

Scenic Watch



Covering
November
2020
News

Paddling in Florida: "What It's Like to Canoe Down the Peace River"



Photo: Sarafina Murphy-Gibson, Sarasota Magazine

"The Peace River offers an idyllic view of Florida nature...

At first, I cling rigidly to my paddle, but soon find an easy rhythm as we glide past the lush combination of cypress, oak and palm. The river is almost



Fun Festivals and Events

[For many more events and details please visit the Visit Florida site](#)

otherworldly beautiful. With recent storms, its beds are swollen with nearly five extra feet of water and low hanging-branches on the banks sway in the current. The water's smooth surface reflects a mirrored jungle, backed by its own blue sky. At times it appears we're floating on clouds...

My interest in the Peace River comes from my recent acquisition of a Florida Fossil Permit, which allows me to collect vertebrate specimens—within certain regulations—on state-owned land. Florida has fascinating geology, unique from the rest of the continental United States, and its riverbeds are a fossil collector's dream...

The Canoe Outpost has examples of various finds, from dugong ribs to pieces of giant armadillo shells. Beyond the teeth of the giant megalodon sharks, you can also search for the chompers of horses, tapirs, crocodiles and giant ground sloths. How cool is that?...

Roughly four miles along, the outpost offers a series of picnic areas that can also function as campgrounds for those wanting a little more time on the water. They're marked with blue signs and have names like First Chance and Armadillo Way...

We pass turtles basking in the sunshine, bucolic fields and trees projecting out of the water, their little islands completely submerged. At one point we hear ominous mooing coming from somewhere in the thick foliage, but escape the bovine menace unscathed. After passing underneath a dilapidated train track that still smells like tar, we round the bend and see our driver waving from the Canoe Outpost dock...





Photo: Sarafina Murphy-Gibson, Sarasota Magazine

We made it—and without getting more than our feet wet."

-- Sarafina Murphy-Gibson, Sarasota Magazine

[Read entire article](#)

[Visit Paddle Florida for more ideas by region](#)

"Walton commissioners could fast-track development along U.S. 331"

"Walton County commissioners have taken a first look at a set of proposals that could reshape the economic potential of the U.S. Highway 331 corridor...

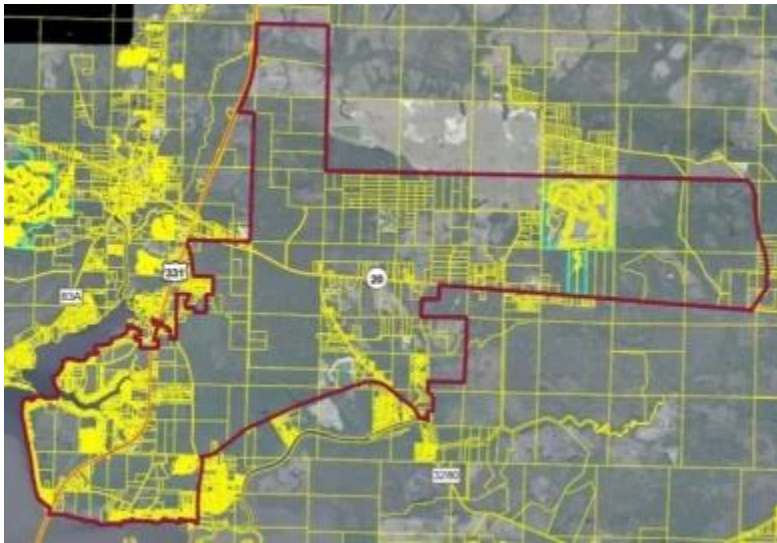
The proposed development standards – more specifically, the establishment of scenic overlay districts – would apply restrictive development standards extending to 400 feet from the affected sections of the two routes...

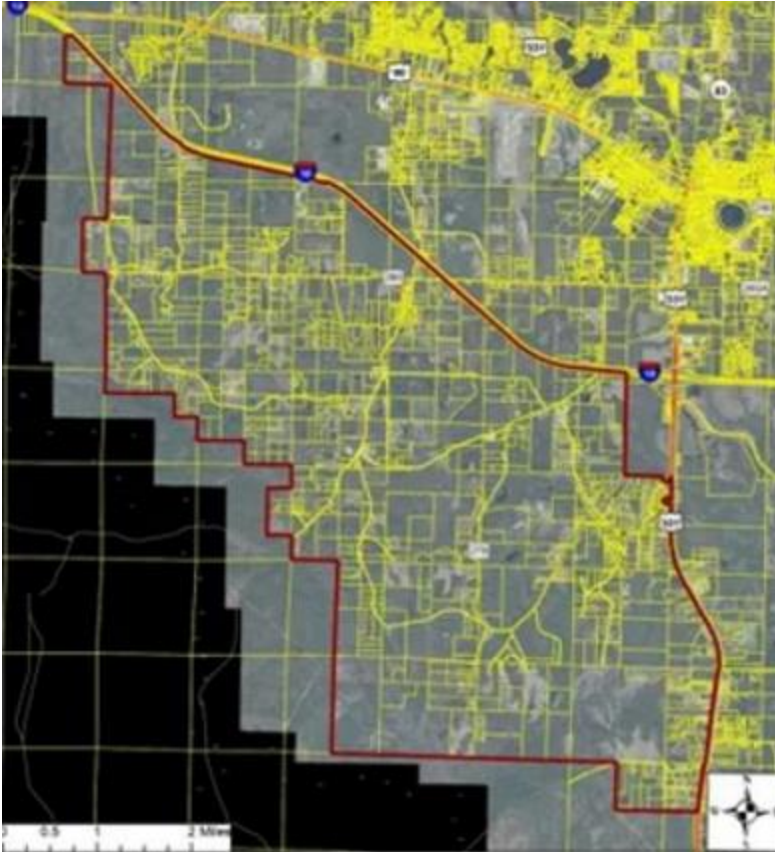
But as a result of recent action by the Walton County Planning Commission, new-vehicle sales lots – originally proposed as an excluded use – would be

allowed along the scenic corridors, if that provision survives further review and action by the County Commission...

One of those sections extends from Choctawhatchee Bay north and west to the edges of the city of Freeport, and also incorporates acreage roughly bisected by SR 20.

A second section, bounded by the south side of Interstate 10, extends north and west from the southern edge of DeFuniak Springs.





Illustrations: Walton County

...Adoption of the amendments would mean that neither the Planning Commission nor the County Commission would get to review any project that met existing county requirements for job creation or economic development...

Leigh Moore, executive director of Scenic Walton... cautioned commissioners to take a longer-term view of the proposed scenic corridor requirements.

'I understand the concern about economic development, and I also encourage that to be a major focus,' Moore said, 'but please keep in mind ... that if you don't have some good aesthetic and (traffic) access management guidelines, then in the medium- and longer-term it ends up hurting economic development ...'

Moore said Scenic Walton is not against growth along the U.S. 331 corridor.

'But we want to do it in the right way, and that requires some local government control and regulation over what can and can't happen in that corridor,' she said..."

-- Jim Thompson, Northwest Florida Daily News

[Read entire article](#)

[Visit Scenic Walton](#)

Editorial: "Give thanks for Jacksonville's history, natural beauty"



Photo: Scenic Jacksonville Facebook

"There is so much to be thankful for in Jacksonville.

What comes to mind immediately includes beautiful natural resources and an incredible history.

The natural resources are dominated by water.

The majestic St. Johns River widens into an estuary as it nears the Atlantic Ocean.

The Intracoastal Waterway has its own unique ecology that you can appreciate from water level. Crossing a bridge at twilight, the setting sun acts like a spotlight, turning the marshes into a soft

palette of colors.

The tributaries of the river criss-cross the city. Two of the most prominent near Downtown, Hogans Creek and McCoys Creek, are being rediscovered with an aggressive nonprofit, Groundwork Jacksonville, leading the way...

Look at a map of Duval's major parks and many of them are located around the outer edges of the county. That is about to change, however. Once the Emerald Trail is completed, there will be 30 miles of urban pathways around Downtown that are linked to the riverwalk. And once the pedestrian walkway is completed alongside the Fuller Warren Bridge, the riverwalks will have a sky-high connection.

Meanwhile, there are plans to expand access along the St. Johns River Downtown. There is much empty space along the Northbank. Plans for a series of riverfront parks are being advanced by Riverfront Parks Now, a group of influential advocates. Public access that began with the Southbank Riverwalk in the 1980s is now coming to fruition.

On the Southbank, plans for a massive mixed-use development at the site of the former Southside Generating Station will include an extension of the riverwalk that wraps around the back of the riverfront development.

Jacksonville's incredible history

The Times-Union Editorial page has been campaigning for a better appreciation of Jacksonville history, especially the history of our Black native sons and daughters...

The stories are fascinating.

Jacksonville – a city of natural beauty and beautiful people"

-- Florida Times-Union Editorial Board

[Read entire article](#)

[More news about this project and MOSH relocation](#)

[Read Scenic Jacksonville on proposed Metropolitan Park](#)

"Trees on the Coast plants 10 trees at South Walton Elementary School"



Photo: Land Air Sea Photography, in Northwest Florida Daily News

"Trees on the Coast, a local environmental

nonprofit, planted 10 trees during a planting ceremony on Nov. 13 at Van R. Butler Elementary School...

Principal Jimmy Ross and 40 students participated in planting the trees. Board members from Trees on the Coast were in attendance to educate the students on the trees and what purpose they would be serving the community.

The trees that were planted are available for adoption as 'Honor Trees.' The cost to adopt, along with a customized naming plaque, is \$250, the release said.

Those interested in purchasing a naming plaque or getting more information on 'Honor Trees' can email info@treesonthecoast.com. More information about Trees on the Coast and corporate sponsorship can be found at Treesonthecoast.com."

-- Jim Thompson, Northwest Florida Daily News

[Read entire article](#)

[Visit Trees on the Coast](#)

Technology: "Planning Commission Approves a Uniquely Styled Sunset Strip Billboard"



Photo: In WEHOville.com

"With a unanimous vote on Thursday night, West Hollywood's Planning Commission approved a new cutting-edge digital billboard on the Sunset Strip that will appear to float in the air.

Using the latest LED technology, the 'Floating Billboard' at 8743 Sunset Blvd. at Sherbourne Drive, will have an opaque frame that seems to disappear when viewed from certain angles. This 'invisible frame' will make the digital advertising image on the 14-foot-tall and 48-foot-wide LED billboard appear to float above the historic building beneath it.

The secret to the three-foot 'invisible frame' surrounding the billboard's advertising area is that it too will be made of LED digital surface. Cameras at the rear of the billboard will continually take images of the sky conditions to the east and transmit those live images onto the LED frame facing west.

'It will reflect the sky behind to the front edge of the billboard and then create the illusion of an invisible billboard,' explained billboard architect Benjamin Anderson.

This new digital billboard will replace the existing static billboard atop the Constance Bennett building, which dates back to 1936. The Georgian Revival style building was named after the famous movie actress who commissioned it. Sunset Sherbourne Holdings, LLC, headed by Chris Bonbright, currently owns the building..."

-- James F. Mills, WEHOville.com

[Read entire article](#)

Support The Preservation of Florida's Scenic Beauty!
Become a [member](#) or [donate](#) today!

www.scenicflorida.org

Citizens for a Scenic Florida, Inc. P.O. Box 8952
Jacksonville, FL 32239