



SIERRA CLUB
FLORIDA CHAPTER

Tampa Bay Group



Hydrilla Huggers at Crystal Springs

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GET READY to Vote in the Primary and General Elections

By Janet Stanko, Chair Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group

Sierra Club members VOTE and vote FOR the environment! Your Florida Chapter and your local political committee have been hard at work reviewing, interviewing and endorsing candidates. Please ensure you are ready. This is a critical election year—both for the general election Nov 3rd, and for the primary August 18th. Here is what you can do to prepare:

- [Check your voter registration](#) Don't assume that because you voted in the last election, you are still registered or able to vote by mail.
- [Check your Federal House Representative](#) It may have changed in the last round of re-districting.
- [Check your Florida House Representative](#) Your Florida state district has not been affected by redistricting.

Check our group social media pages for endorsements. "Follow" your local group social media page to find out about endorsements on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). [Check our Tampa Bay Group Website for endorsements.](#)

Aspire to become more social media savvy. This is the year to get to the next level. If you have aspirations of doing more social media, start now. Not only SC friends, but everyone in your circle. Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn—whatever you are comfortable with. Our endorsed candidates will be posted.

A lot of races will be decided on August 18th, including all of the school board races:

[Deadline to Register or Change Parties:](#) July 20, 2026

[Request a Vote By Mail:](#) Deadline to Request Vote By Mail: August 6, 2026. All voted ballots must be in the elections office no later than 7 p.m. August 18, 2026

Early Voting: August 3 through August 16, 2026

Election Day: August 18, 2026

If you are interested in helping to get Sierra Club candidates elected, or want to participate in our candidate review and selection process, please contact [Gary Gibbons](#).



Tampa Bay Annual Potluck and Presentation

Balancing Florida's Economy and Ecology for a Thriving Future

Annual joint meeting of The Tampa Bay Sierra Club, Tampa Bay Audubon, and The Suncoast Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society, this year's host.

Location: Tampa Bay Garden Club
2629 Bayshore Blvd, Tampa, FL 33629

Wednesday, July 15

Potluck dinner: 6 PM

Please bring a sweet or savory dish to share.

Consider bringing your own cup, plate, silverware, napkin - to reduce waste.

Announcements and Program: 7 PM

"Live Wildly: Balancing Florida's Economy and Ecology for a Thriving Future." Our speaker is Meredith Budd, deputy director of the ["Live Wildly" Foundation](#).

Florida's future—and our quality of life—depend on how well we balance growth with the protection of our natural resources. Live Wildly is building a statewide movement that brings together partners across sectors, ensuring Florida remains a place where people and nature can thrive. This talk will explore how connections -- to nature, to place, and to each other — can drive lasting conservation impact and support a resilient, prosperous future for the state.

Assistance Requested:

Fill out the registration form to help us know how many people are coming.

Register



For the most up to date events information go to:

Events Calendar

Virtual Watch Party of the Vs Goliath film series

Tuesday, July 7th | Time: 8:00–9:15 p.m. ET

Angry Chair Brewery, 4101 N Florida Ave, starting at 7:30 [RSVP HERE](#)

OR

Via Zoom from your home [RSVP HERE](#)

Join us in the first showing of a free, monthly virtual screening series of Vs. Goliath—a powerful, award-winning new documentary series following everyday people across the United States as they stand up to the fossil fuel industry and fight for the future of their communities.

This first episode features Sharon Lavigne, a special-education teacher and

grandmother battling the continent's largest plastic plant in St. James Parish, Louisiana, a region dubbed "Cancer Alley." Following the film, join Sharon, Bill McKibben, and others for a live Q&A.

Keep your eyes peeled as our local Tampa Bay group looks to host watch parties of upcoming episodes:

August 4 — Vs. Goliath: Appalachia

September 1 — Vs. Goliath: Greater Chaco

October 6 — Vs. Goliath: Port Arthur

[RSVP to join the virtual screening and discussion on July 7.](#)

Raymond James Stadium Recycling

Volunteer to encourage proper Recycling at Raymond James Stadium and attend event for free. For upcoming events and to register, go to the Events Calendar.

For information, contact Todd Randolph (Phone: 815-347-2421,
Email: ToddRRandolph@gmail.com).

Movie Night:

Tuesday, August 25 6:30PM

C. Blythe Andrews Public Library, 2607 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Tampa 33610

Please join us for an amazing story that focuses on a tiny sparrow that is used as a barometer for the health of our delicate Florida environment. This documentary has won eight film awards for its excellence!

The Little Brown Bird: America's Most Endangered Songbird is Saving a Landscape

Conservation Committee Virtual Meeting

Monday, July 13 6:30PM

We will discuss local environmental issues of concern, including these below. **For meeting link and to add agenda items, contact [Mary Willa Matz](#).**

July Items include: Development of The German-American Club property. For up to date Agenda: [CLICK HERE](#)

Other Events that might be of interest

July 8, 9, 10 [Environmental Hazards Meeting and Discussion](#)

July 10th Port Tampa Bay Environmental Tour Environmental Theme [Port Harbor Tours](#) | [Port](#)

[Tampa Bay](#)

July 16th [Tampa Bay Times – Rising Seas, Shifting Neighborhoods: Climate Change's Impact on Tampa Bay Housing](#)

The latest outings and outings at other Florida groups can be found on our website at <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay/outings>

Registration is required for all outings. Unless otherwise noted, outings are free though there may be site entry fees. Liability waivers are required, and anyone under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a legal guardian. No pets.



Hydrilla Huggers by Emilie Joyce

Environmentalists are often called tree huggers. On June 6th a group of enthusiastic volunteers became hydrilla huggers at Crystal Springs Preserve to assist in the ongoing removal of hydrilla-- Hydrilla verticillata--a highly invasive aquatic plant. We were given an orientation by Ashley Thomas, President and Jerry Slagle, Resource Manager. The staff of Crystal Springs Preserve also joined the Sierra Club group in the removal.

We learned some very interesting history of Crystal Springs . It is located just south of the Green Swamp and about 15 miles north of Tampa. The springs provide a constant flow of crystal-clear water to the Hillsborough River, which is responsible for the majority of Tampa's drinking water. Prior to the mid 1800s the Seminole Indians hunted and fished along these river banks. It was originally known as "Jarve Springs" before 10,000 acres were purchased in the early 1900s by idealists from the North hoping to find utopia in Florida, buy virgin land cheaply and farm side-by-side. The group grew and in 1911, as the Commongood Society, they founded Crystal Springs Colony. The settlers drew up plans for a town square, bathed in the springs, grew sweet potatoes, strawberries and a "miracle vegetable" called dasheen (a root vegetable similar to the potato and also known as taro). They split the profits, everyone had a deed and that worked for a while. After 100 families had moved to the area, the founder of the community, A.B. Hawk of Toledo, OH,

was supposed to give over control to the residents. He didn't. There were property rights disputes, arguments and some people moved away. The socialist experiment had failed by the late 1920s. In 1927, Hawk sold part of the land to a New York financier, causing more uproar. Much of the controversy centered on who owned the springs, the heart of the community. In 1975 the Thomas family bought and maintained the spring. They kept it open to the public, while developing a lucrative deal to sell water and truck it to the Zephyrhills bottling facility. In 1996, the owner, Robert Thomas, closed the springs to the public. One of the reasons given was that the public left too much trash while swimming or canoeing. In 2006, Crystal Springs Preserve Foundation began planning a learning laboratory with a Nature Center, landscaping, boardwalks and a Wilderness Pavilion. Educators now teach school children and lifelong learners about springs, aquifers, habitat stewardship and biodiversity.

Our hard-working group of young and older folks spent three hours in the river removing hydrilla. It is fast-growing and the heat that the big mats create cuts off oxygen to the river. The slightest little piece of the plant can spread it. Hydrilla is now found in Tampa Bay, thanks to Hurricane Milton. FWC educates boat owners to properly clean their boats to slow the spread. It is preferable not to use chemicals for removal. The hydrilla we removed was picked up that day by Zoo Tampa to feed this favorite food to the manatees in their critical care unit. They come every 2-3 weeks to pick up a truckload.

Ms. Thomas, President of Crystal Springs Preserve told us that people could spend every single day removing hydrilla and never eliminate it. There is always a need for help. Look for a hydrilla removal day in the Fall!

Tampa Water Department Advances Cutting Edge Technology

The City of Tampa is implementing Suspended Ion Exchange (SIX) treatment technology at the Tampa Water Department! While this technology was initially chosen to help remove naturally occurring organic matter, recent independent testing confirmed its ability to remove PFAS (commonly known as "forever chemicals") as well. These new results mean that SIX will help our system operate more effectively and efficiently, ultimately reducing future construction and operating costs. Learn more: <https://www.tampa.gov/.../tampa-water-department-advances...>



Tampa Bay Group

Committee Meetings

Executive Committee

1st Wednesday of every month, 6:30 pm. Virtual.

Janet Stanko (TBSC Chair) is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Meeting

Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84398790165?pwd=hqiGaS9ECLSIWdOIGZMdHlaPGlxLU0.1>

Meetings are open to any member to attend, but if you want to speak, please contact chair@tampabaysierraclub.org to discuss.

Conservation Committee

July 13, 6:30 pm. Virtual. contact Mary Willa Matz, marywilla2@yahoo.com

Google Link: meet.google.com/hub-nuec-neq

Phone number: 601- 844-2921 *PIN:* 219 177 816#



SIERRA CLUB

VOLUNTEER *with Tampa Bay Group*

Volunteers Needed!

Social media - help us reach out to more people! Assist our Social Media coordinator with postings to Instagram, LinkedIn, MeetUp, Facebook. Contact [Carl Bailey](#).

Would you like to see more events? We need more volunteers!!!

Programs chair - organize our General Meetings, including getting the speakers and

logistics. Contact **Janet Stanko**.

Outings leaders - will be trained to lead outings. This includes a 2-year certification (free) in basic first aid. Contact **Ed Shindle**.

ICO leaders will be trained to lead ICO trips. This includes a 2-year certification (free) in basic first aid. Contact **Emilie Joyce**.

Other Volunteer Opportunities that might be of interest

Tampa Variance Review Board

City of Tampa is seeking volunteers to join the [Variance Review Board](#)! They are seeking arborists, nurserymen, horticulturalists, urban foresters, and/or landscape architects to provide expertise for key projects in our city.

About our Events

All events are free unless otherwise noted. Unless otherwise noted, events are open to the public. Registration is required for many events, and some events are limited to members.

For updates, see our event calendar on the Tampa Bay Sierra Club website: <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/tampa-bay>. This calendar has some state-wide Florida events, and you are encouraged to follow your recreational and conservation interest state-wide.

About Us

Join the Sierra Club! **JOIN**

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Content contributed by Gary Gibbons, Emilie Joyce, Willa Matz, Todd Randolph, Ed Shindle, Janet Stanko, Nancy Stevens and others.