



Florida State Parks Foundation Welcomes Board President Matt Caldwell, 2025-2026 Board Officers

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Matt Caldwell, a seventh-generation Floridian and a former member of the Florida House of Representatives, today was installed as President of the Florida State Parks Foundation's Board of Directors at the Foundation's statewide annual meeting.



I am honored to serve as board president and further the incredible successes that the Florida State Parks Foundation has achieved over the past several years."

*Matt Caldwell, Florida State
Parks Foundation Board
President*

Caldwell, who first joined the Foundation board in 2022, will lead a passionate and engaged board of directors dedicated to preserving, protecting, sustaining and growing Florida's award-winning state parks.

The Foundation's 2025-26 board officers include:

President: Matt Caldwell

Immediate Past President: Kathleen Brennan

Vice President: Tom Pennekamp

Secretary: Don Philpott

Treasurer: Jackye Maxey

"Matt is a Floridian, through and through, and he will be a tremendous champion for Florida's natural, cultural and historical resources," said Julia Gill Woodward, CEO of the Florida State Parks Foundation. "We are thrilled to have Matt's leadership, expertise and perspective as we embark on what will surely be an exciting next two years."

Caldwell, whose family originally settled in Micanopy, Florida, near what is now Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park, in 1826, served as a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 2010-18 and was a candidate for the Florida Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services in 2018.

He was elected Lee County Property Appraiser in 2020 and continues to hold that position.

A graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University and the University of Florida, Caldwell lives in Fort Myers with his wife, Yvonne, and daughter, Ava.

"I am honored to serve as board president and further the incredible successes that the Florida State Parks Foundation has achieved over the past several years," Caldwell said. "Florida is an amazing place for people who love the outdoors, and my time on the Foundation board has only strengthened my love for our natural spaces."

"I am proud to take the baton and advocate for our parks whenever and wherever possible."

Caldwell assumes the board presidency from Kathleen Brennan, under whose leadership the Foundation reached unprecedented heights in fundraising, capital projects, accessibility, environmental sustainability and citizen support organization (CSO) support.

During her presidency, Brennan oversaw two major, donor-funded construction projects at Fort Mose Historic State Park and Topsail Hill Preserve State Park, welcomed the "Great Blue Heron" hybrid-electric boat at Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park, and tripled the allocation for the Foundation's Park Impact Grants, which provide direct funding to CSOs or Friends groups for park projects.

She also shepherded the Foundation's new legacy giving initiative, the Great Blue Heron Legacy Society.

"It was an honor and a joy to serve as board president, and I am so proud to look back and see everything we have accomplished in just two years," Brennan said. "The Foundation's mission is one that all Floridians can believe in, and I am happy to know that we have Matt Caldwell stepping up to lead us in the pursuit of that mission. Matt will be a wonderful president, and I am sure he will take us to even greater heights throughout his tenure."



Jackye Maxey (Treasurer) and Don Philpott (Secretary) have served in their respective roles since 2024. Tom Pennekamp (Vice President), a founding member of the Foundation's Board of Directors in 1993, has previously held a variety of board positions, including two terms as president.

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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. All projects are completed by the Florida State Parks Foundation Services LLC, which is a limited liability company affiliate of the Foundation. The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

Tim Linafelt
Florida State Parks Foundation
+1 850-559-8914
[email us here](#)

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