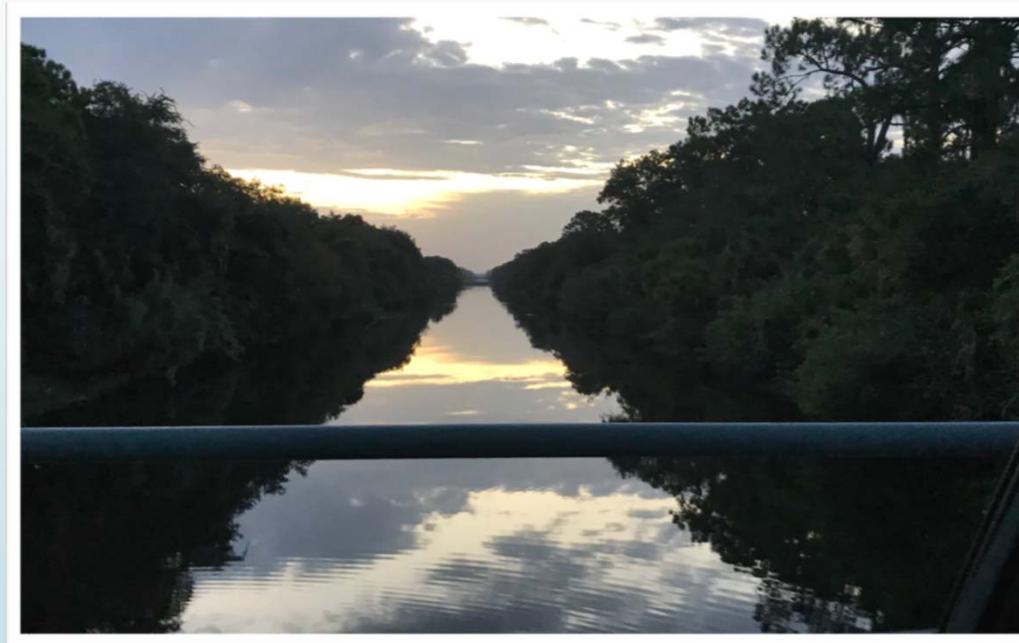


Rights of Nature: The City of North Port Ecosystems



Presented by Clean Water Now



“Legal systems are failing to protect the earth community in part because they reflect an underlying belief that humans are separate from and superior to all other members of the community, and that the primary role of Earth is to serve as “natural resources” for humans to consume. *These beliefs are demonstrably false.*”

American Association of Geographers



“ Current legal systems are designed to perpetuate human domination of nature instead of fostering mutually beneficial relationships between humans and other members of the earth community... Currently the rights of humans, and particularly of corporations, automatically trump the rights of all others.”

American Association of Geographers



“It cannot be stressed enough how everything is interconnected...

When we speak of the ‘environment,’ what we really mean is a *relationship* existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are part of nature...”

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*



“Recognizing the reasons why a given area is polluted requires a study of the workings of society, its economy, its behavior patterns, and the ways it grasps reality.”

Pope Francis



“The Rights of Nature paradigm aims for a fundamental shift in governance...Providing nature with personhood and the guardians to defend its rights in court helps change the framework to a form of ecological governance, rather than laws that provide only for human needs...”

American Association of Geographers



“Fully implementing a Rights of Nature form of ecological governance is the only way to reach true sustainability, because it places human activities *within* the framework of Nature’s laws and limitations.

American Association of Geographers



2006: Tamqua Borough, PA., banned the dumping of sewage sludge as a violation of the Rights of Nature (RON).

Tamqua was the first place in the world to recognize RON in law.



2008: Ecuador became the first country to recognize RON in its national constitution.

2011: The first RON court decision was issued in the Vilcabamba River case in Ecuador, upholding RON constitutional provisions.



2010: Bolivia
passed the
Law of the
Rights of
Mother Earth



2014: The first state constitutional amendment to include RON was proposed in Colorado. Ohio, Oregon, New Hampshire and other states followed suit.



2014: New Zealand Parliament passed the Te Urewera—a former national park—as having “legal recognition in its own right.”



2015: Pope Francis declared "A true right of the environment does exist."

2016: Columbia's Constitutional Court ruled that the Rio Atrato possesses rights to "protection, conservation, maintenance, and restoration."

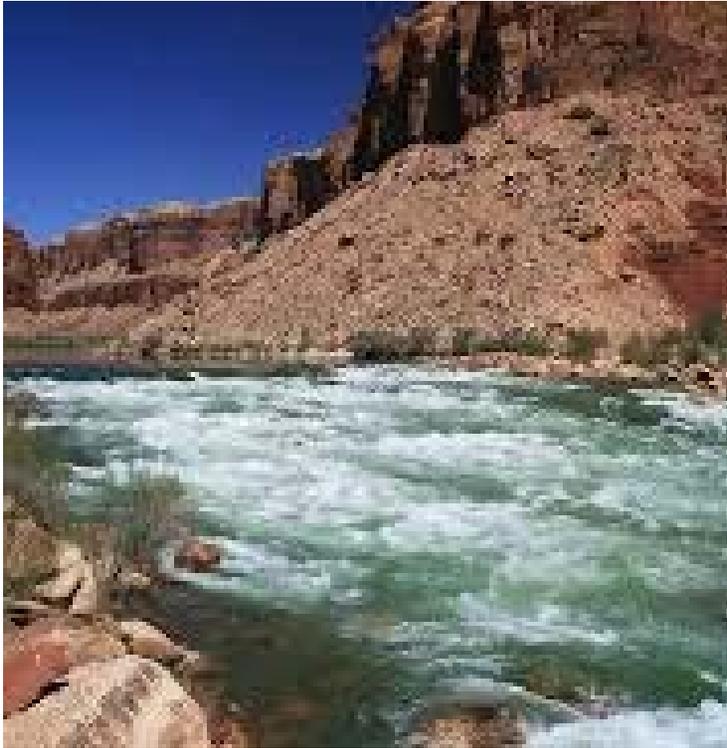


2017: New Zealand grants the Whanganui River legal status as an ecosystem.

2017: India recognizes the Ganga and Yuman Rivers, glaciers, and other ecosystems as legal persons with certain rights.



2017:
Lafayette,
Colorado
enacted the
first Climate
Bill of Rights.



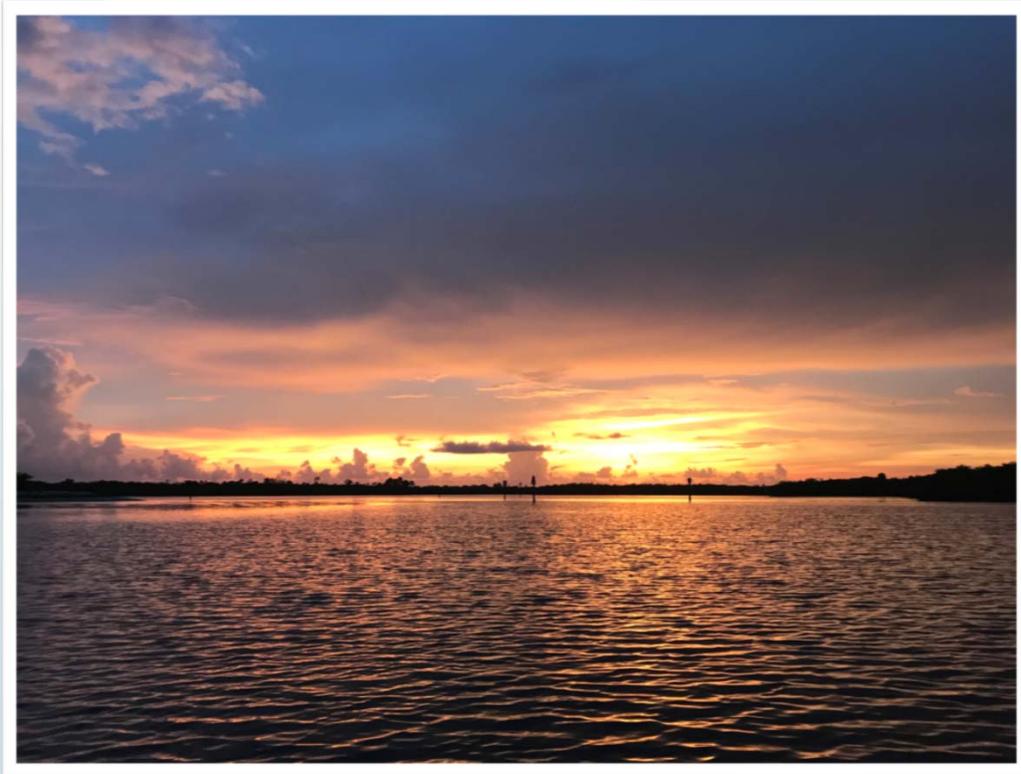
2017: *Colorado River v. State of Colorado* was filed in U.S. federal court. In this first in the nation lawsuit, an ecosystem sought recognition of its legal rights.



2019: Lake Erie
Bill of Rights.

It is the *first* law in
the nation to
secure legal
rights for an
ecosystem.

The Myakkahatchee River Bill of Rights





A. Rights of the Myakkahatchee River

“The Myakkahatchee River possesses rights, including but not limited to the right to naturally exist, flourish, regenerate and evolve; the right to restoration, recovery, and preservation; the right to abundant, pure, clean, unpolluted water, the right to natural groundwater recharge and surface water recharge; the right to a healthy, natural environment and natural diversity; the right to natural water flow; the right to carry out its natural ecosystem functions, and the right to be free of activities or practices, as well as obstructions that interfere with or infringe upon these rights.”



B. Rights of the People

“Every resident of the City of North Port possesses the right to a healthy, flourishing rivers and ecosystems; the right to pure, clean, unpolluted water, including the right to sustainably access, use, consume, and preserve water drawn from natural water cycles; and the right to a healthy environment and natural biodiversity. Every resident of the City of North Port shall also possess the right to be free of activities or practices that interfere with or infringe upon those rights, and the right to be free from state and federal preemptive laws that interfere with the enforcement of these rights.”



Human beings have an inalienable right to a healthy environment.

► That right can only be achieved by securing the highest protections for the natural environment—by recognizing nature’s right to be healthy and thrive.

Rights of Nature

Recognizes that ecosystems and natural communities are not merely property that can be owned but are entities that have an independent and inalienable right to exist and flourish.

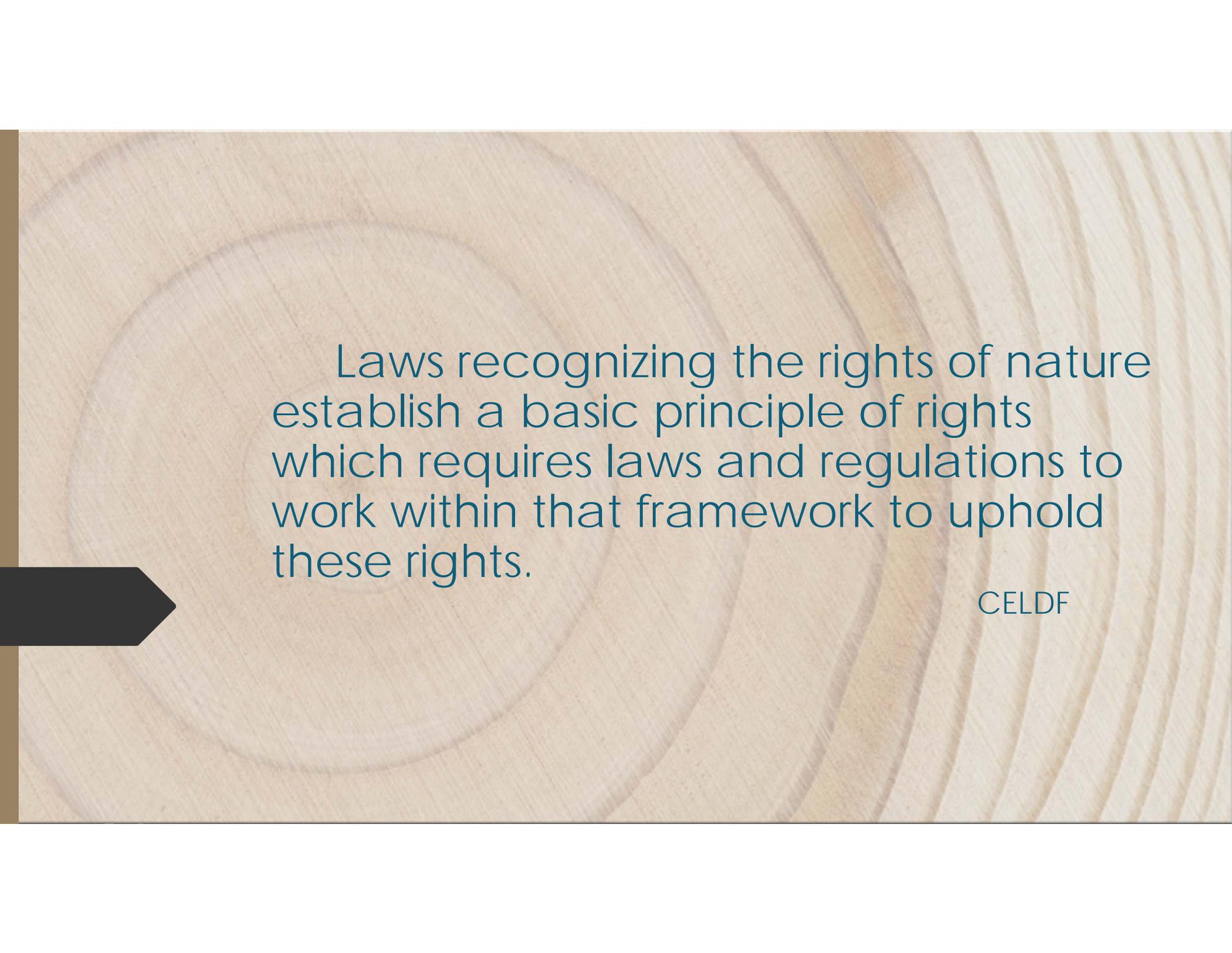
CELDF





Environmental laws *legalize* environmental harms. They permit pollution and destruction of the natural world.

CELDf

The background of the slide is a light-colored wood grain with prominent circular growth rings. On the left side, there is a solid black arrow pointing towards the right.

Laws recognizing the rights of nature establish a basic principle of rights which requires laws and regulations to work within that framework to uphold these rights.

CELDF



Human beings have an inalienable right to a healthy environment.

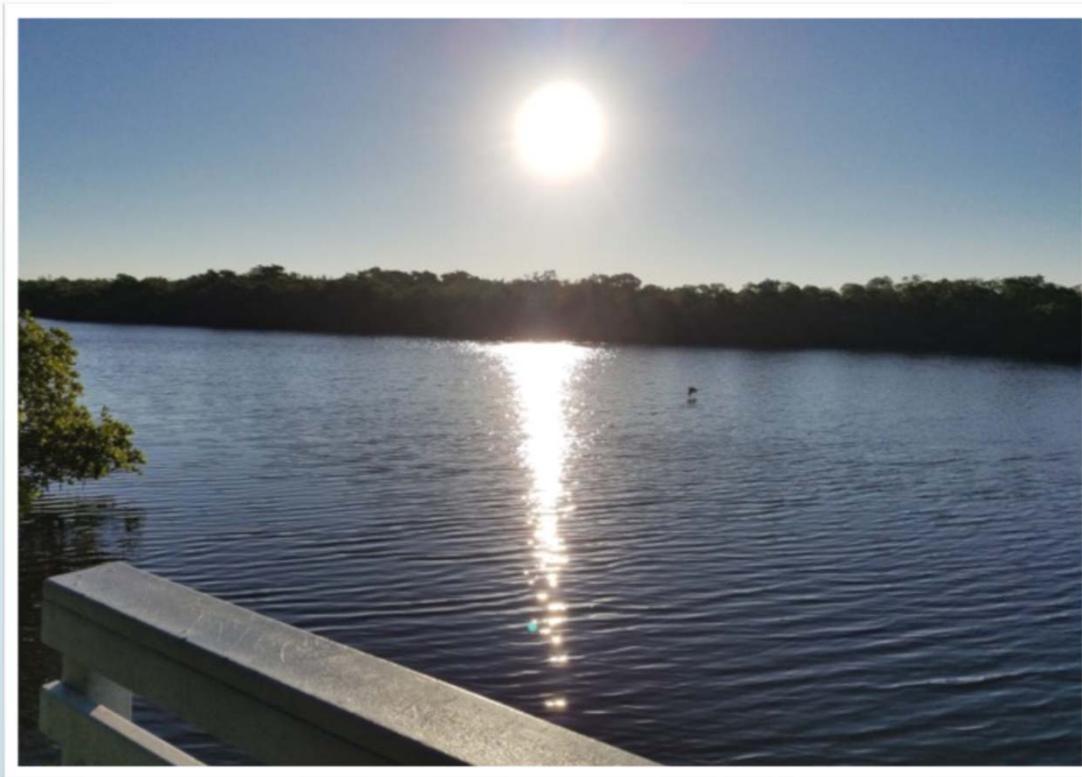
That right can only be achieved by securing the highest protections for the natural environment—by recognizing nature's right to be healthy and thrive.

"Fulfilling the human right to a healthy environment is unachievable without a fundamental change in the relationship between humankind and nature."

CELDF



The Myakkahatchee River Bill of Rights



Presented by Clean Water Now



“The primary cause of the American Revolution was the systemic usurpation of the right of local, community self-government by the British King and Parliament. Those usurpations occurred not only through the direct suppression of colonial legislation, but also through the King’s empowerment of 18th century corporations of global trade, such as the East India Company. Often cited as the final spark of the War, the Boston Tea Party was the direct result of colonial opposition to the East India Company.”

Thomas Linzey & Daniel E. Brannen Jr.
Community Environmental Defense Fund (CELDF)



“ All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and established for their benefit; and therefore, they have, at all times, an inalienable and indefeasible right to alter or abolish their form of government, in such manner as they may deem expedient.”

Constitution of the State of Florida