

Call for Abstracts and Registration Information

2026 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL



Registration is now open, and we are accepting abstracts for oral and poster presentations for the **48th Annual Gopher Tortoise Council Meeting**.

The meeting is to be held in **Gulf Shores, AL at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, 21196 East Beach Blvd., Gulf Shores, AL 36542** from **November 6-8, 2026**.

The meeting will include the Special Session – Conservation Easements – The Benefits and Disadvantages of Using Conservation Easements to Achieve Conservation Successes.

Agenda coming soon.

In addition to presentations about gopher tortoise biology, we welcome presentations on:

- commensals and other species associated with tortoises and southeastern upland habitats
- general ecology of upland pine ecosystems
- habitat management and restoration
- conservation initiatives
- policy, regulation, or economics
- monitoring and field techniques
- Successful and creative partnerships conserving Gopher Tortoises, habitat, or associated species

Instructions for Submitting Abstracts (Oral Presentations and Posters):

The deadline for submitting abstracts is **October 5, 2026**. Abstracts should be 300 words or less and conform to the general style of Journal of Wildlife Management abstract format (see sample abstract below). The name, affiliation, address, and email of the corresponding author should be provided with the abstract. **Please indicate if you wish to present an oral or poster presentation.** Depending on the number of oral presentations received you may be asked to submit a poster. Student presentation awards are given for the top three student oral presentations at the annual meeting. Please **indicate clearly in your abstract if you are an undergraduate or graduate student** so that you can be considered for this award. Abstracts must be submitted in MS Word. Please submit abstracts via e-mail to brothermel@archbold-station.org. Please copy jefbaker@southernco.com. The first 20 students who submit an abstract and give a poster or talk at the 2026 annual meeting will each receive a \$250 Travel Grant. Please clearly indicate on your Abstract Submission if you are interested in the Travel Grant. See here for details: <https://gophertortoisecouncil.org/who-we-are/grant-programs/32-bob-herrington-student-travel-grant>.

Full length presentations will be strictly limited to 15 minutes, including 3 minutes for questions. Speed talks will be limited to 5 minutes, including questions. An LCD projector will be provided. Overheads and 35 mm slides are not acceptable. Posters should be no larger than 48" x 36."

Sample Abstract:

The Effects of Fish Size on Net Energy Intake of Snowy Egrets

Toobee R. Estord¹ and Mork Ritters²

¹Everglades Division, South Florida Water Management District, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

²Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 3200 T. M. Goodwin Road, Fellsmere, FL 32948

Draining wetlands reduces their hydroperiod and causes a shift in the size structure of the fish community toward smaller and younger fish. Reduced fish size could potentially impact snowy egrets (*Egretta thula*) if it reduced their net energy intake. We tested the hypothesis.....
MAXIMUM 300 WORDS.

MEETING DETAILS

Registration

Registration costs include attendance at two days of presentations, on-site refreshment breaks, and Friday night dinner at The Lodge. Dinners include entrée item, rolls, drink, salad, side, and desert). Vegetarian options will be available during registration.

Lunch will be “on your own” (multiple options available on site as well as in nearby Gulf Shores) and a box lunch is also an option with registration. Lunch boxes at the venue will include: sandwich, chips, cookie, and a drink). Vegetarian sandwich option will be available during registration.

Registration is available at the following link:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/369e9pv/lp/fcb654fc-6ae6-448f-a28e-ef214951d1b6>
[lp.constantcontactpages.com]

Registration options for the 2026 Annual GTC meeting are as follows:

- **Early-bird (through Oct. 1):**
 - Student \$15 (includes membership)
 - Professional \$200.00
 - Optional membership renewal: \$25
- **Regular (after Oct. 1):**
 - Student \$100 (includes membership)
 - Professional \$250.00
 - Optional membership renewal: \$25
- **Registration Closes October 23, 2026.**
- **Saturday, November 7th Awards Dinner \$50.00 each. Don't forget to purchase an extra ticket if you are bringing a guest – Dinners include entrée item, rolls, drink,**

salad, side, and desert). Vegetarian option will be available during registration. There will be a **cash bar** open during the Awards Dinner.

- **Sunday, November 8th field trip options will include a free guided tour of Graham Creek Nature Preserve (approximately 20 minute drive from venue) and a paid guided fishing trip at the Gulf State Park Pier. There will be an option to access the pier for a stroll, with no fishing, for those interested. Pier access will be \$10.00 and bait for those fishing will be \$5. These options will be available during registration.**
- Click [HERE](#) to Register. Final Agenda Coming Soon! A draft agenda can be found [here](#) to facilitate travel requests.

Meeting Location: Gulf State Park Lodge, 21196 East Beach Blvd., Gulf Shores, AL 36542.

A room block with details below has been reserved for this event. The block expires October 6, 2026.

Lodging

Hotel Block: The Lodge at Gulf State Park

Room block [reservation link](#) available through October 6

Reservations can also be made via phone at 1-800-618-4350. Mention the group name, Gopher Tortoise Council, or code 91B.

Rooms will be available November 5-8. A limited number of government rate prices may be available to agency employees with budget travel restrictions. Contact jefbaker@southernco.com for more information.

Live and Silent Action:

Both live and silent auctions will take place at this year's meeting so bring your best items to contribute! Our auctions at the annual meeting support [GTC's grant programs](#). Please consider donating auction items at the meeting to raise money for environmental education, student research, and gopher tortoise day funding!

Conference T-shirts

We will continue to use Bonfire as our online vendor to offer a selection of customized t-shirts. The vendor will ship directly to purchasers prior to the meeting and donate all proceeds to GTC. Ordering details will be available soon!

Questions

For more information contact Jeff Baker, GTC Co-chair and host for this year's meeting (jefbaker@southernco.com). Hope to see you all in November!