

# Scenic Watch



March  
2021

## Florida WildQuest - May 1-9



"Explore Florida's Wildlife Management Areas through a unique scavenger hunt experience!"

From May 1 - 9, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will host a series of scavenger hunts on Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) throughout the state. With the free and easy-to-use GooseChase app, you can go on a wild adventure at your local WMA and discover some of Florida's best spots to see wildlife and enjoy the outdoors.

Go on a WildQuest scavenger hunt with your family, friends or as a solo adventurer. Use the app to record photos and videos, responding to fun prompts and earning points as you go..."

Some of the featured Wildlife Management Areas:

[Babcock/Webb](#)  
[Big Bend-Tide Swamp](#)  
[Fisheating Creek](#)  
[Guana River](#)  
[L. Kirk Edwards](#)  
[Chinsegut](#)  
[Tosohatchee](#)

-- Florida Nature Trackers

[Read entire article](#)

Legislative Alert:

Florida bills could bar local government design review and authority for residential buildings



"One of 1000 Friends' foundational priorities is to help build better communities in Florida.

But SB 284 /HB 55, entitled Building Design, would take yet another tool away from

local governments. This legislation seeks to remove local government authority to regulate building design in many areas, although designated local historic districts, Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) districts, and Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are exempt.

The bill would:

- Take away the authority of local governments to work with citizens to protect the character of certain neighborhoods and districts important to the community's character.
- Undermine local economic development efforts that capitalize on the unique character of distinctive areas in the community.
- Remove the ability of neighborhoods and local governments to promote neighborhood reinvestment through maintaining neighborhood character."

-- 1000 Friends of Florida

[Read entire article](#)

Floating Billboards:  
Volusia County's 47 miles of seashore at risk



Photo: David Tucker, St. Augustine Record

## "No tacky displays"

"'Unbelievable' or 'You've got to be kidding' - These are the only phrases which come to mind when reading [the St. Augustine Record] March 19 article about the Volusia County Council approving the use of floating billboards along Volusia County's invaluable 47 miles of Atlantic seashore! Other adjectives such as ugly and tacky also come to mind. As mentioned in the article, once this Pandora's Box is opened there will be no basis for refusing other requests, leading to a parade of these monstrosities cluttering up our otherwise pristine views of the Atlantic Ocean, where we should be looking at dolphins, right whales and swimmers, not tacky advertising. Maybe as a crowning achievement one of these barge/billboards trafficking up and down the beach could strike one of our endangered Right Whale population..."

There seems to be no benefit to Volusia taxpayers and voting constituents, only to the promoters of the concept and a handful of businesses who might advertise on the billboard. I suspect that County Council members will find out at the next election what the broader views of their constituents are on the subject. "

-- Richard Schook, Letter to the editor, St. Augustine Record

[Read entire article](#)

## Community Greening at work in South Florida: "Pine Grove Elementary gets spruced up with 200 trees"



Photo: Pebb Capital, Sun Sentinel

"Pine Grove Elementary School in Delray Beach was recently beautified with the addition of 200 trees on its campus.

The newly planted trees are part of a citywide tree relocation program created by Sundry Village and Pebb Capital in collaboration with Community Greening, an urban forestry nonprofit based in Delray Beach, that involves planting 205 trees in areas that need it the most such as rights-of-way, public parks, schools and neighborhoods in Delray Beach, according to Todd Benson, principal of Pebb Capital.

'We proudly stand behind our corporate social responsibility and want to give back to the community by providing benefits such as better air quality, water filtration, soil stabilization, shade and aesthetic beauty through added foliage.'

The newly planted trees at Pine Grove consist of 50 from Pebb Capital and the rest

from the city of Delray Beach, said Mark Cassini, co-director/co-founder of Community Greening...

According to Cassini, Southeast Florida is losing its tree canopy because of storms, diseases and more people moving here.

And planting more trees provides many benefits such as reducing energy usage, lowering the temperature, cleaning the air and reducing flooding, he said...br> In addition to the tree relocation program, Cassini said that city of Delray Beach funded a tree-planting campaign to plant 10,000 trees in five years. The hope is to increase the city's tree canopy from 23% to 28%...

The trees planted for this project are Florida native trees such as live oak, red maple, crabwood and South Florida slash pine that have ecosystem and wildlife."

-- Jennifer Shapiro-Sacks, Sun Sentinel

[Read entire article](#)

Visit [Community Greening](#) for more information on their programs.

Legal:  
Can a city maintain any distinction between on-premise and off-premise signs?



Photo: Jay Janner, Austin American-Statesman

"Reagan and Lamar sued the City of Austin when the city denied approximately 85 digital billboard permits for off-premise advertising billboards arguing that the City Sign Code's distinction between on-premise and off-premise signs violated the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment free speech clause.

The case was first heard by the US District Court for the Western District of Texas, and held FOR the City, ie, that the city sign code on/off-premise distinction was not content-based and was constitutional using an intermediate scrutiny standard of review.

On August 25, 2020, a three-member panel of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the US Western District Court and held:the Austin Sign Code's on-premises/off-premises distinction was content-based and must therefore be subject to a strict scrutiny standard of review. The Fifth Circuit concluded that under that higher standard of review, the city's on/off-premise distinction was content-based, thus unconstitutional.

The City of Austin has announced it will appeal to SCOTUS—filing due January 21, 2021."

-- Scenic Texas

[Scenic Texas legal experts weigh in on this case](#)

[Read additional article about this battle in the Austin American-Statesman](#)

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