



Adventure Coast Group // Florida Chapter

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

Check out all that's going on!

December 11th Holiday Party
With Wild Florida Images by Gary Kuhl

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee
ZOOM Wednesday, Dec. 4**

**VOTE by Dec. 6th in Sierra Club Adventure Coast
Group Executive Committee Election**

Outing Dec. 8th To Dixie Shores

**Saving Our Springs
Florida Springs Council Sues State**

**SWFWMD Seeks Your Input
Weeki Wachee River Survey**

Pasco Committee to Become a Group

**Adventure Coast Meetup Wed. Jan, 8th, 2025
With Beth Brady of Save the Manatees**

**Florida Manatee Festival Jan. 13-14
In Crystal River**



SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST GROUP HOLIDAY PARTY

6:00 PM - 8 PM

DECEMBER 11TH

THE HISTORIC BROOKSVILLE WOMANS CLUB, 131
SOUTH MAIN STREET IN BROOKSVILLE.

We've had a big year and will mark the holidays and celebrate our successes with like-minded friends at our Adventure Coast Holiday Party

Join us for a social with food and beverages. Stay for a special presentation to follow by Nature Photographer Gary Kuhl who will share his *Wild Florida* images of local wilderness and wildlife. If you're so inclined, bring a plate - desserts especially welcome.



IMAGE OF GARY KUHL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
WWW.SIERRACLUB.ORG/FLORIDA/ADVENTURE-COAST

OR SEND AN EMAIL TO SIERRACLUBADVENTURECOASTCC@GMAIL.COM, OR CALL 352 277-3330.

Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee Zoom Wednesday, December 4th



Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee is dedicated to preserving, protecting, exploring and enjoying nature in areas of Pasco County. The Pasco Conservation Team is working towards spinning off into its own Nature Coast Sierra Club Group. If you would like to join us in leading the way to educate

and protect Pasco's natural open spaces, please email sashabuddha@gmail.com.

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



Vote by Dec. 6th in the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group Executive Committee Election

There's still time to vote in this year's election for Executive Committee (ExCom) members. We have an incredible slate of qualified candidates for you to vote on. Six candidates have been nominated to fill four positions: Ben Berauer, Robin Orlandi, Brad W. Rimbey, Tom Sinclair PhD, Kristi Strazzullo, and DeeVon Quirolo. **Please vote now. All ballots are due by December 6th.**

Adventure Coast members were sent an electronic ballot via email on November 8th. Those without email addresses were sent a mail-in ballot via the U.S. Postal Service. The ballot is also on our website at www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast.

Seven dedicated members serve on the Executive Committee. They are elected by our members for 2-year terms ending in alternating years. This year's election is for 4 positions for a two-year term of office in 2025-2027.

Newly elected Executive Committee Members will be announced in December and at our Holiday Party on December 11th. They will be seated to take office at the January 8th, 2025, Executive Committee Meeting.

Outing Dec. 8th To Dixie Shores



Adventure Coast Outings Chair Ben Berauer has scheduled a field trip on Sunday, Dec 8, from 9 AM-12 PM. Join Park Biologist Andy Kilmer and the Citrus Native Plant Society at the Dixie Shores portion of the Crystal River Preserve State Park.

Andy will discuss the state park's upcoming flatwoods restoration project and the reintroduction of fire after mulching. We should be able to see the ecotones of several systems in this area and the diversity that comes with it.

Total distance will be about 2 miles, and we should return by noon. Please bring your own water and snacks. There are no restrooms or facilities available. We will park along the south side of W Dixie Shores Drive at the SE corner of W Fort Island Trail and W Dixie Shores. RSVP with Ben at bfberauer@aol.com, or call or text at 727-217-5971.

Saving our Springs Florida Springs Council Sues State



For years, as accelerating development resulted in many new permits being approved, springs advocates have demanded action to prevent over-pumping of groundwater that has resulted in reduced flows, increased pollution and harmful algal blooms that have reduced water quality and habitat for marine life in Florida's springs.

On November 18th, the Tampa Bay Times reported that the Florida Springs Council, in collaboration with the Stetson University Jacobs Public Interest Law Clinic, "Presented a clear demand in a new lawsuit against Florida's environmental regulators: follow the law and make your own rules to save Florida's struggling springs."

"If our state agencies don't have to follow the law, we have no hope," said Florida Springs Council Executive Director Ryan Smart. "Frankly, they should be ashamed that it takes a nonprofit group and a law clinic to sue them – not over the technical stuff – but just on following the basic mandate they were given nine years ago."

Florida lawmakers passed a measure nine years ago requiring the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FL-DEP) to create rules to prevent commercial, agricultural and utility industries from over-pumping spring water. It was directed to define harm and apply it when issuing water permits. Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) were created to provide a framework for restoration. In 2020 the Florida Clean Waterways Act was passed requiring new BMAPs by July 1st, 2025.

Since 2022, FL-DEP has released several draft rules that were never adopted. The Florida Springs Council, of which Sierra Club is a member, is concerned that the earlier timeline failed to achieve its goals. In addition, flaws have been identified in the NSILT modeling technology used to arrive at the estimates.

This year, the agency presented another draft and recently held public meetings to disclose new draft plans. Weeki Wachee Basin and Kings Bay/Crystal River/Homosassa/Chassahowitzka Springs Groups Basin are included in this statewide effort. FL-DEP hosted public hearings on November 7th in Brooksville to present draft plans on these local springs. Final plans will be reviewed at public hearings in December 2024 or January 2025.



Image of BMAP hearing Nov. 7th in Brooksville

Each BMAP establishes a Total Maximum Daily Load (TDML). This is the water quality goal—the

maximum level of nitrogen coming from the spring vent allowed to avoid ecological harm. Next the required reduction in nutrients is established by comparing the TDML to actual FL-DEP measurements of how many pounds per year of nitrogen is released at the spring vents.

Allocations for reductions are assigned to nutrient pollution sources such as onsite sewage treatment disposal, wastewater treatment facilities, farm fertilizer, sports fertilizer, urban turf fertilizer, livestock, and atmospheric deposition. The TMDL for Weeki Wachee is 0.28 milligrams of nitrogen per liter. Goals for all the springs begin with a 30% reduction of nutrients in 2028, 80% in 2033, and 100% in 2038.

Strategies to achieve reduction of the nutrients includes setting permit limits for regulated facilities, implementing best management practices in urban and agricultural settings, enhancing wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and developing regional projects and conservation initiatives.

Unless the new plans include accelerated efforts to reduce nutrients, our springs will continue to decline. In all but a few instances, the nutrient reduction goals have not been met. A more robust approach is needed to achieve success. State agencies, counties and cities are required to prepare and implement plans to reduce nutrient pollution for each pollution source. Wastewater is a major source of pollution. This will require high levels of funding for plans to convert septic to sewer, for example. Crystal River estimates septic-to-sewer projects will cost more than \$25 million.

The Florida Legislature allocated \$50 million for all the springs last year. Counties included in the BMAPS are in the process of submitting project estimates to the Florida Statewide Annual Report (STAR) to be considered for state funding. Unless FL-DEP seeks a large increase in funding this year and in coming years to help cities and counties implement projects to meet required reductions, we will fail again. This legal challenge could be a game changer to jump-start realistic efforts to save our springs.

SWFWMD Seeks Your Input Weeki Wachee River Survey



The Southwest Florida Water Management District is conducting a brief survey about recreation activities on the Weeki Wachee River. Your answers will remain anonymous. Please take the survey below. Many thanks!

[Take the Survey!](#)

Pasco County to Become a Sierra Club Group in 2025



By Lisa Hinton, Communications, Sierra Club Florida Suncoast Group

The Pasco County Conservation Committee was formed in 2017 by Tim Martin, then conservation chair of Sierra Club Florida and the Suncoast Group, to encourage protection of the Serenova Preserve from the Suncoast Highway development and ever-expanding conservation issues in Pasco County. Sasha Bartunek has recently led the team and celebrated an impressive milestone by preventing the construction of a large waterfront restaurant at Anclote River Beach Park. This success was made possible through collaborative community efforts, showcasing the power of collective action in preserving our natural environment.

Beyond this significant victory, the team has been actively participating in events to promote environmental awareness. One of the highlights was the "Gopher Games" premiere, held in honor of World Tortoise Day. This event brought the community together to learn about and celebrate the importance of gopher tortoises. Additionally, the team has been supporting Monarch butterflies and engaging in numerous other activities throughout the year to protect and enhance local wildlife and habitat.

Currently, Pasco County is split between three Sierra Club Groups (Suncoast, Adventure Coast & Tampa Bay). In 2025, Pasco County will further solidify its commitment to conservation by establishing itself as a full Sierra Club Group. This new Group will focus on safeguarding the unspoiled regions of Pasco, one of Florida's fastest-growing areas. Pasco's population grew by 639% between 1970–2020, is projected to see an additional 40% increase by 2045. It is critical that the development associated with this large population growth is done in a way that protects and preserves the natural environment central to what makes Pasco, Pasco.

Sierra Club will expand its efforts to protect Pasco's "Open Spaces & Vibrant Places" through the formation of an independent Sierra Club Group dedicated to Pasco County by March 2025.

Your support is crucial in these endeavors. If you live in or near Pasco and are passionate about protecting the environment, consider joining the team. For more information or to get involved, please reach out to Sasha at sashabuddha@gmail.com or call (727) 326-2646.

Together, we can ensure that Pasco County remains a beautiful and vibrant place for generations to come.

SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST MEET UP

With Beth Brady of Save the Manatees

January 8th



Join us for a great evening! 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.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEkc-uurj8uHtR8flZyc55jxxCslk3mpRRK>

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

Beth was born and raised in Pennsylvania and after a few years as a registered nurse, she realized her passion was marine mammals. She moved to Florida to complete a photo ID internship with Florida Fish and Wildlife, earned a master's degree at Nova Southeastern University, and a doctorate at Florida Atlantic University, with research on the vocalizations of Florida manatees. She has added multiple peer-reviewed publications on vocalizations of all manatee species. Currently, she uses drones for a variety of applications, including assessing the body condition of manatees. Beth's journey reflects her dedication to understanding and contributing to the well-being of manatees.



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

Join us for the January 8th Meet Up of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group. Guest speaker will be Beth Brady, Senior Science and Conservation Associate for Save the Manatee.

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.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEkc-uurj8uHtR8flZyc55jxxCslk3mpRRK>

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

Florida Manatee Festival Jan. 13-14 In Crystal River

CITRUS COUNTY
Chamber of Commerce

FLORIDA MANATEE FESTIVAL
CRYSTAL RIVER, FL

Bailey ELECTRIC & SIGNS
EO 13005539

37TH ANNUAL
FLORIDA MANATEE FESTIVAL
JANUARY 13TH & 14TH, 2024
\$10 ADULTS | 12/UNDER FREE
\$5 ENTRY SUNDAY ONLY WITH CHRONICLE COUPON!

GUIDED KAYAK TOURS | MANATEE BOAT TOURS | FOUR ENTERTAINMENT STAGES | FREE ENTRY TO THREE SISTER SPRINGS

FREE PARKING/SHUTTLE AT CRYSTAL RIVER HIGH SCHOOL

- FOOD COURT
- BEER & WINE GARDEN
- ART IN THE PARK
- CRAFT VENDORS
- KIDS ZONES
- STREET ENTERTAINMENT
- HIPPIE VILLAGE AT HERITAGE HOUSE

WWW.GOMANATEEFEST.COM

RE/MAX REALTY ONE | TRUSTED SOLUTIONS | JENKINS AUTO GROUP | State Farm | CRYSTAL | CITRUS COUNTY | CHRONICLE | SUBWAY | 99.9 | ANTARCTIC | COASTAL | ALEXANDER | Johnson's | ARBOR TRAIL | BRAVERA | LANGLEY | CITRUS 25.3 | 96.7 | PLANTATION | COASTAL | WAVE | HCA Florida Citrus Hospital | LUCID | 49 PFO | Select | PLANTATION | DIGITAL SOUND MEDIA | LIFESOUTH | Signs | WMM | 72 Insight | And | ULTIMATE | Sound

Look for our tent at the 37th Annual Florida Manatee Festival in Crystal River at the intersection of Citrus Avenue and U.S. 19. stretching up through the shops and restaurants of Heritage Village and surrounding areas, down to the waterside area along Kings Bay.

We'll be there Saturday, Jan. 13, 9 am – 5 pm; and Sunday, Jan. 14, 9 am – 4 pm. The cost is \$10 per person, age 12 and under free. Free parking is available at Crystal River High School with free shuttles to the festival gates. Volunteers welcome to join our tent! Contact Adventure Coast Group Membership Chair Kristi Strazzullo at krististrazzullo@gmail.com.

More info at: www.gomanateefest.com or www.facebook.com/FloridaManateeFestival, hosted by the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce.



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.