



Spring 2019

[florida.sierraclub.org](http://florida.sierraclub.org)

Get all the latest news by subscribing to our blog:

[sierraclubfloridanews.org](http://sierraclubfloridanews.org)



Find us on Facebook

[facebook.com/sierraclubfl](https://facebook.com/sierraclubfl)



**SIERRA CLUB**

# The Pelican Sierra Club Florida



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SIERRA CLUB

INSIDE: FLORIDA 2019 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

## Sierra Inspires 100% Clean Energy

BY PHIL COMPTON and EMILY GORMAN

Thanks to dedicated teams of Sierra Club volunteers, Florida will soon have eight cities committed to reach community-wide 100% renewable energy as part of our national Ready for 100 Campaign. St. Petersburg, Sarasota and Orlando led the way in 2016-17, with Gainesville and Pinellas cities Dunedin and Largo committing in 2018.

The Ready for 100 Campaign also expanded to South Florida in 2018, where volunteer teams, supported by the Miami Group and Organizer Emily Gorman, are expected to win victories in South Miami and Coral Gables.

Momentum continues, with new teams like the Miami-Dade Sierra Student Coalition working to raise energy conservation awareness with a 2019 Earth Hour event. A Spanish-language Ready for 100 program launches in late February with "Conversaciones Energeticas" in the Little Havana Miami neighborhood. The 100% renewable messaging is also being adopted by allies and partner organizations, like the Miami Climate Alliance, which featured 100% renewable energy as a central tenet of their Miami Rising campaign.

Our volunteer-powered success is led by Sierra group leaders like Lisa Hinton in St. Petersburg, Bryan Beckman in Largo, Alan Brand in Dunedin, Roberta Gastmeyer in Gainesville and Lynn Nilssen in Sarasota. Elected officials recognized strong community support for a clean energy commitment because our teams built broad-based coalitions with partners like the League of Women Voters and NAACP, as well as support from businesses and nonprofits.

Nationally, 105 cities and towns, plus 11 counties, California, Hawaii and the District of Columbia have made 100% renewable energy commitments -- exceeding Ready for 100 Cam-



Sierra volunteers and supporters gather before attending a hearing to oppose the Dania Beach fracked gas plant. / Photo by Doug Jackson

paign goals. This means one in seven Americans now live in communities committed to going all-renewable.

These commitments are catalyzing major clean energy investments, community-led solutions, and strengthened codes, ordinances and policies. More than an aspiration, local governments are using this as a lens for examining the energy impact of all future actions. Cities are also showing the transition to 100% renewables can be equitable, lifting all communities as we move away from fossil fuels:

- St. Petersburg plans a community solar project to provide affordable clean energy to everyone.
- Sarasota is revising building codes to ensure new construction, including public housing, is energy efficient.
- Southern California cities are pursuing Community Choice Aggregation that allows communities greater control over where their energy comes from.
- Atlanta is prioritizing energy efficiency and

*(Continued on page 3)*

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

ALYSSA CADWALADER



I hope everyone's year is off to a good start. The Sierra Club Florida Chapter is excited about the year that lies ahead. With Gov. DeSantis sworn into office, we are cautiously optimistic about the future of our environment. Although we have many questions and some concerns about his environmental plans, we applaud our new governor for placing the environment front and center.

Inside the Florida Chapter, we have many reasons to be hopeful for the new year. Florida is now one of the leading Sierra Club Chapters in the country with six cities signed on to the Ready for 100 program, which includes committing to measurable goals and timelines for transitioning to 100% clean energy. Many other cities in Florida are on the path to becoming Ready for 100 cities, as well.

Our Conservation Committee has been hard at work, and recently chartered three new subcommittees to address water quality, plastics pollution, and growth management. Having rested for only a few moments following the November elections, our Political Committee is deep into strategizing for the 2020 elections. The Emerald Coast Steering Committee in the Pensacola area of the panhandle is growing, and the Florida Chapter is committed to supporting it on its journey to become an official group. A special thank you to the volunteers and activists committed to creating a Sierra Club presence in Northwest Florida!

The Sierra Club was founded on the idea that if you get people out into nature, their experiences will inspire them to protect the environment. More than 125 years later, the Sierra Club continues this tradition with its Outings programs, including national and international outings, local outings, Inspiring Connections Outdoors, and Military Outdoors. Our local groups and Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) programs are looking for individuals who want to inspire both adults and children through our outings programs. If you are interested in becoming an outings leader, please contact your local group or ICO program (contact information can be found on our website).

While it is easy to become exasperated by the Trump Administration's continual degradation of our environmental protections, we need only look into our own backyards, towns, cities, and counties to find hope. Citizens and local governments are tackling climate change and other environmental issues head-on, working to ensure sustainability for our future generations. Sierra Club Florida leaders, volunteers, and members are right there with them. Thank you for your membership and support of Sierra Club Florida, and here's to a wonderful 2019!

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE NEWS

Thank you to all the local conservation leaders that attended our Vision meeting in Daytona in December. Close to 40 of you turned out, and as a result we now have a solid plan for moving forward in 2019. Our plan is to create and re-create several new working groups to tackle the many issues confronting us here across the state.

As such, in January we launched new working groups for Single Use Plastics and Water Quality. In February we hope to launch additional working groups for Wildlife/Habitat Protection and Growth Management. If you have any interest in leading either of these two groups please let us know. We have volunteers identified, but are still looking for someone to facilitate. We hope to have all four groups firmly established and active by our next state executive committee gathering in March.

Tim Martin, Conservation Chair  
Florida Chapter  
timothymartin@suncoastsierra.org



### The Pelican, Vol. 52 No. 1

Marcia Biggs, Editor

The Pelican is published by Sierra Club Florida and mailed to Sierra Club Florida members. Annual membership dues include the Pelican newsletter. Address all inquiries to Sierra Club Florida, 1990 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712 or e-mail [marcia.biggs@florida.sierraclub.org](mailto:marcia.biggs@florida.sierraclub.org)

#### Sierra Club Florida Director

Frank Jackalone

#### Sierra Club Florida Executive Committee

Alyssa Cadwalader, Loxahatchee Group, Chair

Kristine Cunningham, Volusia-Flagler, Vice-Chair

Grant Gelhardt, Big Bend Group

Stephen Mahoney, Miami Group

Rocky Milburn, Tampa Bay Group

Whitey Markle, Suwannee/St. Johns Group

Daniel Marien, Turtle Coast Group

[florida.sierraclub.org](http://florida.sierraclub.org)

# It's a gas, gas, gas ... (not)

On February 5, The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) granted the final air permit for Tampa Electric Company's (TECO) proposal to lock the Tampa Bay area into decades of dependence on climate-disrupting fossil fuels. TECO proposes to expand the burning of fracked gas and recommit to burning coal at its Big Bend Power Station, at a time when all of the science agrees that Florida must stop burning these dirty, dangerous fossil fuels to avoid the worst effects of climate change, including stronger hurricanes and flooding from rising seas.

In response, Florida Chapter director Frank Jackalone issued this statement:

"Tampa is one of the areas of the world that is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the fact that TECO is doubling down on climate-disrupting gas and coal is shockingly short-sighted. Solar energy is affordable and abundant here in the Sunshine State and TECO's Big Bend proposal is like throwing Floridians a brick



when they need a lifeline."

TECO was purchased by Emera -- a Canadian company. Oddly enough, Emera has made huge commitments to clean energy everywhere it operates outside of Florida. In Nova Scotia, they have a renewable energy goal of 40% by 2020 and in Barbados they have a clean energy commitment of 100% by 2045. But here in Hillsborough County, Emera is trying to exploit Florida's "constructive regulatory environment." They think they can get away with pushing dirty, dangerous fracked gas -- which is cheaper than in-

---

## PUBLIC HEARING ON TECO EXPANSION

WHEN: March 11, 2019 6-9 pm

WHERE: Hilton Garden Inn, 4328 Garden Vista Dr., Riverview FL

MORE INFORMATION: Check Florida Sierra Club Facebook @sierraclubfl or Gonzalo.Valdes @sierraclub.org

---

vesting in clean energy. Sierra feels that Emera is putting profits ahead of the public interest with no concern for the long-reaching effects of the resulting climate damages by a fossil fuel plant.

TECO has announced they are raising rates this year by 4% due to increases in the cost of fracked gas. The cost of infrastructure at the new facility would amount to nearly \$898 million dollars from its customers ... all to keep polluting. Sierra Club supports the move to clean, renewable energy, not more fracked gas plants.

---

## Ready for 100%

*(Continued from page 1)*

local solar to reduce electricity burdens for all residents.

It's not enough to have clean electricity. In Florida, transportation emits more carbon and smog than utilities because poor public transit forces more people to drive. Florida invests half as much in transit as other states, resulting in economic inequity with low-income residents spending an unaffordable percentage of their pay to own and maintain a car.

Hillsborough and Broward counties' successful transportation tax votes will fund doubling their bus fleets, addressing this inequity so all families can choose to save thousands by taking the bus. But it's important to avoid increasing smog from buses -- especially in low-income neighborhoods where more kids already suffer from asthma. Both Hillsborough and Broward are moving to zero emission electric buses, joining Tallahassee where



soon one-third of buses will be electric, and Pinellas, where two electric buses now serve downtown St. Pete. By replacing dirty diesel and fracked gas buses, they're reducing air pollution as they increase service. This year we'll continue to work for 100% clean transportation commitments, so everyone can enjoy a clean, quiet ride they can afford.

### Ready for the New Green Deal

Ready for 100 envisions healthy, thriving communities across the U.S., powered by affordable, community-based and 100% clean, renewable sources of energy

with accountability to ensure the energy industry is aligned with the public interest. With an energy system predicated on racial, economic and environmental justice, a thriving workforce has access to secure, safe and sustainable jobs. The national "Green New Deal" introduced in Congress in early February and endorsed by Sierra Club shares these Ready for 100 goals, strengthening our local and national efforts.

### Become a Ready for 100 City

Please help us grow the momentum to a clean energy future: Ask your local elected officials to join the growing list of cities and counties who've already passed their own "Green New Deal" with a Ready for 100 commitment.

To learn more about starting a Ready for 100 campaign in your community, contact: Phil Compton (Central and North Florida) at [phil.compton@sierraclub.org](mailto:phil.compton@sierraclub.org) or Emily Gorman (South Florida) at [emily.gorman@sierraclub.org](mailto:emily.gorman@sierraclub.org).

# 2019 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

BY DAVID CULLEN

Florida Sierra Chapter Lobbyist

The Florida Legislative Session opens March 5. Here's a look at what's in store concerning conservation, growth and transportation:

Despite losing two extremely close races at the top of the ticket: Rick Scott winning the US Senate seat and Ron DeSantis beating Andrew Gillum for Governor, Election Day was not all bad. Nikki Fried won her statewide race for Commissioner of Agriculture and is the first Democratic member of the Cabinet since before Gov. Bush's administration.

In the Congressional delegation, Democrats won two seats and are only one seat away from a majority (13 Ds – 14 Rs). And in the Florida Legislature, Democrats gained one seat in the State Senate (17 Ds – 23 Rs) and seven seats in the House (47 Ds – 73 Rs). The minority caucus in each chamber holds enough seats to ensure they won't be steamrolled as they have well more than a third of the seats – the threshold for being able to slow things down or denying the majority the ability to suspend the rules. At the end of session, slowing things down means bills will die, and that gives them some leverage.

The House elected Rep. Oliva (R – Miami-Dade) Speaker and Sen. Galvano (R – Manatee, Hillsborough) President of the Senate. The two leaders have different styles; in their opening remarks President Galvano said the Senate should move in unity while Speaker Oliva warned against compromise and ending up in an ideological mush in the center. Galvano recently outlined his priorities as building and extending toll roads through rural regions, including the Suncoast Parkway. We'll see if they come together or not...

Shortly after taking office, Gov. DeSantis issued an Executive Order dealing with environmental issues including DEP securing \$2.5 billion over the next four years for Everglades restoration and protection of water resources. The order directs DEP to oppose oil and gas activities off every coast and hydraulic fracturing in the state. The Governor does not clarify whether his order

## Join Sierra Club for Advocacy Day

Sierra Club is part of a coalition coming together in Tallahassee March 12-13 for Advocacy Day. Concerned citizens from all across the state will have the opportunity to speak to their legislators and let their voices be heard. We are advocating to protect Florida's clean water, support renewable energy, and BAN Fracking!



This event is co-sponsored by ReThink Energy Florida, Environment Florida, Food and Water Watch-Florida, Floridians Against Fracking, Physicians for Social Responsibility Florida, Sierra Club Florida, Center for Biological Diversity, Ignite Change, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy and others.

Plan to arrive Tuesday for a training session from 6:30 to 8 pm on how to hold effective advocacy meetings with legislators. Limited lodging is being hosted at the Florida's People Advocacy Center. Fill out the Registration Form at the web site to apply. On Wednesday, March 13, a mini-advocacy training will be held at 8:30 am, with 10 am registration at Waller Park (the dolphins statue). Breakout groups with meet with legislators and aides from 11 am to 4 .

To learn more or to register, go to [www.rethinkenergyflorida.org/reclaiming\\_florida\\_future](http://www.rethinkenergyflorida.org/reclaiming_florida_future)

Check with your local Sierra Club group to see if carpools are being planned.

extends to the full 230 mile protection from drilling in the eastern and Central Gulf or only areas nearer the coasts. Neither does he say whether banning hydraulic fracturing includes acid fracturing or matrix acidization which are the techniques most likely to be used in Florida because of its limestone and dolomite substrate.

He also wants DEP to appoint a Chief Science Officer, but does not acknowledge climate change is caused by burning fossil fuels. While these ambiguities and seeming contradictions are concerning, he does call for enforcement and recognizes the reality of sea level rise. We will have a much better idea of where he really stands on environmental issues when he finalizes his budget and appointments of agency heads and the agency bills are filed.

In the Legislature, Northeast Florida has gained fiscal clout with the chairmen of each chamber's Appropriations Committees, Sen. Rob Bradley and Rep. Travis Cummings, both coming from that area. Sen. Bill Montford, a Democrat, is chair of the Senate En-

vironment and Natural Resources Committee – often the first committee stop for bills of interest to Sierra.

In the House, Rep. Ingoglia (Hernando County), the former head of the Republican Party of Florida, is chair of State Affairs, the main full committee that hears environmental bills. Rep. Clemons (R - Dixie, Gilchrist and part of Alachua) is chair of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

### SIERRA PRIORITIES

Sierra's priorities, approved by the Chapter Executive Committee, are transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy, water quality and quantity, reinstating growth management, and budget.

Details can be found on our web site at [www.sierraclub.org/florida/legislative-lobbying](http://www.sierraclub.org/florida/legislative-lobbying)

These priorities are intended to be a high level overview of our goals and the reasons for them. They provide a lens through which we will evaluate bills as they

# 2019 LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

are filed. These are not the only issues the Club will be working on: wildlife and habitat, environmental justice, and wetlands protection are all still on our radar.

It is likely that the most important bills have not yet been filed, but below is a sampling of some we are following:

## ENERGY

On the Energy front, three bills to ban fracking have been filed. They're all titled **Advanced Well Stimulation Treatment**. SB 146 by Sen. Stewart (D – Orange) and HB 239 by Rep. Fitzenhagen (R-Lee) are companion bills that ban all three types of fracking: hydraulic fracturing, acid fracturing, and matrix acidization. Leadership has said Rep. Fitzenhagen's good ban bill will not be heard in committee.

Sen. Montford (D– 11 Panhandle counties) has filed SB 314 which, in addition to banning all types of fracking, allocates \$2 million to DEP to conduct a study of fracking. The ban is not dependent on the study as the bill is written, but there have been no opportunities for members sympathetic to the oil/gas industry to try to amend it yet. Sierra Club Florida strongly supports banning fracking statewide.

At this writing the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee is putting up a bad Proposed Committee Bill (PCB) that would “ban fracking.” Sounds good, right? But the definition of ‘fracking’ in the bill does not include matrix acidizing which is the technique most likely to be used in Florida because of our limestone geology. It also has loopholes that will allow fracturing techniques.

Sen. Rodriguez and Rep. Fernandez (both Ds from Miami-Dade) have filed SB 78 and HB 169, **Public Financing of Construction Projects**. The bills require a **Sea Level Impact Projection** study to be done before tax dollars are spent on major coastal structures. The study must look at projected SLR over the next 50 years to determine whether the building will be impacted .

Sen. Stewart and Rep. Greico (D-Miami-Dade) have filed SB 88, **Preemption of Recyclable and Polystyrene Materials**. These bills would repeal the preemption of

local government's ability to regulate or ban single use plastic bags and Styrofoam. Sen. Stewart filed this good bill last session, but there was no House companion. We hope the bills will move in both chambers this year.

## WATER QUALITY

SCF has worked with a coalition of organizations to get SB 66 by Sen. Cruz (D-Hillsborough) and HB 545 by Rep. Jenne (D-Broward) **Drinking Water in Public Schools** filed. The bill requires school districts to install and maintain lead removing filters from all drinking water sources public schools built before 1986. The Florida Medical Association Board of Governors, the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Centers for Disease Control all agree that there is no safe level of exposure to lead for children.

SB 216 by Sen. Gruters (R-Sarasota) and HB 141 by Rep. Fine (R-Brevard), **Water Quality Improvements**, is a mixed bag. Section 1 of the bill uses Amendment 1 dollars for septic cleanup in the Indian River Lagoon (\$50 million a year in matching funds). Section 2 requires wastewater treatment facilities to notify customers of any sewage spill, and section 3 imposes a fine of \$1 for each gallon spilled or \$2 per gallon spent on remediation/repair. Sierra does not support using Amendment 1 dollars for septic tank upgrades, conversion to sewer, or wastewater treatment facility construction and will urge the sponsors to find a different source of funding.

HB 85 by Rep. Robinson (R-Manatee, Sarasota) and SB 214 by Sen. Gruters, **On-site Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems**, require the Dept. of Health to run a septic system inspection program, authorize DOH to do rulemaking regarding required repairs, and mandate a disclosure statement notifying a prospective homebuyer of the septic system and recommended maintenance at the point of sale. Similar bills have been gutted by amendments in the past, but there may be sufficient awareness of the challenge posed by septic tanks to our groundwater that it might have a chance.

## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

This is another area where not much has yet been filed. The issue of planning is important for both our energy and water priorities. Efficiently planned communities and green buildings will make it possible for residents to use less energy without sacrificing quality of life. Ending sprawl will let them get from home to work, shopping, and recreation without spending inordinate amounts of time in their cars (The transportation sector is currently the largest contributor of GHGs).

Protecting our wetlands from development will preserve their functions of filtering pollutants and serving as buffers against severe weather, and preventing the paving of aquifer recharge areas is essential. Florida gets 93% of its drinking water supply from groundwater.

Sierra is watching **Growth Management**, HB 291 by Rep. McClain (R-Marion)/SB 428 by Sen. Perry (R-Alachua, Putnam, Marion) which requires local governments to include a ‘property rights’ element in their comprehensive plans.

## BUDGET

While the Governor's budget was presented Feb. 1, the Legislature's final version won't be available until the end of session. Sierra Club Florida continues to fight for the appropriate use of **Amendment 1** dollars pursuant to the Court's holding (currently on appeal) that Land Acquisition Trust Fund money can only be used for land acquisition, plus restoration, management, and improvement of land acquired after the effective date of the amendment. We recognize the need for additional funding for other important environmental goals like wastewater infrastructure and urge the Legislature to provide that funding as well. All of these issues have been underfunded for decades and the bill is due.

To receive e-mail updates and action alerts subscribe to Florida Report by emailing [cullenasea@aol.com](mailto:cullenasea@aol.com).

To follow daily updates we suggest: [www.1000friendsofflorida.com/2019-florida-legislative-session/](http://www.1000friendsofflorida.com/2019-florida-legislative-session/)

# Chapter Awards

The following individuals have been recognized for their work with 2018 Florida Chapter Awards:

**Rocky Milburn, Tampa Bay Group** and Florida Executive Committee, Otter Award, for his longtime commitment to the Outings program and Inspiring Connections Outdoors.

**Stan Pannaman, Broward Group,** Manatee Award, for his longtime leadership on the group executive committee, and many other accomplishments over 15 years with Sierra Club.

**Adrian Hayes-Santos, Suwannee/St. Johns,** Osprey Award, Gainesville City

Commissioner, for leadership in environmental protection, conservation and clean energy issues.

**Dr. Bob Palmer, Suwannee/StJohns,** Panther Award, for his work on springs protection.

**Michelle Sunset, Big Bend Group,** Whooping Crane award, for her work on the newsletter and volunteerism.

**Erin Canter, Big Bend Group,** Otter Award for her work as an outings leader.

**Bryan Beckman, Suncoast Group,** Panther Award, for taking the lead on the group's Ready for 100 campaign.

**Laura Thomas, Suncoast Group,** Osprey Award, for her efforts in moving the Largo Ready for 100 effort to passage.

**Roberta Gastmeyer, Suwannee St. Johns,** Pine Tree Award, for longtime dedication and volunteer work to the group.

**Susan Steinhauser, Broward Group,** Panther Award, for her leadership and inspiration to protect the ocean and other conservation issues.

Congratulations and many thanks to all!



## Gopher Tortoise Rescue



From Loxahatchee Group January Newsletter /By Ed Tedtmann

For years, we walked our two small dogs around the mowed perimeter of a vacant 2.5-acre-piece of land behind our house. Until recently, the parcel was an east to west scrub area with quite a number of trees on it, located a bit north of Old Boynton Beach Road. It was the last vacant parcel available for development in this area since the 1960s.

On the east end of the property we would see a tortoise now and again. Recently, I noticed more aggressive mowing activity, well into the tract, and I contacted the City. I was told that a new developer had purchased it. Since 2005, there have been three developers, and a church, as owners.

I called Rachel King, gopher tortoise biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), to have the tortoises relocated. She sent a contractor to locate the burrows, and to flag and map each one. This is done so that the relocation contractor can find them. The agent discovered 22 burrows. The tortoises ranged in size from six inches wide, to more than twenty inches wide. Most were female.

Tortoises are very strong for their size. The burrows average 15 feet long

and 6.5 feet deep. A tortoise two feet wide, and about a foot thick can push out more than thirty cubic feet of soil, out of a 15-foot-long burrow. That's why the contractor used a backhoe, properly outfitted, and gently scooped up the dirt, starting from the entrance of the tunnel and working with an assistant on the ground, to remove the tortoise.

I spent nearly a whole day watching removals; each one was a bit different. The topography varied, requiring a different approach every time.

Once the tortoises are removed from the ground, they are placed in individual plastic boxes, with air venting, and a shovel of soil from the tortoise' burrow to help relax the animal. They are then moved to a large private property approved by FWC. Tortoises are relocated to a recipient site which has temporary fencing to keep the tortoises from leaving since they have a strong homing instinct. I learned this from a FWC presentation at a Sierra Club general meeting.

Twenty-two tortoises were rescued in the initial round-up. As time went on, my wife Diana and I discovered a few more, as well as a few new burrows, bringing the total to 27 tortoises from a half acre of land.

## To change everything, we need everyone

Sierra Club prioritized inclusivity in both volunteer and staff teams in our 2015 strategic plan. Though this work is much easier said than done, our organization's commitment to workplace inclusion and equity is seen through concrete steps. Workshops such as the "Growing for Change" series sought to address issues such as privilege, movement building, solidarity, and equity at the volunteer leadership level.

The series helped to shape our local campaigns and programs. A recent report by Green 2.0 points out that decades of promises to diversify within the environmental movement have fallen short of expectations. National and Chapter staff are stepping up to this immense challenge. It is high time for our volunteer base to do the same.

In 2018, Florida Chapter instituted a volunteer-led **Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (EIJ) Committee** with the mission of supporting Groups to become more inclusive, organize equitably, and pursue justice in an authentic way. Volunteers become familiar with the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing, as they are a guiding light in this pursuit.

Rise to the challenge; get out of your comfort zone; and volunteer with EIJ Committee! For more information, contact Jessica Lewis by emailing [info@suncoastsierra.org](mailto:info@suncoastsierra.org).

# Sierra Speaks Out at Everglades Conference

The 34th annual Everglades Coalition Conference was held Jan. 10-12 in the Florida Keys. The theme this year was “Everglades Rescue: Send the Water South,” a position long advocated by Sierra Florida Chapter. Attended by decision makers from federal, state, local and tribal governments, and community stakeholders from a vast array of public and private interests, the conference is the largest annual forum to advance Everglades conservation and restoration.

Florida Sierra had a powerful presence in this year’s conference with much timely and insightful commentary. Chapter Director Frank Jackalone gave opening remarks that presented an overview of both our vision for restoring the Everglades and our response to Governor DeSantis’ executive order on water policy reforms. Our state lobbyist Dave Cullen moderated the lively plenary “Managing Growth Before It’s Too Late” which was organized by Diana Umpierre, our Everglades Restoration Organizing Representative. The plenary brought to light the urgency of strengthening the state’s oversight role as well as local and regional land use coordination and citizen participation.

Diana Umpierre also served as a panelist on “Buy the Land: How will Florida Spend the Constitutional Land Acquisition Trust Fund (LATF) Money?” The panel discussed the 2018 decision that ruled that monies from the 2014 Constitutional Amendment 1 may only be spent on acquisition and restoration of conservation lands. Diana shared examples of where LATF funds should be used to advance Everglades restoration and protect critical natural lands and wildlife corridors within the Greater Everglades ecosystem.

Patrick Ferguson, Organizing Representative for the Stop Sugar Field Burning Campaign, moderated a breakout session titled “Green Jobs and Restoration in the EAA: A Match Made in Heaven.” Panelists discussed the opportunities for family-sustaining green jobs that can support the Glades’ local economy and the environ-



Sierra staff and leaders were joined by many supporters at the conference.



Andrew Martino, Kina Phillips, Patrick Ferguson, Larry Williams Jr. /Photo Kil'Mari Phillips

ment, by replacing pre-harvest sugar field burning with green harvesting within and around the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).

Sierra Club also brought voices together from North and South Florida on a session titled “Everglades and Florida’s Springs: Common Ground, Common Cause.” The session was moderated by Sierra Club’s Our Wild America Florida Organizing Manager Cris Costello.

Panelists discussed how nutrient pollution and decades of mismanaged water resources, absence of protective regulation, and defunding of water protection agencies have negatively impacted not just the Everglades, but also Florida’s freshwater springs, lakes, rivers and coastal communities in Central and North Florida.



Frank Jackalone, US Rep. Debbie Mucarsel-Powell, and Diana Umpierre

## DRILLING ON THE HORIZON?

Sierra Club Florida Chapter aims to stand strong against a recent decision by a Tallahassee appeals court that reversed a decision by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), directing FDEP to issue a permit to Kanter Real Estate to perform exploratory oil drilling in the Everglades. The land sits in one of the South Florida Water Management District’s three water conservation areas. FDEP had rightly denied the permit.

This proposed well will threaten the aquifer and hinder Everglades restoration efforts. Broward County commissioners will have to change the land use zoning before drilling can take place. Check our Facebook page for updates in our opposition to this decision.

Sierra Club Florida  
1990 Central Avenue  
St. Petersburg, Florida 33712

**Moving?**

Email new address to  
[address.changes@sierraclub.org](mailto:address.changes@sierraclub.org)  
and include your membership ID  
number located on the mailing label.



NON-PROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
TAMPA FL

Permit No. 2397

## Help Save Species by Urging Renewal of L&WC Fund

Earth Day is April 22. The theme for 2019 is Protect Our Species. Here in Florida, we need to give special attention to our endangered and threatened species not only on Earth Day but every day. At the top of that list, of course, is our Florida panther. A new 2017-18 Progress Report by Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) estimates between 120-230 panthers currently exist in south Florida.

With threats to our wildlife species rapidly increasing, it is especially critical to renew the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Congress let LWCF run out on October 1, and we cannot afford to put essential conservation programs in jeopardy. Major development in eastern Collier County – a core panther habitat area - is particularly concerning, as there is a proposal to allow 45,000 acres of intense development (including a large new town) and mining, in addition to oil and gas exploration. Additionally, limestone and sand mining propose to eliminate hundreds, or even thousands of acres of habitats.

### FLORIDA ENDANGERED SPECIES

West Indian Manatee  
Florida Panther  
Everglades Snail Kite  
Red Wolf  
Florida Scrub Jay  
North Atlantic Right Whale  
Sea Turtles: Leatherback, Kemp's Ridley,  
Hawksbill Sea Turtle (endangered) Green and  
Loggerhead (threatened)  
Gopher Tortoise (threatened)

The Florida FWC 2017-18 Progress Report on Endangered and Threatened Species is now available at [www.myfwc.com/media/18721/fy2017-18-eandt-legislative-report-final.pdf](http://www.myfwc.com/media/18721/fy2017-18-eandt-legislative-report-final.pdf)

LWCF is one of America's most important and successful conservation programs, benefiting every state in the nation. LWCF has a 50-year track record of helping provide clean water, conserve natural resources, increase recreation opportunities and support communities. It has protected millions of acres including prime Florida panther habitat. The program is funded from a small portion of royalties that oil



Photo/Florida FWC

and gas companies pay for offshore drilling rights in our publicly-owned waters .

But Congress has now let LWCF run out, leaving vital conservation land in jeopardy meaning prime panther habitat like the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge & Conservation Area and Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge may go unprotected.

Sign a petition urging Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund at [addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/save-the-land-and-water-conservation-fund](http://addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/save-the-land-and-water-conservation-fund)