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Pasco County Celebrates Florida Gopher Tortoise Day

~~ Educational event highlights the importance of Florida's only native tortoise ~~

PASCO COUNTY, FL ---- Florida's native tortoise got its day in the spotlight at Jay B. Starkey Wilderness Park during an event honoring the April 10 statewide Florida Gopher Tortoise Day. The April 6, 2019, gathering, hosted by Pasco County's [Parks Recreation and Natural Resources Department](#), included an educational hike around the many burrows in the park and an informational booth presentation on the species.

Pasco County is proactively working to protect the gentle, threatened species through relocation refuge sites that provide a new, long-term home for gopher tortoises displaced by development. In 2018, the [Pasco Board of County Commissioners](#) adopted a resolution recognizing the importance of the gopher tortoise, joining more than 30 other cities and counties in Florida with such a designation.



“The gopher tortoise is an important part of our county’s ecology and for some residents, a symbol of natural Florida,” said District 3 Commissioner Kathryn Starkey.

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.

“Many Floridians and visitors to the state are knowledgeable about gopher tortoises and willing to take actions to help them,” said Deborah Burr, who leads the FWC’s gopher tortoise management program. “We’re excited about Gopher Tortoise Day as a way to get more people involved.”

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