



Fall 2018

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The Pelican

Sierra Club

Florida

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SIERRA CLUB

INSIDE: MORE ENDORSEMENTS PAGE 4

Andrew Gillum: The Right Choice for Florida Governor



The Sierra Club is extremely pleased to announce our endorsement of Andrew Gillum for Florida Governor. Gillum established a strong track record of environmental protection while Mayor of Tallahassee. He has a wonderful, refreshing vision for protecting Florida's natural treasures, combatting the causes of climate change, and ensuring clean air and water for our families and our wildlife.



Andrew Gillum is the right person for Florida's most important job. We are convinced that he will clean up the environmental mess that Governor Scott is leaving us with. Gillum will stop the releases of polluted water that fuel Florida's devastating toxic algae water crisis; he will stand firm against plans to drill for oil and gas in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean off Florida's coasts; he will manage the state's growth and fully fund the state's conservation

land acquisition program to protect Florida's natural areas, wildlife, and water resources; and he will convert Florida into a leader for clean, renewable energy. He will tackle climate change as the cause of rising seas, hotter weather, and stronger hurricanes, unlike Gov. Scott, President

Trump and his opponent who bury their heads in the sand and refuse to even talk about climate change.

By contrast, Mayor Gillum's opponent, Ron DeSantis, has a terrible track record in Congress, scoring just 2 percent on the League of Conservation Voters environmental scorecard for his three terms in Congress. That means that DeSantis voted against the environment 98% percent of the time! DeSantis' "environmental plan for Florida" is filled with empty promises, few facts, and fewer details, and he omits any refer-

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Bill Nelson: Environmental Hero for Senate

Sierra Club is proud to endorse Bill Nelson for Senate in the 2018 election. The long-time environmental champion has been a leader in opposing offshore drilling off Florida's coasts. There is a lot we can say about Nelson, but the easiest way to sum it up is to point to his astounding Senate voting record on environmental legis-



lation. According to the League of Conservation Voters: Nelson voted favorably 95% in 2017, 71% lifetime score. So

Senator Nelson is no "election day tree-hugger" like his opponent Rick Scott.

Enforcement of environmental laws in Florida has all but disappeared since Scott first was elected governor in 2010. He diverted clean-up money and slashed staffs of environmental watchdog agencies. If

(Continued on page 5)



Do You Know a Shining Star?

Do you know a Sierra Club member or supporter who has gone above and beyond to accomplish the goals and missions of the Club? Recognition of the accomplishments of our volunteers is an important part of the Florida Chapter and its Groups.



Florida Chapter is seeking nominations for the 2018 Chapter Awards. The deadline submission has been extended to November 1, 2018. There are more than a dozen categories, including legal and community supporters. Take a look and think about nominating someone you know.

Recognition of volunteers MUST begin at the Group (local) level. Nominees for Chapter awards are submitted by Group Executive Committees (to find yours, go to florida.sierraclub.org and click on Groups and then the link). The awards are presented at the Chapter's Annual Chapter Executive Meeting in December.

To see a complete list of awards categories and nomination form, go to www.sierraclub.org/florida/awards-recognitions

Questions? Email awards@florida.sierraclub.org

New Florida Chapter Leaders Announced

Three open seats on the Florida Chapter Executive Committee were filled through an election at the Sept. 15 Florida leaders meeting in Melbourne. The three candidates which will serve two-year terms beginning January 1 are **Alyssa Cadwalader** (Loxahatchee), **Whitey Markle** (Suwannee-StJohns) and **Daniel Marien** (Turtle Coast).

Political Action Committee Donations

It's not too late if you wish to donate to our Florida PAC (Political Action Committee)! Your donation will go directly to support campaigns and candidates we have endorsed in the November 6 election. Note that PAC donations need to be accompanied by a brief reference to your employer name or otherwise describe your occupation. Send your non-tax-deductible check to: Sierra Club Florida PAC, c/o Max Goldstein, Treasurer, 220 Lakeview Dr #305, Weston FL 33326 .



Questions? Contact treasurer Tom Larson at tom.larson@florida.sierraclub.org

Conservation Committee Back in Action

For the first time in over a decade, this year the Florida Sierra Club once again has a fully appointed Conservation Committee. Thanks to our outgoing chair Darryl Rutz for helping us get off the ground to a terrific start this year. We are also welcoming two new members this month, Gary Cochran from the Big Bend Group and Drew Martin from the Loxahatchee Group, and have elected new officer positions, Tim Martin as Chair and Grant Gelhardt as Vice Chair.

We are planning to facilitate a two-hour vision session to be held on December 7, the Friday night before the next Chapter leaders meeting in Daytona Beach. Location and time TBD. All group conservation chairs and active conservation committee leaders are encouraged to attend to help us brainstorm. Join us to help create a plan that will make this team a force to be reckoned with across the state. If you think you can make it, send an email to timothymartin@suncoastsierra.org.

We will also have a committee vacancy at the end of the year, so if you're interested in joining please consider applying for the seat by sending in a one page resume to my attention at the email above by November 15.

Check out our web page on the Florida Sierra Club site at sierraclub.org/florida/conservation-committee

Looking forward to a great year ahead!

-Tim Martin, Incoming Conservation Chair

The Pelican, Vol. 51 No. 2

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

Sierra Club Florida Director

Frank Jackalone

Sierra Club Florida Executive Committee

Mark Walters, Miami Group, Chair

Grant Gelhardt, Big Bend Group

Stephen Mahoney, Miami Group

Kristine Cunningham, Volusia-Flagler, Vice-Chair

Rocky Milburn, Tampa Bay Group

Darryl Rutz, Broward Group

Alyssa Cadwalader, Loxahatchee Group, Vice-Treasurer

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Environmental Disaster Was Waiting to Happen

BY JOHN SCOTT

After a wet May this year, summer brought a blue-green algae that covered Lake Okeechobee. Soon thereafter Red Tide exploded along the coastlines of Southwest Florida; a story that has a familiar ring. When Lake Okeechobee water levels creep above 15.5 feet, the Army Corps of Engineers, in an attempt to protect lives threatened by the unstable Herbert Hoover Dike, releases algae-bearing, nutrient-rich, polluted discharges east and west into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers. Those ecosystems were still recovering from 2016, which was also horrific but had an ending. But, the ecological disasters laying waste to coastal and inland waters in 2018 have no end in sight.

Red Tide is fed by land-based nutrient pollution (sewage, fertilizer and manure) and helped along by rising water temperatures. Period. The nutrient pollution-red tide connection is not under debate. Rain that falls on land carries a steady stream of fuel for Red Tide into our stormwater conveyances and ultimately to receiving water bodies like Lake Okeechobee and the Gulf of Mexico. Stopping pollution at its source, before it makes its way into our water bodies, is the only solution, but one that takes political courage by local and state lawmakers.

Hundreds of dead-end canals in Cape Coral and North Fort Myers are clogged with mats of blue-green algae. And the beaches are covered in dead marine life from red tide. The volume of marine life lost already this year is staggering. At least 554 manatees, over 400 sea turtles and more than 70 dolphins have fallen victim to our state government's folly. More than 2,400 tons of dead marine life has been picked up off of beaches. Gut-wrenching.

The stench has confined people to their homes. Some have left. The only protection is a respirator mask. Local officials don't think testing for airborne cyanobacteria is a priority. I vehemently disagree. Water can be avoided but breathing can't. Aggressive signage and testing are mandatory to protect an unsuspecting public from airborne AND waterborne threats. The response from local and state health departments continues to be woefully inadequate.



Found in cyanobacteria, neurotoxin BMAA is cumulative (like mercury or lead) and has been linked to neurodegenerative diseases like ALS, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease, but long term health effects may not be seen for 20 years.

The economic impact has been devastating, as well. Sanibel and Fort Myers Beach have lost nearly \$41 million combined during the months of July and August. Bailey's General Store on Sanibel has experienced a 40 percent drop in revenue, amounting to a half million dollars in lost business. Charter boat captains are literally "dead in the water," most of them losing 80% or more of their business. The St. Lucie River is also being pummeled by blue-green algae blooms once again.

The Calusa Sierra Club Group hosted Andrew Gillum on a "Look, Listen and

Sanibel beaches have become graveyards for tons of dead fish./ Photo John Scott

Learn Tour" at the Cape Coral Yacht Club on August 24 and participated in roundtables with US Sen. Bill Nelson, Agriculture Commissioner candidate Nikki Fried, and CFO candidate Jeremy Ring, which were productive, educational discussions about environmental problems and solutions.

These disasters are a culmination of terrible policies over the past 20 years. Rick Scott and the Florida legislature have overseen, by far, the worst of those policies in the past 8 years: de-regulated polluters, de-funded water management and environmental protection agencies and unfettered growth and development have combined to give us the algae crisis we have today. We must stop pollution at its source and hold polluters accountable.

In 1996, voters passed the "Polluters Pay" amendment which has remained an unfunded mandate to this day. It's crucial we elect environmental champions in November to break the cycle of destruction and usher in a new era of policies and enforcement that will protect Florida's environment. If we keep going down the same path we've been on, the algae blooms of death will only continue to get worse.

John Scott is vice-chair of the Calusa Group.

Around the State

City of Largo Joins ‘Ready for 100’

The unanimous approval of Largo City Commission on August 7 to join the Club’s Ready for 100 Campaign made the Pinellas County city the 4th city in Florida (with St. Petersburg, Orlando and Sarasota) to commit to an environmentally and fiscally sustainable energy future.

The city commits to achieve 100 percent renewable, zero-emission energy by 2035. Largo will explore ways to reduce energy consumption and increase efficiencies through technology, building upgrades and retrofits. Largo’s commitment also includes supporting a community-wide transition to 100 percent renewable energy through stakeholder engagement and encouraging benefits for the most vulnerable in our community.



More than 80 cities in the United States have now established bold commitments to move away from dirty fuels and repower their communities with 100% clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar. Congratulations to Orlando for being one of 10 cities across the country spotlighted by national Sierra Club in a Case Studies Report for the Ready for 100 campaign. With a population of more than 280,250, close to 10 percent of the city’s energy already comes from renewable resources. To read the report, go to the link below.

Interested in helping your city make the transition? Check out the Sierra Club website at sierraclub.org/ready-for-100 or contact Ready for 100 organizer Phil Compton at phil.compton@sierraclub.org

FDOT Cuts the Coastal Connector

The fight is over for now to save the bucolic horse farmland of North Central Florida from a proposed toll road that would have cut through the heart of Marion County and beyond. The proposed Coastal Connector would have extended from the Suncoast Parkway in Citrus County to I-75 north of Ocala and eventually to Jacksonville. After much opposition, an FDOT letter released August 31 says the agency now believes “it is appropriate to step back and refocus on improvement of I-75” rather than continue to plan for the toll road. Sierra members in Suwannee-StJohns group were actively involved in this fight.

Mosaic Mining Expansion Denied

After three days of public testimony, the DeSoto County Board of County Commissioners voted July 24 4-1 to deny the Mosaic Company’s request to rezone over 14,000 acres from agriculture to Phosphate Mining Industrial. “The Board’s decision is a testament to the hard work by members of the public and conservationists to make sure the elected officials were aware of all that would be sacrificed to allow mining,” said Beverly Griffiths, Chair of the Phosphate Committee of Sierra Club Florida. “DeSoto County’s denial of Mosaic’s request for rezoning was gratifying and uplifting. DeSoto’s unique agricultural heritage and the natural resources that support it are safe for now.”



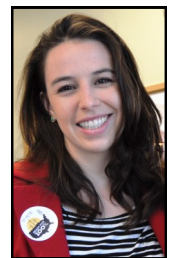
New EJI Committee Seeking Volunteers

The Florida Chapter has committed to becoming a more equitable, just, and inclusive organization as we fight for our environment in Florida. At the beginning of 2018, a workgroup was convened to strategize on how to break down inequities, build up justice, and create a welcoming space for everyone to become involved.

We are now looking to form a committee who will continue to shape and grow these strategies as we strive to make equity, justice, and inclusion a priority into the future. If you are interested in becoming a part of the committee for this important work, please contact Florida Chapter Executive Committee member, Alyssa Cadwalader, at alyssa.cadwalader@florida.sierraclub.org or (561)-246-4083.

Gorman Named Chair of Miami Alliance

Sierra Club Organizer in Miami, Emily Gorman, has been appointed Chair of the Miami Climate Alliance (MCA) Steering Committee. MCA is a network of organizations and individuals dedicated to creating people-centered solutions to climate change. The equity-driven agenda intersects with many public policy issues affecting frontline communities, including affordable housing, mass transit, emergency preparedness and disaster response, food security, flooding, saltwater intrusion, and ICE Detainer/Sanctuary Cities policies.



Sierra Club Florida 2018 Endorsements

We need to ensure that our government, at every level, understands the social, economic, and philosophical value of the environment and our democratic process. Our voice means everything in our government, so consider your civic responsibility and vote in the November 6 elections.



Florida Governor - Andrew Gillum

US Senate - Bill Nelson

Attorney General - Sean Shaw

Agriculture Commissioner -
Nikki Fried

US CONGRESS

Al Lawson (FL 5)

Nancy Soderberg (FL-6)

Stephanie Murphy (FL 7)

Darren Soto (FL-9)

Val Demings (FL-10)

Chris Hunter (FL-12)

Charlie Crist (FL-13)

Kathy Castor (FL-14)

David Shapiro (FL-16)

Alcee Hastings (FL-20)

Ted Deutch (FL-21)

Lois Frankel (FL-22)

Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23)

Frederica Wilson (FL-24)

FLORIDA HOUSE

Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson (FL-10)

Tracye Polson (FL-15)

Adam Morley (FL 24)

Kathleen Tripp (FL 25)

Dr. Linda Jack (FL 36)

Debra Bellanti (FL-60)

Fentrice Driskill (FL-63)

Alex Heeren (FL-66)

Ben Diamond (FL 68)

Jennifer Webb (FL 69)

Margaret Good (FL-72)

Liv Coleman (FL-73)

Tony Mowry (FL 74)

Parisima Taeb (FL-78)

Mark Lipton (FL-79)

Jennifer Boddicker (FL-80)

Ellen Baker (FL 85)

Edgardo Hernandez (FL 87)

Jim Bonfiglio (FL 89)

Sara McFadden (FL-106)

FLORIDA SENATE

Kayser Enneking (FL8)

Melissa "Mel" Martin (FL-14)

Lindsay Cross (FL-24)

Annisa Karim (FL-28)

AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1 - VOTE NO
Property tax assessment exemption

Amendment 4 - VOTE YES
Voters rights restoration

Amendment 5 - VOTE NO
Supermajority required for tax increase

Amendment 9 - VOTE YES
Near shore drilling ban

Updated information on local races may be available on Group web pages. Paid political advertisement paid for by Sierra Club Florida PAC 1990 Central Avenue St Petersburg FL 33712 independently of any candidate or committee.

Gillum for Governor

(Continued from page 1)

ence to climate change, clean energy, or the state's desperate need to manage growth again. His plan to address the state's water crisis by forming a Commission to study red tide is irresponsible; immediate action is needed by the next governor to protect Florida's coastal tourism economy that has been crippled by killer red tide and other types of toxic algae.

The Sierra Club is pleased by Mayor Gillum's choice of Chris King as his running mate. Chris King is a business leader with good values and principles, and he is dedicated to restoring Florida's Everglades and protecting our coastal estuaries from red tide and other algae blooms. We are impressed by his commitment, knowledge, and energy, and are convinced that he will make a terrific Lieutenant Governor.

The contrast between Andrew Gillum and Ron DeSantis couldn't be greater. Gillum is an environmental champion with a proven track record who has the foresight and leadership skills to protect Florida's people and natural resources, while DeSantis, a former member of Congress with a terrible environmental voting record, merely echoes the failed policies of Rick Scott and Donald Trump.

Nelson for Senate

(Continued from page 1)

Scott wins, with his backing from Trump and the Koch Brothers, we can expect more of the same at the U.S. Congressional legislative level. Since the environment is so important in this election, Scott is attempting to paint himself green. But many of his environmental proposals are "fixes" to problems that are paid for by public money rather than the polluters.

Sen. Nelson has steadfastly introduced, sponsored and voted for environmental legislation. Recently, he co-sponsored SB 569 the Land & Water Conservation Funding providing the federal funding for land acquisition. He "gets it" with global climate change and sea level rise and the importance of clean energy as part of the solution. This is the most important Senate race in the country, and we want to keep Bill Nelson on the job working for the environment.

Sierra Opens Office in Glades

On August 11 we celebrated a new and exciting phase of Sierra's work in South Florida with the grand opening of our Belle Glade office in western Palm Beach County. Sierra Club is the first environmental non-profit to open an office in the Glades, within the Everglades Agricultural Area and by the shores of the water heart of South Florida and the Everglades - Lake Okeechobee. The office was packed with partners, local activists, and new friends from across Florida. Attendees shared stories and heard



Patrick Ferguson

presentations from Belle Glade and South Bay activists and Sierra Club organizers Patrick Ferguson (Stop Sugar Field Burning Campaign) and Diana Umpierre (Everglades Restoration Campaign). After the program many took a guided tour of the surrounding community and the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee led by local activists. A caravan of vans and cars drove by the homes, schools, and businesses that are directly affected by pre-harvest sugar field burning and passed by many sites key to the current and potential future socioeconomic status of the Glades:

migrant worker housing, a sugar mill, Glades Central High School, Herbert Hoover Dike, Torry Island on the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee, and more. To learn more about these issue, email patrick.ferguson@sierraclub.org. For issues concerning the Everglades, email diana.umpierre@sierraclub.org.



On the area tour with activist Kina Phillips, center

Photos By Lomiekia Messam



Sierra Club Florida honored Legal Chair **Linda Bremer** for her longtime dedication and service at the Sept. 15 Chapter leaders meeting in Melbourne. Bremer is stepping down as Legal Chair after 11 years, but her service to the Club is long: Chapter Steering Committee, various state and national committees working on wetlands and forestry issues, served on the board of Wildlife Foundation of Florida (1999), and numerous advisory boards and committees in North Florida. She received accolades from many friends and admirers across Florida during the presentation and received a standing ovation. Linda's thoughtful and kind demeanor has become legendary. Thank you, Linda Bremer!



Committee Taking Action in Panhandle

The former Northwest Florida group is in the process of being resurrected as a working committee by active Sierra Club members and supporters under the new name of the **Emerald Coast Committee**. While we are not a full-fledged Sierra Club Group, we can transition to one in the future if our Executive Committee votes for this change.

The Sierra Club Emerald Coast Committee currently serves the seven NW Florida counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Holmes and Washington. Since we are a new committee, our focus has been on getting to know and support the other groups in the area who are already doing great work on climate and sea level rise, single-use plastic reduction, water quality issues, clean energy and other areas of environmental concern.

Our launch meeting was held in May in Pensacola, and we have begun a speaker series at the Pensacola Main Library in Downtown Pensacola.

Since then, we've partnered with local groups (such as the 350 Pensacola, Earth Ethics, Gulf Restoration Network, Keep Pensacola Beautiful, and League of Women Voters) on various events like the Rise for Climate, Jobs and Justice rally, film screenings, a Solar Press Conference, International Coastal Cleanup Day and more.

Are you a concerned resident in one of our counties? We are looking for active members and supporters to join our Executive Committee. We are also in the process of growing our Outings program, so if you enjoy the great outdoors and think you could lead a group, let us know.

For more information or to join our mailing list, email SierraClubEmeraldCoast@gmail.com

To learn about upcoming events, follow our Facebook page: facebook.com/SierraClubEmeraldCoast/ or check our website: sierraclub.org/florida/emerald-coast

Tampa Bay Group Scores Recycling Touchdown

In 1991, the largest professional sports stadium in Tampa Bay didn't have a recycling program. Enter Barbara Heinen, newly appointed City of Tampa recycling coordinator and Phil Compton of the Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group. Together with the leadership of the Tampa Sports Authority (TSA), the "Stash Your Cans" recycling program was born. Now in the 28th consecutive season, this program continues to score tons of recycling touchdowns for the community.

Managed for over 20 years by inaugural volunteer member David Varrieur, the program has been rebranded as the "Stadium Recycling Initiative" at Raymond James Stadium. Prior to the start of each Buccaneers game or event, Sierra Club volunteers act as event day educational ambassadors. They encourage spectators to recycle using the recycling stations located both in and out of the stadium. Their efforts have resulted in collecting thousands of tons of recycled materials annually.

A typical event will include 20 volunteers who man recycling stations at entry gates around the stadium. While thanking guests for supporting the Sierra Club recycling program, they get bin after bin filled up with recyclables. Volunteers are required to wear Sierra Club shirts and attend one Tampa Bay Buccaneers game and one USF Bulls game annually. They also may volunteer for other events including International soccer games, concerts and more.

Volunteers are compensated by getting into the events they work for free. The Tampa Bay Sierra Club is compensated financially per event. This program is con-



Tampa Bay Sierra Club's volunteer group led by David Varrieur, kneeling, at a recent Buccaneers game. Pirate Phil Compton holds a 28 signifying the fundraising program's 28th year of recycling at the stadium.

tinuously the single largest annual fundraiser for the Tampa Bay Group.

Super Bowl Magic

The program drew the attention of Jack Groh, Director of the NFL Environmental Program when he arrived in Tampa to prepare for the 2009 Super Bowl. At that time in the NFL, there were very few recycling programs and none as organized, efficient and successful as the Tampa Group. **Ultimately, this became a model for the NFL, which now has recycling programs in all stadiums!**

The Super Bowl was a massive undertaking and the TSA, Groh and Varrieur worked tirelessly to prepare for it. This included recruitment of additional volunteers, interviewing, background checks, orientation and training events, mandatory volunteer shifts for the NFL Experience

and game day recycling inside the stadium after the game.

Due to the success of the Super Bowl event, Groh requested that the group recycle for the 2017 College Football Championship game. Tons of recycling materials were collected.

The Stadium Recycling Initiative continues to be an incredible recycling success story. This year, Varrieur is working with the TSA to include the Tampa Bay Group in the annual e-recycling and paper shredding event recently added to the schedule.

Thanks to the volunteers of the Tampa Bay Group who have made this stadium recycling effort the largest fund-raising program for Sierra Club in Florida. It's a real win-win for not only the Club, but the stadium and the community!

Outings Leader Retreat Oct. 26-28

All Outings leaders, outings chairs and future outings leaders are invited to the Florida Chapter's annual retreat October 26-28 at Myakka State Park. We will have roundtable discussions and short workshops on topics such as re-certification training, first aide training and new tools to help build and grow your outings program. You'll leave the weekend gathering inspired to start or grow new and innovative outdoor programs. We will be camping. For more information, contact Rudy Scheffer at rudy.scheffer@sierraclub.org or 727-542-6403.



Sierra Club Florida
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St. Petersburg, Florida 33712

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Email new address to
address.changes@sierraclub.org
and include your membership ID
number located on the mailing label.



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South Florida Sierrans Join in the Rise to Be Heard

Sierra Club is making strides with partner organizations in South Florida in recent months by joining to show solidarity and bring awareness to troubling issues.

On September 22, we joined more than two dozen organizations participating in **Boricuas Remember**, a day of solidarity for Puerto Rico and a remembrance for the nearly 3,000 lives lost as a result of Hurricane Maria.

Hundreds of people converged at the Meyer Amphitheatre in West Palm Beach where candidates U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson and Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum spoke. Both criticized what they saw as a weak response by the Trump administration to Hurricane Maria, which devastated the island a year ago. The Trump Administration has consistently failed the



Florida Sierra organizer Gonzalo Valdes, center in black, joins the rally near Mar-a-Lago to demand justice for Puerto Rico. Facebook photo/ Democratic Veterans Caucus of Florida

people of Puerto Rico, from providing inadequate funds for relief and reconstruction to failing to rebuild its power grid and infrastructure following the hurricane.

On September 8, Sierra Club Miami, Miami Climate Alliance and more than 40 partner organizations held **Miami Rising**

For Climate Jobs and Justice Action at Bayfront Park as part of the People's Climate Movement National Day of Action. More than a thousand turned out for a day of empowerment and education, highlighted by art, music, speakers and exhibits. Sierra Club volunteers organized a solar-powered cell phone charging station and collected 275 petition signatures asking the City of Miami to commit to a transition to 100% renewable community-wide energy supply before 2050. Speakers at the event focused on the urgency to act on climate, jobs and justice, illustrating the issues with personal stories. Among the 14 speakers were Sierra Club Organizer and Miami Climate Alliance Steering Committee Chair Emily Gorman.

Check out the campaign at MiamiRising.org.