

# FLAGLER BOCC HEADLINES



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## HELP SHOWCASE FLAGLER IN PHOTOS FOR FAC CALENDAR CONTEST 'STORMY SKIES'

Flagler County is seeking photographers who would like to submit their images for the Florida Association of Counties (FAC) 2024-2025 calendar contest "Stormy Skies."

"This year's theme will test the moxie of photographers, who will need to embrace the storm chaser within," said County Administrator Heidi Petito. "Fortunately, we have a lot of great photographers here in Flagler County, so we are reaching out for help in presenting our captivating storms to the rest of the state of Florida."

"Stormy Skies" submissions can range from "the gentle swirl of clouds to the delicate dance of lightning," the FAC website states.

Flagler County will submit the entries on behalf of individual photographers. The Florida Association of Counties will give winning photographers credit for their images in the calendar.

Entry requirements are as follows:

- MUST BE SHOT IN FLAGLER COUNTY (it is helpful if the location is identified).
- Photos must be at least 3000 pixels / 300 DPI and in .JPEG format (horizontal format for calendar).
- Photos with logos, names, time and date stamps, or watermarks will not be accepted.
- Flagler County deadline is August 12 (Monday) so that the county can get them prepared for submission and submitted.
- To: [jmurphy@flaglercounty.gov](mailto:jmurphy@flaglercounty.gov).



## FWC AND U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE TO FIND SOLUTION FOR WAYWARD SEA TURTLES

Flagler County has received reports that some wayward sea turtles have been able to crawl up onto the top of the new dunes in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction project area and there is worry that they may wander onto State Road A1A. Efforts are under way to provide a solution.

"We are working closely with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service right now to take preventative measures for turtles that may crawl up onto the new dune so they don't go onto the road," said Coastal Engineering Administrator Ansley Wren-Key. "The design of the dune slope was approved by FWC and was supposed to be too steep for the turtles to climb up, but they are apparently able to do so."

Flagler County met with these two wildlife agencies and the Army Corps to discuss additional barriers that can be used to protect the sea turtles from this hazard and reached agreement for an effective solution. The contract will be modified to accelerate the permanent sand fencing. If this cannot be done in a timely manner, temporary silt fencing can be installed and later removed and replaced with permanent sand fencing.

Additionally, dimensions for the permanent sand fencing will be modified such that the slats of the fence will be 3 feet above ground and embedded 10-12 inches below ground, as this would satisfy requirements for both sea turtles and gopher tortoises. It is the goal to have the silt fence mimic the modified design of the sand fence in the interim until the permanent sand fencing is installed.

"Once the wide beach is built, these sea turtles will have more habitat to lay their eggs and nest," Wren-Key said. "On other nourished beaches in Florida, statistics show that nesting activity increases – and the mortality rate decreases – as more nesting areas are provided and the nests are not washed out with high tides and storms, which can be a hazard for nests on narrow beaches."

## 'TUNE IN' TO MEETINGS

AUGUST 5: BOCC REGULAR MEETING AT 9 a.m.  
AUGUST 5: BOCC WORKSHOP AT 2 p.m.  
AUGUST 7: SPECIAL MAGISTRATE AT 1 p.m.  
AUGUST 19: BOCC REGULAR MEETING AT 5 p.m.

### LIVE STREAM

[www.youtube.com/flaglercounty/live](http://www.youtube.com/flaglercounty/live)



FAC Photo Contest Entry  
by P.T. Bourg

## 'INDEPENDENCE DAY' NOT A LICENSE TO CUT TREES ON PUBLIC LANDS

By most measures, revelers enjoyed the Fourth of July in Flagler County in typical ways – watching the parade in Flagler Beach, or cooling off at the newly reopened Splash Pad in Palm Coast, or watching the Fireworks Over the Runways at the Flagler Executive Airport. They also spent the long holiday weekend enjoying Flagler County's wild places and parks.

Sadly, some chose to spend part of the holiday cutting down cypress trees at the county's Lake Disston Boat Launch.

"The launch gives access to Lake Disston, a state designated 'Outstanding Florida Waters,' – because the lake is worthy of special protection to preserve its exceptional ecological significance," said Forestry Supervisor Ralph Risch. "Cutting trees on the county's public property is prohibited by both state and county ordinances."

Some old-growth trees in Florida are over 500 years old, according to the University of Florida IFAS Extension. Cyprresses are among the most flood-tolerant of all Florida's trees, which is why they dominate swamps that have long flood periods.

"They provide flood control and can maintain – or improve – water quality in the environment," Risch said. "They can absorb storm runoff and can help slow flooding during heavy rain events."

The technical term for the Cypress "knee" is pneumatophore, or air-bearing, according to the National Wildlife Federation. The knees bring air to the drowned roots.

Cypress trees provide habitat for amphibians like frogs and salamanders, as well as birds like wood storks and bald eagles.

"Please, enjoy Flagler County's abundant natural resources," Risch said. "As always, let's continue to work together to preserve these wild places in our public spaces, and leave them for future generations to enjoy."

## 'DO DATE' EVENTS

08/24/24

**Master Gardener Plant Clinic | 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.**

**Flagler County Public Library -- Palm Coast**

2500 Palm Coast Parkway NW

Presented through a partnership with the UF Extension Office in Flagler County

## BREAKERS

### FLAGLER COUNTY RECEIVES 3 NACIO 'AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE' INCLUDING BEST OF CATEGORY FOR 'COAST TO COUNTRY'

Flagler County is the recipient of three National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) "Awards of Excellence," including a Best of Category for "Coast to Country" – the county's digital quarterly magazine. NACIO, which is an active affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo).

"Coast to Country" took the top award in the category Specialized Websites single issue communication for the magazine released October 1, 2023. The Transparency Dashboards were awarded an "Excellence," given to entries that exceed industry standards, also within the Specialized Websites category. The third award of "Excellence" was for a feature story entitled "Flagler County Forestry Supervisor Ralph Risch Vouchers 20-plus Species."

"I am proud to announce our team was honored with three prestigious awards from the National Association of County Information Officers," said County Administrator Heidi Petito during the regular Board of County Commissioners meeting. "These accolades recognize our dedication to effectively engaging our community, disseminating valuable information, and fostering a culture of transparency."

The NACIO "Awards of Excellence" program honors the innovative, creative, and outstanding work of county government communicators and state county associations communications departments throughout the nation with its annual awards program, according to its website.

Communications Coordinator Julie Murphy is the editor of "Coast to Country" and authored the story about Risch.

"It is an incredible honor to be recognized at the national level for work I have had a hand in creating," she said. "Excellence is always a goal, and that goal is made easier when you work with a team of outstanding professionals, like Ralph Risch, who provide an endless source of great stories to write."

Deputy County Administrator Jorge Salinas brainstormed the Transparency Dashboards project that was unveiled in May 2023 as part of the county's pledge to provide accurate information to the community. This innovative tool provides viewers with the opportunity to explore data sets of keen interest in a visual and easy-to-understand format.