



LISTEN TO THE KIDS

Rick Scott, the Darling of the NRA, suddenly RESIGNS

W.T. NEXT



2018 Capitol Report

Florida Conservation Voters

Dear Conservation Voter,

The tragic school shooting in Parkland was the single most defining moment of the 2018 Florida Legislative Session. For weeks, the Capitol was bursting with thousands of students, teachers, concerned citizens, and national and international media.

The remarkable diversity of the young people who descended on the Capitol reflected all of Florida. What I found most inspiring was their absolute unity in **their belief that they can change their world.**

Parkland will not just be remembered as the tragedy it was, but as an inspiring demonstration of civic engagement. Seeing this level of activism from people so young gives me hope for Florida's future.

The students know something FCV has been talking about for years - the Florida Legislature is a proving ground for our elected officials. It's where politicians transform campaign promises into legislative action. And for too long we have allowed our elected officials to vote for bills that pollute our drinking water and pave over our natural areas, then immediately spin their record on the campaign trail to make themselves look like champions.

FCV's work at the Capitol plays an essential role in the conservation voter movement's Cycle of Accountability. When lawmakers resort to political jiu-jitsu to cover their poor environmental voting record, it's FCV's job to set the record straight. **And thanks to your support, we will.**

I invite you to read the following pages to learn more about what happened this session as it relates to our environment. We have some big news to report (see below on Florida Forever funding). And for the first time, we'll be highlighting some of our best environmental advocates in the Legislature.

The 2018 General Election is around the corner. I don't think I've ever seen a more engaged electorate. We hope you'll continue on this journey with us in making conservation not just the right thing to do, but the politically smart thing to do.



Alik Moncrief
Executive Director
Florida Conservation Voters



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Defending Florida's Water & Land

After nearly a decade of little to no funding for Florida Forever, the House and Senate agreed to spend \$100.8 million on this necessary land and water conservation program in the 2018-2019 budget. This achievement is in no small part thanks to people like you who made needed phone calls and met with elected officials about the importance of this program.

This funding brings us one step closer to satisfying the will of the millions of voters who approved the 2014 Water & Land Conservation Amendment. Special thanks to Appropriations Chairs Senator Rob Bradley (R-Orange Park) and Representative Carlos Trujillo (R-Miami) for their efforts in securing this crucial funding.

Florida Conservation Voters

The 2014 Conservation Amendment was designed to take the politics out of the annual conservation budget process. And while we are ecstatic to see increased funding next year, FCV will continue to fight for a bill that would statutorily dedicate annual funding to Florida Forever. Both Senator Rob Bradley and Representative Matt Caldwell (R-Lehigh Acres) sponsored long-term funding bills this year, but couldn't come to an agreement before time ran out on the legislative session.

FCV's main priority over the summer will be to ensure that a legislator in both houses files a version of these bills again next year.

Don't Frack Florida

Fracking continues to be one of the most hotly debated conservation issues at the Capitol. Over the past year, the oil and gas industry has increased their seismic testing operations in search of the remaining small oil and gas reserves beneath Florida's aquifers, making the fracking ban more critical than ever.

Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, Senator Dana Young's (R-Tampa) fracking ban bill stalled before ever reaching a floor vote. Appropriations Chair Rob Bradley declined to bring the ban up for a vote in the bill's final committee stop, despite strong bipartisan and unanimous support.

While we are delighted the bill moved farther along in the political process than last year, the failure of the bill to pass the Senate is disheartening. Even worse, House Speaker Richard Corcoran (R-Lutz)

once again blocked Representative Kathleen Peters' (R-St. Petersburg) fracking ban bill from even a single committee hearing in the House.

There was a brief moment of excitement late in the session thanks to Senator Gary Farmer (D-Ft. Lauderdale), who filed a fracking ban amendment to Senator Keith Perry's (R-Gainesville) bad water bill. The amendment strategy ultimately failed when, in a procedural move, Senator Perry blocked the amendment from getting the up or down vote it deserved.

With our partners in the Floridians Against Fracking Coalition, FCV is already planning for next year's legislative campaign. Your voice continues to be the most powerful tool of the ban fracking movement in Florida. Keep up the great work.

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Calls Made to Public Officials



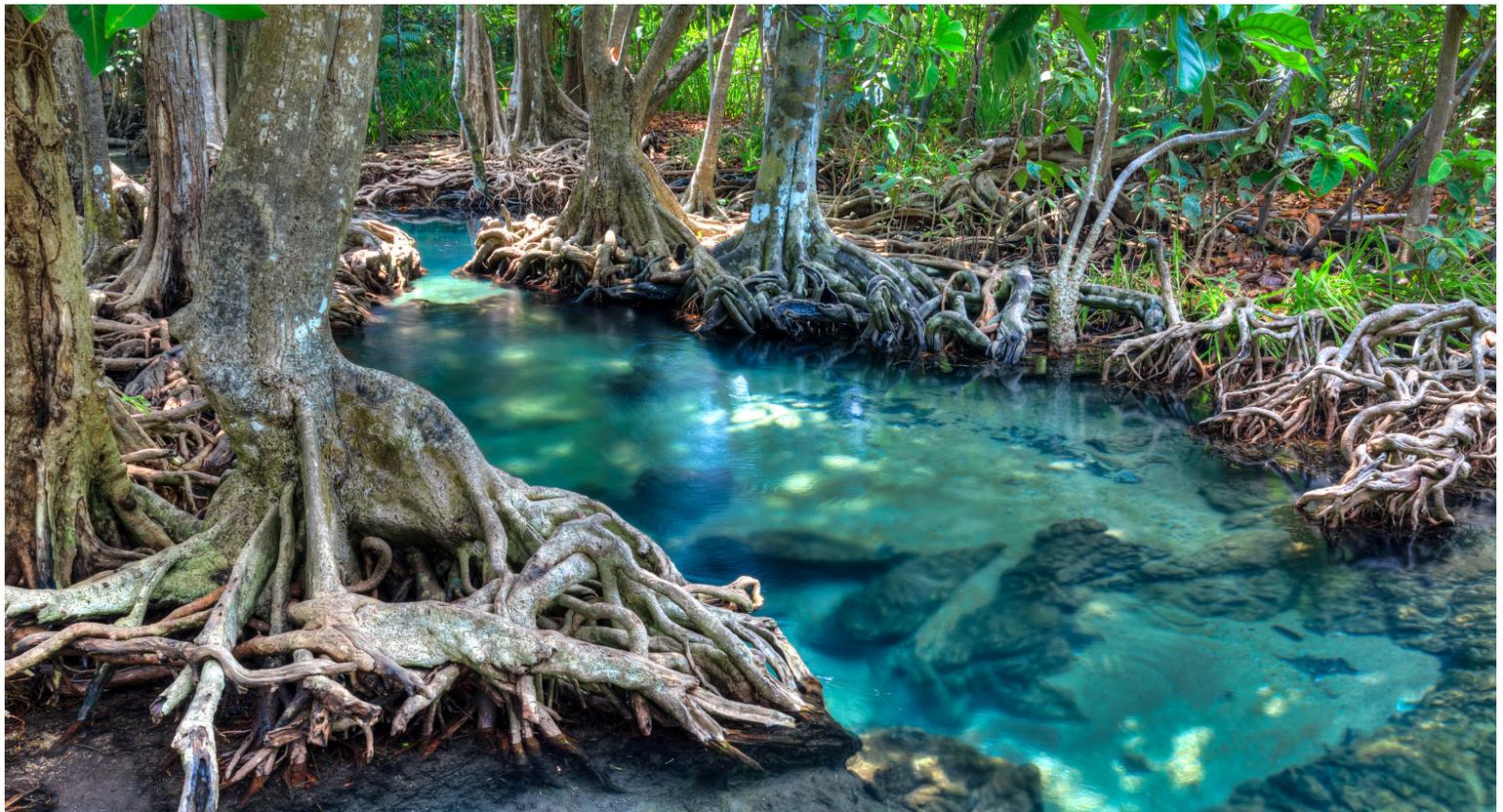
100k

Social Media Shares and Impressions



11k

Activist Emails Sent to Legislators



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2018 Capitol Report

Water, Water Everywhere

Over 90% of Floridians (and visitors) rely on underground sources for their drinking water. Sadly, two bad bills passed this year that could negatively impact our aquifers and wetlands.

Senator Keith Perry sponsored the massive SB 1308, which included a section that would allow for treated human wastewater to be pumped into the aquifer. That's right, human wastewater. Assuming the Governor signs the bill, it will now be legal to pump this reclaimed water into the aquifer without first meeting springs water quality standards or even testing the water for carcinogenic chemicals. FCV opposed this bill in committee and supported Senator Gary Farmer's amendments to fix aspects of the bill late in the legislative session. Unfortunately, Senator Perry blocked these amendments as well.

Florida's springs are ancient and fragile marvels of hydrogeologic evolution. Our wetlands act like kidneys, slowly cleaning water before it seeps into the aquifer below. It's a terrible idea to mix even treated human wastewater with this pristine ecosystem.

Another bill, sponsored by Representative Holly Raschein (R-Key Largo) and Senator David Simmons (R-Orlando) could help the state expedite the permit process by which wetlands are destroyed in Florida. The bill, which passed both chambers, allows the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to assume the national Environmental Protection Agency's permitting process. By having the State of Florida assume these responsibilities without federal oversight, we remove yet another safeguard Floridians have to protect our few remaining wetlands.

FCV Candidates Make a Splash

The 2018 Florida Legislative Session was marked with a series of member resignations that forced special elections in districts across the state. FCV endorsed candidates in two of those races. Both of them won.

Senator Annette Taddeo and Representative Margaret Good both made a difference in their abbreviated time in Tallahassee. Senator Taddeo was an immediate proponent of the fracking ban and spoke up for Florida Forever as a member of the Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee.

Representative Good's election did not occur until very late in the legislative session, but she made the most of her time by being a vocal advocate for conservation issues and voting to oppose harmful wetlands legislation.

Both these legislators were strong environmental advocates at the Capitol and served their constituents well during their short time in Tallahassee. FCV looks forward to working with these conservation leaders again in the 2019-2020 legislative cycle.

Green Star Legislators

Florida Conservation Voters is proud to highlight our 2017-2018 Legislature Green Stars. The following legislators exemplified exceptional conservation leadership by sponsoring and passing good environmental bills or by advocating for conservation funding during the budget negotiations process. Keep up the great work!



Senator Rob Bradley
(R-Orange Park)



Senator Linda Stewart
(D-Orlando)



Rep. Ben Diamond
(D-St. Petersburg)



Rep. Loranne Ausley
(D-Tallahassee)