the **Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**.

Updates include:

1. Closure of the FY24 round of funding for [RAISE \(Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Act\)](#)
2. "Rolling" deadlines for the current and future rounds of the **Bridge Investment Program**
 - [Small Bridge Projects](#) (FY24 applications due March 19, 2024)
 - [Large Bridge Projects](#) (FY25 applications due August 1, 2024)

- [Bridge Planning Projects](#) (FY25 applications due October 1, 2024).

Catalyst Fund Proposals Due April 26

Network for Landscape Conservation

The **Network for Landscape Conservation** is accepting proposals for the 2024 funding round of the **Catalyst Fund**. **Proposals are due on Friday, April 26**. Interested applicants should review the [RFP](#) and the [Applicant Guidance Document](#) to best understand how to submit a strong proposal. These [FAQs](#) may also be helpful in clarifying any questions. Additional information and a link to the application portal can be found on the [Catalyst Fund page of the Network's website](#).

The purpose of the **Catalyst Fund** is to accelerate the pace and practice of landscape conservation and stewardship across the United States. The **Fund** makes strategic investments in strengthening the collaborative capacity of place-based, community-grounded Landscape Partnerships. Through generous support from the **Doris Duke Foundation** and the **William and Flora Hewlett Foundation**, the **Catalyst Fund** will distribute approximately **\$335,000** this year through competitive grants to **Landscape Partnerships** that stand at pivotal points in their development. Funded Partnerships will also be invited to participate in a two-year peer learning program. A portion of the **Catalyst Fund** is dedicated to supporting Indigenous leadership in landscape conservation and stewardship. We especially invite Partnerships that are led by Tribes and/or Indigenous peoples, organizations, and communities to apply.

NOAA RESTORE Science Program

NOAA

The **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) RESTORE Science Program** announced its latest notice of funding opportunity (NOFO-2025) which will provide researchers, resource managers, and other interested parties with **funding to carry out projects that will contribute to our knowledge of long-term trends in the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.**

You can find the **full grant announcement** [HERE](#) along with additional information about this competition including frequently asked questions. The **NOAA RESTORE Science Program** will hold their two informational webinars and answer questions:

- Webinar 1: Friday, **March 29** from 2-3 pm ET. [Register here.](#)
- Webinar 2: Thursday, **April 11** from 11am-12pm ET. [Register here.](#)

All applicants must submit a **letter of intent** by **May 23, 2024** in order to submit a full proposal. **Full proposals** are due on **August 22, 2024.**

Funding Announcements from the Conservation Finance Network and Others

Climate Pollution Reduction Grants Program: Implementation Grants (General Competition)

Application Due: April 1, 2024

Healthy and Resilient Gulf of Mexico RFA

Application Due: April 4, 2024

America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative: America the Beautiful Challenge 2024 RFP

Pre-Proposal Due Date: April 4, 2024

Full Proposal Due Date (by invitation only): July 16, 2024

USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Grants

Application Due: April 9

2024 National Coastal Resilience Fund

Application Due: April 10, 2024

Innovative Finance for National Forests)

Application Due: April 22, 2024

Catalyst Fund

Application Due: April 26, 2024

Coastal Ecosystem Climate Resilience

Application Due: May 1, 2024

Land and Climate Catalyst Planning Grant

Application Due: May 10, 2024

USDA Regional Food System Partnerships

Application Due: May 14, 2024

U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support

Second Round Deadline: Monday, May 20, 2024

Forest Landowner Support: Tribal Access to Emerging Private Markets for Climate Mitigation and Forest Resilience

Application Due: August 21, 2024

USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support

Application Due: August 21, 2024

EPA Environmental & Climate Justice Community Change Grants Program

Application Due: November 21, 2024

News You Can Use



*Photo by Randy Traynor Photography
Anhinga, Aucilla Wildlife Management Area*

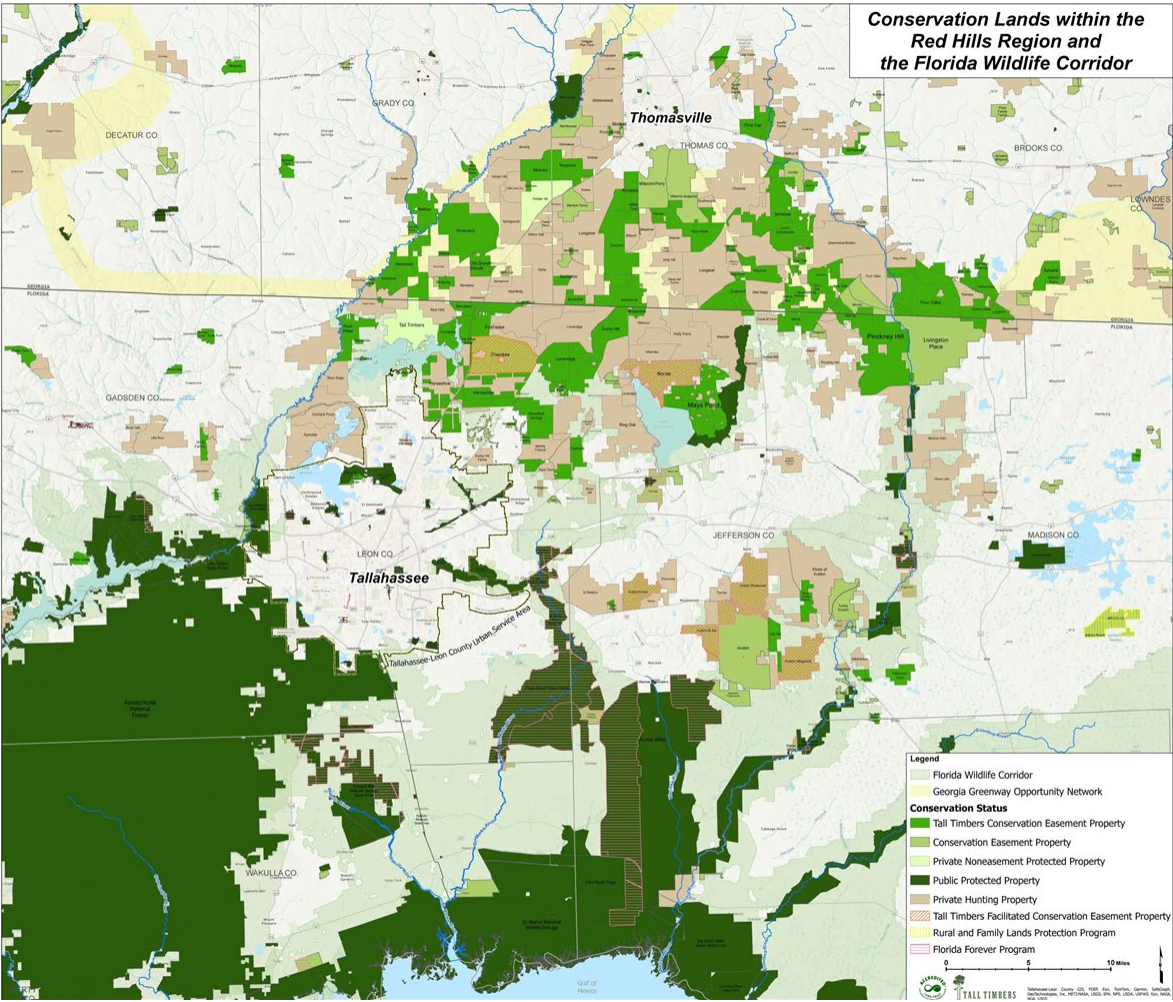
We Need a Farm Bill that Works for Wildlife and Future Generations

Lawton "Bud" Chiles, Jubilee Orchards

"Florida's private lands, and its land stewards, are vital in conserving our wildlife and climate. Landowners work with partners, such as **Natural Resources Conservation Service**, to conserve natural resources while keeping small farms thriving. The **U.S. Department of Agriculture** cannot do it without a strong farm bill that works for wildlife and future generations.

Congress is updating the farm bill this year, which is an opportunity that only comes around about every five years. I urge you to join private landowners like me in asking your members of Congress to include strong biodiversity conservation provisions in the next **farm bill** and ensure that the conservation programs are accessible to all American farms, especially the small farms."

Lawton "Bud" Chiles and his wife, **Kitty Chiles**, own and operate **Jubilee Orchards**, an organic blueberry farm in Tallahassee. Read the full [opinion piece HERE](#) which was [originally published](#) by the **Tallahassee Democrat**.



Public and Private Commitment Key to Connecting Red Hills Conservation Lands

Tall Timbers

Recent conservation successes in the **Red Hills** include the **4,800-acre Cherokee conservation easement** in Leon County and the **4,100-acre Norias conservation easement** in Leon and Jefferson counties two significant contributions to the connectivity of essential natural spaces. The shoreline of the **Norias property** along **Lake Miccosukee** is permanently protected through a conservation easement. Permanent protection of these **Florida Forever properties** is another bold stroke upon the canvas of public and private lands under conservation in the **Red Hills region**. **Tall Timbers** assisted with these recent land conservation achievements and continues work with landowners across the region to conserve land and fill in gaps along the **Florida Wildlife Corridor**.

Collaboration, Conservation Leads to Sea Turtle Rescue

Tyndall Air Force Base

Six cold-stunned **sea turtles** were rescued by the **325th Civil Engineer Squadron's environmental management team** along **Tyndall Air Force Base's** coastline on January 22nd, after a sustained drop in water temperatures. [Read the full story HERE.](#)



Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment
Florida Trustee Implementation Group

Draft Restoration Plan 3 and Environmental Assessment: Water Quality

March 2024

Florida Trustees Seek Public Comment on Draft Restoration Plan 3

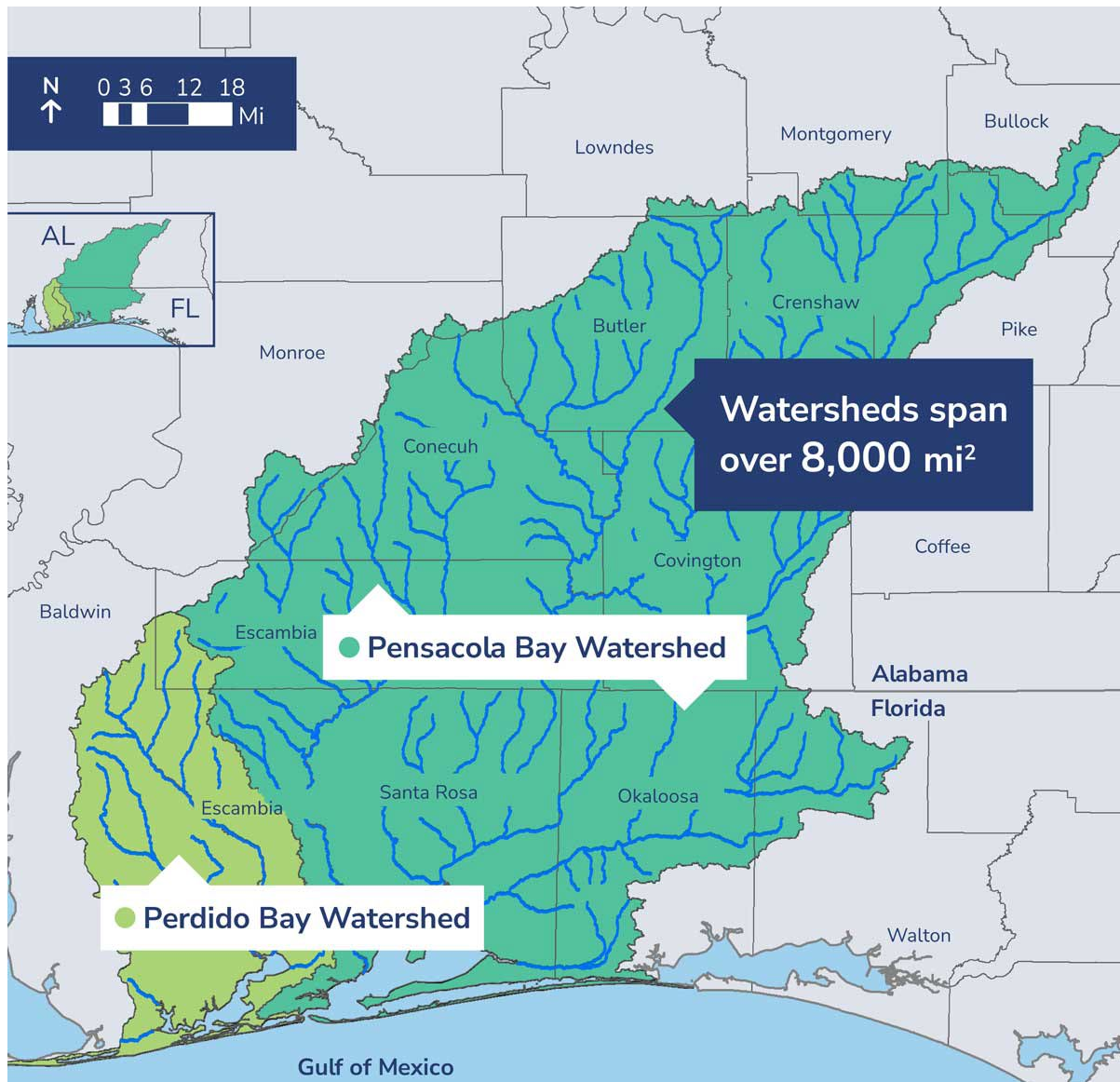
Gulf Spill Restoration

The **Florida Trustee Implementation Group** has released its **[Draft Restoration Plan 3 and Environmental Assessment: Water Quality](#)** for public comment through **April 8, 2024**. They conducted a public online seminar on **March 27, 2024**. The presentation material is posted **[HERE](#)**. In November 2022, the **Florida Trustee Implementation Group** invited public input to identify water quality restoration opportunities. After screening project ideas, the Trustees narrowed the list to **13 water quality projects** comprising the reasonable range of alternatives for evaluation in this draft restoration plan. **Ten** of these projects are within the **NWFSL** and help address the water quality protection goals of the **NWFSL Partnership**. These projects, budgeted to spend nearly **\$88 million**, include paving roads crossing streams to lessen sediment pollution, stream and wetland restoration, watershed enhancement, reduction of nutrients in stormwater runoff, and septic to sewer conversions. Learn more at the **[Florida Trustee Implementation Group's latest Gulf Spill Restoration news update](#)**.

PPBEP Hiring a Project Coordinator

PPBEP

The **Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program** is hiring a **Project Coordinator**. The **Project Coordinator** will oversee all aspects of project coordination for assigned environmental restoration projects, including ensuring project goals and objectives are successfully implemented, managing consultants and contractors, facilitating design review and evaluation with relevant parties, preparation of technical documents, engaging with regulatory agencies and ensuring regulatory compliance, project reporting, implementation oversight, and engaging with the public. The **Project Coordinator** will be responsible for coordinating the design and permitting of the **Carpenter Creek Restoration Project** and design, permitting, and implementation of the **Pensacola Bay Oyster Restoration Initiative**. The full position description is **[HERE](#)**. **[EMAIL HERE](#)** by **April 19** to apply.



Pensacola and Perdido Bay Watersheds May Get Estuary of National Significance Status

NorthEscambia.com

The **U.S. Senate** unanimously passed the **Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary of National Significance Act** to direct the Administrator of the **Environmental Protection Agency** to formally enroll the **Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP)** into the **National Estuary Program** as an “**Estuary of National Significance.**” The bill now heads to the **U.S. House of Representatives**. U.S. Senators **Marco Rubio** and **Rick Scott** introduced the legislation to federally designate the PPBEP to

leverage federal dollars, in coordination with funding by state and local governments, to address water quality and resource challenges in the estuary. The **Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program** is non-regulatory. Read the full story [HERE](#).

ACT Hiring RCPP Coordinator

Alachua Conservation Trust

ACT is hiring a new position to help manage three **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)** awards and contracts. The **RCPP Coordinator** will manage the entire financial and data management process (i.e., reporting, invoicing, and grant management). They will track spending by analyzing financial statements to ensure appropriate use of awarded funds. To this end, the coordinator will work with **NRCS, ACT**, and partner organizations to ensure information and data meet reporting requirements. For the complete announcement, visit [HERE](#).

State and Federal Laws Addressing Land Owned by a Foreign Principal Near Military Installations

Stearns Weaver Miller

The **State of Florida** enacted the **2023 Foreign Ownership Law, Chapter 2023-33, Laws of Florida**. The 2023 Foreign Ownership Law requires three agencies to promulgate rules to implement the new requirements: the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Florida Department of Commerce (FDOC), and the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC)**. In January 2024, the **FDOC** adopted [Rule Chapter 73C-60, Florida Administrative Code](#), implementing section 692.203, Florida Statutes, which applies to the purchase of certain real property on or around military installations or critical infrastructure facilities by certain foreign principals. That same

month, the FREC adopted [Rule Chapter 61J2-10.200](#), which contains the form affidavit a buyer must provide under the 2023 Foreign Ownership Law.

At the federal level, the fiscal year **2024 defense spending bill** signed into law ordered further examination of foreign investors' potential land purchases near military sites. The law gives **DOD** six months to coordinate its report with other agencies reviewing: "... ownership or leasing by foreign persons or governments of land near Department of Defense installations in the United States, particularly involving countries of concern; an assessment of the threat that such ownership poses to United States national security; and a description of steps taken or planned to mitigate these threats and prevent them in the future." Read the full ADC story [HERE](#).

Defending the Shore

Mike Brassfield, Florida Trend

University of Miami researchers are developing artificial reefs to reduce flooding, create habitats for marine life and make Florida's coastlines more resilient. Their inventors compare them to air bags or speed bumps in the sea. And they just might be the future of fighting coastal flooding in Florida. They are called **Seahives**, and they are a new kind of artificial reef being developed and field-tested by researchers at the **University of Miami**. They are 18-foot-long, hexagonal-shaped hollow tubes that get stacked in pyramid-like shapes on the seafloor just offshore. The 2,500-pound concrete structures are perforated to allow seawater to flow through them. The goal of these devices is twofold: Dissipate wave energy and slow down potentially destructive waves before they hit the shore, while simultaneously providing a hospitable environment to grow corals or mangroves. They are designed to be a win-win: Reduce flooding, build habitat. Read the full story [HERE](#).



*Photo by Randy Traynor Photography
Kingfisher, St. Marks NWR*

News from the Conservation Finance Network

The Five Principles That Define Natural Climate Solutions. A new paper clarifies how nature can provide effective, measurable, and equitable solutions to tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. ([The Nature Conservancy](#)).

Instead of Carbon Offsets, We Need ‘Contributions’ to Forests. Because of problems created by the incentive structure for carbon offsets as a mode of climate mitigation, companies should switch to a “contributions” framing to preserve a crucial flow of climate investment. ([Stanford Social Innovation Review](#)).

Conservation Finance 3-part online seminar series resources. CFN hosted an online seminar series about forest carbon for USFS state and territory staff

in the fall. Explore the available resources on this page. ([Conservation Finance Network](#)).

Challenges to Scaling RCPP: A Review of the Regional Conservation Partnership Program's 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity. This report analyzes how NOFOs can be altered to more rapidly deploy federal funding and how the RCPP model can advance innovative conservation strategies at scale. ([EPIC](#)).

Concept Paper Examines Forest Carbon Market Impact on Forest-Dependent Communities and Forest Health. ([U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities](#)).

Florida RESTORE Act New Projects Approved

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council

On March 18, 2024, the **Council Chair**, the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**, approved the **Florida State Expenditure Plan (SEP) Amendment #6**. Under the Spill Impact Component of the **RESTORE Act**, commonly referred to as “**Bucket 3**”, 30 percent of the funds in the **Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund** are disbursed to the five Gulf Coast States. The **6th Amendment** approved **Wakulla County** to redirect all SEP project funds to project 8-1: **Wakulla Springshed Water Quality Protection Program** – to address cost escalation for the construction portion of the **Otter Creek WWTF**. [Learn more about the Florida State Expenditure Plan HERE](#) and the [Story Map- Draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan Update](#).

Emerald Sanctuary Released

Florida Oceanographic Society

Emerald Sanctuary is a documentary about the importance of seagrasses, and the impact of their loss, on the environment and coastal communities of Florida. ***Emerald Sanctuary*** was premiered for **World Seagrass Day**. [View it HERE](#).

Weigh in on Carbon Markets

Florida Land Steward

A new [survey](#) ***Exploring the Potential Effects of an Expanding Forest Carbon Market in the United States*** seeks input on strengths, weaknesses, and anticipated outcomes from forest carbon markets, as well as insight into where additional information is needed to support informed decision making. The survey is open to anyone with insight and opinions into the effects of forest carbon markets on working forests and the communities that rely on them in the United States. Results from the survey will be analyzed anonymously and used with an aim of determining what is working well for forests and people, and what changes are needed to ensure all forest products, services, and values can continue to be available for current and future generations. The survey will take about 12 minutes to complete. [Participate in the survey here](#).



*Photo by Randy Traynor Photography
Double crested cormorant, St. Marks NWR*

Tyndall AFB, Eglin AFB, NAS Pensacola Give Economic Update

MyPanhandle.com

At the **Northwest Florida Economic Symposium** in **Sandestin**, local military leaders spoke to the community about partnerships and new projects. Top officials at **Eglin Air Force Base, Tyndall Air Force Base, and Naval Air Station Pensacola** spoke about the economic impact and partnership the military has in panhandle communities. All three military bases said the best way for the public to help them succeed economically is to partner together. They invite businesses to reach out and see what they need that the local community can provide. Read the full article [HERE](#). You may download the [Florida Defense Industry Economic Impact Analysis 2022 HERE](#).

Are All Carbon Credits Created Equal?

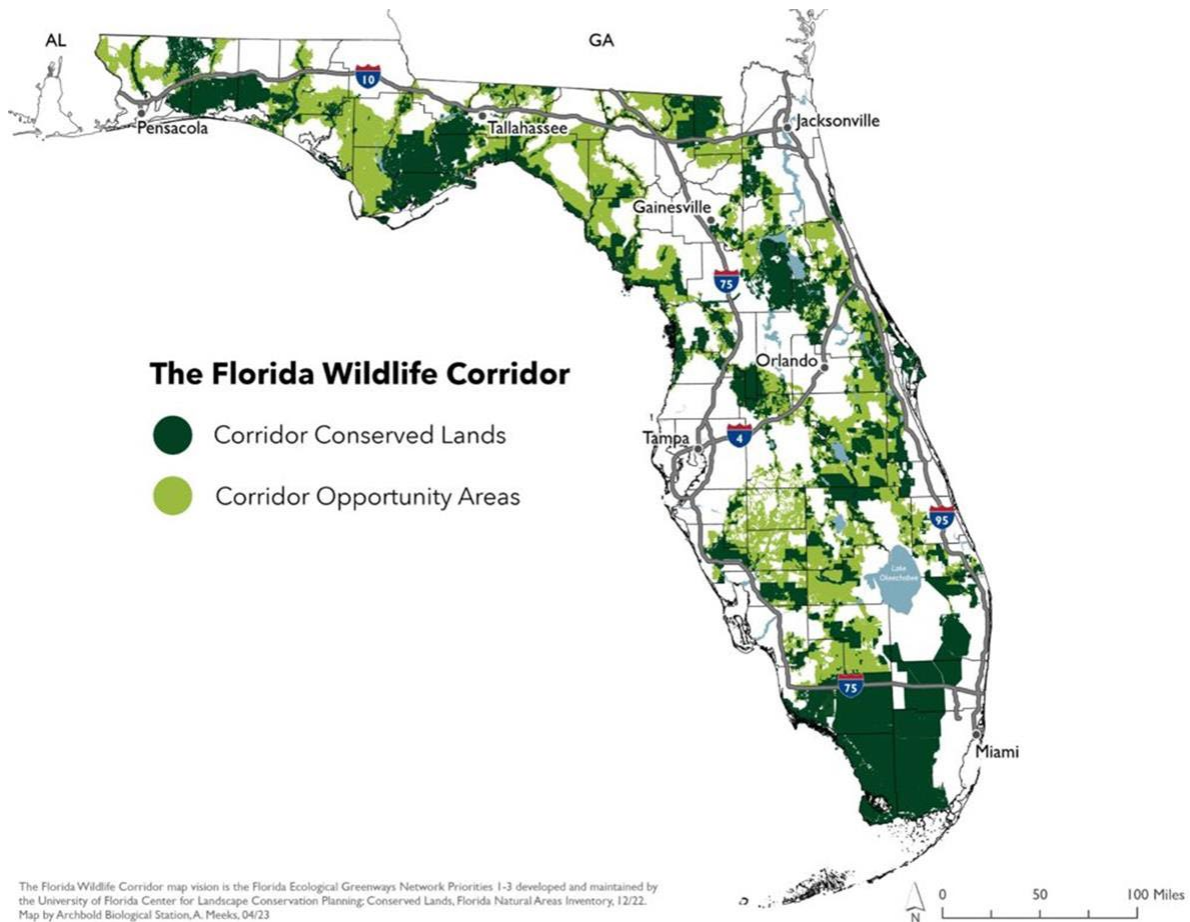
Forest Carbon Works

The question arises frequently, and the simple answer is no, not all carbon credits are equal. It is important to understand that carbon reduction is grouped into two main categories: carbon “removal” and carbon “avoidance” credits.

Removal Credits: These credits involve directly removing carbon from the atmosphere, typically through activities like reforestation, afforestation, CCS (sequestration) or direct air capture technologies. Each credit represents a ton of carbon removed from the atmosphere. The quantifiable carbon removal can be verified, leading to tangible reductions in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. Removal credits offer a direct and measurable approach to tackling carbon emissions, making them an optimal choice for those committed to projects that provide lasting climate benefits.

Avoidance Credits: These credits result from activities that prevent or avoid the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, such as renewable energy projects, energy efficiency initiatives, or conservation projects. While these projects reduce or prevent future emissions, they do not directly remove carbon dioxide already present in the atmosphere.

Learn more [HERE](#).



Ten Facts about the Florida Wildlife Corridor

Megan Mascheri, FAU, The Invading Sea

The **Florida Wildlife Corridor** covers nearly 18 million acres of Florida, consisting of conserved and opportunity lands. The **Florida Wildlife Corridor** has been touted as a crucial way of protecting imperiled wildlife and providing other benefits such as mitigating climate change. But some Floridians might be unfamiliar with specifics about the **Florida Wildlife Corridor**. Here are some quick facts from the [Florida Wildlife Corridor Foundation](#):

1. Inspired by [the GPS movement of a black bear](#), a team of scientists, explorers and National Geographic photographer **Carlton Ward Jr.** began unveiling the vision of the **Florida Wildlife Corridor**.

2. The **Florida Legislature** passed the **Florida Wildlife Corridor Act of 2021** to formally recognize the contiguous geography of the Corridor.
3. The Corridor covers nearly 18 million acres of Florida, consisting of conserved and opportunity lands.
4. Conserved lands make up almost ten million acres of the Corridor, with about 8 million considered “opportunity lands.”
5. Conserved lands include the **Ocala National Forest**, **Everglades National Park**, **Myakka River State Park** and **Apalachicola National Forest**, among others.
6. Opportunity lands refer to the land that is unprotected but still acknowledged as part of the corridor and sought to be conserved in the future.
7. These lands are crucial to the survival of 131 of Florida’s imperiled fauna, including the **Florida panther**, gopher tortoise, manatee, burrowing owl and black bear.
8. The Corridor protects 69 species of threatened or endangered plants vital to the state’s ecosystems, such as the scrub palm, **Everglades bully** and scrub ziziphus.
9. Florida’s economy benefits from the Corridor through its protection of ranching, fishing and freshwater supplies.
10. Conservation of these wild spaces helps mitigate climate change impacts such as reducing greenhouse gases and guarding ecosystems against increasing temperatures.

Eglin AFB Boosts Security, Fines for Trespassing the Santa Rosa Island Test Area

Northwest Florida Daily News

Beachgoers on **Santa Rosa Island** will see an increased security presence around **Eglin Air Force Base** property. Officials from the **96th Security Forces Squadron** announced that they will begin increasing patrols and citing trespassers who enter the **Santa Rosa Island Closed Test Area**, which runs from the **El Matador Condominiums** in **Fort Walton Beach** to **Navarre Beach** in **Santa Rosa County**. The area is currently marked with

signs and barriers indicating no trespassing. A person caught trespassing by land or water will be fined \$65 per occurrence. Alongside ongoing military use, the approximately 17-mile stretch of beach between the borders of the range is home to endangered plant and animal life, with even more activity beginning in May during the sea turtle nesting season. Read the full story [HERE](#).

\$145M to Help landowners Access Climate Markets

USDA

The **USDA Forest Service** is investing nearly **\$145 million** from **President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act**—the largest climate investment in history—to connect forest landowners with emerging climate markets as part of the **Investing in America agenda**. **\$116 million** from the funds being announced is for **20 Forest Landowner Support** projects to provide equitable access to these emerging markets. **NWFSL partners** receiving funding include **American Forests (\$12M)**, **American Forests Foundation (\$20M)**, **Ducks Unlimited (\$10M)**, **The Longleaf Alliance (\$1.85M)** and the **U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities (\$20M)**. For more information, visit [HERE](#).

Upcoming Events

3rd Annual PPBEP Management Conference Meeting

Pelican Post

Registration is open and free for the **3rd Annual Pensacola and Perdido Bay Estuary Program's Management Conference, *Beyond Boundaries: Watershed Partnerships for Progress***. The Conference will be held Wednesday, **April 3rd** from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM CT at **Sanders Beach Corrine Jones Resource Center in Pensacola**. Breakout sessions include:

- Project Development Mixer
- Local Policy Recommendations
- Oyster Shell Recycling Focus Group
- Living Shoreline Cost Share Program Focus Group

The agenda is **[HERE](#)**.

Planning to Protect the
FLORIDA WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

A **FREE Four-Part Online Seminar**
April 4 to May 1, 2024

Presented by **UF** CENTER FOR LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PLANNING **1000 FRIENDS of FLORIDA**

Florida Climate Smart Ag **FCG** THE FLORIDA CONSERVATION GROUP **Florida WILDLIFE CORRIDOR Foundation** **LIVE WILDLY foundation** **SOLUTIONS FROM THE LAND**

Find Out More and Register at **1000fof.org/upcoming-webinars**

Approved for professional credits for planners, floodplain managers, and Florida attorneys, landscape architects, and environmental health professionals.

**Planning to Protect the Florida Wildlife Corridor
April 4 Online Seminar**

1000 Friends of Florida

Part 1 of 4: Looking at the Big Picture. Thursday, **April 4** from **noon to 2 P.M., Eastern. [Register Now!](#)**

What is landscape-scale conservation and why is it important? How has the **Florida Wildlife Corridor** evolved from decades of GIS-based analysis and why should we be concerned about protecting it? What role does agricultural land play in the corridor, and what are some of the threats and opportunities? What impact will climate change and associated population migration have on the corridor? Join **University of Florida Center for Landscape Conservation Planning Director Thomas Hctor, PhD, cattle rancher and conservationist Jim Strickland, Florida Conservation Group Executive Director Julie Morris,** and **Florida Atlantic University School of Environmental, Coastal & Ocean Sustainability (ECOS) Founding Director Colin Polsky, PhD,** as they address these questions and more.

Living Shoreline Courses 2024



Photo Credit Mandy Baily

Who is this course for?

Anyone looking to learn the details of how to permit and install living shorelines -marine contractors, landscape architects, local government, property owners, and all others interested in promoting living shorelines.

Details

\$50 includes two-day course registration, manual, and lunches. Course is in-person and consists of classroom and living shoreline field site time.

CEUs available from: Florida Construction Industry Licensing Board (CILB), Society for Ecological Restoration Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner Program, and Florida Nursery, Growers, and Landscape Association

Instructors include Florida Sea Grant, FL Dept. of Environmental Protection, US Army Corps of Engineers, FL Water Management District, local government staff, and other shoreline experts.

For more information and registration links, please contact Living Shoreline Program Assistant Mandy Baily at mbaily@ufl.edu or visit the Florida Sea Grant Living Shoreline Training for Marine Contractors website.



UPCOMING 2024 COURSES

Miami

(Coconut Grove)

February 1st and 2nd

Central Indian River Lagoon

(Vero Beach)

March 19th and 20th

Forgotten Coast

(Apalachicola)

April 11th and 12th

Sun Coast: Tampa

May 16th and 17th

Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team

Learn the details of how to permit and install living shorelines. This course is aimed at marine contractors, landscape architects, property owners, and all others interested in promoting living shorelines. The course will be held **Thursday and Friday April 11th and 12th** 8:30 am-4:30 pm at the **Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve**, 108 Island Drive in **Eastpoint**, FL 32328. [Register HERE](#). \$50 includes course registration, manual, refreshments, and lunches. Course is in person and consists of classroom and living shoreline field site time. **For more information EMAIL Rick O'Connor** or **EMAIL Anita Grove**.



JOIN US

**DRIVERS OF THE BIODIVERSITY
CRISIS:
AMERICA AT A CROSSROADS**

WEBINAR SERIES

FLORIDA IN FOCUS

FRIDAY, APRIL 12TH
11:30 AM - 1 PM ET

This symposium features an overview of biodiversity loss in the U.S. by Defenders of Wildlife's Dr. Lindsay Rosa and an in depth look at biodiversity by a panel of Florida wildlife and conservation experts.

© Thomas G Barnes/USFWS

**Drivers of the Biodiversity Crisis: America at a Crossroads
Florida in Focus Webinar - April 12**

Defenders of Wildlife

Defenders of Wildlife's Center for Conservation Innovation recently released a report on the five leading drivers of biodiversity loss in the United States. This symposium is the first in a national series of webinars to

present and showcase those challenges. Florida has the unfortunate distinction of being the state that faces the most severe biodiversity threats. But at the same time, meaningful actions are occurring in Florida to address some of the leading drivers of biodiversity decline. Join us as we highlight the biodiversity crisis and its leading drivers, as well as helpful actions already underway. Attendees will come away more knowledgeable and able to support action in the field, in Tallahassee and on Capitol Hill to meet current and future challenges facing biodiversity. This online seminar will be held **April 12th from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM ET**. [Please Register HERE](#).

UF Spring Symposium: "From the Ground Up"
April 16-17

Chris Demers, University of Florida

There's still time to reserve your spot for the **2024 Spring Symposium** to be held at **UF Stern Learning Center at Austin Cary Forest Campus**. The symposium will explore reforestation and restoration techniques for various land management objectives. From the ground up, we will dig into site preparation, prescribed fire, species, and genetics, and bring it all together in case studies featuring innovative technologies and various land management objectives. This event is a fun and educational tradition, and a suitable place to network with fellow forestry and natural resource professionals. [Register online at HERE](#). The [2024 Spring Symposium event packet with full agenda, directions, hotel blocks, and other details is linked HERE](#).

Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team Annual Membership Meeting
April 17

Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team

Anyone who engaged in living shoreline or estuarine restoration, implementation, policy, or planning is invited to participate in the **Panhandle Estuarine Restoration Team (PERT)** annual membership meeting on **April 17th** at **Camp Helen State Park** from 9:00-2:00 PM CDT. For more information and to register, visit [HERE](#).

Forests + Climate Learning Exchange Series Scheduled

The [Forests + Climate Learning Exchange Series](#) is co-hosted by the **Forest Carbon and Climate Program & Society of American Foresters** and is held the **first Wednesday** of the month through **June 5, 2024** at 3pm ET, Virtual.

International Conference on Shellfish Restoration September 15-18 at Jekyll Island

Melody Ray-Culp

The **International Conference on Shellfish Restoration** will be held on **Jekyll Island**, Georgia on **September 15th-18th 2024**. More details on the conference can be found [HERE](#). They are inviting presentations on any topic related to the restoration or conservation of marine, brackish, or freshwater molluscan shellfish species and their associated habitats. For more information, [EMAIL Peter Kingsley-Smith](#).

Resources



*Photograph by Carlton Ward, Jr.
Tyler Macmillan and Joe Guthrie
Econfina Creek Water Management Area*



2023 SENTINEL LANDSCAPES ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

SENTINELLANDSCAPES.ORG

2023 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishments Report

Sentinel Landscapes Partnership

The **2023 Sentinel Landscapes Accomplishments Report** is available [HERE](#). Through **fiscal year (FY) 2022, \$1.1 billion** in conservation funds have been committed to projects in sentinel landscapes, with **\$133 million committed in FY 2022 alone**. The number of acres protected increased from the previous FY by **over 67,000 acres**. In FY 2022, the number of acres enrolled in financial and technical assistance programs totaled over **4.4 million acres, a 44 percent increase** over FY 2021 (3.1 million acres). These increases illustrate the sustained growth of the **Sentinel Landscapes Partnership's** impact.

New Land Cover Data for Coastal Change

NOAA

The **NOAA Office of Coastal Management** announced the availability of new high-resolution land cover data for coastal communities across the country, funded by the **Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**. The new data (previously held by the private sector and prohibitively expensive) is 900 times more detailed than **NOAA's** traditional land cover product. This data can be used for planning for sea level rise, protecting communities from floods, and informing wetland restoration projects, among other uses. You can download the data from [NOAA's Digital Coast website](#). This newly available data is an important development in Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with coastal storm flooding and rising sea levels and their damaging effects on communities, ecosystems, and economies.

Tools to Quantify the Carbon Value of Forest Protection

Open Space Institute

The [Open Space Institute](#) has updated data for better identification of at-risk high-carbon forests for the continental U.S., including projections of

permanent forest cover loss, and estimates of avoided emissions from land protection.

Act Fast and Smart on Nature-based Climate Solutions

Environmental Defense Fund

The **[Environmental Defense Fund](#)** summarized **[this recently published scientific article](#)** on effective, lasting nature-based climate solutions vital to address the climate emergency.

New Report on Managed Retreat

NASEM Gulf Research Program

The **NASEM Gulf Research Program** has released a **[new report](#)** on the unique challenges, needs, and opportunities associated with the relocation of communities and infrastructure away from high-risk areas. It includes findings and recommendations based on information from local community workshops.

Accelerating Oyster Restoration in the Gulf of Mexico Report and Recording Available

The Nature Conservancy

The recording from **The Nature Conservancy's March 4 webinar - [Accelerating Oyster Restoration in the Gulf of Mexico](#)** – is **[HERE](#)** and their report is **[HERE](#)**.

Partner Spotlight

Apalachicola Regional Stewards Alliance

The **Apalachicola Regional Stewardship Alliance (ARSA) Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA)** was established in 2003 by **The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Northwest Florida Program** and other stakeholders in the **Apalachicola River** region. The mission of the **ARSA CISMA** is to implement a comprehensive, region-wide approach to address the threats invasive aquatic and terrestrial non-native invasive species pose to native ecosystems within the **Apalachicola River** region (adopted January 2004). Since its inception, **ARSA** has conducted semiannual meetings, implemented control projects on private lands, assisted land managers with grant writing, compiled and shared data, performed cooperative outreach and education, and participated in other activities related to non-native invasive species. Our goals for the future include the continuation and expansion of these activities, with an increased focus on private land control and public education programs. For more information, [EMAIL Diane Alix](#) of The Nature Conservancy in Florida.

Partner Collaboration



Photo by the Department of Defense, Eglin Air Force Base

"Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives. It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results." — Andrew Carnegie

Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Partnership Meetings

The partners for the **NWFSL** have established several goals, objectives, actions, and measurable results to gauge our success. To put us on the pathway to success we have formed two work groups to help us collaboratively achieve our regional resiliency and sustainability goals:

Climate Resiliency and **Private Lands and Natural Systems Stewardship work groups. Please note that the Private Lands**

Stewardship and Natural Systems Work Groups merged in March 2023. These work groups are our conservation delivery network.

The NWFSL Partnership has virtual partners' collaboration calls on the 4th Wednesday of the even numbered months at 3:00 P.M. Eastern/2:00 P.M. Central. In case you didn't receive the recurring calendar invitation or you would like to share the invitation, you may join these calls via Microsoft Teams by video at: **[Click here to join the meeting](#)** or by dialing in (audio only) to: **(509) 904-0868 with the phone conference ID: 800 814 676# (this link and number has not changed from previous calls).**

Our Private Lands and Natural Systems Stewardship Work Group has its scheduled virtual meeting on the third Wednesday of the odd numbered months at 3:00 P.M. Eastern/2:00 P.M. Central.

Our Climate Resiliency Work Group meets on the fourth Wednesday of the odd numbered months at 3:00 P.M. Eastern/2:00 P.M. Central.

If you would like to participate on a work group or join the Partnership Collaboration calls and did not receive an invitation, please **[EMAIL](#)** NWFSL coordinator **Kent Wimmer**. A **current list of the members of the NWFSL Partners** and our two **Work Groups** and other resources are available for download **[HERE](#)**.

Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape Outreach

In March, our NWFSL coordination team of Kent Wimmer and David Wolfe continued to meet with partners and others introducing our sentinel landscape and coordinating activities that included (with others scheduled):

- **Apalachicola National Estuarine Research Reserve Symposium** and NWFSL presentation on February 29th and March 1st.
- **LegacyWorks Group** on the 4th and with the **Conservation Finance Network** on the 11th.
- **NFWF National Coastal Resilience Fund** site visit to Panama City and **TAFB**, and presentation to **Texas A&M** Environmental

Management class on sentinel landscapes and specifics on the NWFSL on the 5th.

- **Sentinel Landscapes Coordinators** on the 7th.
- **SERPPAS Steering Committee** meeting in Atlanta from the 6th to 8th.
- **NWFSL Sustainable Forest Economy Team** on the 8th.
- **USAF, Eglin AFB, Okaloosa County and Throve Environmental; Leon County** on the 11th.
- **NWFSL RCPP** proposal with **NFWF, Tall Timbers, GCPEP** on the 11th and 25th and with **NRCS FL** on the 14th and 26th and **NFWF** on the 6th and 26th.
- **Southeastern Partnership for Forests & Water** virtual meeting on the 13th.
- **Southeastern Defense Community Resilience Workshop** in Athens, GA from the 12th to 14th.
- Second quarter report submitted to the **U.S. Endowment for Forests and Communities** on the 16th.
- **REPI Webinar** on resilience funding programs, and **NWFSL Private Lands and Natural Systems Stewardship Work Group** on the 20th.
- **Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field Military Installation Resilience Review** meeting in Shalimar, **SERPPAS Energy Development & Siting Work Group** and **Florida Wildlife Corridor Solar Team** meeting on the 21st.
- **Avon Park AFB Partners** meeting on the 26th.
- **NWFSL Climate Resiliency Work Group** on the 27th.

Please contact [Kent Wimmer](#) to schedule a briefing or presentation. For your reference, the NWFSL [Resources Page](#) has **static** and **recorded presentations, factsheets**, a [Story Map](#), a [web map application](#) showing our partners' focus areas, and the [Sentinel Landscapes in Florida Memorandum of Understanding](#).

To contribute to our newsletter, to subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, or to be added or removed to the NWFLS partners list and our working groups, please [EMAIL Kent Wimmer](#).

The partners of the Northwest Florida Sentinel Landscape greatly appreciate the financial support from Defenders of Wildlife, the United States Endowment for Forestry and Communities, Inc. (the "Endowment") and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate this collaborative effort. The Endowment is a not-for-profit corporation that works collaboratively with partners in the public and private sectors to advance systemic, transformative and sustainable change for the health and vitality of the nation's working forests and forest-reliant communities.