

GFWC Florida Conservation Bulletin Spring 2020

GFWC Florida is honored to have completed **951 Conservation Projects in 2019,**
Donated \$53,288.75 in funds, and generously contributed \$120,932.96 of In-kind donations.

GFWC Florida members **served for an incredible 42,745 hours on Conservation Projects!**

I am extremely excited to share that we have reported another significant increase in overall projects for the year, from 790 the year prior, **up to 951 projects this past year – an increase of 20%!** Conservation awareness and action is on the rise, how great for our environment, our future, and GFWC!

An Update on our two Conservation focused 7 Grand initiatives!

GFWC Florida has wholeheartedly embraced our GFWC Conservation Grand Initiatives. These have been promoted at every opportunity, every speaking engagement in clubs, District and at State, and our members have responded with enthusiasm and action!



Members will donate **1,000 pairs of used shoes** to Soles 4 Souls or Nike “reuse-a-shoe”

Soles for Souls has been a much-loved project, that has enabled every one of every means and ability to participate and make a difference in this International initiative. The year prior in 2018 we collected 1,475 pairs of shoes for Souls for Souls, and I was so excited to report that we had surpassed the International total right here within our very own state! This was celebrated on the back cover of our Convention program where conservation initiatives were highlighted. And now for the exciting news, this year we have increased that amount of giving to a very generous **4,197 pairs of donated shoes, a 285% increase!** GFWC Florida has surpassed the initial national goal 4 times over this year, how great we are able to share our blessings with others in need in this very special way. We have been so happy to support this GFWC Grand Initiative with an overall collection to date of **5,672 pairs of shoes** – and counting!

Stay tuned if GFWC will meet our new goal to be announced at the International level:

To Date: 36,763 Pairs of Shoes have been collected

Goal by June 2020: 40,000 Pairs of Shoes – Let’s do it!



Members will plant 1,000 trees on Arbor Day

Our GFWC Grand Initiative of **planting a tree on Arbor Day** was also a club favorite! This is a perfect example of what we can do together as a Federation, when we focus our efforts in a unified and likeminded direction. When the GFWC Grand Initiatives were first introduced in mid-2018, our National Arbor Day has already passed, yet our clubs on their own initiative had planted 252 trees that year. We know this total because it was on our reporting form. **When we worked together as a Federation and set this global goal, we collectively as a state responded planting 3,190 trees in 2019!** For those who love statistics as much as I do, that is **an incredible 1,266% increase!** A true reflection of leadership and initiative from our International President, with a strong response from our state. This program has enriched our state after a devastating hurricane, cleaned and enhanced our 1,350 miles of Florida shoreline, and is actively exchanging carbon dioxide for oxygen rich air for us to breathe everywhere. We can accomplish so much when we work together, what a powerful example! And, we still have another Arbor Day of totals to count, and GFWC Florida is motivated and will be ready to go!

Stay tuned if GFWC will meet our new goal to be announced at the International level:

To Date: 17,811 Trees

Goal by April 24, 2020: 20,000 Trees – Let's do it!



Congratulations GFWC Florida

1st Place Conservation Winners for 2019!

Thank you for your great reports, counting hours, dollars, shoes, and trees!
You have won the **GFWC Florida first-place award for your category in Conservation!**

Your clubs should be very proud of this great achievement!

Category 1 - GFWC Greater West Palm Beach Women's Club

Category 2 – GFWC Coral Springs Woman's Club

Category 3 – GFWC Fort Walton Woman's Club

Category 4 – GFWC FL Fabulous FL Flamingo Flock

Category 5 - GFWC Lutz-Land O'Lakes Woman's Club, Inc

“GFWC Florida Everglades Eagles”

Did you see our ‘Convocation’ of Eagles that attended Fall Boards Convention?



Sponsored by GFWC Clubs and Artists from all over the state to support the Florida Everglades!

A very special Thank You to all of the individual and Club ‘Sponsors’ of our Everglades Eagles!

These Sponsors donated \$150 to underwrite the cost of their eagle and also found an artist to decorate them! You have provided the grass roots for this project, and we thank you!

Everglades Eagles are Up for Adoption!

These beautifully hand painted Eagles will continue to be up for adoption for \$500 to the community, which will be ***matched by the South Florida National Park Trust***, totaling a \$1,000 contribution for your \$500 donation. Adoption will include your Bald Eagle of choice, a Certificate of thanks, recognition of your name or Club in our next Convention Program and of course, an invitation to the ribbon cutting ceremony in the Everglades in 2021-2022.

If you have a community event where we can showcase Eagles for Adoption during 2020 please contact Conservation Chair Elizabeth Fisher at 305 434-2003 or gfwcelizfisher@gmail.com

All funds to benefit new and improved Hurricane resistant educational signage throughout the Everglades Royal Palm and Anhinga Trail originally preserved by the FFWC.



**A reminder of why Royal Palm State Park, the nucleus of the Florida Everglades,
Is so important our Woman's Clubs and to our history.**



Left: Daniel Beard and members of Florida Federation of Women Club, presentation of plaque, October 10, 1947.
Middle: Royal Palm Lodge, Royal Palm State Park built in 1919
Right: Royal Palm State Park Dedication Plaque, "The Florida Federation of Women's Clubs" October 10, 1947

Royal Palm State Park's History as posted on the National Park Service website:

The Florida Federation of Women's Club, and particularly the Preservation Committee chairwoman **May Mann Jennings**, took a deep interest in the area and began campaigning for the designation of Paradise Key as a state park. To their success, the state declared 960 acres for Royal Palm State Park in 1916 to the FFWC. This acreage was also matched by Mrs. Flagler. Ingraham highway, a road from Florida City to Paradise Key, had also been recently completed and was dedicated along with Royal Palm State Park, on November 23, 1916. By 1921, 2,080 more acres had been donated by the state, making Royal Palm a 4,000 acre state park.



[A spotlight on our Top 10 GFWC Florida Conservation Projects for 2019](#)

1. Introduction of Intertidal Ecosystem through Sailing

Our club partnered with Sand Key Sailing Center and other dedicated volunteers to allow differently abled sailors to experience the Tampa Bay Estuary and its plant and animal life through sailing in specially designed boats. Veterans, seniors, residents, foster children and those who are mentally or physically challenged were able to see first-hand the plants and animals that make this area unique. Our members donated 179 hours and our club made a \$50 donation to help share Conservation with these sailors. **Submitted by the GFWC North Pinellas Womens Club**

2. The Million Orchid Project – and Water Gun Water Patrol team

The native orchids beauty can take a person's breath away. This project is a five-year orchid reintroduction program. More than a century ago South Florida was a natural orchid paradise.

Orchids were exploited as the Florida East Coast Railroad extended South and urban development continued. In early May 2019 the Million Orchid program was installed in Miami Springs. 500 orchids were installed in a collaborative effort between the City of Miami Springs and the GFWC Miami Springs Woman's Club and Fairchild Gardens. It was realized that the orchids needed a regular watering schedule, optimally early in the day, to help ensure their survival. The Miami Springs Womans Club organized a "Water Patrol" team. Early each day the orchids had to be watered, every day the first week, every other day the second week, every third day the third week and twice a week in the final week. There were 3- 6 volunteers daily. Each day a member volunteer brought a gallon of water or a gallon container. They were armed with six water guns which were used to gently soak the orchids. Over 18 days, the club members participated in watering the orchids. ***Submitted by the GFWC Miami Springs Womans Club***

3. The "Borrow Bin"

When we were visiting the Sea Turtle Conservation Center in Navarre we noticed that they had a "Borrow Bin" for recycling plastic beach toys. Our club donated \$100.00 to one of our member's condominium to establish a bin at the condo. Both tourists and owners have supported this effort to try and reduce the amount of plastics that are dumped into our oceans every year. We are also reaching out to other condos in the area to enlist their help in also establishing bins. ***Submitted by the GFWC fort Walton Beach Womans Club***

4. Florida Everglades Eagle Project – First Sponsored and Adopted Eagle

The Flock's head bird heard about this Florida statewide project and got the flock excited. She collected \$535 from 31 members. She wrote a check for \$500.00 to the South Florida National Parks Trust. The additional \$35.00 went to our general fund for the painting of the Eagle. The FFFF was the first adopted Eagle These funds will go towards the Florida Everglades replacing of educational signage which had been destroyed by hurricanes and weathering, which enlightens visitors including many children on school field trips about its unique ecosystem. 50 Eagles were 'Sponsored' statewide by clubs for \$150. Artists were solicited to beautifully paint these Eagles, then they were placed up for adoption for \$500 each after being on display at Fall Boards. I solicited a matching grant by the South Florida National Park Trust, which will all total \$50,000 enough to restore and enhance hurricane proof signage which will now be bilingual as well. The nucleus of the Florida Everglades was originally preserved by the Florida Federation of Womens Clubs over 100 years ago, our goal is to help keep that GFWC legacy alive! ***Submitted by the GFWC Fabulous Florida Flamingo Flock***

5. Joined National Arbor Day Foundation after Hurricane Michael

Hurricane Michael that occurred in October 2018 destroyed much of our community with significant damage to 90% of the homes and businesses and a catastrophic loss of trees. In January 2019 our club was working with FEMA to get an SBA loan to complete mitigation of damages and to find contractors to repair the \$199,000 worth of estimated damages. Most of our members were in the same situation personally. Natural Resource Restoration and beautification became our CSP's number one priority. We joined the National Arbor Day Foundation and

received ten free trees. We were still in the debris removal process and since the irrigation system was destroyed, and the repair was not the club's priority, we gave the trees to members who were able to plant them. We also placed information in the club newsletter to let our members know the importance of replacing the millions of destroyed trees for ground water absorption, carbon dioxide reduction and cooler temperatures as a result of shade. Members were encouraged to also join the National Arbor Day Foundation ***Submitted by the GFWC Womans Club of Panama City***

6. Planting at the Tallahassee National Cemetery

The GFWC CCWC created a beautiful garden for the newest National Cemetery in Florida! Ten members, two friends, Tallahassee National cemetery Beautification Committee members, and Cemetery staff worked together to prepare the plan for and plant camellias, roses, and Aztec plants at the Cemetery. We also planted azaleas at a second site near the garden. ***Submitted by GFWC Capital City Women's Club***

7. Soles 4 Souls – Juniors Team Effort Collection

GFWC Orlando Juniors, Tampa Juniors, Brandon Juniors, Four Corner Juniors, Lake Placid Juniors, Junior Woman's Club of Lakeland and the Junior Woman's Club of Midtown collected and donated over 738 pairs of shoes for the Soles 4 Souls program. This program provides shoes to impoverished countries offering entrepreneurial opportunities in these markets, offering inexpensive shoes enhancing dignity, and protection from injury and illnesses associated with bare feet in public and community places. ***Submitted by the GFWC Florida Junior Clubs***

8. Conservation Eco-Cruise Outing

Our club donated \$1000 to the Friends of Rookery Bay through funds generated by ticket sales from an outing we arranged. 30 members and friends participated in a sunset eco-cruise on March 18th on the Conservancy of SWFL's Good Fortune II. This event offered education on the Rookery Bay environment and wildlife, as well as a wonderful outdoor and social experience for our members. All while being educated and raising funds for an excellent conservation cause. ***Submitted by the GFWC Naples Womens Club***

9. Community Help - Fresh Vegetables

Our local Community Garden has ten plots that are set aside for raising vegetables, not for themselves, but for the local food bank. We were able to increase our donation to 400 pounds of fresh produce. These volunteer hours reflect one member working 10 hours during the growing season. ***Submitted by the GFWC fort Walton Beach Womans Club***

10. Mimosas, Duh?

What do you do when your clubhouse property is nearly three acres? Well, we proposed to plant a citrus orchard! Initially, some of our members did not see the value in fruit versus parking. Luckily, a voice was heard above the din and the voice said, "We could make mimosas!". The vote to proceed was unanimous and members donated to purchase five varieties of orange trees! We also planted

a hedge of anise to frame our orchard and two Japanese loquat trees to frame the front of the clubhouse. In this project, a total of seven trees were planted. **Submitted by the GFWC Woman's Club of Palatka**



GFWC Florida Conservation Club Creativity Award 2019

The **GFWC Florida Coral Springs Womans Club** has created a great Conservation project **"From Trash to Treasure"** highlighting recycling that any club, with members of any age or physical ability, can participate in and thoroughly enjoy! What makes it so special is that it has become a *'very popular activity among members and guests alike'* and they look forward to it at each meeting! It's a very creative, yet simple idea.

Everyone brings an 'old' item or two they no longer use or have need of to their meeting, and as per their narrative *"sometimes VERY old"* items... keeping them out of recycling bins and out of the trash can. They are remembering the 'reuse' before the 'recycle' bin, and especially before the 'rubbish' of discarding unwanted items into our landfills. Each member who brought an item then receives a lucky raffle ticket and a new treasure awaits as their number is called at the end of the meeting. Members can't wait to see what others have brought... and the excitement builds throughout the meeting! Who will be called first for the top choice of the recycling bounty?!

Reusing and reinventing uses for items is always a priority over sending items for community recycling and so important to keep items out of our waste. This project does not cost any money, and everyone leaves with a smile on their face with their new precious heirlooms, after having cleared a space out on a shelf or in a drawer - which feels great too! Members can share amongst themselves as to who donated what, if there is a story behind the item, and new ideas or uses for it. This also helps develop relationships and communication between members. As their club member says, they really do not care about what they win, they are having fun while supporting a great Conservation cause!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve GFWC Florida as your Conservation Chairman. I am so proud of the wonderful and creative efforts our state has contributed towards Conservation and our Grand Initiatives. Keep up the great work, our world is a better place because of you!



Elizabeth Fisher

GFWC Florida State Conservation Chair

Cell: 305 434-2003

Email: gfwcelizfisher@gmail.com