

The Pelican

The Official Newsletter of Sierra Club Florida



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From the Chair

by Kristine Cunningham, Chair, Sierra Club Florida Executive Committee

If you're new to the Sierra Club Florida Chapter: welcome! We're so grateful you've taken the time to learn about our work, trust us with your membership, and hopefully become part of the driving force behind environmental solutions across Florida.

The Sierra Club Florida Chapter refers to our statewide organization, while Sierra Club Groups are the local organizations within the Chapter. We have 16 Sierra Club Groups across Florida, with membership determined by your zip code. (Not sure which Group you belong to? [Click here!](#))

Whales, panthers, and bears, oh my! Offshore, onshore, rivers, wetlands, Everglades, farms, and forests – this is Florida. And we truly have it all.

As Chair of the Chapter's Executive Committee, I've been in conversations with people from all over the state who are working to protect their communities and reduce the impacts of the changes they are facing. If we separate "wants" from "needs," we see a clearer picture. We need local governments to protect land for clean water and air, ensure access to food, maintain basic infrastructure, and prepare for the inevitable catastrophic events we face.

Our "wants" reflect what matters to us on a personal level. For some people, that includes wildlife, parks, and renewable energy, to name a few. Often, wants and needs overlap, and when we have more resources available, our collective impact grows.

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From the Chair (continued)

How can the Sierra Club Florida Chapter and our Groups help you make a difference? To address “needs,” we provide membership resources and support to help you engage in supporting candidates who prioritize strong local infrastructure. We have conservation committees focused on clean water and clean air initiatives, as well as environmental justice committees working to support our state’s most vulnerable communities. This is just a small sample of the work we do with staff and volunteers to create change.

The “wants” are also essential to our quality of life. We offer a dynamic and growing outings program, including Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO), which provides outdoor experiences specifically for children.

We also support a Green Schools program, a Regenerative Farming Committee, and lead dedicated campaigns for saving our state parks, fighting offshore drilling, protecting our wildlife, restoring the Everglades, advocating for clean energy, and other key environmental issues facing our state.

We have tools to help you get involved in your community, and we want to hear from you.

Please feel free to reach out to me. I will listen.

Kristine Cunningham
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Honoring the Lives and Service of Two Extraordinary Sierra Club Leaders

We’re deeply saddened to share the recent passings of two incredible members of the Sierra Club Florida community: lobbyist Dave Cullen and volunteer leader Rocky Milburn.



Dave Cullen



Rocky Milburn

Our thoughts and hearts are with their families and friends during this difficult time. To make a contribution to help Rocky’s partner recover and rebuild, please click [here](#).

Celebrate Earth Month with Sierra Club Florida



Happy Earth Month! Throughout April, we're celebrating our planet with Sierra Club events all across the state – from outings and meetings, to rallies, cleanups, and more.

Choose your own adventure and join us in exploring, enjoying, and protecting Florida's amazing wild places this month and beyond.

[Find an Event](#)

[Support Our Work](#)

[Sierra Sessions](#)

Legislative Session Roundup



Because of your advocacy and support, we made real progress for Florida's environment this legislative session. [Here's a snapshot](#) of what you helped accomplish – and where we go from here.

Get Involved with the Chapter!

QUARTERLY MEETINGS

Q2: June 12-14, Wekiva Island, FL - Register [Here](#)
 Q3: August 28-30, DeLand, FL
 Q4: December 11-13, Cedar Key, FL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

April 21st, 7:00-9:00pm - Register [Here](#)
 May 19th, 7:00-9:00pm - Register [Here](#)
 June 14th, 9:30-11:30am - Register [Here](#)



Introducing SCFL's Outings Program Manager

by Jordan Holaday, Outings Program Manager,
Sierra Club Florida

Hello Happy Hikers!

My name is Jordan Holaday, and I am the Florida Chapter's new Outings Program Manager. I am looking forward to supporting all of our local Groups to strengthen and grow our Outings programs; whether that's expanding offerings, enhancing safety, or encouraging creativity. Outings have always been at the heart of environmental advocacy, and I've seen that impact firsthand!

I come to this role after three years as the Outings Chair for the Broward Sierra Group here in South Florida and can't wait to use my enthusiasm throughout the state.

I've spent the past decade working in parks and recreation, beginning as an Assistant Naturalist for the local park system in my native New Jersey, and working my way up to managing an 800-acre park equipped with a campground, high ropes course, aquatic center, and miles of trails! Along the way, I've led archery classes, belayed climbing routes, coordinated canoe trips, and administered a scholarship program that provided free access to camps and programs for those in financial need. This program really came full circle for me, as I was once a recipient myself as a child, and helped spark my lifelong love for the outdoors.

I promise to apply my experience in outdoor learning, as well as my passion for equitable access, to get as many people as possible participating in our programs and fighting for the causes in their communities right alongside us. If you have any questions, or feel particularly inspired to see your local Outings program grow, please reach out! I am all ears.

Jordan Holaday, Certified Parks and Recreation Professional
Outings Program Manager, Sierra Club Florida
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Hot Tips for a Hot Summer

by Brooke Alexander-Goss, Organizing
Manager, Sierra Club Florida

The summer heat is coming, and so is the increase in your energy bill. But keeping your home cool doesn't have to mean spending more.

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Hot Tips for a Hot Summer (continued)

The easiest way to stay cool? Don't let the heat in! Sunlight peeking through your windows can quickly warm up your home, so close blinds or curtains during the hottest parts of the day, especially on south and west-facing windows when the sun is strongest. And don't forget about humidity: hot, moist air can sneak inside and make your home feel even warmer. Adding weather stripping around doors and windows helps keep cool air in and the summer heat out.

Fans are another easy way to keep cool air moving while using less energy. Don't forget to set fans to spin counterclockwise in summer to push cool air down; Remember fans cool PEOPLE not rooms, so turn them off when you leave the room to save energy.

Many utilities charge higher rates during peak hours, so try running appliances like dishwashers, dryers, and ovens early in the morning or later in the evening. Try taking advantage of the warm weather by cooking outdoors; grilling keeps heat out of your kitchen. Even preheating your oven can raise your indoor temperature by a few degrees in a short time, making your cooling system work harder.

Finally, regular maintenance goes a long way. Clean or replace air filters frequently and ensure your cooling system is running efficiently to avoid unnecessary energy waste.

By combining these simple strategies, you can enjoy a cooler home, lower energy bills, and a more energy-efficient summer overall.



Join us at Pier 60 on Clearwater Beach ahead of the 16th anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill!

Enjoy time with like-minded folks as we work together to clean up our shores, celebrate the Rice's whale, and raise awareness for its protection—including the threat of offshore oil drilling.

Together, we can have some fun in the sun while helping protect our coast, its wildlife, and the future of the Rice's whale.

Event Highlights

- Community beach clean-up
- Speakers, visuals, and advocacy
- Life-size inflatable Rice's whale!



9 AM-12PM | APRIL 18 | CLEARWATER

REGISTER HERE

What We're Building Together This Spring

by Jessica Wisdom, Development Director,
Sierra Club Florida

This spring, Sierra Club Florida supporters from across the state are once again coming together to power the work ahead.

Our spring appeal is currently underway, and we're already seeing an inspiring response from members and advocates who care deeply about protecting Florida's wild places, clean water, and communities. At a time when so much is at stake, this support helps ensure we can continue showing up where it matters most.

Because of these gifts, we're able to keep momentum going beyond the headlines. That means supporting local groups, strengthening our advocacy during and after legislative session, and continuing the on-the-ground work that connects people to the places we're fighting to protect.

It also means being ready. Ready to respond when new threats emerge. Ready to defend the progress we've made. And ready to seize opportunities to move Florida toward a cleaner, more sustainable future.

One of the most powerful things about this community is that it shows up in so many ways. Some supporters have taken action by contacting their legislators or attending local events and outings. Others have made a financial contribution, some for the first time, while others continue a long-standing commitment to this work.

If you haven't yet made a gift this spring, there's still time to be part of it. Every contribution helps sustain this work and strengthen our collective impact across the state.

There are many ways to give – whether it's a one-time gift, a monthly commitment, a donor-advised fund, or another approach that works best for you. You can explore options and learn more here: sierraclub.org/florida/give or feel free to reach out to me directly, I'm always happy to connect!

Thank you for being part of this work.



Midtown Academy Blooms

by Estela Najera, Suncoast Group

In March, Sierra Club's Andy Harris had the honor of presenting a \$1,000 check to Midtown Academy in South St. Petersburg. Located in a historically underserved community, Midtown Academy serves a diverse student body, many of whom are neurodivergent.

The newly planted trees will provide much-needed shade for students during recess, P.E., and lunch – helping prevent overheating while creating more opportunities to safely enjoy the outdoors.

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Midtown Academy Blooms (continued)

The project, *Growing Wishes: The Midtown Community Tree Project*, is a PTA-led environmental justice initiative inspired by *Wishtree* by Katherine Applegate. Narrated by a 216-year-old oak tree named Red, the story follows a young girl named Samar and explores themes of empathy, acceptance, and belonging. At its heart, the book is about kindness – and at Midtown, that message has quite literally taken root.

Students also heard from Jacqueline Litton, who spoke about the importance of green spaces and why access to nature matters. The presentation concluded with a warm welcome for two of the newly planted trees – “Maggie” and “Nola,” a nod to the magnolia species.

This community-led effort highlights the power of nature-based solutions to address challenges like extreme heat on school campuses. Just as importantly, it plants the seeds of environmental stewardship – giving students not only shade today, but a deeper connection to the natural world for years to come.



Sustainable Event Planning Guidelines

by Grant Gelhardt, Conservation Committee,
Sierra Club Florida

With spring's festivals and events approaching, it's a great time to promote greener gatherings using the [Sierra Club Florida Chapter's Sustainable Event Planning Guidelines](#).



June 12th 2026

SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA AND FARMWORKER ASSOCIATION OF FLORIDA *LAKE APOPKA TOXIC TOUR*

The Farmworker Association of Florida (FWAF) will guide us through a two hour bus tour, teaching us about the toxic history of Lake Apopka and sharing the lived experiences of farmworkers. 50 years of pesticides being washed from land to lake - and more - have had a significant impact on the health of families as well as the ecosystem and wildlife. The Farmworker Association Of Florida has been building power with Farmworkers, diverse workers and Rural low-income communities throughout Florida for over 40 years, since 1982. We hope you can join us on this environmental justice learning excursion!



RSVP at <https://bit.ly/4tTMTc2>

Coming Soon: A New Wave of Action

Our Gulf is at a critical juncture.

Recent federal actions to weaken protections under the Endangered Species Act are opening the door to expanded offshore drilling. Threats to Rice's whales and every other endangered species in the Gulf are growing every day under the Trump Administration. It's not only marine wildlife that is at risk, but also Florida's coastal economy, water quality, and our way of life.

Floridians have fought offshore drilling before and won. Now, as we approach the 16th anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, we are launching a major new effort to meet this moment.

Stay tuned for more details, and get ready to join the movement to Save Our Shores!





FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT NEEDS YOU

Our state faces urgent environmental challenges every day. Your contribution to Sierra Club Florida provides the ongoing support needed to protect our water, wildlife, and lands — now and for future generations.

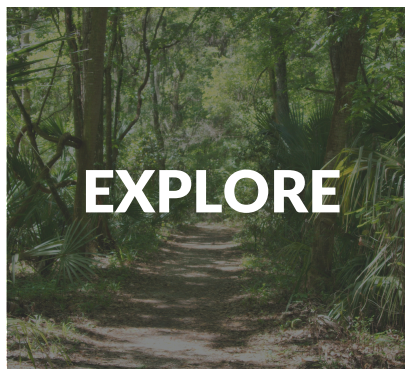
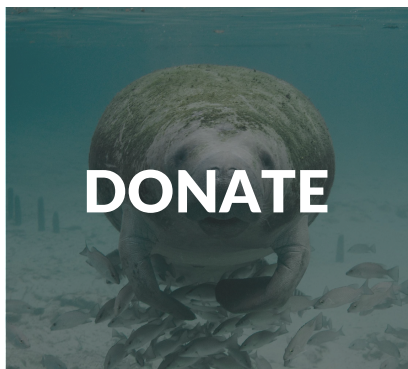
Make a monthly gift and help save the places we love.

[SIERRACLUB.ORG/FLORIDA/GIVE](https://sierraclub.org/florida/give)



Get Involved!

Sierra Club Florida is working tirelessly to protect wildlife and wild places, ensure clean air and water for all, and fight for environmental justice here in Florida. Whether supporting our campaigns, participating in an outing, or volunteering with your local group, there are so many ways to get involved and support our mission!





SIERRA CLUB

FLORIDA CHAPTER

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