

On Earth Day, Florida State Parks Foundation announces more than \$100,000 toward pine tree plantings in state parks

Tree planting initiative has raised nearly \$260,000 since 2020, renewed for 2024

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, April 22, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida State Parks Foundation is proud to celebrate Earth Day by announcing that its Plant a Pine program has surpassed its goal of raising \$100,000 in one year to plant longleaf pine seedlings in Florida State Parks.

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Planting a pine is an easy and inexpensive way to make a positive impact on Florida’s natural environment.”

*Tammy Gustafson, Florida
State Parks Foundation
President*

The Foundation officially raised \$101,539 through private and corporate donations. Each \$1 contribution helps plant one longleaf pine seedling in one of Florida’s award-winning state parks.

“We are simply overwhelmed by the amazing public support for our Plant a Pine program,” Foundation President Tammy Gustafson said. “Planting a pine is an

easy and inexpensive way to make a positive impact on Florida’s natural environment. Pine donations may also be dedicated to a friend or loved one, which makes them especially meaningful and memorable gifts.”

Originally conceived in response to Hurricane Michael, which destroyed 500 million trees across the Florida Panhandle in October 2018, the Plant a Pine program has generated nearly \$260,000 toward longleaf pine restoration.

Gustafson also announced today that the Foundation will seek to raise another \$100,000 for longleaf pines by Earth Day 2024.

“This is a proud day for all of us who love Florida State Parks,” she said, “and we look forward to celebrating again next year.”

Longleaf pines are native to the southeastern U.S. and support more than 30 endangered and threatened species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers, gopher tortoises and indigo snakes.

They once spanned approximately 90 million acres, but after decades of commercial demand, longleaf pines today cover an estimated 3% of their original territory.

The Foundation coordinates with Florida State Parks to plant trees in parks identified for restoration efforts. Previous parks to receive seedlings include: Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, 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.



Native longleaf pines play a crucial role in Florida's natural ecosystems.

"Restoring longleaf pine forests is important for Florida State Parks," said Chuck Hatcher, director of Florida State Parks. "We appreciate the commitment of the Foundation to this effort. Knowing that citizens contribute to our success makes this special for our staff and the species supported in these forests."

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The Florida State Parks Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)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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