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## THE NEWSLETTER OF FLORIDA'S WILDLIFE LEGACY INITIATIVE

Spring 2014

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### Florida's State Wildlife Grants - 2013 Proposed Projects

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative is excited to announce projects selected for the 2013 [State Wildlife Grants](#) cycle!

During the past year, Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative has worked with numerous external and internal partners in developing project scopes of work, drafting and posting announcements, and reviewing submissions. Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative Goal Teams developed the following projects through both the general and targeted processes. Of the twenty-eight proposals received, nineteen are recommended to the [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) for funding. The proposed awards, listed below, total \$1.5 million and will help Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative achieve its [2012 to 2017 goals](#).

Goal	Project Title	Principal Investigator Affiliation
<b>Adaptation</b>	Climate Change Impacts to Freshwater Stream Resources in the Florida Panhandle	FWC
	Implementation of a Scenario-Based Model of Adaptation Planning for the South Florida Marine Environment (KeysMAP)	FWC
<b>Data Gaps</b>	Filling in Data Gaps for Obligate Invertebrate Commensals of the Gopher Tortoise	Florida Natural Areas Inventory
	Addressing Data Gaps of the Everglades Mink and the Sherman's Short-Tailed Shrew	FWC
	Worthington's Marsh Wren Abundance and Habitat Associations in Northeast Florida	FWC
	Seasonal Movements of White-Crowned Pigeons ( <i>Catagoenais leucocephala</i> ) Tracked by Satellite Telemetry: Identifying Transnational Threats, Management Needs, and Conservation Opportunities	Avian Research and Conservation Institute
<b>Freshwater</b>	Establishing Protocols for the Assessment of Gastropod Abundance and Life History Parameters Across Multiple Habitats Using the Banded Tulip, <i>Fasciolaria liliium</i> , as the Model Species	FWC
	Post-Restoration Evaluation of Chipola River Freshwater Invertebrate Indicator Communities	FWC
<b>Marine</b>	Landscape-Level In-Stream Habitat Mapping: Side Scan Sonar	FWC
	Net Ecosystem Productivity and Calcification as Predictors of Optimal Habitat for <i>Acropora cervicornis</i> Nursery Outplants	FWC
	Coral Settlement at Patch Reefs in the Florida Keys	FWC
	Development of a Protocol to Assess the Health of Hatchery-Bred Long-Spined Sea Urchins ( <i>Diadema antillarum</i> ) in Coral Reef Ecosystem Restoration Efforts	University of Florida
	Identification of Suitable Coral Restoration Sites and Resilient Coral Reef Communities Through Assessment of Existing Coral Monitoring Data	FWC
<b>Monitoring</b>	Evaluating the Role That the Predatory Snail <i>Thais deltoidea</i> Has on Enhancing Survival of Outplanted Staghorn Corals as Part of a Comprehensive Coral Reef Restoration Strategy	FWC
	Continuation of the Coastal Habitat Integrated Mapping and Monitoring Program (CHIMMP)	FWC
<b>Terrestrial</b>	Seagrass Integrated Mapping and Monitoring in the Florida Panhandle and Offshore Big Bend Region	FWC
	Goethe State Forest Mesic Pine Flatwoods and Sandhill Restoration Project	Florida Forest Service
	Fire Line Preparation and Fuel Reduction at Kissimmee Prairie Preserve State Park	Florida Park Service
	Florida Fire and Ecosystem Restoration Teams	The Nature Conservancy

Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative thanks the FWC staff from many sections and the external partners without whom the 2013 State Wildlife Grants cycle would not have been successful. Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative also thanks the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Florida field offices and the Region 4 office in Atlanta for assistance and for providing the funding that makes these projects possible.

If you are interested in State Wildlife Grants funding, [contact Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative](#). And visit [Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative's website](#) for updates and for the 2014 State Wildlife Grants cycle announcement this summer!

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### Teaming With Wildlife Highlight - 2014 Fly-In Event

**Kevin Kemp, Southwest Regional Wildlife Legacy Biologist**

The [Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies](#) recently hosted the [Teaming With Wildlife Fly-In](#) on February 25-26, 2014 in Washington D.C. The purpose of this annual event is to demonstrate the wide ranging support of the [State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program](#) and other wildlife conservation legislation by conservation agencies, non-governmental organizations and businesses around the nation to our elected officials. The grant program was established in 2001 to address, for the first time, the lack of dedicated conservation funding for more than 12,000 fish and wildlife species that are neither hunted nor fished. This funding is allocated to each state in order to implement the [State Wildlife Action Plans](#).

Attendees of the Fly-In are members of the [Teaming with Wildlife Coalition](#), a diverse group organized on the state level that works to support continued funding for wildlife conservation and associated recreation and education. Over 6,300 organizations and businesses are members of this coalition nationwide, and we are working to build our coalition here in Florida.

**You can help!**

**Join the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition!**



**TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE**  
a natural investment

Over 90 individuals from more than 20 states participated in the Fly-In this year, and while Florida did not send a delegation to the event, staff from the FWC provided informational handouts (right) to elected officials showing the importance of continued federal funding toward fish and wildlife conservation around the state. One of the handouts provided was a list of State Wildlife Grant projects from 2009 to 2014. In that time, 227 projects totaling over \$43.5 million have been funded. Those projects requested over \$24.5 million in State Wildlife Grant funds and were matched with over \$19 million. Projects implemented covered research, monitoring and management for [Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#) and their habitats in terrestrial, freshwater and marine systems.



Events like the Fly-In help ensure that funding for more conservation projects will be provided in the future, and with a growing coalition, Florida can demonstrate even more support for the State & Tribal Wildlife Grant Program to Congress going forward. For more information on Teaming with Wildlife or to join Florida's coalition, please visit [www.Teaming.com](#).

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### Chick-Proofing Rooftops in Brevard County

**Heather Hitt, Northeast Regional Wildlife Legacy Biologist**

How do you "chick-proof" a rooftop? In Brevard County, the Space Coast Shorebird Partnership, of which the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) (FWC) is a partner, is working with businesses so chicks of shorebirds that begin their lives on rooftops have a better chance of survival.

In Florida, nesting season for many shorebirds and seabirds lasts from March to August. With reduction of suitable beach-nesting habitat, predation by feral cats, raccoons, and coyotes, and disturbances from people and dogs, some threatened shorebird species turn to the gravel rooftops of buildings for nesting. In Brevard County, at least 14 rooftops had least terns or black skimmers nesting on them while there were only 3 reported ground nest sites for the terns and none for the skimmers.



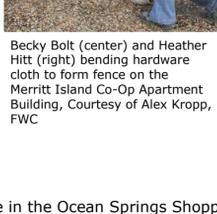
**Top:** A black skimmer adult and flight capable juvenile in the parking lot at Winn-Dixie in Indian Harbour Beach, Courtesy of Alex Kropp, FWC



**Bottom:** Adult and juvenile least terns nesting on a rooftop in Brevard County; Courtesy of Marc Virgilio, [FDEP](#)

Rooftops can be safer for these birds to raise their young because they are out of reach from the disturbances and predators on the beach. But there are other dangers: chicks falling off roofs or being washed down drain pipes. To combat these perils, the Space Coast Shorebird Partnership (one of many [Florida Shorebird Alliance](#) partnerships around the state) worked with building owners and managers at three locations on measures to prevent chicks from experiencing those disasters during this year's nesting season.

At the Merritt Island Co-Op Apartments, volunteers placed "chick fencing" around the perimeter of one apartment building's rooftop to prevent least tern chicks from walking off the roof like several did last year. Resident Erin Harayda routinely placed them back on the roof with the help of the maintenance crew. Volunteers Becky Bolt, Amanda Jones and Rachel Richards helped staff from FWC build a 6-inch fence made of hardware cloth around the edge of the roof. A special thank you goes out to the building manager, Janet Mikkelsen, for allowing us to put up the temporary fencing, and the maintenance crew, Buster Swinesberg and Ralph Pollock, for helping us get the materials up to the rooftop.



Becky Bolt (center) and Heather Hitt (right) bending hardware cloth to form fence on the Merritt Island Co-Op Apartment Building, Courtesy of Alex Kropp, FWC



Rachel Richards placing bricks on fence to hold it down on the Merritt Island Co-Op Apartment Building, Courtesy of Alex Kropp, FWC



Linda Archer covering drains at Winn Dixie in Indian Harbour Beach, Courtesy of Anna Deyle, FWC

The Winn-Dixie in the Ocean Springs Shopping Center in Indian Harbour Beach is one of only four nesting sites for black skimmers along the east coast of Florida. Volunteers Amanda Jones, Mark Nathan, Linda Archer, and Leslie Martin helped FWC staff make sure all drains on the Winn Dixie rooftop were covered with hardware cloth to prevent least tern and black skimmer chicks from being washed down during heavy rains. We would like to thank the general manager of Ocean Springs Shopping Center, Brian West, and the general manager of Winn Dixie, Richard Klenotich, for allowing us to make this temporary modification to the rooftop.

At the Best Western Cocoa Inn, volunteers Heather Martin and Tracy Frampton helped FWC staff cover the drain holes with hardware cloth on the rooftops of all of the hotel's buildings to prevent least tern chicks from being washed down with rain water. We would like to thank the general manager, Reepal Mehta, for supporting the Least Terns last year and allowing us to make this temporary modification to the rooftop.

For more information or to volunteer with the Space Coast Shorebird Partnership, please contact Heather Hitt at 772-469-4267 or [heather.hitt@myfwc.com](mailto:heather.hitt@myfwc.com) or visit [www.FLShorebirdAlliance.org](http://www.FLShorebirdAlliance.org). If you know of rooftops where shorebirds or seabirds are nesting in the Space Coast or Treasure Coast, please contact Heather.

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### Goal Post: Terrestrial

**Heather Hitt, Northeast Regional Wildlife Legacy Biologist (Terrestrial Goal Lead)**

Our current Terrestrial Goal focuses on increasing the use of prescribed fire as a management tool on 5 priority habitats (dry prairie, natural pineland, pine rockland, sandhill, and scrub), but our previous 5-year goals also focused on restoring sandhill and scrub.

In 2010, the Wildlife and Habitat Management (WHM) Section (formerly Terrestrial Habitat Conservation and Restoration [THCR]) received a State Wildlife Grant to restore the ecosystem structure and function on four Wildlife Management/Environmental Areas (WMA or WEA). Various sandhill and scrub restoration activities, including some experimental, took place on [Guana River WMA](#), [Lake Wales Ridge WEA](#), [Big Bend WMA](#), and [Apalachee WMA](#). The project was completed in 2013 and a footprint of 1,140 acres of sandhill and scrub were restored using multiple treatment types and prescribed burns resulting in a total of 2,299 acres of on the ground restoration activities.

#### Guana River WMA, St. Johns County

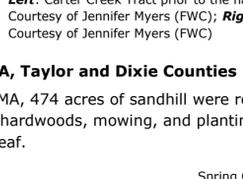


Staff at Guana River WMA collaborated with the Florida Wildlife Research Institute to mechanically treat 106 acres of scrub in experimental patterns (checkerboard—see map to the right, linear, and perimeter) and then followed up with prescribed burns. The results showed that there was no significant difference in variability of oak vegetation heights, amount and patchiness of open ground, or herbaceous plant diversity.

**Left:** Checkerboard mow pattern applied to a tract of land in Guana River WMA

#### Lake Wales Ridge WEA, Highlands and Polk Counties

On the Lake Wales Ridge WEA, 89 acres of hardwood reduction was performed on sandhill habitat.



**Left:** Carter Creek Tract prior to the hard wood reduction treatment, Courtesy of Jennifer Myers (FWC); **Right:** Carter Creek Tract post-treatment, Courtesy of Jennifer Myers (FWC)

#### Big Bend WMA, Taylor and Dixie Counties

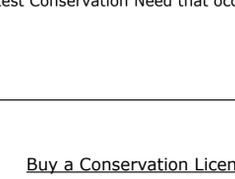
At Big Bend WMA, 474 acres of sandhill were restored by reducing the amount of hardwoods, mowing, and planting native wiregrass seed and longleaf.



Spring Creek Unit post planting, Courtesy of Leah Scott (FWC)

#### Apalachee WMA, Jackson County

On Apalachee WMA, 471 acres of sandhill were restored by removing overgrown hardwoods, thinning dense pine stands, and planting wiregrass.



**Left:** Apalachee WMA sandhill prior to prescribed burn, Courtesy of Nathan Bunting (FWC)



**Right:** 3 months post burn, Courtesy of David Moynahan (FWC)

All of these activities were followed up with prescribed burning at each WMA/WEA and will allow for the continued use of fire as a management tool. This project has significantly contributed to efforts to restore sandhill and scrub on public lands in the state and is expected to benefit over 60 Species of Greatest Conservation Need that occur within the project area.

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### Buy a Conservation License Plate & Show Your Support for Florida's Wildlife!

For more information about the following five conservation license plates, please visit the [BuyAPlate](#) [Florida](#) website.



Left to Right: [Conserve Wildlife](#) (FWC), [Go Fishing](#) (FWC), [Helping Sea Turtles Survive](#) (FWC & the Sea Turtle Conservancy), [Protect the Panther](#) (FWC), & [Save the Manates](#) (FWC)

The [BuyAPlate](#) Program is managed for the FWC by the [Wildlife Foundation of Florida](#).

### Share how you are implementing the State Wildlife Action Plan!

To share how you are implementing Florida's State Wildlife Action Plan in Legacy's Newsletter, please contact [Caroline Gorga](#).

If you are not currently receiving FWLI's e-mails, please [sign up!](#)

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