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Pasco County Focuses on Efforts to Protect Gopher Tortoise

~~Florida's only native tortoise, a threatened species, gets much-needed recognition~~

PASCO COUNTY, FL ---- The [Pasco County Board of County Commissioners](#) is proactively working to protect the native gopher tortoise and is encouraging our communities to do the same.

Since gopher tortoises are a threatened species in Florida and are protected under state law, these gentle land tortoises must be relocated before any land clearing or development can take place. [Pasco County Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources](#) is working to establish a gopher tortoise recipient site within Pasco to provide long-term refuge for gopher tortoises displaced by development.

“The gopher tortoise is an important part of the area's ecology and for some residents, a symbol of natural Florida,” said Pasco County Commissioner Kathryn Starkey. “The recipient site will be located in land purchased through the Environmental Land Acquisition and Management Program.”

Conservation of gopher tortoises depends not only on the efforts of the [Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission](#) (FWC) and other conservation groups, but also on Florida's citizens. Download the [Florida Gopher Tortoise App](#) to report gopher tortoise sightings and to learn more about this threatened species.



April 24, 2018: the Pasco Board of County Commissioners declares April 10, 2018 Gopher Tortoise Day.

Parks, Recreation and Natural Resources Director Keith Wiley accepts the proclamation along with “Poly,” an FWC-registered educational gopher tortoise who lives at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park.