



Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group November 2023 News, Events & Action Alerts

**Vote in the Adventure Coast
Executive Committee Election**

**Adventure Coast Meet Up Wed. Nov. 8th 7-8pm with
ReNae Nowicki on Wetlands Across the Adventure Coast**

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IRA tax dollars for Energy Efficiency**

**Pasco County: Open Spaces, Vibrant Places
Zoom Thursday, Oct. 12, 8pm**

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**Pinehurst Rezoning: Hernando County
Commission says NO to Rezoning**

VOTE in the Adventure Coast Executive Committee Election

Make your voice heard in the Sierra Club

Adventure Coast Group by voting in our

Executive Committee election. There are three

two-year terms to be filled this year. If you

have a joint membership, each member must

reply separately.

Please note if you hold a joint account. Ballots

must be received by 11:39 pm on November

20th, 2023, to be counted. Duplicate ballots will

not be accepted.

VOTE HERE

If you do not wish to use the online ballot above - use the
printable ballot [here](#), enter your name and member number on ballot and

vote. Then either email or mail your ballot to us. Duplicate ballots will not be accepted.

Your membership number is needed to vote. You can find it on the mailing label of your Sierra Club magazine or by logging onto www.myaccount.sierraclub.org or by contacting Member Care at member.care@sierraclub.org or by calling 415-557-1100.

If you have any questions about the Elections process, please contact the Elections Committee at adventurecoastelections@gmail.com or call 352-277-3330.

Adventure Coast Meet Up Wed. Nov. 8th 7-8pm with Dr. ReNae Nowicki on Wetlands Across the Adventure Coast



Join us for the next Adventure Coast Group Membership Meet Up at the [South Brooksville Community Center, 601 East Martin Luther King Boulevard](#) in Brooksville, from 7—8pm on Wednesday, November 8th. from 7pm—8pm. Attend in person or remotely via Zoom.

Guest speaker Dr. ReNae Nowicki will discuss wetlands across the Adventure Coast: their ecological expression, how and why they vary, and a tool to help understand what drives their hydrology. She is an Ecohydrologist with EcoHydrologix LLC, a consulting firm specializing in environmental assessments for local governments and public agencies. The Adventure Coast is divided into five geomorphologic provinces, each imparting an ecohydrological signature within their wetlands. We'll explore these signatures and key differences in wetland hydrologic driver(s) and how a new study helps us better understand and protect the wetland functions & values.

Dr. Nowicki's 27-year career as an Ecohydrologist specializing in wetland/lake ecohydrologic evaluations. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from St. Leo College in Biology, a Master of Environmental Management in Resource Ecology from the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University, and a PhD in Geology from the School of Geosciences at the University of South Florida.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at:
https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAKf-qtqTiiHdB1keZqrPAh2iBGkKUz_Ew4

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

Action Alert: Gov. DeSantis refuses \$346 million IRA tax dollars for Energy Efficiency



Please take action now to let Governor DeSantis know that as a taxpayer, you are outraged that he refused access to \$346 million in free federal Inflation Reduction Act funding. This support was to help local governments prepare and protect our communities from climate change and homeowners upgrade their homes to lower their energy costs.

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs had applied for the funding, but Commissioner Wilton Simpson was told to withdraw the application. It would have reduced carbon emissions that are creating a climate crisis that Floridians are already experiencing with stronger storms and hurricanes, hotter weather, droughts and sea level rise.

An article in the Tallahassee Democrat by Meta Calder of the League of Women Voters, noted that: *"Half of these dollars, \$173 million were to be used to provide rebates exclusively to households with low to moderate incomes for the purchase of energy efficient appliances, electrical updates to accommodate those appliances, and weatherization improvements such as insulation. Households with incomes up to 80% of Florida's median income would be eligible for 100% of their costs - up to the rebate amount. Households with more than 80% but less than 150% of the median income could receive up to 50% of their costs - up to the rebate amount. The rebate caps are substantial – just about covering the current purchase price for energy efficient appliances."*

We need to make a huge fuss! Let your elected representatives, and especially the Governor, know this is not fair. **Please send off a quick email today to tell them that: We are outraged that you denied Floridians our share of taxpayer dollars to protect our communities from climate change and reduce emissions through energy efficiency.**

Governor Ron DeSantis: <https://www.flgov.com/email-the-governor/>

Florida State Legislators:

Citrus County residents - [Rep. Ralph Massullo, MD](#)

Hernando County residents - [Rep. John Paul Templeton](#)

Florida Senator Blaise Ingolia: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/S11>

Thank you!

Pasco County: Open Spaces, Vibrant Places



“Open Spaces, Vibrant Places” is the motto of Pasco and it is more important than ever to remember as it has become one of the fastest growing counties in the state of Florida. The balance between Open Spaces and Vibrant Places needs to be done in a way that preserves our beautiful natural habitats and minimizes development in coastal high hazard areas which are extremely vulnerable to the effects of climate change (increased hurricanes and flooding).

The Sierra Club Pasco County Conservation team takes on the challenge! The team works to educate the public and identify and protect the natural beauty that is Pasco. In 2023, we hosted two out of a five-part series “The Cotee River: Understanding the Jewel of Pasco County, Headwaters to the Gulf” with Linda Blake, MS Ed. You can see it on YouTube - Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee Channel.

We are working with other local organizations to protect Anclote River State Beach Park from a huge restaurant development on Pasco County-owned property. We oppose development of a 400+ unit apartment complex on the “Anclote 74 Ecosystem” in Tarpon Springs and support upholding the Northeast Pasco Rural Area Protections.

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 efforts to educate and protect Pasco’s natural open spaces, please emailsashabuddha@gmail.com. Join us on the 2nd Thursday of the month or Nov. 9th this month via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7674695843> with the Zoom ID: 767 469 5843.

Seeking a Sierra Club Citrus County Student Leader



The time is now to get involved in saving our planet! Sierra Club is seeking a Citrus County Student Leader to offer a youthful voice on our Executive Committee and collaborate with Hernando County Student Leader Jasmine Tavares on Sierra Club efforts to protect our environment. Some activities include participating in monthly ExCom meetings, attending and speaking out at public hearings on key issues, tabling at events, and supporting membership activities. To learn more, contact Jasmine Tavares at jtavares0828@gmail.com.

If you're interested in applying, send an email to sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com with a little about you! If you know a promising student interested in the environment and conservation, point them our way!

Action Alert: Help Save Weekiwachee Preserve



DID YOU KNOW?



The Florida black bear was a Threatened Species until 2012.

They are now listed as a Recovered Species and the FWC approximates that there are 4,050 black bears in Florida. The Weekiwachee Preserve is a critical juncture in the Florida Wildlife Corridor for bears and other wildlife.

After extensive local involvement and stakeholder input, on September 19th, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group reached out to the Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District regarding Hernando County's proposal to lease and develop a 350-acre parcel of land within the Weekiwachee Preserve. Our letter to the Governing Board can be read [here](#).

We received a reply on behalf of Governing Board Chair Ed Armstrong on October 16th, noting that: *"Discussions are ongoing between the District and Hernando County staff regarding the county's proposal for recreational development on a portion of the Weekiwachee Preserve. Any proposed agreements with the county on use of these lands will need to come to the Governing Board for approval. Our meetings are open to the public and allow interested parties to provide feedback prior to the Board making a decision. Since this item has not been brought to the Board for consideration, it would not be appropriate for Chair Armstrong to comment on this specific issue at this time."*

Those current negotiations appear to pre-ordain an eventual sale of the 350 acres to the county as "surplus" so their plan to develop an artificial beach and swimming area can move forward. We believe the high conservation value of this land precludes such a determination, and that its value for conservation has only increased after 25+ years of quality management by the District. Adventure Coast Group strongly opposes any plan that would eventually open the door for the county to purchase the land and then develop an artificial beach and swim area.

Help us keep up the pressure to stop this ill-advised proposal. Please email Frank Gargano, Senior Government Affairs Regional Manager, Government and Community Affairs Office, Southwest Florida Water Management District at frank.gargano@swfwmd.state.fl.us or via mail or phone at: 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34604-6899. Office: 352-796-7211, Direct: 352-224-9698.

Let him know that we do not want the Weekiwachee Preserve to be turned over to the county to create an artificial beach/swim area within a well-used Wildlife Corridor on tax-payer conservation lands. Surely there's a better place for such a high-density activity than Black Bear habitat.

Pinehurst Rezoning: Hernando County Commission says NO to Re-zoning



Since 2021, Sierra Club Adventure Coast and Pinehurst Concerned Citizens have opposed a Hernando County rezoning request by Brightwork Real Estate, Inc., on behalf of out of state property owners, to develop a parcel of seven lots at the northeast corner of Spring Hill Drive and U.S. Highway 19 in Spring Hill. This woody 11-acre parcel was zoned to provide a landscaping barrier at the entrance to the original Deltona Corporation plan to develop one of the first residential communities in Spring Hill. Brightwork wanted to replace it with an intense 7 -unit commercial development including a gas station, drive-through fast food, and other high traffic businesses with access through the neighborhood's access road behind it. This busy intersection ranks third in the county for accidents.

The final hearing before the Hernando County Commission was Tuesday, October 23. Sierra Club was ably represented by Hernando Conservation Chair Tom St. Clair who emphasized that good planning includes green space to support sustainability goals and improve quality of life in developed communities. This barrier provides a sound and green space buffer from the noise and traffic of Highway 19 for homeowners on east Pinehurst Drive.

Opposition to commercial intrusion was strong and the residents, organized by Brenda and Dave Rabbitt, didn't want the development to provide connectivity to their homes, as planned. They organized to oppose it as Pinehurst Concerned Citizens and were represented at the hearing by their lawyer George Angeliadis.

Hernando County Commission Chair John Allocco voiced support for the landscape buffer. Other commissioners noted that the commercial plan was too dense for that location and they did not want their shared access road to increase traffic for the residents. Brenda was grateful that the commissioners were sensitive to the potential intrusion into the residential community. In the end, the commission voted 5-0 to deny the application. Given the urban sprawl of Spring Hill, the commission was well-advised to consider quality of life issues. Thank you. It took a while, but a win is a win for the environment and the community that benefits from it.



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](#).