Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Site Nominations for the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail

Who can submit a site nomination?

Site nominations must be submitted by the person who is authorized by their organization or entity to make a commitment to being a GFBWT partner. This person should be familiar with and primarily responsible for the site. Interested community members are welcome and encouraged to contact such persons about this application opportunity and work with them to prepare application materials.

When can I submit a site nomination?

You can submit nominations from 10 a.m. on Oct. 3, 2022, until 5 p.m. on Feb. 28, 2023. However, it's a good idea to prepare in advance.

Is my site right for the GFBWT?

If your site has the following traits, it might be a good choice for the GFBWT!

- **Unique Wildlife Viewing Opportunities**

  This means visitors have a chance to see iconic or rare birds, animals, butterflies, plants and/or ecosystems in high quality habitats. It also means the site provides special ecological value to the surrounding area. Think of any place providing a good home for native wildlife and providing people the opportunity to enjoy seeing it. Current sites range from relatively untouched forests to city parks.

- **Site Resilience**

  This means that sites must be able to withstand public use. If there are any sensitive habitats or species present, information must be provided on how their disturbance is mitigated or prevented, and the site must have a protection plan in place to make sure increased levels of public use do not harm the site or the wildlife living there.

- **Safe and Legal Public Access**

  This means the site must be either publicly owned or a private landowner has given written permission for the public to use the site. It also means the site must be free of serious safety hazards or the site must be managed so the public can be reliably protected from any serious safety hazards that might occur at the site. Providing public access for people with disabilities whenever possible is also encouraged.

- **Educational Programming**

  Sites must provide educational materials, programs or events related to Florida's wonderful wildlife. These can include guided tours, workshops, interpretive signs, printed or online checklists, fact sheets, web pages and more!

Is there a cost associated with nomination?

There are no costs directly associated with nomination or selection for the GFBWT. However, it is highly encouraged that at least two wayfinding signs be installed to direct visitors to GFBWT sites. Applicants are therefore asked to make a commitment to seeking funding for sign installation and maintenance should their site be selected. Installation and maintenance costs will vary by site.

How can I submit a site nomination?

To submit a site nomination, you'll need to:

i. **Prepare an Application Packet.** The Application Packet contains detailed instructions and templates for the documents you'll need to complete and an application checklist to help you keep track of everything you need.

ii. **Complete the online Site Nomination Form via Survey Monkey.** You'll be able to upload the materials from the Application Packet to the relevant parts of the Site Nomination Form. You'll also be able to save your application as you go and return to edit it later. Site Nomination Forms that haven't been submitted can be edited all the way until nominations close at 5 p.m. on Jan. 27, 2023. **Submitted applications will be considered complete and cannot be edited**, so only hit that final button once you're ready.

What will I need to know to prepare an Application Packet?

You'll need to know:

- What native bird, butterfly, mammal, reptile and amphibian species visitors are most likely to see at your site, and the best times to see them. Visitor observations like eBird lists are a great resource for this.
- Whether any endemic, rare or at-risk species are found at your site.
- The habitat types present at your site, how they are impacted by human use, and their current condition.
- The educational opportunities your site offers to teach the public about wildlife and wildlife viewing (e.g., guided tours, interpretive signs, checklists).
- Descriptive facts about your site including but not limited to:
    - Site owner/managing agency
    - Distance to the nearest town
    - Nearby population demographics
    - Distance to the nearest GFBWT site
    - On-site amenities
    - Safety concerns

What documents will I need to provide?

You will need to provide signed copies of the Required Documents provided in the Application Packet. These are:

- **Letter of Organizational Commitment.** This letter commits those responsible for the site to an active partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Wildlife Viewing Section should their site be selected for inclusion in the GFBWT. It must be signed by the site manager and any other relevant person ultimately responsible for the site.
- **Statement of Sign Funding Intent.** The GFBWT strongly recommends the installation of at least two wayfinding signs along the main road approaching the site. Applicants are asked to identify a funding source and to commit to seeking funding for sign installation should their site be selected for inclusion in the GFBWT.

- **Sign Maintenance Agreement.** Wayfinding signs for GFBWT sites are maintained by road maintenance partners who are responsible for the roads approaching the sites (e.g., FDOT or county or city public works department). Applicants must provide a statement of support from the appropriate road maintenance partner expressing the partner's commitment to sign maintenance should the site be selected for inclusion in the GFBWT.

- **Species Lists for the Site.** Please complete using the template provided in the application packet.

- **Public Access Guarantee.** FOR PRIVATELY OWNED SITES ONLY. A signed statement from owners of private land guaranteeing public access should the site be selected for inclusion in the GFBWT.

You are also encouraged to provide the following Recommended Documents to strengthen your application:

- Site management plan (if available).
- Supporting material documenting the species observed at the site (e.g., eBird lists, iNaturalist projects, checklists, publications).
- Supporting material showing how at-risk species, fragile ecosystems, and habitats at the site are being or will be protected (if applicable).
- Supporting material showing the educational opportunities offered at your site (photos, documents, etc.).
- Supporting material documenting the features of your site making it legal and safe for the public to access.
- Letters of support from local community organizations (e.g., tourism department, chamber of commerce, Audubon Society, Native Plant Society).

All relevant documents must be uploaded to the Site Nomination Form. Acceptable formats include PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG and JPEG.