





"Save the Gulf Sturgeon" Samantha Hawk Stern, Homeschool



"Time Flies"

Carolina
Bickmeyer,
Micanopy Area
Cooperative
School



"Alligator's
Swamp"

Leela Dodds,
Abraham
Lincoln Middle
School



#### Protect Habitat & Wildlife

- Minimize or eliminate the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in your yard.
- Make your yard wildlife friendly. Plant a pollinator garden and use native shrubs and trees to increase wildlife habitat.
- Minimize light pollution at night by turning off outdoor lights or using motion sensors, timers, or dimmers, and opting for warm-colored lights outdoors.





- Be energy aware. Turn off lights and electronics when not in use.
- Consolidate driving trips and walk or ride your bike whenever possible.
- Keep grass clippings and landscaping debris out of the streets.
- Do not litter. Secure items or trash from flying out of moving vehicles.
- Clean up after your pet. Scoop it! Bag it! Trash it!
- Purchase goods that are created with minimal packaging, transportation footprint, and impact on the environment.
- Report illegal dumping to 352-264-6800.
- Take household hazardous waste to your local HazWaste Collection Center.



- Save water outdoors by turning off automatic irrigation systems and run manually only when plants show signs of stress.
- Check your system regularly, promptly repair leaks, and remember the Alachua County irrigation restrictions are the maximum you can water.
- · Hand watering with a garden hose is a great way to target only those plants that are actually thirsty.



## Hazardous Waste Center

Hazardous Waste poses a threat to environmental health and human safety if not properly disposed.

#### What type of hazardous waste is accepted?

- Aerosol containers
- Automotive chemicals and filters
- Batteries (all types)
- Emergency flares
- E-scrap
- Flammable liquids and solids
- Fluorescent lamps and CFLs
- · Household cleaners
- Lawn chemicals

- Paint products
- Pharmaceuticals
- Pool chemicals
- Propane tanks
- Sharps (syringes, needles, and lancets)
- Stale gas and diesel fuel
- Thermostats and thermometers
- · Used cooking oil

## "Save Our Pollinators"



Laila Thorndike, 5th Grade CB. Parker Elementary



Otis Darnell, 1st Grade Expressions Learning Arts Academy

## Alachua County's Rural Collection Centers (RCCs)

Help us keep our beautiful Alachua County clean and free of trash and dumping! The five Rural Collection Centers are rural, regional facilities for the collection of recyclables, solid waste, yard trash, bulk items, and household hazardous waste. These facilities are for residential use only (commercial waste is prohibited).

#### What can I drop off at the RCC?

**Recycling** - Flattened, dry cardboard, paper, and paste board (cereal boxes), and commingled containers such as plastic bottles/jars, plastic yogurt/margarine tubs, aluminum, steel and tin containers, glass bottles/jars.

**Garbage** - Please place trash bags in available compactor or in dumpster if directed.

**Yard Waste** - Leaves, grass clippings, brush and small tree limbs. Remove yard waste from plastic bags before recycling and **do not include** boards, lumber, rocks, fencing, pallets, toys, or furniture.

**Bulk Metals Recycling** - Washers and dryers, stoves, grills, filing cabinets, metal exercise machines, metal patio furniture, metal roofing, bicycles, and lawn mowers and other gas-powered equipment (must be empty of gas and oil).

**Household Hazardous Waste** - Oil filters, fluorescent lamps, rechargeable batteries, vehicle/boat batteries, computer equipment, electronics, and up to five gallons of waste oil and old paint per day are accepted.

#### **Main Location:**

5125 NE 63rd Ave., Gainesville, FL 32609

Phone: 352-334-0440

Mon. – Fri., 7 AM – 5 PM, Sat. 8 AM – 12 PM

Closed: Sundays and holidays

## Rural Collection Centers:

Mon., Tue. Fri. & Sat., 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM Closed: Sundays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

#### **Archer Rural Collection Center:**

19401 SW Archer Road Phone: (352) 495-3257

#### **Alachua/High Springs Rural Collection Center:**

16929 SW US Highway 441 Phone: (386) 454-2563

#### **Fairbanks Rural Collection Center:**

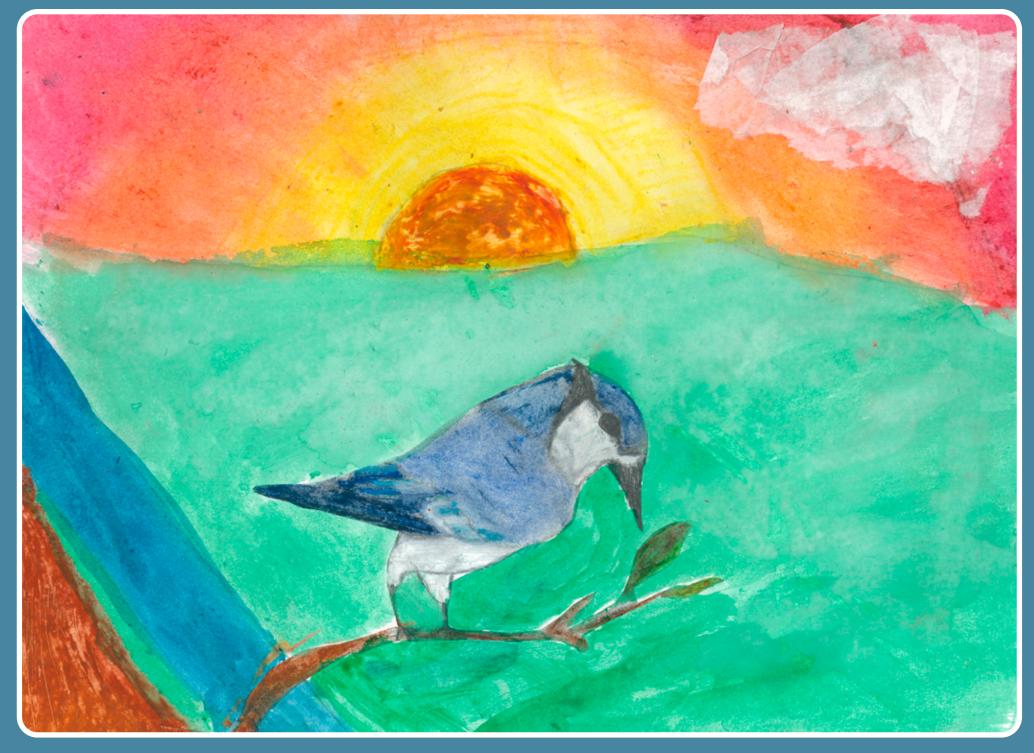
9920 NE Waldo Road Phone: (352) 334-3873

#### **North Central Rural Collection Center:**

10714 N SR 121 Phone: (352) 334-3875

#### **Phifer Rural Collection Center:**

11700 SE Hawthorne Road Phone: (352) 334-3874



"Peaceful Songbird" • Rose Brouillard • 4th Grade • Expressions Learning Arts Academy

#### "Protect Our Future, Protect Our Forests!"

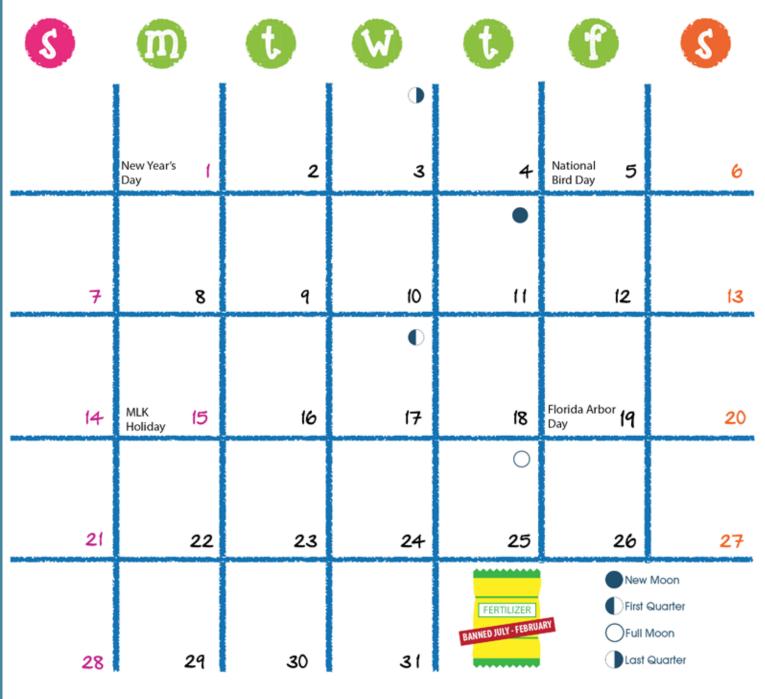


Victoria Bell, 8th Grade Abraham Lincoln Middle School

We can see birds from near and far this time of year in Florida. Many birds like to rest in forests, while others seek waterways to use as stopovers during migration. We can do our part to ensure our feathered friends have a safe place to land by protecting habitat and minimizing our impact on wild birds. One way Alachua County safeguards bird habitat is by requiring tree removal permits. Trees provide important shelter for birds, so be sure to ask about a tree permit before cutting any trees. We can also minimize our impact on local bird populations by putting bells or sonic devices on outdoor cats' collars, which warn birds that a deadly hunter is nearby.

This calendar recognizes environmental events and dates of holidays established by law. For a multicultural calendar, visit: www.timeanddate.com/holidays/us/2024

# January 2024





"The Halcyon Days of the Heron" • Cecilia Duda • High School • Eastside High School

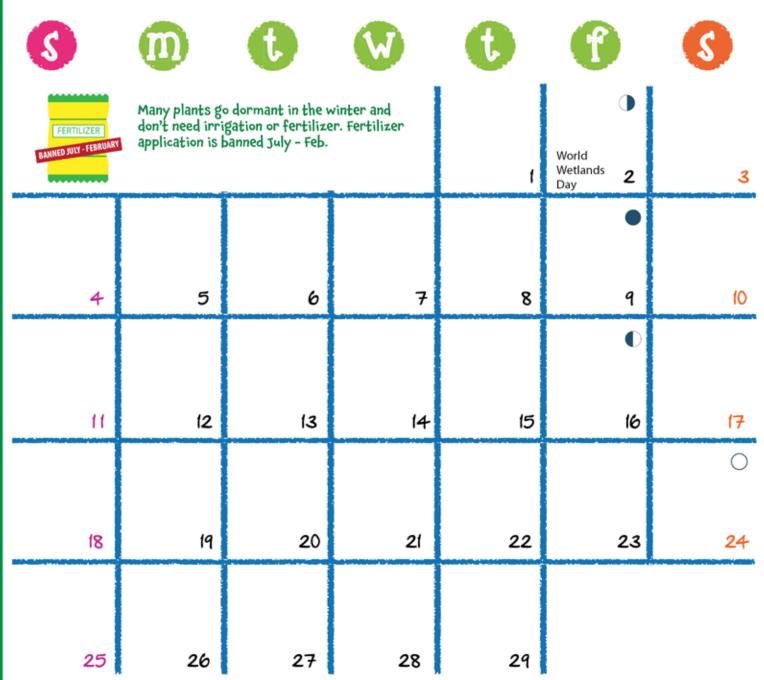
#### "Moorhens at Sweetwater Wetlands"



Shyla Brunson, 3rd Grade Sunflower Homeschool

One of the best ways we can combat climate change is with green solutions that work in harmony with nature. At a community-wide level, we can preserve natural areas that provide critical habitat and water quality protection such as wetlands and floodplains, promote multi-modal transportation networks, and shift to renewable energy sources. Individuals can do their part, too. Examples of combatting climate change at home include composting kitchen waste, planting trees for shade, growing plants for pollinators in your garden, and mowing less often. How can these green solutions work for you?

# February 2024





"Egret at Sundown" • Bligh Komanski • Kindergarten • Expressions Learning Arts Academy

#### "Only Rain Down the Drain"



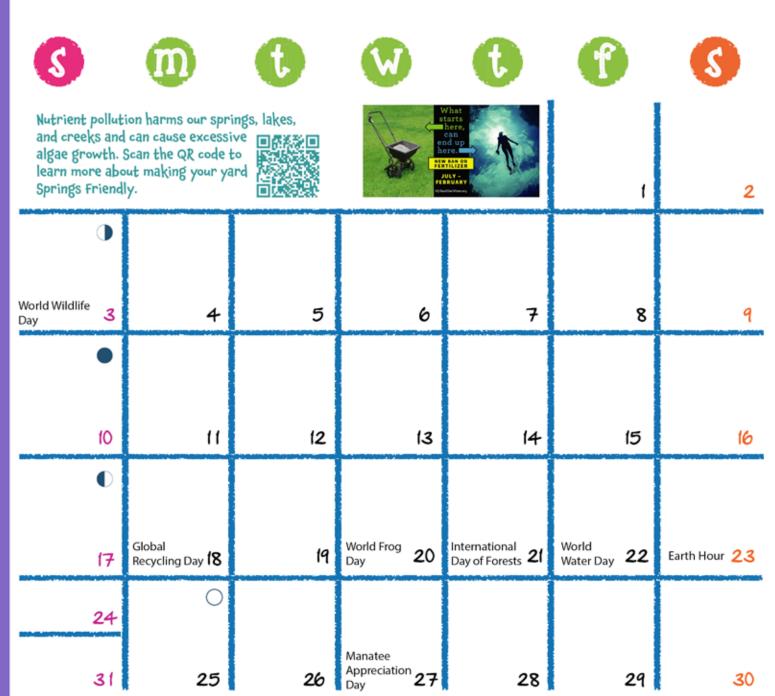
Harmony Lockett, 5th Grade M.K. Rawlings Elementary Center for Fine Arts

In urban areas, hard surfaces such as pavement and rooftops prevent water from soaking into the ground. This water runs off our streets into storm drains to prevent flooding. Storm drains in Alachua County often lead directly to creeks or lakes without treatment or filters. Stormwater pollution is created when runoff picks up contaminants like pet waste, fertilizers, and trash.

Keep pollution out of storm drains and nearby ecosystems by:

- Eliminating fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide use in your yard.
- Scooping, bagging, and trashing pet waste.
- Not littering.
- Keeping grass clippings and yard debris out of the street.

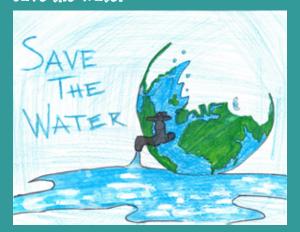
## March 2024





"Great Blue Heron at Poe Springs". Darby Amalia Brunson • 6th Grade • Sunflower Homeschool

#### "Save the Water"



Derek Diaz, High School Buchholz High School

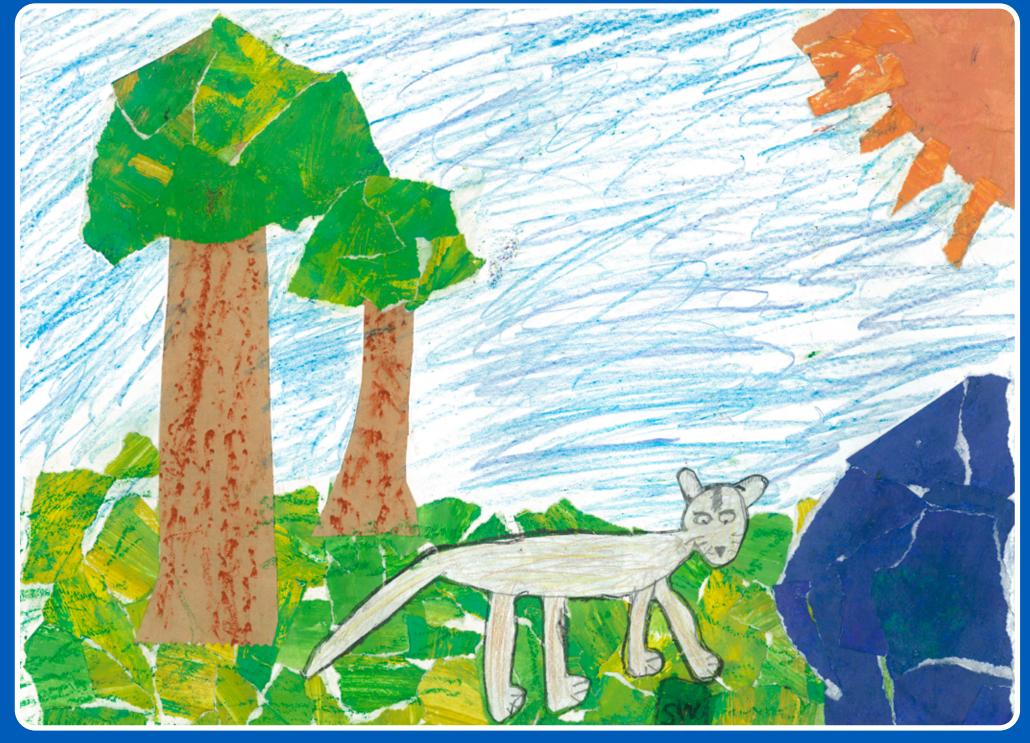
Did you know that April is Water Conservation Month? In Florida, the water we use at home also feeds our rivers and springs. As our state population grows, more water is drawn out of the aquifer and taken away from our springs and other ecosystems. Most of our water is used outdoors, especially by irrigation systems.

Here are some ways that we can save water and preserve healthy ecosystems:

- Turn your irrigation system off and/ or disable it once plants establish.
   When adding new landscaping, opt for temporary irrigation.
- Consider landscaping with native or Florida-Friendly drought tolerant plants that survive without irrigation or fertilizer.
- Make sure your rainfall shut-off device is working properly, and only run sprinklers as needed.

# April 2024

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	1	2	World Aquatic Animal Day <b>3</b>	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	<b>(</b> 5	16	International Bat Appreciation Day <b>17</b>	18	19	20
21	Earth Day <b>22</b>	23	24	25	National Arbor Day <b>26</b>	27
28	29	30	Irrigation restrictions are the maximum! To conserve water, turn your system off and only run it as needed.	Location  Odd House #  Even House #  Other residential/ commercial	Summer 2nd Sun in Mar - 1st Sat in Nov  Wed and/or Sat  Thur and/or Sun  Tue and/or Fri	Winter 1st Sun in Nov- 2nd Sat in Mar  Saturday  Sunday  Tuesday



"Florida Panther in the Woods" • Felix Caraballo • 1st Grade • Expressions Learning Arts Academy

#### "Roseate Spoonbill in Pencil"



Dwenn Marie Orola, High School Buchholz High School

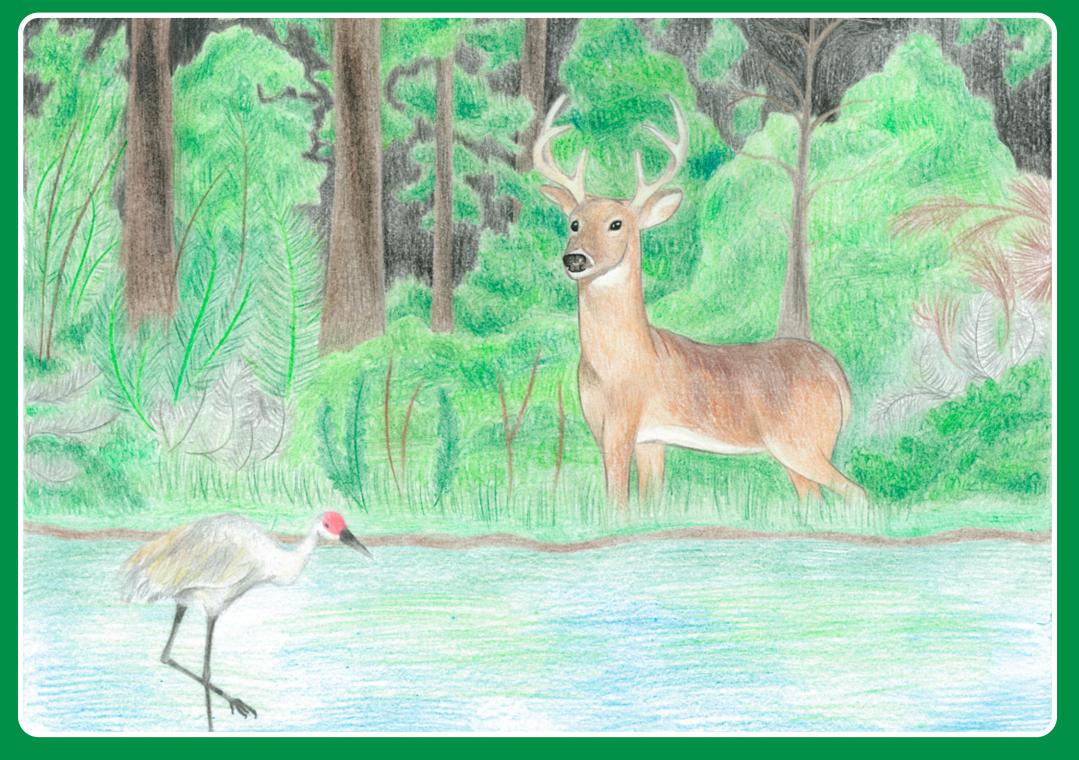
Endangered Species Day is celebrated to raise awareness about imperiled species, the importance of biodiversity, and threats from factors such as habitat loss, climate change, pollution, and illegal wildlife trade. The year 2023 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act, which provides a national framework to protect threatened and endangered plants, wildlife, and the habitats they need to survive.

Florida is home to over 130 imperiled animals and more than 600 imperiled plants. It is important to work collectively to ensure they thrive alongside us.

"We don't own the planet Earth; we belong to it. And we must share it with our wildlife." – Steve Irwin

# May 2024





"Wildlife in Alachua Forests" • Sylvia Guo • 8th Grade • Abraham Lincoln Middle School

#### "Working Close to Home"



Diana S. Monk, 5th Grade CB. Parker Elementary

If you spend time in your Alachua County Parks and Preserves, you may have been lucky enough to observe some of the 315 bee species native to Florida. This diverse group includes tiny, iridescent sweat bees, fuzzy bumblebees that nest in large underground colonies, and even a bee that specializes in pollinating blueberries. 29 of these species are endemic to Florida – meaning they live nowhere else in the world! Native bees love native flowers, so one of the best ways you can help our buzzing buddies is to choose native flowering plants for your landscape.

## June 2024





"Save My Home" • Winny Wang • 7th Grade • Abraham Lincoln Middle School

## "A Cooter Turtle's First Encounter with a Bottle Cap"



Kartikeya Rajderkar, High School Eastside High School

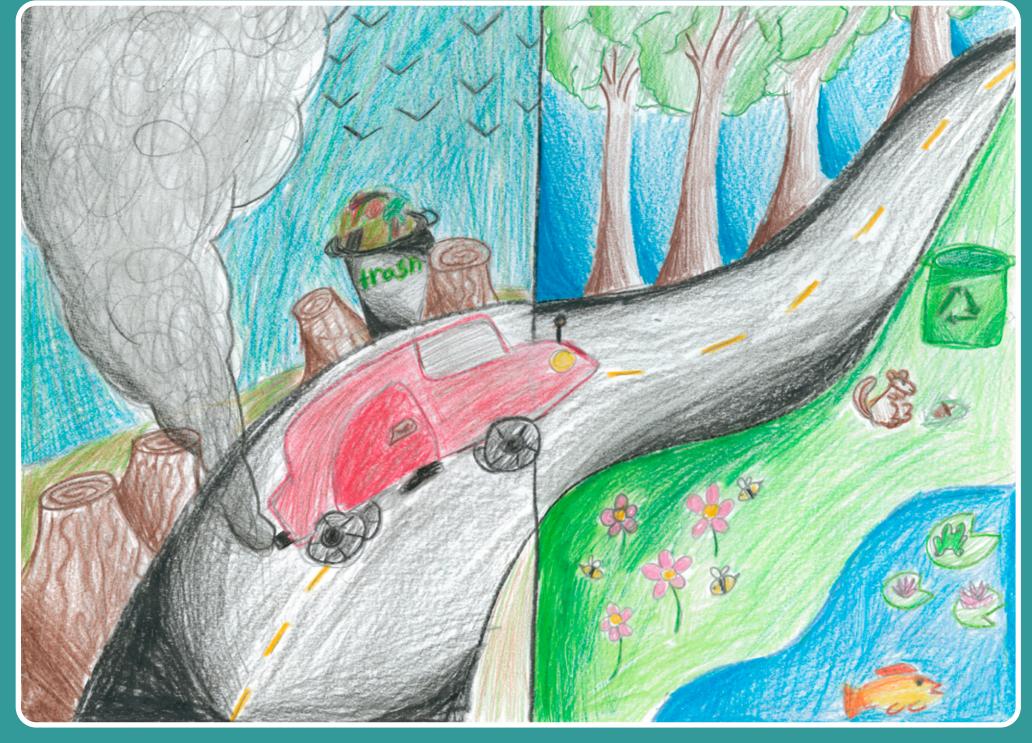
Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computer system that creates, analyzes, and maps geographic or spatial data. Examples of GIS data include wetlands, water bodies, street networks, and addresses. When you use the internet to search for an address or driving directions, you are using a GIS system.

At the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department, GIS is used as a tool to aid decisions about reducing the impact of development on the environment. Staff view different layers on a GIS map to determine where to best locate development on a site, according to the County's Land Development Codes. For example, a structure should be at least 75 feet away from a wetland.

Check out **Alachua County's Map Genius,** a GIS application for the public, at\_https://mapgenius.alachuacounty.us.

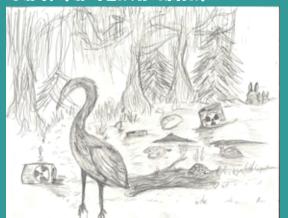
## July 2024





"Stop Before It Is Too Late" • Raya Ulmer • 5th Grade • CB. Parker Elementary School

#### "Our Natural Environment"



Zophia Sotkiewicz, 6th Grade Abraham Lincoln Middle School

If you change your own motor oil, you should know how to handle and dispose of the used oil and filters. Americans improperly dispose of an average of 16 million gallons of used oil per month. That's more than the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez oil tanker in 1989. Here's what YOU can do:

- Use a ground cloth and drip pan when doing oil changes or engine repairs.
- Clean up oil spills immediately.
- NEVER dispose of used oil in a storm drain, ditch, or on the ground.
- Used oil, filters, and oily rags should never be disposed of in the household garbage.
- Oil filters should be allowed to drain for several hours.
- Put used oil in a clean, leak-proof container.
- Take used oil, filters, and oily rags to an oil change shop or an Alachua County collection center for recycling and disposal.

# August 2024





"Dinosaurs and Aliens" • Sina Etemadi • High School • Eastside High School

# "Untitled"

Ahyala Long, High School Buchholz High School

#### "Dinosaurs and Aliens"

A title meant to mislead. The namesake comes from the organisms highlighted within my piece, the Common Snapping Turtle and *Hydrilla verticillata*. Snapping turtles are said to have lived with the dinosaurs, while hydrilla is an invasive plant introduced to Florida waters through the aquarium trade. Hence, Dinosaurs and Aliens. While it makes for a fun title, the ecological damage sustained to native ecosystems is anything but fun. My piece is meant to draw attention to the alien invasion happening unbeknownst to many in the community. On the left, I have native plants such as sago duckweed, coontail, eelgrass, and elodea. On the right, I have the oppressive hydrilla growing out of control. The juxtaposition of the native and invasive plants serves as a potent reminder of an environmental disaster happening in our backyards. Also, snapping turtles eat elodea, so a layer of intrigue is added. Who knows, maybe these prehistoric turtles can be the next biological control agents recruited to fight the *hydrilla* invasion.

## September 2024





"Crows on the Lawn" • Rachel Xu • High School • East side High School

#### "Nature at Night"

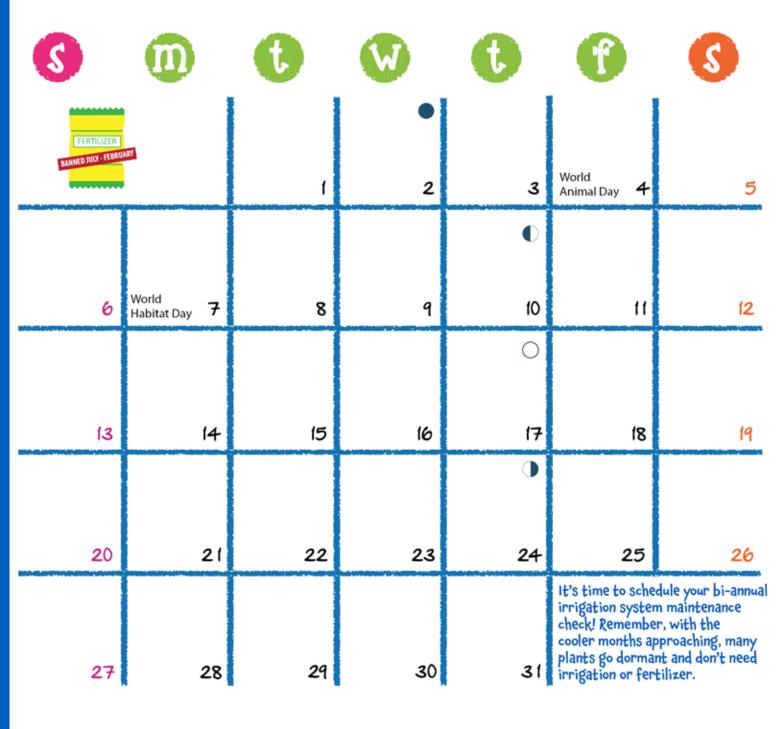


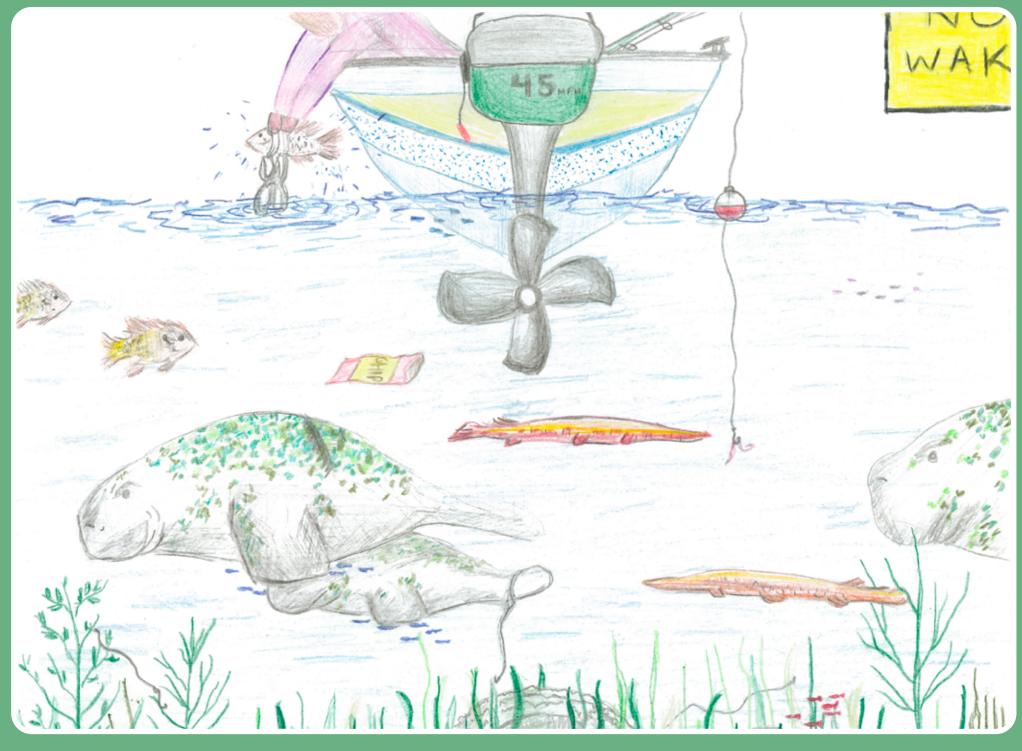
Simi Reoven, 2nd Grade Expressions Learning Arts Academy

October brings cooler temperatures, and it's a great time to explore nature. Many birds have begun their fall migration, and you are likely to see more diversity of species over the next few months.

Florida is an important migratory stop, providing critical food and habitat for birds that need to refuel on their journey, or stay for the winter. The importance of protecting Florida's water, conserving land, and preserving habitat and wildlife, reaches beyond our local species and beyond our state borders. Florida's role in bird migration is a reminder that everything is connected.

## October 2024





"Unintended Consequences of Trash in the Water" • Brie Komanski • 3rd Grade • The Rock School

#### "Water of the World"



Allie Schofield, High School Cornerstone Academy

Manatees use the 72° F water in springs for winter refuge, and consume vegetation in these habitats. Keep your "Feet Up and Float" in springs to avoid trampling and killing plants that are an important food source for manatees, and beneficial to the entire spring ecosystem!

Manatees have no natural predators and are only threatened by human activity – primarily collisions with watercraft and habitat loss. Don't forget to stay at least two kayak lengths away from a manatee. If you find a manatee in distress or deceased, call 888-404-FWCC (3922) or \*FWC from your cell phone.

#### November is Manatee Awareness Month!

Report manatee sightings to the Florida Springs Heartland Manatee Sighting Network at www.AlachuaCountyWater.org.

## November 2024

(3)	m	<b>(</b>	W		F	S
FERTILIZER BANNED JULY - FEBRUARY	Irrigation is day a week water, turn and only wa	s limited to one – to save more off your syste ter as needed!	My My Our	Yard Water	1	2
Irrigation Restrictions change <b>3</b>	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	Veterans ff	12	13	14	America Recycles Day <b>15</b>	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	Thanksgiving Day <b>28</b>	29	30



"Alachua's Life in Color" • Kaylee Bleeker • High School • Gainesville High School

#### "Bob the Bear, He Can Fix It"



Duncan Macgregor, 2nd Grade Cornerstone Academy

Snakes often strike fear into even the bravest souls, but understanding their importance within an ecosystem is key to helping allay those fears. Many snakes eat unwanted pests, such as rodents, around houses and barns. Snakes are an important part of the food chain, as they provide food for hawks and other raptors. Venomous snakes, while deserving great caution, are just as important in the food chain and ecology of natural areas. Their beauty is often awe inspiring! Please do not harm or kill unwanted snakes. Instead, to request assistance to safely remove a snake (venomous or not) from your yard or home, visit: https://www.facebook.com/groups/ FreeSnakeRemovalDirectory

## December 2024



## Get out and EXPLORE

There is simply no better way to gain an appreciation for the natural environment than to go out and explore it, canoe it, hike it, bike it... you get the idea! Below are some of our favorite County parks and Alachua County Forever Preserves.

Park Name	Location	Description	Icons
Barr Hammock Preserve - Levy Prairie	14920 SE 11th Dr, Micanopy	This Preserve is accessible from the northern entrance off of SE 11th Drive, the 6.5-mile Levy Loop Trail encircles a wet prairie and offers vistas along the unshaded northern trail. Spring and fall wildflowers, and migratory birds in fall and winter. Southern portion of loop is shaded.	NO DOGS
Barr Hammock Preserve - South Entrance	300 SE 175th Ave, Micanopy	13 miles of shared, forested trails; a favorite loop for hikers is the Bayhead trail; for equestrians, the Hammock Trail. If you are up for a long hike or ride, the Landing Overlook offers magnificent views.	<b>*</b>
Buck Bay Preserve	6502 N County Rd. 225, Gainesville	Multiple trail loops through pine flatwoods habitat, ranging from 0.7 miles to 2.5 miles in length.	<b>*</b>
Four Creeks Preserve	6845 NW 37th St, Gainesville	A partnership property with the City of Gainesville, with a 2.5-mile walking loop trail through pine and hardwood forests. Trail can be flooded during wet periods. There is currently no parking at this preserve.	NO BIKES
Fox Pen Preserve	Near 10777 Holden Park Road in Hawthorne	A 1-mile-long trail loop through pine and wetland habitat. A partnership project with Alachua Conservation Trust.	<b>*</b>
Lake Alto Preserve - North	14500 Co Rd 1471, Waldo	3.5 miles of unpaved trails accessible from the Preserve entrance off of CR 1471, or from the boat dock on Lake Alto. Look for black bear tracks in the north portion of the preserve.	<b>*</b>
Lake Alto Preserve - South	18795 NE 132nd Ave, Waldo	The 1.2-mile Canal Loop is accessible from NE 132nd Ave, less than 1/2 mi east of CR 1471. Wildflowers abound in fall near the entrance.	<b>*</b>
Longleaf Flatwoods Preserve	Main parking area located on CR 325, about 2.3 mi south of Hawthorne Rd/SR 20.	Managed by SJRWMD, the Preserve features relatively intact natural communities including sandhill, mesic flatwoods, and cypress swamps. Wildflowers can be plentiful spring thru fall. Group camping is available by reservation only at https://www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/camping.	
Mill Creek Preserve	14505 NW County Road 236, Alachua (just west of the intersection with CR 241)	This Preserve features about 5 miles of trails and the southernmost extent of American beech trees. There are several easy-to-moderate marked loop trails of various lengths. See migratory birds in fall.	NO BIKES
Newnans Lake Conservation Area	3 tracts: Hatchet Creek Tract trailhead is 0.9 mile east of the Hatchet Creek bridge on SR 26; North Tract trailhead is on CR 234, 2.2 mi south of SR 26; South Tract trailhead is near Newnans Lake boat ramp on SE 3rd Place, Windsor	Managed by SJRWMD, the best time to visit this area is winter, as some trails can be wet and buggy during the summer, and there are trail closures during hunting season in fall and spring. Horses are limited to the Hatchet Creek and North Tracts. Group camping is available by reservation only at https://www.sjrwmd.com/lands/recreation/camping.	
Phifer Flatwoods	Parking area located at 12243 SE County Rd 2082 on the Gainesville Hawthorne State Trail (GHST)	Four different short trails (ranging from 0.5 miles to 1.3 miles) through pine flatwoods near wetland areas. Trails are accessible from the Gainesville Hawthorne State Trail.	<b>H</b> SHR
Poe Springs Park	28800 NW 182nd Ave, High Springs	This park offers swimming in the springs, picnic facilities, play areas as well as hiking trails. Parking fee is \$6 per vehicle.	<b>†</b> ≥ <b></b>
Serenola Forest Preserve	Near the intersection of SW 21st Street, and SW 49th Ave., near Idylwild Elementary School	A 1-mile trail loops through a diverse hardwood forest. Two street parking spots by the main trail head, but trail access is primarily by foot or bike.	为参院
Sweetwater Preserve	2 trailheads: one at 309 SE 16th Ave, Gainesville; the other located north of Boulware Springs City Park (3300 SE 15th St, Gainesville) on the GHST	The 1.75-mile West Trail accessible from SE 16th Ave. offers full shade along Sweetwater Branch. It connects to the 1.2-mile Sandy Trail (parking at Boulware Springs), which weaves through 8 different natural communities.	<b>*</b>
Turkey Creek Preserve	2 trailheads: Main Trailhead (with parking) located at 6300 NW 93rd Ave, Alachua; the other, Pedestrian Trailhead (no parking) located at 10182 NW 59th Terr, Alachua	Features 5 miles of unpaved trails over rolling topography through a variety of habitat types. All trails can be accessed from either trailhead, and there is also a ½ mile Fitness Trail with 7 exercise stations to add a workout to your visit. Please refer to exercise equipment rules and instructions found onsite.	<b>*</b>
Watermelon Pond Park and Preserve	10700 SW 250th St, Newberry	A marshy, sandhill lake, accessible for shallow water boaters from the boat ramp at Watermelon Pond Park.	



















Hunting (during season)