

Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail



INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Nominating New Sites for the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail

The GFBWT excited to announce the opening of nominations for new Trail sites! The nomination process has three steps:

1. Review the [FAQ](#) to get an introduction to the site nomination process, including what information and documents you'll need to provide when submitting your nomination.
2. Read and complete the relevant documents provided in this [Application Packet](#). These documents are detailed instructions and templates of the paperwork that you will need to complete to submit your nomination.
3. Complete the online [Site Nomination Form](#) via Survey Monkey to submit your nomination. This form will be active from Oct. 3, 2022, to Feb. 28, 2023, and consists of questions about your site that will determine its suitability for the GFBWT. You will be able to upload the completed documents from the Application Packet to the Site Nomination Form.

Note that this nomination process is for new sites only. For updates to existing sites, or if you have any questions about new site nominations that are not covered in the Application Packet, please contact the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Coordinator at Lauren.Ali@MyFWC.com.

The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail looks forward to receiving your site nomination.

Sincerely,

Lauren Ali
Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail Coordinator
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Email: lauren.ali@myfwc.com



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Understanding the Application Packet

The Application Packet is a group of downloadable PDF files containing instructions and templates for the documents you'll need to complete and upload to the online Site Nomination Form to submit a site nomination.

The Application Packet contains two types of documents:

- The **Required Documents** are the paperwork you will need to **complete and upload to the online Site Nomination Form to submit a nomination**. The Application Packet contains templates for Required Documents.
- The **Additional Documents** are **helpful tools that may be useful as you prepare your application** (e.g., an application checklist to help you keep track of your progress). You will not need to upload Additional Documents to the online Site Nomination Form.

This page also includes information on **Recommended Documents** that may **strengthen your nomination**, although they are **not required**. The Application Packet does not contain templates for Recommended Documents.

Required Documents

There are eight Required Documents, described below. The file name for each document begins with numbers 1 to 7 indicating the order in which you should view them. **Signed copies of relevant Required Documents must be uploaded to the online Site Nomination Form for a site nomination to be considered.**

1 - Instructions for Applicants

This document contains detailed instructions on how to prepare an Application Packet to submit a site nomination. The information in this document can also be found on the [GFBWT website](#) but is included in the Application Packet as a downloadable PDF for reference.

2- Letter of Organizational Commitment

For a site to be considered for inclusion on the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail (GFBWT), the site manager must commit to a continuing active partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Wildlife Viewing Section if the site is selected.



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Active partnership is defined as the following:

- Completing a brief yearly survey to confirm that the site's description in GFBWT online and print publications is up to date.
- Notifying the GFBWT Coordinator of any damage to GFBWT signage, if applicable.
- Notifying the GFBWT Coordinator of any major site changes that would affect the visitor experience (e.g., trail closures, hurricane damage, changes in hours, new programming, new recreational opportunities, land acquisition).
- Advertising the site's status as a recognized GFBWT location in online and print materials.
- Notifying the GFBWT Coordinator of any changes in site management, providing accurate contact information for new staff and informing the new manager of their responsibilities as a Trail partner.

The site manager ultimately responsible for the site must acknowledge and accept these duties by a signing the Letter of Organizational Commitment.

3 - Public Access Guarantee

All GFBWT sites must provide safe and legal public access. Therefore, it is required that nominations of privately owned lands include a signed statement from owners guaranteeing public access should the site be selected for inclusion in the GFBWT. **The Public Access Guarantee form is only necessary for nominations of privately owned sites.** There is no need to include it if nominating a publicly owned site.

4 - Statement of Sign Funding Intent & 5 - Sign Maintenance Agreement

Road signs are important in making travel decisions. A 2020 survey of GFBWT users showed that 83% of respondents had seen a sign that prompted or motivated them to visit a Trail site. It is therefore strongly recommended that nominated sites install and maintain road signs directing visitors to the site, with a minimum of two signs along the main road to the site.

Applicants are therefore asked to submit a Statement of Sign Funding Intent to express their commitment to seeking funding for sign installation, and a Sign Maintenance Agreement established with the appropriate road maintenance partner responsible for the roads approaching the sites (e.g., FDOT or county or city public works department). The cost of initial installation for two road signs is variable based on location and number of signs but should be **less than \$2,000. Applicants who have submitted the signed Statement of Sign Funding Intent but have not yet obtained funding will not be penalized during the selection process.**

All engineering planning and sign installation must be funded and completed independently of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Once engineering is complete, the sign panels and directional arrows themselves will be provided by the FWC upon request to sites selected for inclusion in



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the GFBWT. Note that many road maintenance agencies across the state of Florida have maintenance agreements with the GFBWT or GFBWT partners for existing sites. **Current county-level maintenance agreements are available for reference from the GFBWT upon request.** Contact Lauren.Ali@MyFWC.com for more information.

6 - Species List

Sites that are selected for inclusion on the Trail must provide high quality, unique wildlife viewing experiences. Applicants are asked to use the editable Species List Template provided in the Application Packet to prepare species lists recording the different types of birds, butterflies, native mammals and native reptiles and amphibians that visitors are most likely to see at the site. The lists must contain both the common and scientific names of the species where possible and notes on the best times to view them if known. The lists should be uploaded as a single DOC, DOCX or PDF document.

7 - Guide to the Site Nomination Form

The final step in the site nomination process is submitting the online Site Nomination Form (hosted via Survey Monkey). This form collects information that will be used to determine whether a site is suitable for inclusion on the GFBWT and is where all Required and Recommended Documents must be uploaded. The Guide to the Site Nomination Form is a valuable tool to help applicants prepare the best site nomination possible. It contains all the questions applicants will be required to answer, as well as information on the form itself and how to complete it. **Note that the guide IS NOT the Site Nomination Form, and only online Site Nomination Forms submitted via Survey Monkey will be considered.**

Additional Documents

These documents are included in the Application Packet to assist applicants, and do not need to be submitted as part of the site nomination. They include:

- A PDF copy of the [FAQ](#) for GFBWT site nominations
- An application checklist
- A formal letter announcing the opening of GFBWT site nominations
- A flyer announcing GFBWT site nominations



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The FAQ and application checklist are meant to help applicants in preparing to submit a new site nomination. The application checklist lists all the Required and Recommended Documents in a fillable PDF, so the items can be checked off on either hard or soft copy according to user preference.

The formal letter and the flyer can be shared with prospective nominators, site managers, maintenance partners or other relevant parties.

The Additional Documents can be downloaded from the [GFBWT website](#).

Recommended Documents

These documents are not required and are therefore not provided in the downloadable application packet linked at the bottom of this page. However, including these documents in your nomination (by uploading them to the Site Nomination Form) can strengthen a nomination.

Site management plan

If one is available, including the site management plan in your site nomination can provide useful information on the site's long-term viability as a part of the GFBWT.

Supporting material documenting the species observed at the site

Although species lists are part of the Required Documents, it can also be helpful to include documentation showing the sources of these lists, e.g., scientific studies, eBird lists, iNaturalist lists or projects, data collection efforts carried out routinely at the site, etc.

Supporting material showing how at-risk species, fragile ecosystems, and habitats at the site are being or will be protected

This may be included within the management plan. However, if no management plan is submitted this information can be provided in another format.

Supporting material showing the educational opportunities offered at your site

This may include tour schedules, activity sheets, images and documentation of educational events (e.g., photos, screenshots of event pages), images of interpretive signs, website links, copies of educational materials handed out on-site (e.g., fact cards, checklists).



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Supporting material documenting the features of your site making it legal and safe for the public to access

This may include maps, photos, documentation of accessibility features, etc.

Letters of support from local community organizations

Letters of support show the local community is invested in the site and in its inclusion on the GFBWT. Letters can come from any group, including but not limited to the local tourism department, chamber of commerce, Audubon Society and/or Native Plant Society.

All documents must be uploaded to the application form. Acceptable formats include PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG and JPEG.



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