

Celebrating Earth Day, the Florida State Parks Foundation Plans for Next Year of Pine Tree Plantings

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- This Earth Day, the Florida State Parks Foundation recognizes the thousands of individual donations that have made its Plant a Pine initiative successful and looks to this next year for additional support in moving the needle on restoration efforts for the longleaf pine.



Engaged citizens are supporting the protection and restoration of our beautiful state parks and their biodiversity, ensuring endangered longleaf pines are here to thrive for generations to come."

*Tammy Gustafson, Florida
State Parks Foundation
President*

Hurricanes wreak havoc on the environment, including devastating impacts to tree populations, some of which may already be at risk of extinction prior to natural disasters. Launched on Earth Day, April 22, 2020, Plant a Pine began in response to Hurricane Michael from 2018, which destroyed 500 million trees across the Panhandle.

Over the past two years, donors have helped to fund the success of this grassroots initiative that provides direct and positive impacts to Florida's ecosystem by planting endangered longleaf pines in Florida State Parks.

"Caring donors have been a driving force in this campaign

and each gift, no matter the size, has led to more longleaf pines in Florida," said Tammy Gustafson, Florida State Parks Foundation President. "Engaged citizens are supporting the protection and restoration of our beautiful state parks and their biodiversity, ensuring endangered longleaf pines are here to thrive for generations to come."

In partnership with the Florida Park Service, the Foundation plants trees in Florida State Parks identified for restoration efforts. Each \$1 donation supports the planting of one seedling, and a tree can be donated in memory of a loved one -- a gift that continues growing and thriving in Florida.

The following Florida State Parks have benefited from this initiative and received longleaf pine seedlings: Torreya State Park, Ichetucknee Springs State Park, Fort Cooper State Park, Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, Lake Kissimmee State Park, Dunns Creek State Park, Alafia River State Park, Highlands Hammock State Park, Oscar Scherer State Park, Paynes Creek Historic

State Park, Ponce de Leon Springs State Park and Big Shoals State Park.

Longleaf pines have been prized for their commercial use in building houses, ships and railroads, and their resin is used for making turpentine. Mature longleaf ecosystems support more than 30 endangered and threatened species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers, gopher tortoises and indigo snakes. Without additional support for longleaf pines, native to the Southeast, they face being wiped out as the pines only cover an estimated 3% of their original habitat.

The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501©3 nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests. This project is completed by the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation.

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