



Audubon FLORIDA Naturalist

Summer 2014

Protecting Florida's Special Places Forever



Photo by Christina Evans

2014 Florida Audubon Society Leadership

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The Kissimmee Prairie is one of the last remaining natural strands for the Burrowing Owl, a state listed species of special concern.

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Photo By Ralph Arwood



*John Elting, Chairman,
Florida Audubon Society*

Dear Audubon Members and Supporters,

This November 4, Florida residents will vote to secure the Water and Land Legacy Campaign - Amendment 1 on the ballot. At about the same time I will be stepping aside as your chairman after four very enjoyable and productive years. I am extremely proud of the work that has been done by our members, chapters, board, staff, and citizen scientists. I will defer from praising individual contributions as Audubon is the sum of all efforts.

Last month I returned to my roots exploring parts of northern Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. It was a disquieting trip. Industrial agriculture on a grand scale has decimated hedge rows, rivers, creeks, ponds, and virtually all vestiges of undisturbed land. What remains is one great, uninterrupted carpet of green. Teenagers no longer have summer jobs of detasseling corn; people scratch their heads as they watch honey bee colonies collapse; and migrating birds and butterflies find no sanctuary, including the long distance runners such as the Arctic Terns and the Monarch Butterflies.

The acquisition, retention, and reclamation of public lands are critical to our survival. In counter-point to my mid-western observations, private equity is now taking on a role in environmental concerns. Ecosystem investment partners are earning credits on a huge scale. Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is making investments expecting a reasonable return. Other public and private funds will emerge and regardless of project profitability, they will bring a new focus to the importance of public lands.

All told, and in comparison to other states, we are doing a pretty good job in Florida. Given the size and political clout of our adversaries, we are holding our own - battles won, wars yet to be determined. I thank you all for your efforts and your determination and may they continue unending. Fight hard and enjoy the battles.

Best to all,

John W. Elting,
Chairman, Florida Audubon Society

Learn more at www.GivetoAudubonFlorida.org



*Eric Draper, Executive Director
Audubon Florida*

Make 2014 a Big Year for Conservation

Every time I hike or walk on public lands, or swim in a spring or from a public beach, I take a moment to remember that at one time someone worked hard to protect that place.

I love the legacy of Florida conservation and never forget that we walk in the footsteps of people who gave a great deal in time, energy and money to create the laws and programs that have preserved so much of our beautiful state. We owe it to those who came before us to continue their work in order to pass on an even better Florida.

We have a chance to do something this year that will completely shape the future of Florida conservation. Amendment 1 will direct \$18 billion over twenty years to protect and restore water and land. We must do everything in our power to get 60% of the vote on November 4.

Nearly one million Florida voters signed the Water and Land Legacy petition to put Amendment 1 on the ballot. Audubon members gathered nearly 40,000 signatures and Audubon helped raise the budget to fund the campaign. To those who gathered signatures and contributed, please accept our hearty gratitude. You helped create an historic moment for Florida conservation.

Long ago efforts to make water a public resource and create a land acquisition trust fund are the legacy of changes to the state's constitution. We owe every mile of undeveloped shoreline and water and every inch of public parks, forests and wildlife lands to those decisions.

The need for money is shifting toward restoring water resources. Along with protecting those special places targeted for public land acquisition, Florida has yet to figure out to how to pay the long-term costs of springs' protection and restoring the Everglades and coastal estuaries. The Legislature has systematically diverted funds away from water and land protection. Amendment 1 will reverse that trend and force legislators to spend money to protect our environment.

The 2014 Audubon Assembly on October 17-18 will help rally people to vote in favor of Amendment 1. I hope that you will join us – all Audubon members and supporters are welcome. We keep the costs low so you can learn and help shape Audubon's conservation agenda. See page 14 for details.

Even if you cannot make the Audubon Assembly this year, you can volunteer to help get out the vote by getting in touch with your local Audubon chapter or the Amendment 1 campaign at VoteYeson1FL.org. With your help, this generation will follow in the steps of those who came before and leave a Florida better equipped to deal with the countless pressure on our lands and wildlife.

Eric Draper
Executive Director, Audubon Florida

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EVERGLADES CONSERVATION

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Full a full directory of staff and locations go to
<http://fl.audubon.org/audubon-locations>



Forever Florida

Expanding Bald Cypress Restoration Efforts

The stories that follow tell about lands purchased with public funds.

This is a story about a 47,000 acre private eco-ranch and wildlife conservation area, created under the leadership of Allen Broussard Conservancy. The property encompasses nine distinct ecosystems.

Rescued from developers, hunters, and ruthless loggers, Forever Florida stands as a shining example of successful preservation of Florida's native wilderness. More than 160,000 cypress trees have been planted on this private site. Many of the original cypress trees were poached by illegal logging before persistent legal action finally ended logging in Forever Florida, hopefully for good.

But the battle continues to repopulate the area's Bald Cypress trees, home to so many birds and other wildlife species. The slow growing but long-lived Bald Cypress trees have long been prized by loggers for their large diameter, up to 144 inches at breast height, and up to 150 feet high.

Most of the trees have been planted where the tree poaching was done. Volunteers including many from Audubon Florida and the Florida Wildlife Federation, were instrumental in accomplishing this massive tree-planting operation. The areas have already begun to attract some of the birds that nest in Florida's Bald Cypress trees. Birds include the Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-throated

Warbler, Wood Duck, Swallow-tail Kite, Bald Eagle, Anhinga, Barred Owl, Pileated (and other) Woodpeckers, Wood Storks, and a variety of herons and egrets.

In addition to benefitting nesting birds, species including wood ducks and turkeys, as well as many native mammals such as squirrels, eat Bald Cypress seeds. In the water, catfish will spawn in submerged hollow cypress logs. Some cypress domes are also important refuge for alligators and other aquatic animals. Preservation of cypress domes and strands is vital for many of these native and endangered species.

The mission of the Allen Broussard Conservancy at Forever Florida is to preserve and protect the fragile ecosystems of Florida's native wilderness, to provide a permanent protective habitat for wildlife, to maintain the historical ranching operation and to educate the public about the importance of conservation and the preservation of our unique heritage.

For more information, contact:
ABConservancy@ForeverFlorida.com.



How You Can Help Support this Conservation Site

The Allen Broussard Conservancy is in the process of purchasing contiguous lots within the area. This venture is funded in part by Forever Florida—Ziplines & Adventures in the Wild, the concessionaire that escorts visitors to Forever Florida, including to an eco-adventure park located within Forever Florida. The Adventure Park coexists peacefully with the wildlife inside the conservation area. Forever Florida—Ziplines & Adventures in the Wild brings visitors, who would ordinarily never go into the woods, out into the woods. And by doing so, these visitors are exposed to the beauty of wild Florida and the need to preserve and protect Florida's fragile ecosystems. The Adventure Park provides educational tours by horse, coach, zipline and other aerial adventures. Hiking and birding by members of Audubon and other nature-based organizations is permitted with registration.

More support is needed to acquire these lots and continue the conservation efforts. The Allen Broussard Conservancy appreciates and accepts direct donations that can be given online at www.allenbroussardconservancy.org



Photo by Mac Stone

Stories of Protecting the Places that Make Florida Special

Florida's conservation history is an epic tale of people who had the vision and passion to protect Florida's special places through land conservation programs and projects. The mega acquisition funds Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever followed decades of efforts where federal, state and local governments created our current system of parks and natural areas. As voters prepare to decide on Amendment 1, which will make \$18 billion available to protect land and water, we share eight stories from conservationists.

Each of these natural areas added to Florida's land and water legacy in unique ways – protecting springs, watersheds, wildlife corridors, threatened and endangered birds and wildlife, coastal resources, and even working ranch lands. Each story connects to the work of Audubon, our partners, empowered citizens, and forward-thinking leaders who help keep the ecological fabric of Florida from being torn apart.

Together we can create more of these stories – passing on to our successors the best of Florida's special places protected for all forever.

This section funded by support from Plum Creek Foundation.

North Key Largo

Unique Habitat for Migratory Birds and Butterflies

By Peter Frezza
Research Manager
Audubon Everglades Science Center

As I look south into the Florida Keys at the spectacular view of natural landscapes from atop the Card Sound Bridge, I can only imagine what North Key Largo would have looked like if developers had gotten their way in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Over 50 major developments housing 30,000 – 45,000 new people were planned for this most northern section of the Florida Keys. A three decade battle was fought by local citizens and environmental organizations including Florida Audubon Society to protect the natural habitat.

Thanks to a conservation victory, the nearly 3,000 acres of important habitat were protected. The North Key Largo tract was acquired by the state beginning in the early 1980s through Florida's Conservation and Recreational Lands program and later by Preservation 2000 funds. Audubon played a role in encouraging the acquisition of these lands and was given a 110 acre parcel which is now managed by Audubon as a sanctuary.

Containing the largest intact West Indian hardwood hammock in the continental U.S. along with other rare habitat, it is host to over 80 federal and state listed threatened and endangered plants and animals. The Florida Park Service owns and operates the Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park providing opportunities for self-guided or ranger-guided tours along over six miles of nature trails with first-rate birding and butterfly watching.

The hardwood hammocks are not only important for resident species but provide vital stopover habitat for birds migrating along the Atlantic Flyway. The wetlands and marshes on the periphery of the hammocks serve as excellent habitat for shorebirds and wading birds. As a member of Audubon's Everglades Science Center team, I have recognized that they are also important foraging areas for juvenile Spoonbills born in Florida Bay. It has been the focus for some of our Center's Spoonbill research which helps measure the success of Everglades restoration.



Summer Tanager

Photo s by R. Munguia

Breeding populations of tropical bird species inhabit North Key Largo including Mangrove Cuckoo, White-crowned Pigeon and Black-whiskered Vireo. Tropical vagrants or rarities in south Florida such as La Sagra's Flycatcher, Thick-billed Vireo, Zenaida Dove, Bahama Mockingbird and Western Spindalis can also be discovered. The last confirmed sighting of a Key West Quail-Dove in the U.S. also occurred in the hardwood hammocks of this region.

Black-throated Blue Warbler



Photo by Mac Stone

Topsail Hill Preserve State Park

A Panhandle Coastal Treasure

By Eric Draper
Executive Director
Audubon Florida

Topsail Hill Preserve was a dream with an adventuresome name and a magical description - white sand cliffs soaring over the Panhandle's last three miles of undeveloped and unprotected coastline. Fate conspired to spare this special place from the condos that bookend it. First a site where troops trained to roll tanks over dunes, the parcel fell out of speculator's hands during the savings and loan crisis in the early 90s and became one of the first projects protected by Preservation 2000.

My job then was to sell legislators on the idea of using bonds to buy endangered lands. My colleague George Willson's job was to spend the money; making land deals the Florida Cabinet would approve. George snatched the remote coastal parcel just miles from Destin from developers for the low price of \$18 million. Topsail remains one of the most beautiful

places in the state park system. My first of many visits to Topsail required hiking through the woods to get to the beach. Along the way I saw the stunning geologic feature that makes the 30A area unique. Three pristine freshwater lakes were tucked just behind the dunes. From the top of the dune both the azure Gulf and the tannin lake waters could be observed. I stayed in silent contemplation until sunset cast the landscape in gold and red hues.

Topsail is still a favorite destination. As a native Floridian I claim an inherited right and duty to swim in open water. Moving around the state to visit supporters and policy makers, stops to hike and swim keep me grounded in our cause and puts delight in my heart. When at Topsail, as with many other favorite places, I salute George Willson for the gift of a special moment in a special place.



Photo by David Moynahan

Audubon Florida and Choctawhatchee Audubon are fighting a proposed boardwalk at Topsail that would cut across the dunes through pristine scrub habitat to provide a private point of access for an adjacent development.

Photo by David Moynahan

Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed

Protecting SW Florida's Precious Water Resources

By Ed Carlson
Director Emeritus
Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

Twenty-five years ago, the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Land and Water Trust was founded to protect the watershed surrounding Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples, Florida. When I was Sanctuary Director, former Audubon Researcher Mike Duever and I proposed CREW to help maintain the water levels at Corkscrew.

The partnership resulted in the largest protected, intact watershed in southwest Florida. The almost 46,000 acres of conservation land, straddling Lee and Collier Counties, provide southwest Floridians aquifer recharge for water supplies, natural flood protection, water quality benefits, wildlife habitat and public recreation. The area includes Corkscrew's 13,000 acres, owned by National Audubon Society. State funding, including Preservation 2000 and Florida Forever, were used to purchase 29,250 acres. Significant tracts

are still needed to complete the vision of protecting a total of 60,000 acres. CREW is a great example of a successful private-public land conservation partnership. It works because it includes all the players involved in the project. The acquiring agencies, local land owners, developers, conservationists, elected officials and the public formed a 30 member board of directors. The board helps coordinate the land acquisition, land management, and public use of the watershed in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District (owner and manager of the land outside of Corkscrew) and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (which monitors wildlife, hunting, and provides law enforcement).

The synergy and decision-making ability of the board members working together are astounding. When the primary land acquisition agency, like the South Florida Water Management District, has a well-defined project with immense public, private and local government support, it becomes a priority and great things happen!



Ghost Orchid

Photo by R. J. Wiley

The CREW Land and Water Trust is helping further Audubon Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary's goal to protect and restore shallow wetlands for Wood Storks and other wildlife.



Photo by R. Munguia

Babcock Ranch

A Working Ranch that Protects Water and Wildlife

By Eric Draper
Executive Director
Audubon Florida

I will never forget my first visit to Babcock Ranch. Manager Arnie Sarlow took me on a tour of the backwoods and pastures and told of squeezing out a small profit from ranching and forestry while leaving much of the land wild.

Babcock Ranch is one of Florida's finest examples of a large working ranch that also protects water and wildlife. Telegraph Swamp runs through the middle of the 93,000 acre ranch keeping strands of cypress forest wet and delivering fresh water to the Caloosahatchee River. Adjacent to Babcock Wildlife Management Area, the ranch helps form a huge swath of forest and grasslands in Charlotte and Lee Counties and is close to ranches and public lands to the east.

The area provides space for panthers to expand into and hosts bear, wild turkey and quail. Red-cockaded Woodpeckers flourish in the pinewoods and wading

birds make a good living in the wetlands. Hunters have long leased areas within the forest to maintain a stable deer population.

Babcock Ranch went on the market a decade ago. Fears that the ranch would be subdivided led to a scramble to find more than \$500 million – the family's asking price. Entrepreneur Syd Kitson struck a deal to preserve more than 74,000 acres while carving out land for a new community on the southeast corner of the property. That left the price to protect most of the ranch at just \$300 million.

Audubon and others worked to secure a state appropriation and supported the agreement that the cattle ranch would continue to operate and ranch staff would be kept on to control feral hogs and conduct prescribed fires.

Now Babcock Ranch is a great example of public lands allowing traditional uses and public access: a high point in the history of Florida's land conservation.



Photo by R. J. Wiley

Red-cockaded Woodpeckers and wading birds make a good living in the wetlands. The area also provides space for panthers to expand their range and hosts bear, wild turkey and quail.

The Wekiva Basin

Balancing Transportation and Conservation Needs

By Scott Taylor
Florida Audubon Society Board Member

The Wekiva Basin in Central Florida has but one east/west road, the two lane State Road 46. In the year 2000, the Florida Department of Transportation announced they were conducting research aimed at making State Road 46 a four lane highway. This moment defined what was to become of the Wekiva Basin, and the 1988 Wekiva River Protection Act that hoped to protect this special place. The flow of habitat from Rock Springs State Park north through the Seminole State Forest had the benefit of a tunnel under State Road 46 with another tunnel in the planning stages. Notwithstanding these protections, bear encounters with automobiles continued to mount.

The following year Audubon and other environmental groups decided to come together, leading to the formation of the Wekiva Coalition. Members wanted to see if a solution could be crafted.

Rather than taking the route of protest, this group made a conscious decision to offer transportation officials a way to complete the long awaited beltway around Orlando that provided environmental protections.

Audubon's Charles Lee prepared an Executive Order for Governor Jeb Bush to sign. The signed order created the Wekiva River Basin Area Task Force. The Coalition helped to craft what is now the 2004 Wekiva River Parkway and Protection Act. The Act mandated the purchase of three properties and a continuing effort on a fourth. State acquisition funding thus far has allowed over 2,000 acres to be set aside as part of the Parkway project. An almost contiguous wildlife corridor of public land now reaches to the Ocala National Forest. Efforts are underway to acquire the missing pieces. The Parkway will feature thousands of feet of elevated portions providing major improvements for bears and other animals to traverse this transportation artery.

This is a story about cooperation that yielded a win-win. Today, the Wekiva Basin Commission created by the Act continues to monitor and report on the many facets of the Act that go far beyond a road project.



Photo by R. Munguia

Audubon Florida Board Member Scott Taylor partnered with Garry Jones, president of Full Sail University, to acquire and warehouse an important parcel in the Wekiva Basin near the St. Johns River until the state could acquire it. The state decided to purchase this important corridor in July.



Common Gallinule

Photo by Scott Taylor

Silver River Salvation

A Story About Community Engagement

By John H. Hankinson, Jr,
Former Chair Florida Audubon Society and
EPA Region IV Administrator

In 1983 I received a disturbing call from a Marion County science teacher. He heard that the St. Joe Company was selling roughly 1150 acres along the south bank of the Silver River to a development company. We had always taken for granted that the Silver River would remain a natural wonder and historic tourist attraction. The north side of the River was owned by the people who managed Silver Springs' attraction.

We engaged the county commission chairman and others to "Keep the Silver River Silver." Our strategy was to have the property purchased under Florida's Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) program. The community rallied to get the property ranked high on the CARL acquisition list. Citizens wrote letters, contacted political leaders,

and came to the CARL committee public hearing. The front line of the high school football team even sang "Way down upon the Silver River" for amused committee members. The project received a high ranking for good reason. It protected an entire spring ecosystem and historical assets.

The campaign to "Keep the Silver Silver" was not over, however. The CARL fund was short of money, and it appeared the land may be sold to development interests. Fortunately, St. Johns River Water Management District, with the encouragement of Gov. Bob Graham, purchased the property and held it until state funds were available. Since then, the north side of the river and the lands around the spring head were purchased and the Marion County School Board created the Silver River Museum. The state has just recently taken over the management of Silver Springs'

attraction and is creating one of Florida's premier state parks.

The battle is not over. Overpumping and water pollution in the watershed has reduced the flow of the River dramatically and degraded the springs with nutrient pollution. Audubon Florida is working with other organizations and agencies to restore the crystal clear flow of the Silver River so that future generations can be enchanted by this magical place.



Photo by Mac Stone

Audubon Florida is working to keep the Silver River Silver through policy advocacy and public education.

Kissimmee Prairie State Park

Protecting a Globally Imperiled Ecosystem

By Clay Henderson
Former President
Florida Audubon Society

One of my favorite hiking spots is the Kissimmee Prairie. The Florida National Scenic Trail lets me walk back in time in this last remaining vestige of the prairie frontier. Patrick Smith immortalized the Kissimmee Prairie in his iconic book, *A Land Remembered*, capturing the very soul of Florida. His description of life on the prairie frontier inspired many voices of our environmental movement.

This stretch of Florida's heartland along the Kissimmee River is the largest mosaic of dry prairie in Florida. It is a globally imperiled ecosystem. Here, many threatened species hang on for dear life. It was in Gum Slough where the last of the Carolina Parakeets nested before their extinction in the early 20th Century. Today, the Kissimmee Prairie is one of the last remaining sanctuaries for the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, considered the most endangered bird in

the lower 48 states. But it is also a place of hope. Fifty years ago, there were only about 500 pairs of Bald Eagles in the entire 48 states. Today, there are more than 500 pairs of Bald Eagles in the Kissimmee Prairie area alone.

Through the work of Florida's land conservation programs and Audubon, over 80,000 acres of the prairie have been preserved. Work began with the acquisition of Three Lakes and Prairie Lakes under the Environmental and Endangered Lands Program approved by the voters in 1972. Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park was one of 22 new state parks created with funding from Preservation 2000. A significant portion of the prairie was originally protected by National Audubon Society with private funding.

Today, Audubon is working with ranch landowners to promote expansion of the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge established in 2012 by the Obama Administration to conserve one of America's last grassland and longleaf

pine savannah landscapes. Increasing the size of the refuge through a combination of conservation easements or purchases will allow the large ranches to continue in operation. These ranches have preserved much of the region's wildlife and water resources and our hope is that they will endure in the future.



Photo by Christina Evans

Today, the Kissimmee Prairie is one of the last remaining sanctuaries for the Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, considered the most endangered bird in the lower 48 states.



Photo by Christina Evans

Guana River Marsh Aquatic Preserve

An Acquisition that Almost Didn't Happen

By Henry Dean

Former General Counsel and Acting Director, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of Natural Resources and former Executive Director of both SFWMD and SJRWMD

One of my favorite environmental land acquisitions is the Guana River Preserve, now part of the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve. There are two reasons. First, the sheer beauty and abundance of natural resources make Guana River one of the most spectacular natural areas in the State. The preserve, located off AIA between St. Augustine and Jacksonville, provides critical habitat for 48 animal and 8 plant species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern.

Second, the acquisition process was interesting, to say the least. There was overwhelming local and regional support for the acquisition, including several Audubon Chapters weighing in. Negotiations occurred in the spring of 1984, my last Department of Natural Resources acquisition before I transferred to St. Johns Water Management

District. We reached agreement on price rather quickly. But then the seller told me he wanted to retain a one acre parcel within the middle of the Preserve for a gas station. I told him I didn't think that was possible. He responded that this was non-negotiable. He went on to explain that over the past 30 years every time he opened a new gas station (he had about 200 by then) someone opened one across the street from him and tried to run him out of business. For once in his life he was going to have a station with no competition. I offered a 30 year lease back with one option to renew and we signed the contract.

So if you're visiting Guana River Preserve to hike, go birding, enjoy the beach, or visit the environmental education center and are running low on gas swing into the Gate station!



St. Johns County Audubon's Past President Diane Reed does weekly shorebird surveys and an annual Hawkwatch at the GTMNERR. She is also leading field trips this season for neighboring Duval Audubon.

Photo courtesy GTM Research Reserve.

Red-shouldered Hawk



Photo courtesy GTM Research Reserve.



2014 Audubon Assembly

October 17-18, 2014

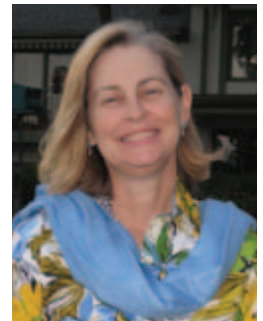
Hutchinson Island Marriott Stuart, Florida.

The Audubon Assembly is Florida's premiere conservation conference. This year's event celebrates Florida's legacy of water and land conservation. The Assembly brings together chapter members with conservation leaders, scientists, educators and policy makers. Through nature-inspired field trips, gifted speakers and thought-provoking learning sessions, Audubon joins together people of all ages and backgrounds in our common interest of protecting Florida's remarkable natural resources.

Featured Guest Speakers

Keynote: Leslie Kemp Poole, Author and Rollins College Professor
Saving Florida: Our Legacy and Our Future

Join Rollins College Professor Leslie Kemp Poole in an exploration of Florida's remarkable history focusing on the protection of the wildlife, the landscapes and habitat that makes our state like no other. Learn about Audubon's early days, prior to the constitutional amendment allowing women the right to vote, when it was women who often took a leadership role in the conservation movement. Today, threats to Florida's environment remain dire and the need for inclusion is no less important. Dr. Poole will share lessons from our past which can help guide Audubon's future.



Welcome Luncheon Speaker: Mac Stone, Photographer and Scientist
Celebrating Florida's Land and Water Legacy

Mac Stone, former Audubon Florida scientist at the Everglades Science Center at Tavernier and award-winning conservation photographer, has documented America's swamps and wetlands including the greater Everglades ecosystem. Join Mac for a journey through Florida's special places from north Florida to the Florida Keys. Later that evening, attend a book signing event showcasing his new book - Everglades: America's Wetland - featuring more than 240 striking photographs highlighting the natural beauty of the Everglades.



Friday Learning Sessions

After our kick-off lunch on Friday, you will have the opportunity to participate in two of three different breakout sessions.

Engaging the Next Generation of Conservationists to Protect Land and Water Resources

How can we engage the broadest constituency to not only get out the Vote Yes on #1 but to actively engage in and steward the conservation outcomes we hope to achieve over the next 20 years? What do the polls reveal and how will we use this information to find common ground to inspire a new, non-traditional audience? Drawing upon Water and Land Legacy campaign efforts, citizen science programs, political leadership, chapter projects and personal experiences, we will share best practices, success stories, and strategies for engaging Florida's next generation of conservationists.

Getting to Yes with Amendment 1: The Skills and Plan for Getting out the Vote

Audubon members took the lead on getting the Florida Water and Land Legacy Amendment on the November ballot. Now we need to educate voters in our communities and get them to "vote yes on Amendment 1." Learn from experts about how to work with your chapter and local allies to communicate about land and water conservation and make sure Florida votes YES on 1!

Balancing Land Conservation, Habitat Restoration or Maintenance – You Decide!

If passed, what is the best way to spend Amendment 1 dollars? If passed, Amendment 1 could yield \$650 million next year and \$18 billion over 20 years. The Legislature will prioritize how the money will be spent – choosing between parks, habitat management, restoration, water resources and other priorities. Learn about how Florida's pressing needs for environmental funds can be met with Amendment 1. Then join in a discussion on the ranking and implementation of Audubon's recommendations for Amendment 1 spending priorities.

Saturday Learning and Conservation Action Agenda Sessions

Communicating About Climate Change, Sea Level Rise and the Future of Birds

As climate change and sea level rise shift the distribution and numbers of birds, how do we communicate with decision makers and the public about impacts to birds and habitats? How do we create climate strongholds for at-risk species? Join us for a briefing on National Audubon's climate initiative. Learn how citizen science helped shape new predictions about the changes in bird distribution. Learn how you can better communicate and advocate for limiting the effects of sea level rise on coastal habitats, and how to create safe havens for Florida wildlife.

2015 Conservation Action Agenda – Approving Audubon Florida's State and Regional Priorities

Each year members approve Audubon Florida's conservation priorities at the Audubon Assembly. Go to the website FL.Audubon.org to learn more about the proposed Action Agenda.

Rally for Amendment One

This fun plenary session will challenge each of us to come up with the most exciting reasons to vote for the Land and Water Conservation Amendment. Bring your voice, humor and best pitch.

Assembly Field Trips

This year's field trips will take you to some of the most beautiful places in South Florida.

Friday Field Trips include a tour of the Hawk's Bluff trail near the southern end of Savannas Preserve and a boat trip to Bird Island on the Indian River Lagoon. Saturday field trips include a tour to Audubon of Martin County's Possum Long Nature Center, a tour of Hutchinson Island's unique habitats and parks, and a repeat of the Bird Island boat trip on the Indian River Lagoon. The two boat trips will be an additional cost of \$30 (Friday) and \$15 (Saturday).

Closing Events

The Assembly ends on Saturday with Audubon's lively Chapter Awards Luncheon that celebrates the successes of Florida's extraordinary Audubon chapters. After the luncheon, attendees are invited to join us for the Florida Audubon Society Annual Meeting, beginning at 1:45 p.m.

Nominate a Chapter for a Special Award

The Saturday Chapter Awards Luncheon recognizes significant chapter achievements and milestones, while exhibits on display throughout the Assembly showcase inspiring chapter efforts and projects. Know a chapter deserving of an award? Nominate yours or another chapter for Chapter of the Year, Best Conservation Project, Best Education Project and Best Membership Recruitment program.

Nominations and supporting materials must be received by September 30th for consideration. For additional questions or to submit nominations, contact Jacqui Sulek, Chapter Conservation Manager, at jsulek@audubon.org or (386) 497-4185.

Conservation Leadership Initiative

Audubon Florida is pleased to once again include 25 college students in our Audubon Assembly. To learn more about engaging with the next generation of Conservation Leaders email Katie Warner at kwarner@audubon.org.

Hotel and Reservation Information

Assembly officially begins Friday, October 17, and runs until about 2 pm on Saturday, October 18. Register online at fl.audubon.org or contact Jonathan Webber at 850-999-1030 or via email at jwebber@audubon.org

Early bird registration: \$129

Regular registration: \$149

YOU MUST BOOK YOUR HOTEL ROOM SEPARATELY.

This year's Assembly will be held in Hutchinson Island, at the beautiful Marriott Beach Resort & Marina. Call 1-800-775-5936 (mention you are with Florida Audubon) and book by September 26, 2014 to reserve your group rate room. Group rate is \$119 a night.



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Summer 2014

Florida Audubon Naturalist is published by Audubon Florida. The Florida Audubon Society, National Audubon Society (doing business as Audubon Florida), and the 44 chapters in Florida, work together in a strategic alliance. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Audubon Florida © 2014.

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Production Rose Printing, Inc. **Design** Reinier Munguia

Cover Artwork Christina Evans

Post Production Assistance Victoria Johnston

Contributors Ed Carlson, Henry Dean, Eric Draper, John Elting, Peter Frezza, John H. Hankinson Jr., Clay Henderson, Charles, Lee, Jacqui Sulek, Scott Taylor, Jonathan Webber, Julie Wraithmell

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Join Us for the
Audubon FLORIDA

Assembly 2014

October 17-18, 2014
Hutchinson Island Marriott
Stuart, Florida

- Nature-inspired field trips
- Two great authors share their engaging conservation messages
- A rally and workshops on the Water and Land Legacy Amendment 1
- Thought-provoking learning sessions
- College Conservation Leadership Initiative (CLI) to engage future leaders
- Review and vote on Audubon Florida's Annual Conservation Action Agenda
- Networking opportunities with other Audubon members and staff
- A beautiful hotel with beaches and nature trails just minutes away

Find out more details inside this edition.

Pursuant to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the Florida Audubon Society will be held at the Hutchinson Island Marriott, Stuart, Florida at 1:45 p.m. on October 18, 2014.



Photo Courtesy of the Hutchinson Island Marriott