



Adventure Coast Group // Florida Chapter

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group May 2026 News, Events & Action Alerts

Check out all that's going on!

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation
Committee Monarch Festival May 2nd**

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation
Committee Monthly Zoom May 6th**

**Join us! Adventure Coast Executive
Committee Zoom Wednesday, May 13th**

**Reporting on Florida's Future
With Max Chesnes, May 15th**

**Adventure Coast Meetup May 20th
with Dr. Madison Trowbridge on
Working Together to Protect Our Springs**

**Flood Risk to Resilience
Hold the Dates for June 11th, 18th & 24th
Community Listening Sessions**

**Florida Legislature Sets Special
Budget Session for May**

**Citrus Hearing on Proposed Asphalt
Plant Postponed to November 19th**

**Hernando Re-Zoning for 907 Unit
Housing Development Postponed**

***A Lifetime of Earth Days:
Hope Versus Loss* by Joe Murphy**

Politics & Government

Sierra Club Pasco Conservation
Committee Monarch Festival May 2nd

NEW PORT RICHEY

Monarch FESTIVAL

May 2nd 2026
10 AM - 1 PM
New Port Richey
Public Library
5939 Main St.

Educational and fun activities for all!

Speakers include:
"Milkweed Man" & The Sierra Club

- Facepainting
- Children's activities during the event
- Arts & Crafts Provided by Pasco Fine Arts Council
- Sidewalk Chalk
- Art Vendors with Butterfly Art

And so much more!

-  Milkweed seeds gifted to all who attend
-  Milkweed seedlings gifted to first 50 who attend
-  Gifts distributed at 11:00, 12:00, and 1:00

Sponsored by

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Sierra Club Pasco Conservation
Committee Zoom Wed. May 6th



Wednesday, May 6th Zoom: Join our ZOOM meeting the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7674695843> with the Zoom ID: 767 469 5843.

The Sierra Club Pasco Conservation Committee is dedicated to preserving, protecting, exploring and enjoying nature in areas of Pasco County. 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 way to educate and protect Pasco's natural open spaces, please email Sasha sashabuddha@gmail.com or call (727) 326-2646.

Join us! Adventure Coast Executive Committee Zoom Wednesday, May 13th



Image: Green Drinks at Marker 48 with Hernando Native Plant Society

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group is seeking members interested in getting involved. Please consider joining our team. We are seeking individuals interested in protecting our environment, educating our community and advocating to defend it. To learn more, get started by signing up to attend our monthly Executive Committee meeting held the second Wednesday of each month. This is where we discuss and determine how to achieve our annual goals. We are all volunteers and you can choose how much or how little time to engage.

The next monthly Executive Committee meeting is May 13th from 5pm—6:30pm via ZOOM. It is open to the public and you are welcome to join us online. Join at: <https://zoom.us/j/98626505635?pwd=4Aayd4E7vcTmXqtUKomYP33Ab5lJQ.1>

Meeting ID: 986 2650 5635 Passcode: 392529

Next year, we will have vacancies on the Executive Committee, so we are planning ahead and want to get others familiar with

May 15th 2026 @ 6:30PM

REPORTING ON FLORIDA'S FUTURE WITH MAX CHESNES

*How can we use conservation
storytelling to spur hope – and
meaningful change?*

A lifelong Floridian and Tampa Bay Times Environmental Writer, Max Chesnes, will tell us how his investigative reporting on threats facing Florida's public lands has led to policy change and a broader statewide appreciation for Florida's outdoor spaces. In 2024, Max broke a series of stories about how Florida's government wanted to develop state parks with golf courses and hotels, and a separate proposal that would have traded away some of the Withlacoochee State Forest to a luxury golf developer. Max will present on his reporting process and how human-centered environmental stories can be a catalyst for enduring change.



In person at the
Historic Brooksville
Woman's Club, 131 S.
Main Street in
Brooksville, FL.

Or join via Zoom at
<https://bit.ly/48c66pX>



Join us Friday, May 15th at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Brooksville Woman's Club. [131 South Main Street, Brooksville](https://www.brooksvillefl.com/131-South-Main-Street) for a talk on Reporting on Florida's Future with Tampa Bay Times Environmental Writer Max Chesnes. The event is hosted by Hernando Audubon Society, Adventure Coast Sierra Club, and Hernando County Native Plant Society.

Join the meeting in person or via Zoom. To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/HqIUzM8sQzmvuyzcDfZUZQ>.

For more information, go to www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast, email sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com or call 352 277-3330.

May 20th 2026

SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST MEET UP *with Dr. Madison Trowbridge on Working Together to Protect Our Springs*

*At the Historic Brooksville
Woman's Club, 131 S. Main
Street in Brooksville, FL.*



Dr. Trowbridge's talk is entitled "Working together to Protect Our Springs." Florida's springs are home to mullet, manatees, and mermaids. In this presentation, attendees will learn about springs and how the Southwest Florida Water Management District helps to protect them. She is the Springs Scientist and the Springs Team Lead for the Southwest Florida Water Management District. She holds a Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Biology from the University of South Florida. Prior to joining the District, her doctoral work focused on bacterial communities in Hospital Hole, a sinkhole located underneath the Weeki Wachee River. She has published four research papers and has worked on springs for over a decade.

Social at 6:30 PM and meeting at 7 PM. Join the meeting in person or via Zoom. To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/oRT4CCfqQ60-EZe4CVdOmA>.

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

Join us for the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group Meetup on Wednesday, May 20th, 2026, at 6:30 pm with guest speaker Madison Trowbridge of the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Social at 6:30pm, meeting at 7pm at the Historic Brooksville Woman's Club, [131 S. Main Street](http://www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast) in Brooksville, FL.

Join the meeting in person or via Zoom. To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/oRT4CCfqQ6O-EZe4CVdOmA>.

For more information, go to www.sierraclub.org/florida/adventure-coast, email sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com or call 352 277-3330.

**Flood Risk to Resilience
Hold the Dates for June 11, 18, & 24th
Community Listening Sessions**



The Tampa Bay region is a flood-vulnerable area, facing extreme risk from storm surge, sea-level rise, and heavy rainfall due to its low-lying geography, extensive coastline, shallow continental shelf, and dense development. Both coastal and inland flooding threatens the safety, property, and livelihoods of Tampa Bay's communities.

The **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council** is developing the Tampa Bay Coastal Master Plan (TBCMP)—a comprehensive, four-year, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant-funded initiative in Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Sarasota counties. It spans more than 2,200 square miles of coastal and inland communities, estuaries, rivers, wetlands, and barrier islands.

The Coastal Master Plan aims to strengthen regional flood resilience by addressing the impacts of sea-level rise, storm surge, extreme rainfall, and high-tide flooding through a coordinated, data-driven, and community-based process. The 2026 focus includes hosting public listening sessions to identify flood-vulnerable communities, prioritize restoration and flood-reduction projects, and guide long-term adaptation strategies with a strong emphasis on equity, innovation, and collaboration.

As partner/collaborators in this effort, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group, Hernando Audubon and other community organizations will host three listening sessions as follows:

Thursday, June 11th 5pm—6:30 pm at the George Washington Carver Community Center, [95 Three Sisters Springs Trail, Crystal River](#). The facilitators will be Sierra Club's Robin Orlandi and Maxine Connor in cooperation with Hernando Audubon and other community-based organizations. Refreshments will be available.

Thursday, June 18th 5pm-6:30pm at the Weeki Wachee Area Club, [7442 Shoal Line Boulevard, Hernando Beach](#). The facilitator will be Sierra Club's Taylor Masnjak in cooperation with the Weeki Wachee Area Club and local long term recovery management efforts.

Wednesday, June 24th, 5pm-6:30pm at the Ridge Manor Community Center, [34240 Cortez Boulevard, Ridge Manor](#). The facilitator will be Lynn Gruber-White, President of the Ridge Manor Property Owners Association in cooperation with Joe Murphy of Sierra Club and Hernando Audubon along with other stakeholders. Refreshments will be available.

These efforts ensure that local governments, community organizations, residents, and technical experts all contribute to shaping the plan. This year, the Coastal Master Plan will develop a Regional Flood Risk Assessment that will provide a scientific and analytical foundation for all future project recommendations. By 2027, the focus will be to design, screen, and evaluate projects in priority areas based on community feedback. In 2028, the plan will be released.

What you can do now: Save the date and plan to attend a workshop in your area. Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and Hernando Audubon participated in the recent Flood Listening Session Facilitation Training and will engage as non-profit stakeholders in the process for Citrus and Hernando Counties. Contact us at sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com for more information.

Florida Legislature Sets Special Budget Session for May



This is one of four postcards designed by Denise Dookeran, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Communications Director.

According to an April 23rd WUSF article, more than a month after ending the regular session without passing a budget, legislative leaders say they have a deal on top-line spending levels. The special session to hammer out the budget will run May 12-29, although as we go to press, the formal proclamation for the session hasn't been issued.

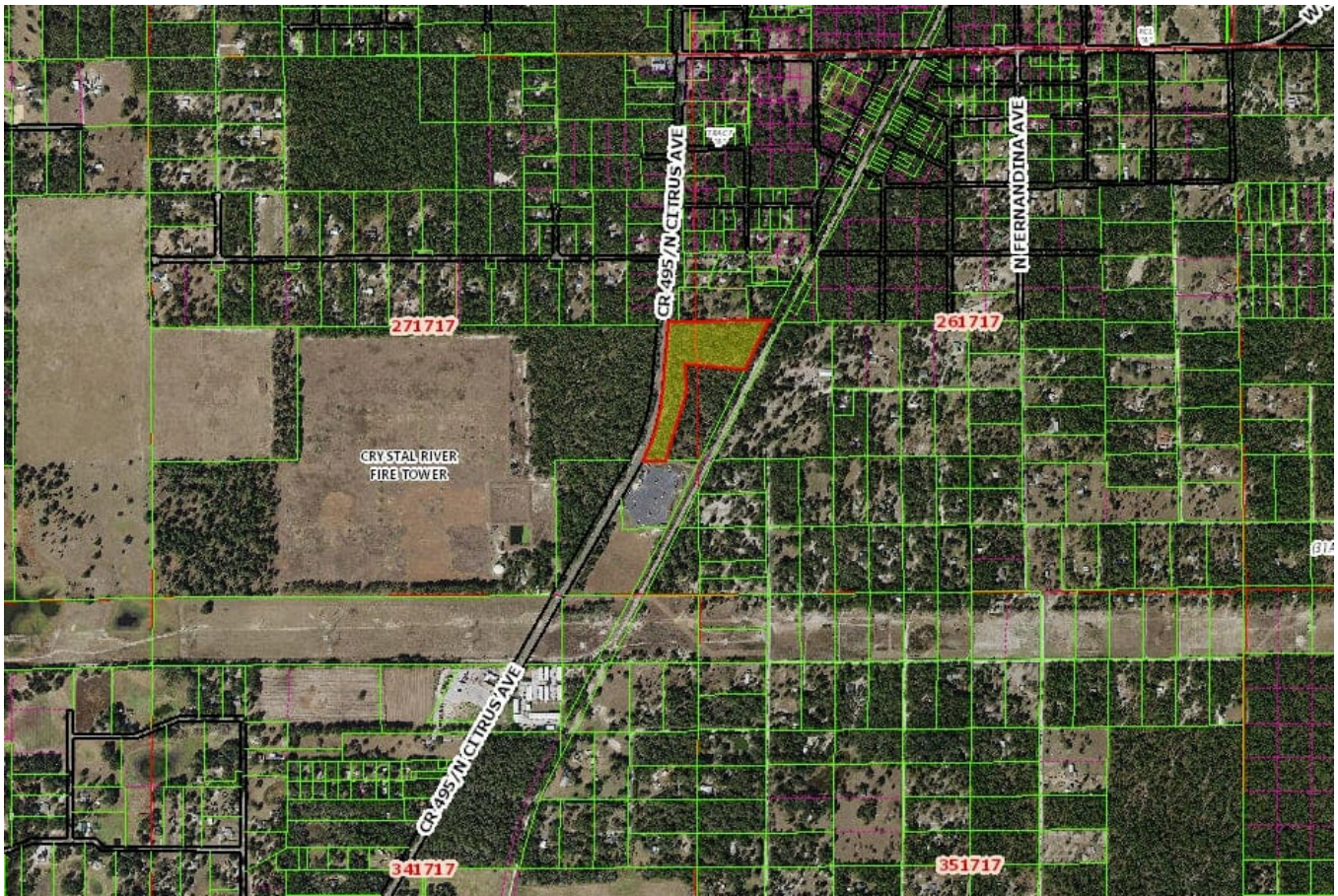
During the regular session the Senate passed a \$115 billion budget and the House passed a \$113.6 billion spending plan. House Speaker Daniel Perez, R-Miami insisted on a budget that was less than the current year level of \$115.1 billion. Budget talks between the chambers remain at odds on major issues.

There are wide gaps between the chambers on land conservation programs. We're concerned that full funding for Florida Forever and the Florida State Parks Program is at risk. During the regular session, Adventure Coast Group printed 100 postcards that members and supporters signed, urging our Florida Senator Ralph Masullo to support full funding. We noted that "There are 135 projects now on the Florida Forever priority list of approved purchases and a backlog of repairs estimated at almost \$800 million dollars for our award-winning parks that need funding to ensure thriving parks for people and wildlife. We hope we can count on you to support them. Thank you." He actually mentioned that he had heard from his constituents on the floor of the House during budget discussions.

Then, when the budget was sent to the Senate and House Budget Committee Chairs for negotiation, we printed up and mailed out another 100 postcards to Senate Budget Chair Ed Hooper and House Budget Chair Lawrence McClure with a similar message. Thanks to everyone who signed the postcards. We'll keep hoping they realize the value of biodiversity and conservation to improve our lives and that of all living things.

Source: WUSF | By Gray Rohrer, News Service of Florida. Published April 23, 2026.

**Citrus Hearing on Proposed Asphalt Plant
Postponed to November 19th**



A 22-acre Asphalt Plant on Citrus Ave /Co Rd 495 has been proposed in a rural area of Citrus that requires a zoning change to industrial. The site is near hundreds of residences just north of the Suncoast Parkway's final extension that will cross Citrus Avenue and terminate to the West at Hwy 19/98, around 5 miles south of the proposed Barge Canal/Port Citrus site.

The application Planning and Development Commission hearing that had been postponed from April 2nd to April 16th was postponed once again and will now be heard at 9am on Thursday, November 19th at the Lecanto Government Building, [3600 W. Sovereign Path, Room #166, Lecanto, FL 34461](#). There are more than 1700 signatures on a petition to oppose this application due to resident concerns about compatibility with surrounding land uses and potential environmental and traffic impacts.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend and speak out.

Learn more at Channel 10 Tampa Bay article: <https://www.wtsp.com/article/news/local/citruscounty/proposed-asphalt-plant-crystal-river/67-9dc1469e-3109-4a7f-8968-9c4128f220b5> video: https://www.instagram.com/reel/DU6yYITjHe-/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=NTc4MTIwNjQ2YQ==

Curtiss Bryant's Citrus Insider blog summarizes the application here: <https://www.thecitrusinsider.com/next-up-asphalt-plant/>

For more information, contact sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com.

Hernando Re-Zoning for 907 Unit Housing Development Postponed



At the request of applicant Jack Melton Family, Inc., the Hernando County Commissioners voted unanimously on April 20th to postpone two zoning items that would allow a 226-acre unimproved property to become a single-family planned development project with 907 densely packed units. The land is between Lockhart Road and I-75 and is currently zoned agricultural.

It had been approved by the Hernando Planning and Development Commission after hours of discussion, including many nearby residents opposed to the project. The applicant offered to address concerns ranging from roads, emergency medical services, and other transportation issues.

The area is not far from the Florida Wildlife Corridor, but follows a trend of development of rural lands adjacent to interstate highways. We are losing rural America and habitat for endangered black bears and other wildlife. Commissioners are strapped by rules that allow such changes, but argue that design improvements and modifications can reduce the density.

A Lifetime of Earth Days: Hope Versus Loss by Joe Murphy



U.S. Sen. Edmund Muskie, author of the Clean Air Act, speaks on Earth Day in Philadelphia on April 22, 1970. (Peter54321, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons).

I was born April 21, 1970. My first full day of life was April 22, 1970: [the original Earth Day](#). I have been alive for all the Earth Days and am hopeful for a few more – 56 years of hope and loss.

The original Earth Day helped launch a conservation movement that produced great progress and soaring hope. The

Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the National Environmental Policy Act were all passed within a few years. Just six years earlier, the Wilderness Act passed.

Major cities were choking on pollution, the Cuyahoga River had literally caught fire and iconic species were in danger of disappearing. The public demanded action and, to their credit, elected officials responded. Hope flowed like a river and the future seemed bright.

Power and profit though do not simply disappear when challenged. They pushed back. Earth Day 1970 eventually led to folks like Interior Secretary James Watt under President Ronald Reagan and his radical anti-environmental agenda. Powerful forces set in motion loss that lessened hope. We see that today as our nation's environmental laws are gutted.

Corporate America became very good at co-opting the message of conservation and Earth Day and branding it, selling it and using it for their goals. The focus shifted to individual actions, not community actions that would change policy or practice and be accomplished through laws and regulations.

What "we" can do was shifted to what "you" can do. Individual actions and responsibility are important, but in an era of climate change, global trade, rampant development and wholesale gutting of environmental policy, people acting together, in shared purpose, have the best chance of conserving public health and the natural world.

Fifty-six years after Earth Day 1970, we still teeter between hope and loss. Five decades later, the cost of failure is much higher.

Climate change and sea-level rise have consequences that could impact us for centuries. The Age of Extinction we are in now is fundamentally altering evolution and humans are now driving extinction and loss through our actions. We have become the variable that determines who survives, and who enters extinction.

So, we must choose. Hope versus loss. Action versus apathy. Protecting the rights of future generations or abandoning our responsibility to them. I say we choose hope.

We need to work with hope driving our hearts, science leading our minds and the wonder of nature guiding our souls. We need to think big and act big.

The [Florida Wildlife Corridor](#) gives me hope. The audacity and bold vision of connecting over 18 million acres of habitat for large wildlife to transverse Florida from the Everglades to the Panhandle to the Okefenokee is amazing. And it is happening.

The growing grassroots resistance to never-ending growth and development in Florida gives me hope. I talk with people every day who are of different parties, perspectives and ideologies who all agree they want to see rivers and springs protected, overcrowding reduced, green space conserved and the endless creation of rooftops abated. Candidates who ignore this undercurrent of opposition may do so at their peril. The 2026 elections in Florida could offer some true surprises.

Prescribed fire as a land management tool and its continued and expanded use gives me hope. It is tough to conduct as Florida develops, but landscapes that were robbed of fire and its life-giving value for decades now are being reborn in fire. Fire in Florida is as important as rain to the natural world, and Florida's land managers have embraced that. Public lands are better for it.

If you care about the conservation of wild Florida, you can succumb to the feeling that loss is everywhere. And it is surely occurring. But it is balanced with glimmers of hope. Progress has been made with some species and in some landscapes, but it is fragile. It must be nourished and protected. Every acre of natural Florida must be cherished and conserved to avoid loss overcoming hope.

The powerful truth is loss will only expand if left unopposed. The irony is that the very species that is driving the natural world toward continued disaster is the same species that has the power to reverse the loss.

Hope versus loss: Let us choose hope, then act with it, share it, cultivate it and celebrate it. Let us do it together. That is an Earth Day to celebrate.

Joe Murphy is a native and lifelong Floridian who lives in Brooksville. You can follow Joe and his "Season of Public Lands" efforts on Instagram ([@naturecoastjoe](#)) and on Facebook (<https://bit.ly/joemurphyfacebook>). Banner photo: An event marking the anniversary of Earth Day is held (National Archives at College Park, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons).

Sign up for *The Invading Sea* newsletter by [visiting here](#). To support *The Invading Sea*, [click here](#) to make a donation. If you are interested in submitting an opinion piece to *The Invading Sea*, [email Editor Nathan Crabbe](#).

Politics & Government



Florida Phoenix | Ahead of Earth Day, environmentalists blast proposal to remove protections for endangered species (4/22)

“We need decisive action from our elected leaders — we cannot afford to go backward and expand offshore drilling in the critical habitat of the Rice’s whale, or by weakening the Endangered Species Act in ways that push this species, and so many others, closer to extinction,” Michael McGrath, lead organizer for Sierra Club Florida, said during a press conference at Pier 60 on Clearwater Beach Saturday.”



House of Representatives Pulls Bill To Gut Endangered Species Act

Legislation from Rep. Westerman would have drastically weakened bedrock environmental law
 April 22, 2026

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, on Earth Day, the House of Representatives removed a bill from consideration that, if passed, would have dangerous consequences for endangered and threatened species across the country. The “ESA Amendments Act” ([HR 1897](#)), sponsored by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR), proposes to drastically weaken the Endangered Species Act by rewriting key portions of the bedrock environmental law, decreasing protections for imperiled wildlife.

Among the bill’s numerous harmful provisions, it would extend timelines for listing processes, allowing imperiled species to continue to decline while decisions are pending. It would also fast-track timelines on delistings, arbitrarily limit federal agencies’ role in managing listed species, increase the allowable “take” — or the hunting, wounding, trapping, or killing — of threatened species, and narrow critical habitat designations.

Since it was signed into law in 1973 by President Richard Nixon, the Endangered Species Act has helped more than 99 percent of listed species avoid extinction, with many on the road to population recovery. In a recent national poll, [84% of Americans](#) said they support the implementation of Endangered Species Act measures to prevent extinction.

In response, Bradley Williams, Deputy Legislative Director for Wildlife and Lands Protection at the Sierra Club, released the following statement:

“We are encouraged to see that the House of Representatives has pulled this bill after outcry from Republicans and Democrats. By rejecting a bill that would have gutted protections for endangered and threatened species across the country, Congress is sending a clear message that protecting wildlife is a shared American value, not a partisan issue. As we celebrate Earth Day, we applaud the House of Representatives for declining consideration of this extremely harmful legislation.”



The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 3.5 million members and supporters. In addition to protecting every person’s right to get outdoors and access the healing power of nature, the Sierra Club works to promote clean energy, safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and legal action. For more information, visit sierraclub.org.



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.