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

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**Run for Election to the Sierra Club  
Adventure Coast Executive Committee**

**Attention Up-And-Coming Advocates  
We are seeking a Citrus County Student Leader**

**Adventure Coast Meet Up Wed. Oct. 11th 7-8pm  
With Michael Cohen of Solar United Neighbors**

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee  
Zoom Thursday, Oct. 12, 8pm**

**Adventure Coast Outing Oct. 25  
to Janet Butterfield Brooks WPA**

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# RUN FOR ELECTION TO THE SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee (ExCom) of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group has 3 positions up for election for the 2024-2025 period. The Committee has a total of 7 members, each serving two-year terms. Candidates must be Sierra Club members, passionate about protecting our local environment, willing to help promote Sierra Club's mission, Adventure Coast Group goals, and attend monthly meetings.

We are accepting nominations until October 16th, and hope that you (or a friend) will step up to run in the election. Bring your ideas, thoughts, and commitment to our Adventure Coast Group. To qualify, you must be a member of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and at least 18 years of age.

## SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION

to [AdventureCoastElections@gmail.com](mailto:AdventureCoastElections@gmail.com)  
by October 16th, 2023.

### INCLUDE YOUR:

- NAME, ADDRESS, EMAIL, TELEPHONE
- BIO/RESUME
- IMAGE OF YOU FOR THE BALLOT
- A 3-PARAGRAPH NARRATIVE OF YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE BALLOT

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

email [sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com) or  
call 352-277-3330.



Submit your nomination and requested items listed above to [AdventureCoastElections@gmail.com](mailto:AdventureCoastElections@gmail.com) by October 16th, 2023.

For more information email [sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com) or call 352-277-3330.

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**Attention Up-And-Coming Advocates**  
***We are seeking a Citrus County Student Leader***



The Citrus County Student Leader would work alongside our Hernando County Student Leader, Jasmine Tavares, and the Executive Committee (ExCom) on local initiatives and offer a youth perspective. Some activities include attending monthly ExCom meetings, attending County Commissioner public hearings, tabling at events, and sending welcome letters to new members. If you want to learn more about firsthand experience on the position, reach out to Jasmine Tavares, Hernando County Youth Leader, at [jtavares0828@gmail.com](mailto:jtavares0828@gmail.com).

If you're interested in applying, send an email to [sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com) with your resume and a little about you! If you know a promising student interested in local environmental advocacy and conservation point them our way!

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**Save the Date!**  
**Adventure Coast Meet Up Wednesday, Oct. 11th 7-8pm with**  
**Michael Cohen of Solar United Neighbors**



Join us for the next Adventure Coast Group Membership Meet Up at the South Brooksville Community Center, [601 East Martin Luther King Boulevard](https://www.google.com/maps/place/601+East+Martin+Luther+King+Boulevard,+Brooksville,+FL) in Brooksville, from 7-8pm on Wednesday, October 11th. Attend in person or remotely via Zoom.

Our guest speaker will be Michael Cohen, a member of Sierra Club in Central Florida and co-founder and current board member of what became Solar United Neighbors of Florida in 2015. He spends a lot

of his retirement volunteering on growing solar, after a career marketing restaurants, real estate, and hotels.

Michael will discuss the state of solar energy in Florida and says: "You might not know that rooftop solar is better and cheaper than utility scale solar farms. Learn more about going solar and some of the benefits of the Inflation Reduction Act."

Note: This is the new location for Sierra Club Adventure Coast Membership Meetups that are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month from 7-8PM. Please mark your calendar.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: [https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAKf-qtqTiiHdB1keZqrPAh2iBGkkUz\\_Ew4](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAKf-qtqTiiHdB1keZqrPAh2iBGkkUz_Ew4)

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

More info at [adventurecoast@florida.sierraclub.org](mailto:adventurecoast@florida.sierraclub.org) or call (352) 277-3330, check out our website at [www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast](http://www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast), or find Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group on Facebook.

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## Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee Zoom Thursday, Oct. 12th 8pm



Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee is dedicated to preserving, exploring, and enjoying nature in areas of Pasco County.

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

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## Adventure Coast Outing Oct. 25 to Janet Butterfield Brooks WPA



Explore a hidden gem with Adventure Coast Group's Outings Leader Eugene Kelly on Wednesday, October 25th. The Janet Butterfield Brooks Wildlife and Environmental Area (WEA) is owned and managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and is only opened for public visitation by prior arrangement, so this is a rare opportunity. The outing will be co-led by Hana Brinkley, our host from FWC.

Gene will introduce you to the mosaic of upland habitats present on the 319-acre property. Special emphasis will be placed on the 118 acres of "sandhill" habitat, which is distinguished by a canopy of mature longleaf pines and an extremely diverse groundcover. October is the best time of the year to observe sandhill's annual explosion of wildflowers. FWC's management of the property includes regular applications of prescribed fire, and the most recent "burn" is expected to generate an especially spectacular display of wildflowers this fall. Other habitats we will encounter include pine flatwoods and hardwood hammocks. Collectively, these habitat areas support populations of gopher tortoise, fox squirrels, kestrels, and many other species. Bring your binocular to better enjoy the many migratory bird species that could be present during our visit.

The outing will consist of a hike that is moderate in length and difficulty, covering about 2 miles of mostly sandy and uneven trail. Wear appropriate footwear, and be sure to bring a water bottle and snacks. Reservations are required and will be limited to 20 participants. We will start the outing at 9:00 am, so please plan to arrive 10 or 15 minutes early for "sign in" and to receive an overview about "JBB". The outing will conclude by noon.

There is no street address for JBB, so we suggest using the address for the private residence located immediately across the street from the entrance gate (15478 Baily Hill Road, Brooksville, FL) to find the location, which is approximately 0.3 miles west of Citrus Way on Baily Hill Road.

**For more information, or to RSVP, please contact Eugene Kelly a [gmkelly@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:gmkelly@tampabay.rr.com).**

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**Weekiwachee Preserve: Sierra Club Adventure Coast  
appeals to SWFWMD Governing Board**





## 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 to both Hernando County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) local staff, and after careful deliberation, on September 19th, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group reached out to the Governing Board of the District regarding Hernando County's proposal to lease and develop a 350-acre parcel of land within the Weekiwachee Preserve.

The 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. The legal authority to designate the land as "surplus" rests with the Governing Board and requires a determination that the lands "are no longer needed for conservation purposes." 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. The 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.

Our letter to the Governing Board can be read [here](#).

Let's keep up the pressure to stop this ill-advised proposal. Contact Frank Gargano, Senior Government Affairs Regional Manager, Government and Community Affairs Office, Southwest Florida Water Management District at [frank.gargano@swfwmd.state.fl.us](mailto:frank.gargano@swfwmd.state.fl.us) or reach him via mail or phone at: 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34604-6899. Office: 352-796-7211, Direct: 352-224-9698.

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**FDEP Rule Hearing on Consumptive Use Permits  
Save our precious springs!**



As springs lovers, we know over-pumping is a serious threat to the future of our springs. The water use permitting system should protect our springs from harm. On August 28th over a hundred springs activists from across Central and North Florida stood together in Gainesville to urge the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to follow the law and protect our springs.

A 2016 law directed FDEP to “adopt uniform rules for issuing permits which prevent groundwater withdrawals that are harmful” to Outstanding Florida Springs. But for seven years, FDEP has flagrantly disregarded the law and refused to propose statutory rules to do so despite an FDEP finding that Florida will run out of water by 2040 at current rates of withdrawal.

In 2022, after more than six years of delay, FDEP finally proposed a draft rule. However, it was essentially the same as the rules already adopted for all water bodies in 2014 and was withdrawn after opposition from Florida Springs Council, Sierra Club FL and Senator David Simmons, co-sponsor and author of the 2016 law. Now, FDEP is back with another proposed rule, equally as weak but the Our speakers were clear that the springs need our help now. The hard part is setting limits to the growing need for more water by more developments and agricultural uses. We need conservation strategies and limits set now. Florida Springs Council has proposed a rule that we all support.



Adventure Coast Group speakers included Chair DeeVon Quirolo, member Robin Orlandi, and League of Woman Voter’s Natural Resources Chair Maxine Connor. Michael McGrath spoke on behalf of Sierra

Club Florida, Adventure Coast and Florida Sierra Club also submitted written comments. **So did over 850 Springs Advocates** who sent emails through the Florida Springs Council's advocacy system. **Thank you!**

The public comment period closed September 20th. We have left FDEP without a doubt that we will never accept less than what our beloved springs deserve and require. Let's do it again and again until our springs are protected for future generations! Stay tuned for more opportunities to "show up" for your favorite springs, rivers, streams, and coastal waters. Being there makes all the difference!

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## **Wilton Simpson Technical College Native Plants Demonstration Project**



The Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and the Hernando Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, in cooperation with the Hernando County School District and Hernando County, are planning the Wilton Simpson Technical College Native Plants Demonstration Project. The goal is to incorporate installation of native plants and educational signage into the landscaping for the new college to be located at the Brooksville Airport on Spring Hill Drive. The land has been cleared and fill brought in to raise it to the 100-year flood level. Hernando County Project Manager Eric Van De Boogaard plans to complete construction by August 2024.

The Hernando Chapter of the Native Plant Society has recommended that the native plants include a mix of tree, shrub and groundcover species to impart a range of colors and textures, and located where the lighting and exposure will be conducive to healthy growth and longevity. The use of perennial species is included to minimize maintenance and maximize plant longevity. They would be clustered to focus and/or replaced with species that support native pollinators and are capable of reseeding. The parking lot islands have not yet been studied, but shade trees whose roots won't compromise the islands are preferred candidates.

Two areas on campus and 16 parking islands in the parking lot are being considered for installation of native plants and signage. We recommend durable outdoor informational signage describing native plants, identifying key species represented and the benefits of landscaping with natives, with a credit line for the partners involved.

The contract for this project on county-owned land will be issued through the county engineering firm of Coastal Engineering. A qualified contractor experienced in native plant landscaping has been recommended, along with professional outdoor signage companies. We want to collaborate on the graphic design and recommend selecting a knowledgeable local graphic designer.

We are honored that this is a priority project for the school district. This demonstration project will result



in increased awareness of the benefits of native plants and installation of native plants in a landscaped setting. For more information contact DeeVon Quirolo at [dquirol@gmail.com](mailto:dquirol@gmail.com) or Eugene Kelly at [gmkelly@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:gmkelly@tampabay.rr.com).



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