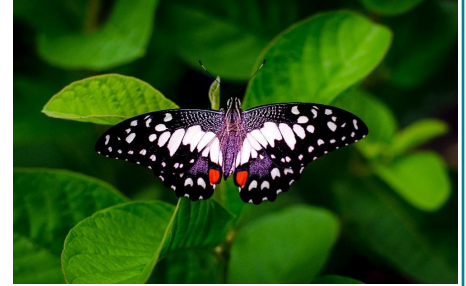




TAMPA BAY SIERRA CLUB MONTHLY JANUARY PROGRAM (Virtual)

Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – 7:00 pm

BUTTERFLIES - HOW SIMPLE IT IS FOR ANYONE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN INCREASING HABITAT FOR BUTTERFLIES OF TAMPA BAY



Speaker: Anita Camacho is the President and Founder of Tampa Bay Butterfly Foundation and North American Butterfly Association-Tampa Bay chapter.

These groups work together at the state and/or local level to conserve butterflies, pollinators, and their habitats as well as educate the public about the importance of the Florida ecosystem for pollinators.

Anita also opened the Little Red Wagon Native Nursery in South Tampa.

Come and learn what you can do to attract a wonderful variety of butterflies!

Time: January 10, 2024, 7:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada) Room opens at 6:45 and Meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85377901302?pwd=VzZtQnk5MDIqTnZzUHJTMGhFazU2dz09>

Meeting ID: 853 7790 1302 Passcode: 458956

TAMPA BAY SIERRA CLUB MONTHLY FEBRUARY PROGRAM (Virtual)

Wednesday, February 14, 2024 – 7:00 pm

How Much Water Can We Safely Use From Our Local Rivers and Still Protect the Environment?



Speaker: Sid Flannery, is the retired chief environmental scientist with the Southwest Florida Water Management District,

(SWFWMD). Sid Flannery obtained Bachelors and Masters Degrees from the University of Florida in the field of Fisheries and Aquatic Science, and has spent 35 years doing extensive research and water management in Florida, including 30 years at SWFWMD where he worked on the ecological role that rivers play in the health of our estuaries and fisheries. We use rivers in the Tampa Bay region for drinking water and Sid will discuss the importance of maintaining the correct balance in those ecosystems.

Time: February 14, 2024, 7:00 PM Eastern Time. Room opens at 6:45 and Meeting starts at 7:00 pm.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85377901302?pwd=VzZtQnk5MDIqTnZzUHJTMGhFazU2dz09>

Meeting ID: 853 7790 1302 Passcode: 458956

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Group Chair / ICO: Rocky Milburn

(813) 966-9785

rocky.milburn@florida.sierraclub.org

Vice-Chair / Parliamentarian

Political Chair: Gary Gibbons

gary.gibbons@florida.sierraclub.org

Conservation: Nancy Stevens

813-380-1668

nancy.stevens@florida.sierraclub.org

Outings Chair: Shirley Denton

shirley.denton@florida.sierraclub.org

Events/Tabling Chair: Michael Newett

michael.newett@florida.sierraclub.org

Communication Chair: Rob Jordan

robert.jordan@florida.sierraclub.org

Plastics Chair/Media Contact:

Janet Stanko

janet.stanko@florida.sierraclub.org

Transportation Chair: Jim Shirk

jim.shirk@florida.sierraclub.org

Co-Treasurer: Don Kruse

don.kruse@florida.sierraclub.org

Other Officers & Assignments

Secretary: Kathy Crosby

kathy.crosby@florida.sierraclub.org

Treasurer: Andy Harris

andy.harris@florida.sierraclub.org

Recycling Chair: Barbara Heineken

barbara.heineken@florida.sierraclub.org

Membership Chair / Volunteer

Coordinator: Dianne Skripek

@florida.sierraclub.org

Program Chair: Bonnie Newett

bonnie.newett@florida.sierraclub.org

ICO Webmaster: Bob Rice

bob.rice@florida.sierraclub.org

Newsletter: Corky Crowley

corky.crowley@florida.sierraclub.org

Tampa Bay Sierra Club Stadium

Recycling Initiative: Dave Varrieur

(813) 503-6970

dave.varrieur@florida.sierraclub.org

Media Contact: Cheryl Van Beek

cheryl.vambeek@florida.sierraclub.org

Outings Leader/Trainer: Ed Shindle

Ed.Shindle@florida.sierraclub.org

TAMPA BAY



OUTINGS

SIERRA CLUB

With the cooler weather, Tampa Bay Outings has more opportunities to get outdoors and to enjoy all the wonderful fun filled places that make Florida such a great place to live in.

For updated outings please go to our schedule, which we will publish on [MeetUp](#) page online:

[Upcoming events | Sierra Club Groups of the Greater Tampa Bay Florida Area \(Saint Petersburg, FL\) | Meetup](#)

and our website

<https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay>.

[Florida Seller of Travel Reference No. ST37115](#)

Participant Agreement Waivers will be required for all participants through advance registration, call:

(415) 977-5630 or www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/

All trips have experienced, trained, certified leaders.

Sat. Jan 13, 2024 Paddle Join us at 9:00 am to paddle the **Alafia River**. Level moderate, 11 miles, fast moving water. Winter days can be a good time to see wading birds.

Contact Leader: Shirley Denton, at shirley.denton@florida.sierraclub.org, for details. **Must RSVP**

GET
OUTDOORS!
MAKE
FRIENDS!
HAVE
FUN!



TAMPA BAY



ICO

SIERRA CLUB

Tampa Bay Inspiring Connection Outdoors (ICO)

Attention Birders: Do you have a pair of



binoculars you no longer use? Did you have a good year and upgraded? The Lakeland ICO group would love to have more binoculars for the kids to use on hikes. **Future Birders!** Please contact Emilie at emiliejoyce17@gmail.com and I will arrange to have them picked up.

This year we are working with the 5th grade students at **Academy Prep of Tampa, St Pete, Lakeland, Leto, and Riverview High Schools**, in addition to the **Young Men's Leadership Corp** from **Plant and Berkley High Schools**.

If you are interested in becoming a leader or volunteering, please contact one of the leaders.

Academy Prep of Tampa: Agency Lead, Karen Kress at kress_loy@hotmail.com

Academy Prep of St. Pete: Agency Lead, Rocky Milburn at tbico@live.com

Academy Prep of Lakeland: Agency Lead, Emilie Joyce at emiliejoyce17@gmail.com



Conservation Committee



Next meetings are Monday, January 8 and February 12 at 6:30 via zoom.

💧 Tampa Wastewater Reuse: Advocating for needed, safe, cost-effective water solutions.

It has been 3 years since Tampa proposed their sewage wastewater project. PURE. Since then, the Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group, in conjunction with Friends of the Hillsborough River, League of Women Voters of Hillsborough County, and Tampa Homeowners Association of Neighborhoods have advocated for safe, cost-effective water for Tampa. Below are some highlights of the work we have been doing.

Tampa Water Background. Tampa is a member of Tampa Bay Water, which was formed to manage water supply for the counties and cities in the region. Tampa is permitted by the Southwest Florida Regional Water Management District (SWFWMD) to get drinking water from Hillsborough River, up to 80 million gallons a day (mgd). Tampa can purchase additional water from regional supplier, Tampa Bay Water. Tampa has a reclaimed water program in place for some industry users and for some households for lawn watering. Tampa is required by SWFWMD to maintain a year-round minimum flow of clean, fresh water for the Hillsborough River's tidal estuary, even during periods of low rainfall.

Tampa proposes wastewater reuse again. Tampa has been unsuccessfully proposing wastewater reuse for 30 years. We begin this chapter of wastewater reuse when Tampa City staff calls together 3 stakeholder groups in December 2020 to describe their plans for a project they call PURE. The plan is to put treated wastewater from the Sewage Treatment Plant into the aquifer and Hillsborough River reservoir to, as they explain to us,

- 💧 Drought-proof the reservoir
- 💧 Provide minimum flows of water for the Hillsborough River
- 💧 Comply with Florida state legislation mandating “beneficial use” of wastewater.

San Diego vs Tampa One of the first things we suggest is that Tampa do something like what San Diego has done for their wastewater reuse program, also called PURE. San Diego went through a **Transparent Process** over a period of 18 years including: Needs analysis and options, public outreach, building a prototype, and expert analyses before they designed and built their potable reuse system.

In contrast, Tampa’s PURE is a water reuse project to use all 50 mgd of Tampa’s wastewater, there is no transparent process and there is already at this point, a preliminary design.

Stakeholders try to work with the City Staff to come up with a solution for water in Tampa, hoping that we would not have to fight every few years. The first hurdle is that City Staff already has a preliminary design, and a schedule for implementing their design and selecting a contractor. We request that they go back to the basics and answer critical questions and then redoing the design. These questions fall into 3 broad categories:

- 💧 What is the **need**? *What are alternatives to meet Tampa’s water needs? How much water is needed beyond current supplies? How much will conservation help?*
- 💧 Is it **safe**? *What are the contaminants? What are safe levels? How will they be removed? What industry is dumping into sewage and how will it be controlled?*
- 💧 What will it **cost**? *Compared to alternatives and conservation? To make it safe?*

We request a Scientific Review and an Alternatives Analysis to be done by outside groups.

Continued on Page 4

Continued From Page 3 **City Officials do not document answers to our question**, even though we meet with City staff regularly for 20 months. The City hires the National Water Research Institute (NWRI) to review the PURE project, but never follows up on its recommendations. The City hires a local consultant to review Benefits and Costs of alternatives, but we have questions about the alternatives analysis which puts the City's preferred solution on top.

The risk of contaminants in the wastewater is not factored in. For example, in the wastewater PFAS levels are 5-20x higher than river levels, and exceed EPA proposed standards. We are also concerned about the unknown dangers of other unregulated contaminants.

The cost is a low estimate, even though it is in Billions of \$\$, because the treatment does not include Reverse Osmosis; and without RO, safety is in question.

Analysis assumes the City must use all 50 MGD to meet Florida statute. We disagree that the City must use all the wastewater. City never analyzes the actual water need.

Stakeholders do Public Outreach. We meet with 6 of 7 City Council members one on one to educate them on the project and issues. The project is complicated, City staff is promoting a one-sided version. We bring to them input from the public, information on Tampa's water infrastructure and alternatives, and our concerns and questions on need, safety, cost. Until the public's questions are answered, people will continue to say "yuck" to toilet to tap. We meet with the Mayor, speak at public forums, do TV and Radio interviews and talk shows to educate the public on the issues of wastewater reuse.

In early 2022 we support a City staff request for funding for public outreach and more study because we think it will lead to answering our questions,

City Doesn't Do Public Outreach And Study, despite the City staff getting over \$1M in funding, except for two presentations jointly with stakeholders that do not answer the questions. Studies are not done, except for a Suspended Ion Exchange (SIX) trial.

Time to Fight. Despite still meeting with citizen stakeholders, City staff works behind the scenes and tries to get some things passed by City Council. Fortunately, our network of sharp-eyed Neighborhood Association leaders spots these attempts to get PURE on the City Council agenda without our knowledge. The City Staff are continuing to dismiss the public reaction as the yuck factor, and request over \$1M to hire a better PR firm to educate the public. They have no plans to answer our questions about need, safety and cost. And the Mayor is clearly still behind PURE.

In September 2022, with just a few weeks until PURE goes before the City Council to vote on additional funding, we decide that it is time to fight to kill the project. Fortunately, we have the pieces in place – educational materials for the public, talking points, connections to citizens and various local groups, and an educated city council.

We hold a press conference to inform media and get good coverage. We do interviews with all the major tv and radio stations and local newspapers.

We write a letter to the Mayor objecting to PURE and listing our questions. We get over 20 organizations to sign, including 16 Neighborhood Associations, in just a few days.

Through neighborhood associations and other contacts, we rally citizens to write to the City Council and mayor.

City Council votes down additional funding and wants to kill the PURE project.

Continued on Page 5

Continued From Page 4 They cite the over 120 letters in opposition from a broad base of the public. Several council members expressed their own personal concerns, reflecting an understanding of the project they may not have had before we had met with them.

In 2023 - Toilet to TAP is Election Issue To stop PURE, we need a City Council that understands the issues, and supports the public in our concerns. There are several contested City Council elections and Toilet to Tap becomes a major election issue. Fortunately, a majority of candidates opposed to Toilet to Tap win, due in no small part to their open opposition to it.

Finally, after the election, in May 2023, PURE is cancelled.

We are still watching. The PURE contract has not been officially terminated and the state legislation is still in place mandating beneficial use of wastewater. We are working to get flexibility in the State Mandate. And we are watching for any signs of new wastewater reuse proposals in Tampa.

If you would like more information or would like to get involved with a project, contact Nancy Stevens, at Nancy.Stevens@Florida.SierraClub.org.



Waste-to-Energy/ Incineration---False Solutions to Waste Disposal

Webinar January 18th at 7:00 pm EST Zoom

What's not to like about "free" energy?

Cities and counties are increasingly recognizing that landfill space is limited, and recycling isn't the answer they thought it would be. Many cities and counties are looking for other ways to dispose of municipal waste materials. Waste-to-energy (WTE) or incineration proposals can sound enticing to local officials. Actually there are many false solutions with similar destructive disposal processes: advanced recycling, chemical recycling and gasification are a few permutations of the same process.

Waste-to-Energy has particular sizzle because of the "free" energy it provides. Slick presentations to city officials and the public obscure the toxic impacts, expense and the ways these processes undermine better ways of addressing the waste problem.

Get ahead of the slick proposals and find out—

- ✦ What's to dislike about 'free' energy while getting rid of wastes?
- ✦ Why waste incineration is the most expensive and most toxic waste disposal method?
- ✦ What are health impacts on low income communities of color and others living near these facilities?
- ✦ What are similarities between the various false solutions?
- ✦ What is Sierra Club's position on these processes?
- ✦ How can zero waste reduce the need for these destructive disposal methods?

Presenters:

Kevin Budris, Deputy Director of Just-Zero.org will present about incineration and other waste disposal processes.

Roger Diedrich, member of the Sierra Zero Waste Grass Roots Network will present the Sierra guidance document on Destructive disposal.

This webinar is sponsored by the Sierra Single Use Plastics + subgroup of the Grass Roots Network.

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000002HShpAAG>

to get the facts and join the conversation.



SIERRA CLUB

TAMPA BAY GROUP

Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group

January / February 2024



Nonprofit Org.

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Thonotosassa, Florida 33592

Web:

florida.sierraclub.org/tampabay



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SIERRA CLUB
P.O. BOX 421041

Palm Coast, FL 32142-6417

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Tampa Bay Sierra Club 2024 Annual Planning Meeting

Date and Time:

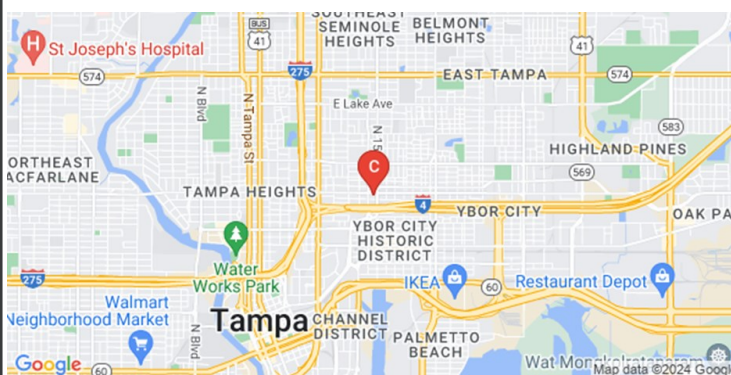
Saturday, January 20, 2024; at 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM (Eastern)

Location: Academy Prep Center of Tampa Inc.

1407 E Columbus Dr, Tampa, FL 33605

We will get together as a group and map out our plans for the upcoming year. All are invited. Your input is welcomed. 2023 was a good year for the Tampa Bay Sierra Club and looking forward to 2024 and making it even a better year, **BUT** we need your help. **THERE IS SO MUCH WORK TO DO!** Lunch will be served.

Bring: Water Bottle, Coffee Cup. Laptop or note book.



Now is the time to get involved and volunteer.

