



Fall 2018

THE FLORIDA WILDLIFER

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Florida Spotlight</i>	2
<i>What does FLTWS do?</i>	3
<i>Spring Meeting 2018 Wrap Up</i>	4
<i>Spring Meeting 2018 Awards</i>	7
<i>Chapter News—T-shirt Contest</i>	8
<i>Fall Meeting 2018</i>	10
<i>National Chapter News</i>	11
<i>Meetings and Events</i>	13
<i>Photo call</i>	14

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

The Wildlife Society was established 75 years ago, and has been working since then “to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation.” Twenty-five years after National began their efforts, visionaries in FL decided it was time for our own chapter to operate at the state level. Our chapter has been working “to serve and represent wildlife professionals in promoting wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and resource stewardship” since 1968. **This summer the Florida Chapter reached its 50th anniversary.**

There is a lot of work to be done on behalf of wildlife in our state. Florida is home to ~4,400 native species, which includes nearly 400 native bird species, nearly 100 native reptile species, >80 native mammal species, and >50 native amphibian species. This is a level of biodiversity to be proud of! When considering species richness of all 50 states, FL ranks 4th for reptiles and 5th for birds. Our unique geography (a peninsula, with a north-south gradient that spans from temperate to sub-tropical to tropical climates) helps explain why we have more endemic wildlife species than most other states (Florida scrub jay, Florida mouse, Florida bonneted bat, and Florida bog frog, to name a few).

Yet this remarkable diversity faces many adversities. Several of our ecosystems are threatened, endangered, or critically endangered, and many of our species are imperiled. Florida’s human population has risen exponentially during the past century. We now have >21,000,000 people, with an additional 1,000 arriving each day. The massive expansion of human presence has triggered a rapid rate of land conversion, with much more anticipated in the near future. Peninsular Florida is predicted to lose more forested

land than any other area in the southern U.S. by 2060, and most agricultural lands in southern Florida are expected to be converted to development as the region becomes even more urbanized to accommodate more people.

Many of our residents, as well as many of the visitors brought in by our booming tourism industry, don’t understand the importance of our natural resources. A recent report, called [The Nature of Americans](#), shows some disturbing statistics regarding the general public, such as the number of Americans who consider the outdoors unsafe, the number of people who are uncomfortable being outdoors alone, and decreasing trends in the amount of time people spend outdoors versus in. This report also contains a lot of insight as to what aspects of the outdoors people find intriguing, what topics they are most interested in learning more about, and some of this data is Florida-specific. The report contains a wealth of information that we could use to frame conservation messages that resonate with the voting public. As wildlife biologists and land managers who care about the future of the natural resources in our state, I encourage you to serve as environmental educators, in either formal or informal settings. Most people have an innate interest in wildlife: what small action could you take to educate and inspire your neighbors, family, friends, and most especially kids about Florida’s biodiversity? How could you help them understand the importance of nature to their health and well-being, as well as that of future generations? How could you inspire them to become an advocate for Florida’s wildlife?

In honor of the Chapter’s 50-year anniversary, we will be holding a Strategic Planning Session at our Fall Meeting. This is an oppor-

(Continued on page 3)

FLORIDA SPOTLIGHT

CREATING SAFE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS UNDERNEATH I-4

Johnson Engineering has a long history with FDOT District One, and one of our latest projects is using remote cameras to determine optimal bridge design for use by large mammals. Johnson Engineering wildlife biologist, Dr. Jennifer “Jen” Korn, brings her years of experience working with the endangered Florida panther and remote camera trapping, to take the lead on the project. Jen is placing cameras under bridges and wildlife crossings from I-4 to Alligator Alley to monitor for use by Florida panther, Florida black bear, white-tailed deer, and other species that cover large distances and rely on wildlife corridors. While 60 wildlife crossings exist in Florida, new crossings can be costly and difficult to engineer around private lands. A more cost-effective alternative is to retrofit existing bridges. One bridge where this might be possible is on I-4 at Reedy Creek, less than five miles from the bustling attractions of Orlando.

The Florida Wildlife Corridor organization is a group that brings awareness to the need to connect and preserve the Florida Wildlife Corridor - a statewide network of lands and waters that supports wildlife and people. The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition team, Carlton Ward, Jr., Mallory Lykes Dimmit, and Joe Guthrie took on the Heartland to Headwaters: Corridor at the Crossroads trek to highlight the diminishing connection between the Green Swamp north of I-4 to the Everglades Headwaters to the south.

On a hot and sunny afternoon in April 2018, Jen met the team and the film crew from Grizzly Creek Films, alongside busy I-4. Under the bridge, the temperature dropped a few degrees, but the din of the cars above was amplified. Expedition team members arrived by canoe from Reedy Creek and remarked that just a few hundred feet from arriving it felt like a different world. They all crowded around Jen’s laptop screen to see what had passed by the cameras. Many of the usual suspects like raccoon and otter appeared, but then excitingly, a bobcat appeared on screen. Even though bobcats are smaller in size and area traveled, if they will use a crossing, there is the potential that a panther or bear could too.

The Reedy Creek bridge was built simply to allow Reedy Creek to flow under I-4, however it was not built with wildlife in mind. Brent Setchell, with FDOT District One, has visions for many of the bridges in his District and across Florida. Inexpensive options exist to retrofit bridges to be more wildlife-friendly. A notable example is the bridge over the C-1 Canal on SR 80, east of LaBelle. In 2014, FDOT added ledges on both sides, and fencing for approximately 1 km along the highway. Jen has monitored that bridge with cameras since construction was completed, and she regularly records panther use. Would similar changes at places like Reedy Creek finally entice a panther or a bear to cross there? While there are not many panthers north of the Caloosahatchee River, occasionally males do get as far as I-4, and a few have crossed. Two male panthers have come close, yet sadly met their demise trying to cross I-4, less than a quarter mile from the Reedy Creek bridge.

This collaborative effort between FDOT and Johnson Engineering will continue to assess bridges and crossings for potential future retrofitting, which will aid in creating or maintaining crucial corridors for Florida wildlife like panthers and bears. Safe wildlife crossings also increase public safety by reducing vehicle impacts with wildlife.

For more information, contact Jen Korn at 817.829.0453 or jkorn@johnsoneng.com.



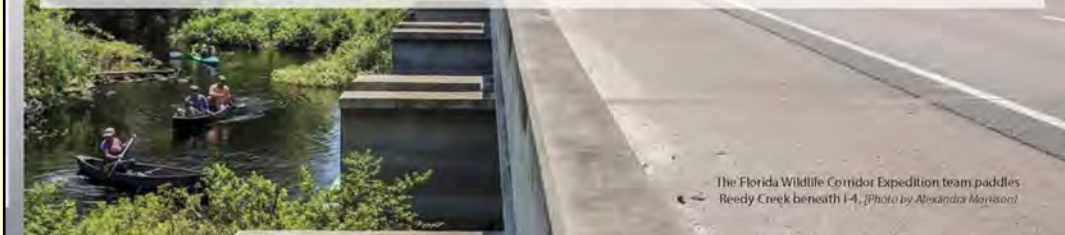
The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition team, (R to L) Carlton Ward, Jr., Mallory Lykes Dimmit, and Joe Guthrie gather around Johnson Engineering’s Dr. Jennifer Korn’s laptop to see what had appeared on the wildlife camera. [Photo credit: Carlton Ward, Jr.]



A bobcat was captured on the wildlife camera crossing under I-4 at Reedy Creek.



Panthers are regularly recorded on wildlife cameras using the C-1 Canal wildlife crossing near LaBelle.



The Florida Wildlife Corridor Expedition team paddles Reedy Creek beneath I-4. [Photo by Alexandra Morrison]

Want to highlight a program or project with which you are involved? Send photos and a short description to: the editor, Jen Korn at jen-nifer.korn@fltws.org

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Visit the Florida Chapter website at <http://www.fltws.org>

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

tunity for all members to help chart the future of FLTWS, to re-envision our goals and objectives, and make sure our organization is using the most appropriate and up-to-date strategies to reach them. The planning session is open to all members, and will be most successful if we have a diversity of participants. Please join us for the Strategic Planning Session on November 2 at Gold Head Branch State Park to help ensure FLTWS is responsive to the needs of Florida's wildlife. You can register here: <https://fltws.org/new-events/2018/11/1/fltws-2018-fall-meeting>.

Sincerely,
Holly Ober
President, FLTWS

Holly.ober@fltws.org



What does FLTWS do?

Find out as we highlight each committee or member in upcoming newsletters.

Daniel Greene, FLTWS Chapter Secretary

In September 2017, I left my post doc position at Texas Tech University and accepted a new position with Weyerhaeuser Company's Southern Environmental Research Program. In this new role, I am tasked with maximizing biodiversity on managed forests and conservation lands, including terrestrial and aquatic vertebrate and invertebrate species. Several key responsibilities in my position include understanding of wildlife-habitat relationships on managed forest landscapes, developing management approaches that integrate wildlife habitat within managed forests, and providing technical support to forest managers. In addition to having internal wildlife research projects, I also work closely with universities, conservation organizations, and government agencies on numerous projects. These projects include research on game and non-game species, but most often have a greater emphasis on at-risk species.

While I am based out of Columbus, Mississippi, my work area covers 11 states in the Southeast, ranging in the west from Texas to Oklahoma, and east to Florida and Virginia. I am still actively involved in wildlife research in Florida, with an increasing emphasis on amphibians and reptiles. In addition to my responsibilities with the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society, I also serve on the Steering Committee for Southeastern Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (SEPARC) and am a member of TWS' Leadership Institute (Class of 2018).

The TWS Leadership Institute provides an elite group of 10-15 promising members of TWS with leadership training each year. The Leadership Institute prepares participants for leadership positions, both in their workplace and in TWS. Participants are early-career professionals who are 2-3 years out of school (either undergraduate or graduate), currently working full-time in a wildlife professional position, who have demonstrated evidence of their leadership potential. FLTWS is proud that one of our own was selected from a nationwide pool of applicants for this year's class.



SPRING 2018 MEETING WRAP UP

By Holly Ober, FLTWS President



The FLTWS 2018 Spring Meeting took place on April 11 – 13 at the Plantation—Crystal River, FL.

The meeting kicked off Wednesday morning with a fun and challenging Scavenger Hunt, created by Board Member Monica Folk. Teams, consisting of one student and one professional, scored the grounds of the Plantation, in search of a long list of items to be found by following Monica's creative and often puzzling natural history clues. The activity was a good opportunity for attendees to begin to get to know one another, test their knowledge, and enjoy a beautiful morning outdoors on the waterfront!



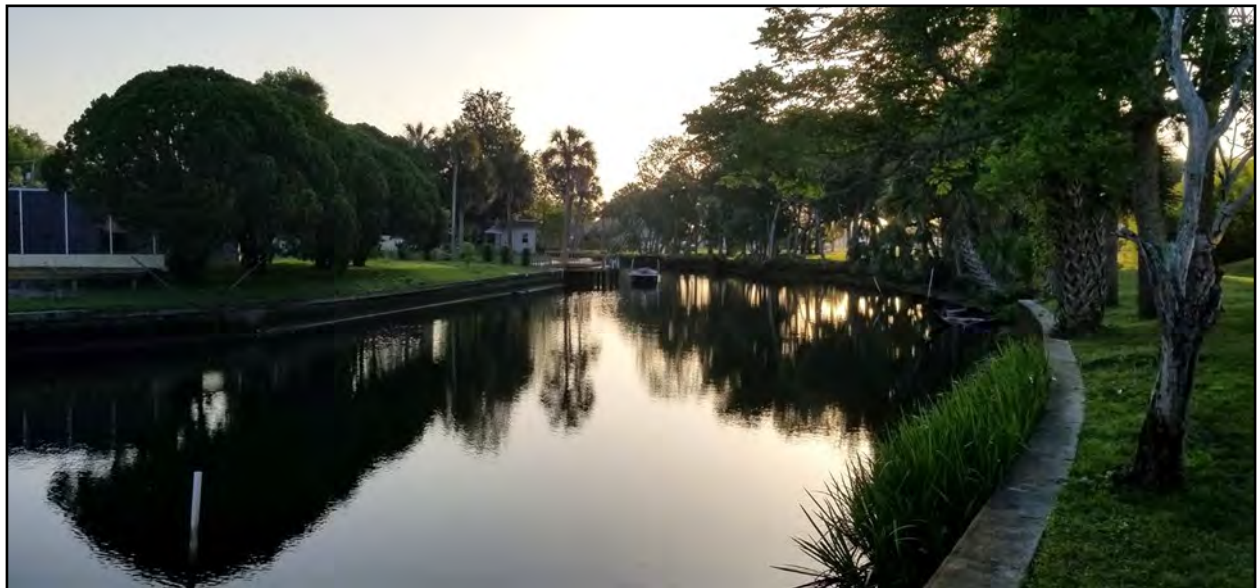
Next, invited speakers at the Symposium on *Coastal Conservation in Florida* provided presentations on a variety of topics, including the conservation of beach mice, shorebirds, sea turtles, mink, the potential of spoil islands to support wildlife, and the role of a new marine science center in promoting coastal conservation and education.

(continued on page 5)



SPRING 2018 CONFERENCE WRAP UP

Invited speakers from left to right: (TOP) Terry Doonan; Raya Pruner; Ray Carthy; Jennifer Smith; (BOTTOM) Lorraine Margeson; Franklin Percival.



The Symposium was followed by an FLTWS chapter business meeting, then an evening social on the back lawn (pictured above.)

Continued on page 6



SPRING 2018 CONFERENCE WRAP UP

We began Thursday with a plenary session on Managing Florida's Coastal Resources, where we heard thought-provoking narratives from coastal experts: Anne Birch (below, left) and Bill Pine, (below, middle), as well as local Wildlife Refuge Manager, Joyce Palmer (below, right).



Then we transitioned into a series of student and professional technical sessions, followed by a poster session, silent auction, and awards banquet.



On Friday, attendees had their choice of a field trip to Crystal River Preserve State Park, field trip to Withlacoochee State Forest, or an indoor workshop on the fundamentals of 3D printing. All were informative and fun!



SPRING 2018 MEETING AWARDS

At the recent 2018 Spring Meeting, FLTWS gave away 4 prestigious awards.

Jose Grisales was the recipient of the 20th annual *Greater Everglades Student Memorial Scholarship*, which recognizes and financially assists an undergraduate student pursuing a career in wildlife biology at a 4-year school in Florida, during their Junior or Senior year. Applicants for the scholarship are evaluated according to their extracurricular activities, demonstrated leadership, professional potential, financial need, personal goals, contribution to Florida wildlife, as well as the strength of a letter of reference from a wildlife professional. The Florida Wildlife Federation and the National Wild Turkey Federation co-sponsor the scholarship. Jose, who is originally from Columbia, is a senior at Florida Atlantic University, where he is majoring in Biological Sciences with a minor in Psychology and certification in Environmental Sciences. As this year's recipient, Jose received a check for \$2,000 at the FLTWS Spring Meeting.

Wesley Boone was the recipient of the 6th annual *Courtney A. Tye Memorial Graduate Student Scholarship*, which recognizes and financially assists a graduate student pursuing a career in wildlife biology at a school in Florida. Applicants for the scholarship are assessed based on their stated career interest, research relevance, contribution to Florida wildlife, demonstrated leadership, professional potential, TWS involvement, financial need, and strength of a recommendation from a professor. The Florida Wildlife Federation and the National Wild Turkey Federation co-sponsor the scholarship. Wes is currently working on a Ph.D. in the department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida, where he makes a commendable contribution to mentoring undergraduates. He has been an active member of TWS since 2012. As this year's recipient, Wes presented his dissertation research findings on the insular hispid cotton rat at the FLTWS Spring Meeting, and received a check for \$3,000.

Toni Westand received the 2018 *Outstanding Educator Award*, which honors an individual who has developed and implemented educational tools relating to Florida's native wildlife. Toni currently serves as Supervisory Refuge Ranger at JN "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Her work there ranges from leading education programs for kids and adults, to overseeing visitor services for nearly 1 million visitors per year, and initiating new and innovative outreach projects.

Steve Johnson received the 2018 *Paul Moler Herpetological Conservation Award*, which recognizes individuals who have demonstrated excellence in the field of amphibian and/or reptile conservation. Dr. Johnson is an Associate Professor in the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida, where he holds a teaching and extension appointment. Thus, his job is to educate students and members of the public about wildlife. He has educated tens of thousands of people in Florida about the state's native and non-native wildlife and has made a lasting impact on the lives of many UF students through his role as an instructor at UF.



CHAPTER NEWS—T-SHIRT CONTEST

DESIGN THE NEXT FLTWS T-SHIRT!

The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society is looking for contest submissions for an ORIGINAL and UNIQUE DESIGN to be featured on a new FLTWS t-shirt!

Contest Rules:

- ◇ Design Guidelines:
 - * Your design should be inspired by and/or pertain to wildlife or its conservation and management.
 - * Your design must be within 11 x 11 inches and will be on the back of the shirt only. The FLTWS logo will be applied to the sleeve or the front breast pocket area of the t-shirt. A slogan may be submitted as incorporated into the t-shirt design. If this is the case, the slogan may be applied to the front breast pocket area of the t-shirt and the logo may be applied to the sleeve, at the discretion of FLTWS.
 - * Your design must be wholly original. By submitting a design you are guaranteeing that you hold rights to everything in it, and that it does not contain any copyrighted material, including images/copy found on the internet, unless clearly marked as published under a creative commons (cc) license.
 - * Digital entries only. Design submission should be saved to produce a quality output. Acceptable file formats are high resolution JPG, TIFF, GIF, PNG, Adobe Illustrator (AI), PDF, or Photoshop (PSD). Resolution should be at least 300 dpi.

- ◇ The contest is open to all FLTWS members, student chapter members, or their family members.
- ◇ All entrants must be 18 years or older to submit an entry. If you are under the age of 18 you may still create and submit a design, but it must be submitted on your behalf by a parent or guardian.
- ◇ You may submit up to two designs per person, but they must be submitted as separate entries.
- ◇ All entries should be submitted to Jodi.Slater@fltws.org with the following information/statements:
 - * Entrant name
 - * Affiliation with FLTWS (member, student chapter member, family member of an FLTWS member (including their name))
 - * Contact information, including:
 - ◆ Name
 - ◆ Address
 - ◆ Phone number
 - ◆ Email
 - * Optional: Describe your inspiration for the design.

- ◇ The submission information must be filled out completely and truthfully. If you fail to submit the requested information completely, give any false information or fail to reveal any pertinent information, you may be disqualified from the competition.
- ◇ You must submit your design digitally by midnight ET, **December 31, 2018**.

- ◇ Designs will be judged on the following criteria:
 - * Concept/originality - striking and/or memorable design
 - * Visibility (eye-catching and visible from a reasonable distance)
 - * Completeness of design – must be ready for print
 - * Feasibility - must be easy to reproduce

(continued on page 9)

CHAPTER NEWS—T-SHIRT CONTEST

- ◇ Entries will be judged by the FLTWS board members.
- ◇ The winner will be notified by email and/or phone at the close of the voting period, via the information provided on the entry form.
- ◇ At the sole discretion of FLTWS, disqualification, forfeiture and the selection of an alternate winner may result from any of the following:
 - * A winner's failure to respond to notification within seven (7) business days after its transmission; the return of an email notification as undeliverable after three (3) attempts; winner's failure to provide original design files; winner's failure to execute and return a release form.
 - * Upon contacting a winner and determining that they have met all eligibility requirements of the contest, such individual will be declared the "winner" of the contest via social post, FLTWS website, and the FLTWS e-newsletter.
- ◇ The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society will have first printing rights to the winning design. By submitting you agree that if your design wins, it can be used by The Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society on a t-shirt and other promotional items, including the FLTWS website and marketing and public relations materials. In addition, FLTWS reserves the right to make adjustments to the design.
- ◇ The winner and image of the design will be recognized in our newsletter, on our website (www.fltw.org) and on social media.
- ◇ All contest decisions are made by FLTWS and are final.

**By submitting an entry, you are agreeing to all contest rules.
If you have any questions, please email Jodi.Slater@fltw.org .**



CHAPTER NEWS

FALL MEETING 2018

Register Now! Two-Part Fall Meeting

Wetland Plant Identification Workshop – 1 November 2018

- One-day training on identification of wetland plants; no prior experience necessary
- Morning indoor session at Gold Head Branch State Park will introduce wetland plant communities, common species, and general botanical terminology
- Afternoon outdoor session will explore wetlands of a nearby natural area
- CEUs will be available, and this workshop can help meet the botany requirements for TWS certification (CWB or AWB)
- Class size will be limited to 25 participants to ensure extensive interaction with instructors
- Registration: \$25 for professional FLTWS members, \$15 student members, \$50 non-members

Strategic Planning for FLTWS – 2 November 2018

- This summer, the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society reached its 50th birthday!
- Much has changed since our last Strategic Plan was developed in 2006
- Join us to add your voice to a discussion of plans that will shape the future direction of the Florida Chapter of The Wildlife Society
- This event is open to all current members, and will take place at Gold Head Branch State Park
- Help ensure FLTWS is responsive to the needs of FL's wildlife, through discussions led by an expert facilitator
- Registration is \$10 for professional members and \$5 for student members (includes lunch)

Everyone is invited to attend one or both events. Lodging (the night before each event - 31 October or 1 November) will be available in rustic, shared cabins at Gold Head Branch State Park. Register now at <https://fltws.org/new-events/2018/11/1/fltws-2018-fall-meeting>.

To prepare for the strategic planning meeting, we have developed a short questionnaire to get your input on what you consider the most important roles for the chapter, what our priorities ought to be, the fees associated with the activities we host, and suggestions you have for changes we could make to become more effective in serving the wildlife community. Feedback obtained from this survey will guide our discussion during the planning session on November 2.

The survey will take only a few minutes of your time, and will assist us in making sure we are responsive to your needs and interests. Here is the survey: https://ufl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_77f2sJk4qsdN9SR. We want to hear from you, regardless of how involved you've been with the chapter in the past, and regardless of whether or not you can attend the meeting on November 2. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard.

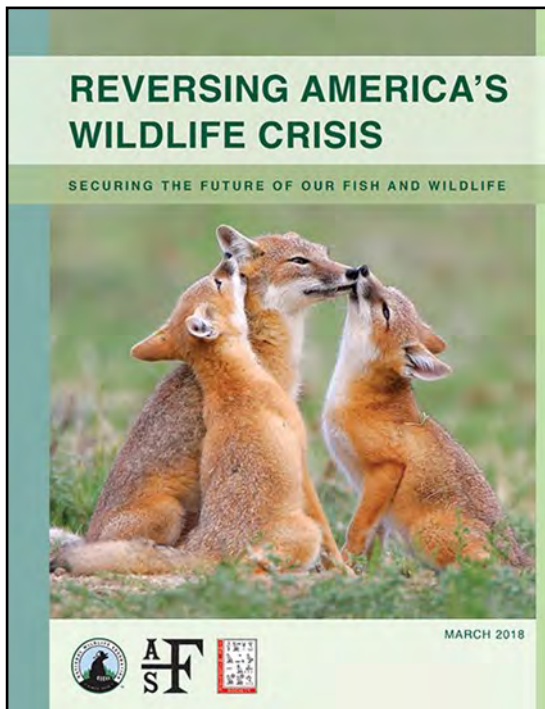
REGISTRATION ENDS THIS FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2018!!



NATIONAL CHAPTER NEWS

Securing the Future of Our Fish and Wildlife

National TWS recently teamed up with National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and American Fisheries Society (AFS) to compile a report. The report, called "[Reversing America's Wildlife Crisis](#)" celebrates the diversity of species we have in the U.S., and describes the threats responsible for the decline of these species.



The sentiment of the report ranges from celebratory and optimistic, to bleak and discouraged. An upbeat attitude prevails when the variety, charisma, and adaptations of the country's species are being described. This is followed by a sense of despair as the number of species in decline are reported.

Following a 2 year investigation by a panel of experts, the committee put forth some innovative ideas on how the fate of our country's wildlife could be improved. The expert panel consisted of 26 leaders from disparate occupations, including not just biologists, but also representatives from outdoor recreation retailers and manufacturers, the energy industry, sportsmen's groups, and other conservation organizations. Ultimately, their intent was to define ways to generate funding for conservation. The recommendations of this panel have been incorporated into the *Recovering America's Wildlife Act*. This federal legislation calls for \$1.3 billion annually, to be dedicated to the implementation of each state's wildlife action plan. This would help reduce the shortfall between what each state has identified as being necessary to get their state's wildlife on the path to recovery versus what they are able to do with current budgeting.

The proposed legislation, [H.R.4647 - Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) and [S.3223 - Recovering America's Wildlife Act](#) would allocate funds from oil, gas, and mineral royalties paid to the federal government to proactively conserve wildlife. This innovative approach would designate funds from extractive uses of public lands to wildlife conservation, providing state wildlife agencies with resources needed to proactively manage at-risk species. The House version of this bill was introduced to Congress in December 2017 and the Senate version in July 2018. For more information, visit [National's website on this topic](#).

NATIONAL CHAPTER NEWS

Greeting Students,

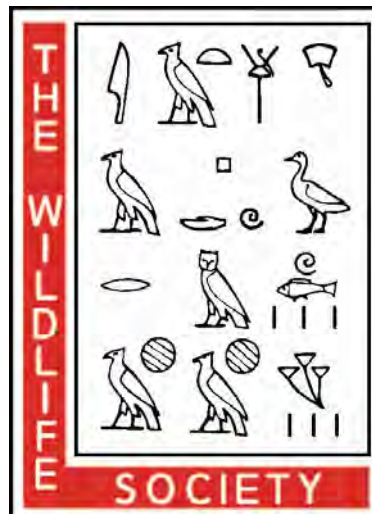
Have you ever heard of the Student Development Working Group? We are a Working Group within the National Chapter that promotes increased student awareness of national TWS membership benefits, works to expand knowledge and technical capabilities of student members, and helps prepare student members for professional wildlife careers. The working group facilitates networking between students and experienced TWS members by hosting meetings, workshops, poster sessions, a mentoring program, and a student chapter leaders' breakfast. The working group also selects the recipient of The Wildlife Society's Student Chapter Advisor of the Year Award.

Our working group features the latest student's news in The Student Chronicles. We actively post on our TWS Student Development Working Group Facebook page. We deliver new topics, current student research and professional skill building.

We look forward to being the voice for students to the Parent Society of The Wildlife Society. We are always here to welcome new student members. We look forward to helping and providing for the next generation of the wildlife profession!

If you have any questions about the Student Development Working Group please contact Chair Kristi Confortin at kaconfortin@bsu.edu.

Please see attached link for the Student Development Working Group Facebook Page, all you have to do is "like" the page to get daily updates! Click on the logo below to visit our Facebook page!



MEETINGS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST

Public Land Acquisition &

Management Partnership Conference

October 1-3, 2018 in Sarasota, Florida

More details [here](#).

FLTWS Wetland Plant Identification Workshop

November 1, 2018 in Keystone Heights, Florida

<https://fltws.org/new-events/2018/11/1/fltws-2018-fall-meeting>

FLTWS Strategic Planning Session

November 2, 2018, in Keystone Heights, Florida

<https://fltws.org/new-events/2018/11/1/fltws-2018-fall-meeting>

Florida Birding and Nature Festival

October 11-14, 2018, in Tampa, Florida

www.floridabirdingandnaturefestival.org

Florida Wildlife Festival

October 20, 2018, in Umatilla, Florida

floridawildlifeFestival.org

Annual Florida Panther Festival

November 3, 2018, Naples Zoo, Florida

floridapantherfestival.com

34th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference

January 10-13, 2019 in Key Largo, Florida

evergladescoalition.org

FLEPPC 2019 Annual Conference

March 27-29, 2019 in Daytona Beach, Florida

More details to come at www.fleppc.org

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PHOTO CALL



A group of North American river otters (*Lontra canadensis*) march past a remote camera at Babcock Ranch Preserve, Charlotte, County. River otters are an aquatic carnivore in the weasel family. They are native to Florida and can be found primarily in and near freshwater throughout the state except for the Keys. Photo credit: Dr. Jen Korn, Johnson Engineering, Inc.

Do you have a really awesome photo from the field or from a game camera? We want to see it! Each newsletter we will feature one of our member's photos here and on the FLTWS website. Please e-mail photos with a short description to the editor, Jen Korn, at jennifer.korn@fltws.org Please indicate your permission for usage in both the newsletter and the website or newsletter only. We can't wait to see everyone's adventures!

