



Adventure Coast Group // Florida Chapter

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group July 2024 News, Events & Action Alerts

Check out all that's going on!

**Adventure Coast Meetup Wed. July 10th
Untamed Florida with Linda Walinski**

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee
ZOOM Thursday, July 11th**

**Ben Berauer New Adventure
Coast Outings Chair**

**Constitutional Amendment Proposed for
Right to Fish and Hunt Raises Concerns**

Duke Energy FL Rate Hike

Springs BMAP's Update

**Welcome Om 2nd Annual Bee Conscious
Sat. August 17th 10am-2pm**

**August: Summer Vacation -- No MeetUp!
Get outside!**

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Meetup Wed. July 10th on *Untamed Florida* with Linda Walinski

Conservation Photographer Linda Wilinski will present *Untamed Florida* with videos and photographs at the July 10th Adventure Coast Group Meetup. Public welcome. Attend in person or remotely via Zoom. The meeting will run from 7–8pm at the South Brooksville Community Center, 601 East Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Brooksville, FL.

Explore Florida's enchanting freshwater springs and wildlife through Linda Wilinski's lens where photography and conservation meet. Witness the beauty and significance of keystone Florida's species, learn more about them and their importance to Florida's ecology. Linda will take you on a visual journey to celebrate these natural wonders and the wildlife that calls it home.

Linda Wilinski is a passionate conservation photographer with a focus on freshwater springs. She is a certified Florida Master Naturalist who attended Crealder School of Art and is a board member of Rainbow River Conservation and Florida Springs Council. Her photography and lectures of Florida's wilderness shed light onto its beauty and perils. She believes the true essence of conservation photography is putting wildlife first, even if it means missing a photo opportunity.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAodO2spz8pG9LaDrdzDyXnm0zpjQWlzvDv>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

More info at

adventurecoast@florida.sierraclub.org or call 352 277-3330, check out our website at www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast.



To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAodO2spz8pG9LaDrdzDyXnm0zpjQWlzvDv>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Pasco Conservation Committee
Zoom Thursday, June 12th at 8pm**

SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA
PASCO
CONSERVATION
COMMITTEE



2nd Thurs. @ 8pm on Zoom



Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee is dedicated to preserving, exploring and enjoying nature in areas of Pasco County. We are working towards spinning off into its own Nature Coast Sierra Club Group. If you would like to join us in leading efforts to educate and protect Pasco's natural open spaces, please email sashabuddha@gmail.com.

You're invited to join our Zoom meeting the second Thursday of each month at 8:00PM at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7674695843> with the Zoom ID: 767 469 5843.

Ben Berauer New Adventure Coast Outings Chair



Adventure Coast was lucky to have Ben Berauer join our Executive Committee a few years ago. Now he has accepted the position of Outings Chair for our Group. Ben succeeds Eugene Kelly, the current Vice Chair, who has our eternal gratitude for planning some great outings to special places during his tenure.

Ben Berauer has a long history of organizing outings for Sierra Club. He has been a Sierra Club member since 1982, and an outings leader almost as long. He has served as the outings chair for the Turtle Coast and Suncoast Groups and is proud to now step in and serve as Adventure Coast's Outings

Chair. Ben has also served as SE representative of Local Outings Support Committee (LOSC) in 2012/2013 and is currently a member of the Florida Chapter Outings Committee.

Ben loves nature, the outdoors, and open spaces, and firmly believes that we each must do what we can to protect our environment! One of the ways is through outings, and he'll do his best to support the Adventure Coast Group outings program. As he put it, "Our Group is blessed with having an abundance of opportunities for outings in many natural areas. I invite all Adventure Coast members to join me in doing so and hope that you will then also join me in supporting our outings program as a leader."

We look forward to getting outside with Ben in some special places as well.
Stay tuned.

Constitutional Amendment on the Right to Fish and Hunt Raises Concerns



The right to fish and hunt will be on November the ballot in Florida as a constitutional amendment. Florida voters will decide on whether to enshrine fishing and hunting as a constitutional right. The language includes "Preserve forever fishing and hunting, including by the use of traditional methods, as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife." To pass, 60% of the voters must support it.

According to the **Tampa Bay Times**, *backers of Amendment 2, including outdoors groups, say the proposal will protect Florida's cultural heritage from "anti-hunting" threats. Lawmakers placed the initiative on the ballot last year and it passed unanimously in the House and 38-1 in the Senate.*

Rodney Barreto, vice chairperson of Yes on 2, the committee backing the amendment, wants hunting and fishing protections cast in stone for future generations. It is also supported by the National Rifle Association, the American Sportfishing Association, the Congressional Sportsman's Association and other groups.

Opponents say the amendment is unnecessary. Chuck O'Neal, chair of NoTo2.org the committee opposing the amendment, notes that the amendment could mean invasive animals are killed instead of relocated and it could have risky implications for black bears as human-black bear interactions have increased recently. He is concerned that the amendment could justify hunting on private property.

The Animal Law Section of the Florida Bar has taken an active stance against the amendment, saying "Hunting is not outlawed in any state. What is the threat is Florida's proposed amendment to wildlife and the ecosystem as a whole."

The Sierra Club Policy on Sport Hunting and Fishing is clear: Within both modified and natural ecosystems, the Sierra Club believes that acceptable management approaches include regulated periodic hunting and fishing when based on sufficient scientifically valid biological information and when consistent with all other management purposes and when necessary total protection of particular species or populations. Because national parks are set aside for the preservation of natural landscapes and wildlife, the Sierra Club is opposed to sport hunting in national parks and national monuments. *Guidelines developed by the Wildlife Committee, December 1994* - <https://www.sierraclub.org/policy/wildlife/wildlife-and-native-plants>.

Adventure Coast's Hernando Conservation Chair Tom St. Clair participated in a June statewide conservation meeting and priority one is mobilizing to oppose the proposed Constitutional Amendment. Tom noted that efforts are underway to collaborate with a list of many other Florida conservation organizations on messaging and strategy to stop this proposed amendment.

Duke Energy Florida Rate Hike



Image from Citrus Chronicle

A series of public hearings were held by the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) to consider a Petition for a Rate Increase filed by Duke Energy Florida (DEF). The Inverness meeting on June 12th was attended by several Sierra Adventure Coast Group leaders.

The Duke Energy Crystal River Powerplant continues to operate Units 4 and 5—two expensive, outdated, unhealthy coal plants. We spoke out on our concern with coal pollution and asked that they begin plans now to retire them by 2030. Duke seeks to charge customers over \$50 million in the next two years on equipment maintenance that could be spent on clean energy funded in part by U.S. Department of Energy grants.

Adventure Coast Citrus Student Leader Noa Adera captured the spotlight with her compelling comments to protect our environment. Citrus Conservation Committee Member Robin Orlandi described specific impacts of the pollution to downstream residents in Citrus and urged the commissioners to adopt clean energy instead. Chair DeeVon Quirolo asked for clean energy now and no more coal, and cited health

and environmental impacts.



Top to bottom: Noa Adera, Robin Orlandi, and DeeVon Quirolo speaking at the FPSC Inverness public hearing.

Next, the FPSC staff will file a recommendation with the Commission that addresses DEF’s proposed revenue increase. The Commissioners will then vote on this matter at a future Commission Conference. Based on the Commission’s decision on DEF’s proposed revenue increase, staff will prepare another recommendation that addresses the specific rates to be charged to each class of customers. The Commission will then vote on DEF’s rates at a future Commission Conference.

Sierra Club’s national Environmental Law Program will continue to pursue its legal challenge with an August evidentiary hearing scheduled.

Springs BMAP Update



The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FLDEP) began efforts to update the Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) for impaired Florida waters with a webinar on May 30th. It included plans for Crystal River/Kings Bay, Homosassa/Chassahowitzka Springs Groups and Weeki Wachee. The goal is to revise current state goals to remediate these nutrient-impaired waters. How to achieve those goals is left up to the individual counties. Twenty-four of the 30 Outstanding Florida Springs identified by the 2016 Springs and Aquifer Protection Act are considered impaired by pollution.

The plans that FLDEP produced in 2018 were flawed, so a coalition of conservation groups including Sierra Club filed a legal challenge to require new plans. The court ruled in our favor in February 2023, but the state has failed to comply with the 1st District Court of Appeals order until now. We need plans that meaningfully address pollution to save our springs.

The current BMAPS identified all the sources of nutrient loading and set goals to reduce the nutrient loading to meet Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) established for each impaired waterbody. FDEP uses a Total Deposition model to estimate this loading by source, including surface and groundwater inputs. Septic tanks led all categories followed by urban turf grass, farm fertilizers, livestock populations waste, biosolids, and on-site sewage treatment disposal systems. The sources varied by springs group and the TMDL goals varied accordingly.

Various projects have been undertaken or planned to meet goals to achieve a 30% reduction in nutrients by 2028, 80% by 2033 and 100% by 2038. Water quality has been monitored at the springs to identify improvements. None of our local springs achieved the nutrient-reduction goals, to the chagrin of many.

A Statewide Annual Report (STAR) is being produced now and is due out sometime in July. A final plan is due by the end of the year. More meetings will be scheduled, and the next one will lay out the new plans. FDEP indicated that they plan to engage with local governments, the agricultural industry and other stakeholders to make meaningful progress.

Ryan Smart of the Florida Springs Council commented that we need to finish all the planned projects NOW to achieve the goals by 2038. The same goals that were set 10 years ago have been postponed each time the plans are updated. The goals for this new plan should be an 80% reduction as previously set, not 30%.

Others raised concerns that accounting for future growth may be underestimated due to the growth spurt in the number of new residential units that have been approved in Hernando and Citrus Counties. Accurately accounting for atmospheric deposition was another concern raised.

You can find more information about each meeting at

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/bmap-public-meetings>. These meetings are opportunities for springs advocates to ensure that the state adopts effective plans as required by law to restore Florida's Springs. We encourage you to attend meetings for our springs.

Welcome Om 2nd Annual Bee Conscious Sat. August 17th 10am-2pm



Look for our inside table at this annual event to celebrate bees!

Welcome Om Integral Healing and Education Center
[4242 Lake in the Woods Drive, Spring Hill, FL.](#)

August: Summer Vacation -- No MeetUp!



Explore and enjoy our local springs, waterways, and forests!



The Sierra Club is America's largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person's right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit sierraclub.org.

For more information about Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group, visit our website: www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast, send an email to sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com, or call 352 277-3330. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

Getting too many Sierra Club emails? **Don't hit unsubscribe!**
Use the **Manage Preferences** option at the bottom of this or any other Sierra Club email to **choose what you want and what you don't want.**
Please keep on subscribing to My Chapter, the first option, so you continue to receive news from Sierra Club volunteers in your neighborhood.