

Meet Kevin Barry — WINNING CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPHER

The winner of this year's on-line Photography Contest is Kevin Barry's profusion of Bur Marigold blooms in Polk County's Lake Hatchineha Watershed (pronounced "hatch-n-haw"). The image is the September image in *LINC's Florida Forever 2012 Conservation Photography Calendar*.

"That was my first time at that location, and I totally lucked out with the weather, the flowers in peak bloom, and I was ready with the right equipment," Barry confessed. "I met up with one of my central Florida Flickr contacts before dawn, and from the parking lot we had to hike to reach the area where the flowers were blooming. The main goal that morning was going to be bird photography, but I was blown away when I saw all the yellow flowers and decided to concentrate on them first."

"When I started shooting at dawn there were no clouds in the sky, and landscapes without clouds usually don't work too well. But I continued trying different compositions as the sun rose, and eventually the clouds rolled in. The scene just got better and better."

[Kevin Barry](#) has been photographing in Florida for over twenty years. Nature always ends up being his favorite subject. "I always try to keep an open mind," Barry acknowledges, "and I am ready to capitalize on any good photographic opportunity that presents itself when I'm in the field." Still, Barry's photography does have a message. "Nature is special," he explains, "and needs to be protected."

Barry likes being a Florida photographer because, as he says, "Florida has such biological diversity, and in spite of our large and growing population, much land has been set aside in the form of parks, forests, and preserves, which are all great for a nature photographer."

Conservation photographer, and LINC Calendar Project Manager, Mac Stone asked Barry how it felt to win the LINC Florida Forever conservation photography calendar contest for a second time. "Well, it's always great to have a photo published, especially in a calendar," Barry admitted, "but this calendar isn't just a product put out there to make some company money. It showcases some of Florida's most precious resources that are in danger of being lost."

The Lake Hatchineha watershed is one of the Florida Forever priorities for public protection, consisting of approximately 6,500 acres in areas of rapid development in Osceola and Polk Counties. The parcels would preserve a continuum of rare natural communities, from the high scrub on the edges of Florida's Central Ridge to marsh, floodplain, lakeshore, and black water streams in the lowland areas.

The Hatchineha watershed is important because nearly 800 acres of the project are essential groundwater recharge areas, and another 4,800 acres directly impact surface waters of the state.

Bur marigold is a common name for several species of Bidens, a genus of flowering plants in the family Asteraceae. Florida has eight native species of Bidens; Bidens laevis is dominant in this picture. The plants bloom from September to October, producing numerous solitary bright yellow flowers. The dark brown seeds of the plant have spiky projections at one end that adhere to clothing, feathers, and animal fur so they can be carried to new habitats, making them also known as beggarticks.

