



Adventure Coast Group // Florida Chapter

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

Check out all that's going on!

**Sierra Club Pasco Conservation
Committee Monthly Zoom Sept. 2nd
Green Belt Trail hearing Sept. 9th**

**Join us! Adventure Coast Executive
Committee Zoom 5pm Sept. 9th**

**Adventure Coast MeetUp Sept. 16
Don Hall on Regeneration: Transform
Yourself to Transform the World**

**Save our Waters Week Chassahowitzka
River & Coastal Clean-Up Sat. Sept. 19th**

**Sierra Club Adventure Coast Social
Sat. Sept 26th at Caffe Connection**

**Adventure Coast MeetUp Oct. 21
Joe Murphy: History of Conservation in
Hernando County & the Nature Coast**

**Adventure Coast Meet Up Nov. 18th
Doug Alderson on Florida's Rivers
& Restoration of the Kissimmee**

**Join our Team!
Nominations for Election to
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Committee open till Oct. 23rd**

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Data Center Expansion in Florida**

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New Tower Approved
for Linda Pederson Park

Sierra Club Magazine
Volunteers Are Often the Unsung
Heroes of Public Lands Management

SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA PASCO CONSERVATION COMMITTEE



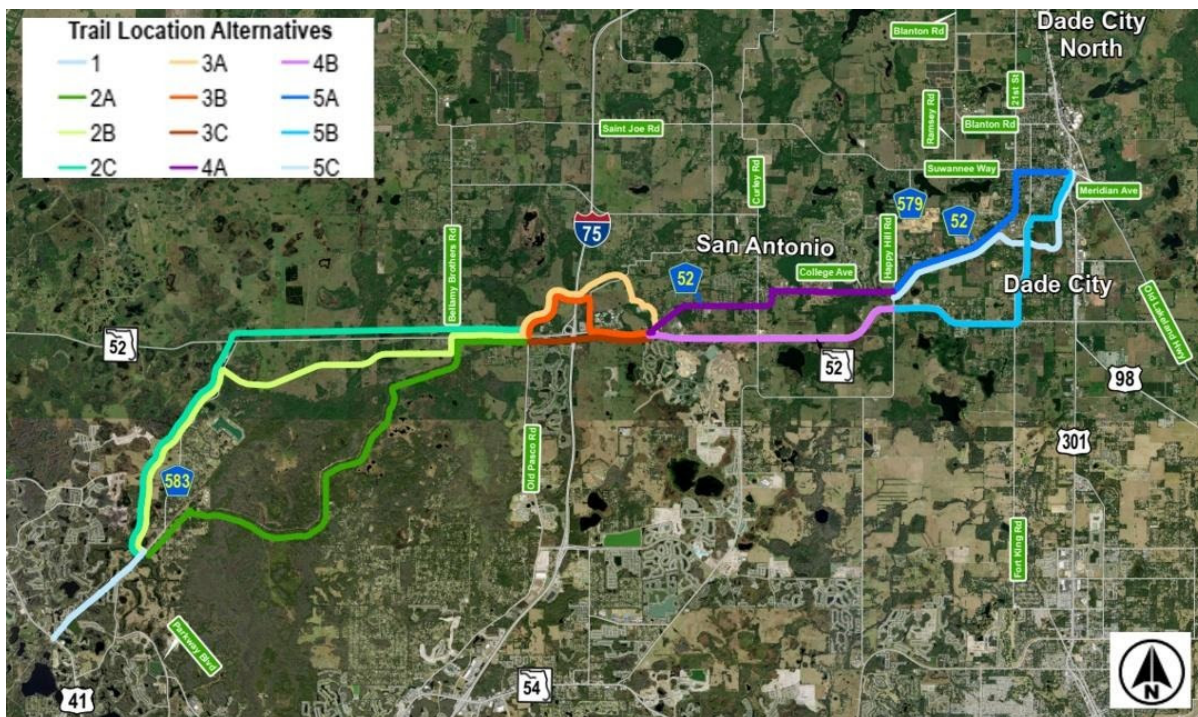
1st Wed. @ 8pm on Zoom



Wednesday, September 2nd 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.

**Pasco County Commission Hearing
on Orange Belt Trail 10am Sept. 9th**



The Pasco County Board of County Commissioners will hear the final proposed alignment alternative for the Orange Belt Trail on Wednesday, September 9th at 10:00 am at the Historic Pasco County Courthouse, 2nd Floor, [37918 Meridian Ave., Dade City, 33525](#). The hearing previously set for in August was postponed because all the commissioners were not present.

The proposed alignment that will be presented to the board starts at US 41 and travels east to the Hardy Trail in Dade City, which is more than 23 miles in length. The most recent version of the trail was studied in five segments, with each segment offering several alignment alternatives. Learn more at: [Orange Belt Trail – Trinity to Trilby](#). The public is invited to attend this public meeting.

Join us! Adventure Coast Executive Committee Zoom 5pm Sept. 9th



Adventure Coast Outings Leader Ben Berauer leads an outing with Vince Morris of the Florida Forest Service

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group is seeking members interested in getting involved. Please consider joining our team to actively protect our environment, educate our community and advocate to defend it.

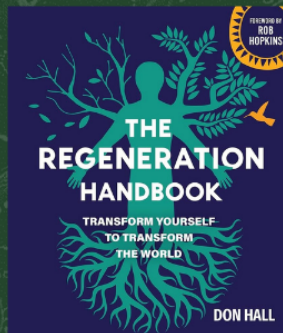
To get started, attend our monthly Executive Committee ZOOM meeting held the second Wednesday of each month. This is where we discuss and determine how to achieve our annual goals. We are all volunteers and you can choose how much or how little time to engage.

The next monthly Executive Committee meeting is Wednesday, September 9th via Zoom 5pm—6:30pm. It is open to the public and you are welcome to join us online at: <https://zoom.us/j/98626505635?pwd=4Aayd4E7vcTmXqtUKomYP33Ab5lIJQ.1>
Meeting ID: 986 2650 5635 Passcode: 392529

September 16th 2026

SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST MEET UP *with Don Hall, author of The Regeneration Handbook*

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



Don is the founder of Evolutionary Change and author of *The Regeneration Handbook: Transform Yourself to Transform the World* (New Society Publishers, 2024). He is an internationally-recognized leader in the Transition Towns Movement, serving in several different capacities over the past 17 years: first as Education & Outreach Coordinator for Transition Colorado, then as founder and Executive Director of Transition Sarasota (Florida) and Executive Director of Transition US. Don now serves as Training Coordinator for Transition Network International. He also holds a Master's in Environmental Leadership from Naropa University, a certification in Permaculture Design from the Central Rocky Mountain Permaculture Institute, and regularly teaches on a wide variety of topics including leadership development, community organizing, effective collaboration, and local food systems.

In 2019, Don edited and published *10 Stories of Transition in the US: Inspiring Examples of Community Resilience-Building*. His journey from local grassroots organizing right here in Florida up to national and global scales has provided an incredible blueprint for community-led change. He now lives in Boulder, Colorado and loves hiking in the mountains, playing music with friends, and practicing Tibetan Buddhist meditation.

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/YFo8R7lcQi6XgSJ_bUp11w

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Chassahowitzka River & Coastal Clean-Up Sat. Sept. 19th



Keep Citrus County Beautiful and Save Our Waters Week Committee, in partnership with the Citrus County Aquatics Service Division, invites the public to participate in the county's 2026 37th Annual Lakes, Rivers & Coastal Clean-Up scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 19th from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The event is conducted each year in partnership with the Citrus County Government, Southwest Florida Water Management District, and others to promote public awareness to save Citrus County's rivers, lakes, estuaries, and springs from further deterioration and ecological disaster.

Friends of the Chassahowitzka River, the Nature Coast Ramblers and Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group will again participate. If you wish to help in this cleanup, please sign up by replying to this notice.

Deadline to register is September 3rd if you wish to join our group and get a t-shirt. Reply to Ben (352-897-0479) with an SMS text, or email to bferauer@aol.com to sign up.

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Social Sat. Sept 26th 2-4pm at Caffe Connection



Sierra Club Adventure Coast team and participants at
Tampa Bay Coastal Plan listening session in Weeki Wachee

Wonder what our local Sierra Club is all about? Join leaders in the Adventure Coast Group on Saturday September 26th from 2pm-4pm at Caffe Connection, [4196 Mariner Boulevard, Spring Hill](#).

We'll be there to meet and share what Sierra Club does in the community to explore, enjoy and protect the planet. Plan to join us for this informal get-together. Get involved! Everyone is welcome; bring a friend.

RSVP suggested at sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com or call 352-277-3330. See ya there!

October 21st 2026

SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST MEET UP with Joe Murphy on the History of Conservation In Hernando County & the Nature Coast

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



Joe Murphy is a lifelong and native Floridian. He is a conservation advocate, educator, nature writer, a voice for Florida's environment and has worked with the National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and Healthy Gulf. A former elementary science teacher, he writes about nature and place and lives in Brooksville with his wife and has two children and two grandchildren. And two very good dogs.

He notes that "In the late 1860's famed naturalist John Muir ended his Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf in Cedar Key, Florida. His experiences on that journey along the Nature Coast shaped his perspective and played a role in his founding of the Sierra Club. We can learn lessons for today by looking to Muir's vision and leadership. In Hernando County we have a long legacy of conservation leaders from Col. Raymond Robbins, Lisa Von Browsky, and Steve Fickett to modern advocates. By knowing where we came from, we can seek inspiration for where we need to go."

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/join/zoom/register/1lyC2D5iT16SS_hs4Ly2_w

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November 18th 2026

SIERRA CLUB ADVENTURE COAST MEET UP with Doug Alderson on Florida's Rivers & Restoration of the Kissimmee

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



Doug's presentation will be on Florida's rivers and the restoration of the Kissimmee River, which involved the support of Florida Sierra Club. He prefers a kayak to a desk, hugs trees and friends, and loves observing alligators, manatees and other wildlife. Doug retired from coordinating FDEP's Office of Greenways & Trails designated kayak and canoe trails, among other duties. He was awarded the Florida Sierra Club 1979 Environmental Award for helping stop clearcut timber practices in St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge.

Doug's 18 books focus on Florida's dynamic and quirky, such as *America's Alligator*, *Wild Florida Waters*, *Waters Less Traveled*, *New Dawn for the Kissimmee River*, *Encounters with Florida's Endangered Wildlife*, and *A New Guide to Old Florida Attractions*. He recently published a memoir, *A Florida Dance: Life Stories from the Sunshine State*. Among his many awards are six first place Royal Palm Literary awards for nonfiction books and four Florida Authors and Publishers Association gold medals.

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/wngxqHeGROqEX70akjVwcg>

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**Nominations for Election to
Adventure Coast Group Executive
Committee open till Oct. 23rd**



The Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group is led by an Executive Committee (ExCom) of seven members in our group territory of Hernando and Citrus Counties. They are elected by our members.

This year's election is seeking nominees for 3 positions for a two-year term of office in 2027-2029.

Candidates should promote Sierra Club's mission to enjoy, explore and protect the planet, support protecting our local environment, and attend monthly ExCom meetings. Bring your ideas, thoughts, and energy to Adventure Coast Group. To qualify, you must be a member of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group and at least 18 years of age.

To submit your nomination, send us your:

- Name, Address, Email, Telephone
- Bio/resume
- Image of you for the ballot
- A 3-paragraph narrative of your qualifications for the ballot

Submit your nomination to the Election Committee at AdventureCoastElections@gmail.com by October 1st, 2026.

Make a difference! Get involved in saving our springs, forests and wildlife!

Sierra Club Florida: Stop Hyperscale Data Center Expansion in Florida



Sierra Club: Meta data center in Mesa, Arizona.

Sierra Club Florida supports local community efforts to “hit pause” on hyperscale data centers by local governments. August 13, 2026, Sierra Club Florida committed to strengthen the efforts of residents and community organizations facing the growing threats and impacts of hyperscale data center development around the state. These data centers present more extreme environmental concerns than traditional facilities due to their large size and higher resource demands that result in

extreme strain on energy grids, massive water consumption, wildlife habitat destruction, and severe noise pollution. Despite taking up vast amounts of land and receiving major state tax breaks, completed data center warehouses also employ very few permanent workers, offering little to no long-term economic benefit to local communities.

Brooke Alexander-Goss, Sierra Club Florida Organizing Manager, said, “Our communities need access to clear, reliable information and practical resources to address the impacts of AI-data center expansion around Florida. Sierra Club Florida’s new citizens’ toolkit will help empower residents to advocate for protections for the environment and the well-being of their communities.”

Javier Estevez, Sierra Club Florida Political and Legislative Director, said, “Florida has a key opportunity to learn from residents across the country who have already experienced the impacts of hyperscale data centers and address those risks before they happen here. While the Legislature took the first step this session in addressing increased costs, we must do more to protect Floridians from the other impacts associated with AI-data centers, including dangers to public health and the environment. Sierra Club Florida is committed to helping residents understand these proposals, engage with local officials, and prepare their communities to meet the challenges ahead.”

Robin Orlandi, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group Citrus Conservation Committee Co-chair, said, “Citrus County residents showed what communities can accomplish when they come together to protect their water, environment, and quality of life. More than 200 residents turned out for a nearly nine-hour public hearing, and the county ultimately voted unanimously to deny the proposed data center application. This victory demonstrates the power of informed, organizing community advocacy, but the fight is far from over. As counties around Florida develop new protections against data center proposals, continued education and engagement will be essential.”

Sierra Club Florida opposes poorly planned hyperscale facilities based on the energy, climate, water and ecosystem impacts. Hyperscale Data Centers are extremely large, resource intensive facilities designed to support cloud computing and artificial intelligence. Facilities are 100,000 to over 1,000,000 square feet, some spanning multiple millions of square feet for 5,000 to hundreds of thousands of servers, including dense GPU clusters for AI. They use from 100 to more than 500 megawatts of electricity, consume enormous amounts of electricity and water, and generate noise and air pollution from industrial cooling systems and diesel backup generators.

What’s at Stake: In recent months, it has become clear that local governments aren’t prepared for the rapid arrival of these types of facilities; there also aren’t any regulations in place for them.

Extreme Strain on Energy Grids: A single large AI data center can consume as much electricity as 50,000 households. To support this massive demand, electric companies must upgrade infrastructure, which often drives up electricity rates **for local residents.**

Massive Water Consumption: Data centers require up to 5 million gallons of water a day for cooling systems to keep server racks from overheating. They often consume water directly from local drinking and municipal water sources, worsening water scarcity in vulnerable areas.

Public Health and Noise Pollution: A data center’s industrial cooling fans and HVAC systems run continuously, creating a permanent high-decibel drone that disrupts sleep and increases stress for residents, drives homeowners away, and decreases local property values.

Minimal Economic Benefit: Despite use of vast amounts of land and receiving major state tax breaks, completed data center warehouses employ very few permanent workers.

Sierra Club Florida Requirements for responsible development include 100% renewable energy standards, water and cooling standards, community protections from noise and infrastructure needs, location and site principles to prioritize already disturbed or developed sites, and resource responsibility on the use of water and electricity produced onsite or purchased locally. Hyperscale data centers can support technology innovation, but only if planned responsibly. Florida communities should not bear the environmental or financial costs of poorly designed facilities.

Take Action: Together, we can push back against data centers in our communities. Sign up for updates, support our work, follow us on social media, and check out our toolkit at sierraclub.org/florida/datacenters for information, resources, and materials to join us in this fight!

The first draft for public comment of the new **Citrus County Data Center Ordinance Amendment** will be released in early September, with a public feedback form available online, followed by a public Board of County Commissioners workshop before the final draft is scheduled for review before the Planning and Development Commission. Contact us at sierraclubadventurecoastcc@gmail.com.

Citrus Conservation: Betz Farm BOCC Hearing Oct. 13



Robin Orlandi speaks at Citrus County Commission

The Citrus County Planning and Development Commission (PDC) met Aug. 20 th and recommended denial of a revised plan for the 348-acre Betz Farm property. Two days earlier, the applicant had filed for a 60-day continuance, then withdrew it as the meeting began. This resulted in many local residents opposed to the development missing the meeting and not having an the opportunity for public comment, because they were led to believe the application hearing would not take place.

The revised plan called for fewer homes, smaller lots, private roads and another 20 years to complete the project. Density changed from 1,542 homes to 1,466 – 1,138 single-family homes and 328 townhomes. Speakers unanimously opposed the revision based on congestion from possibly 3,000 new vehicles on an already busy road and existing flood zones.

Sierra Club Citrus Conservation Co-Chair Robin Orlandi attended the hearing to oppose it, noting that the site occupies the priority focus area for recharge to the Kings Bay springs group as identified by FDEP. Extensive wetlands, cypress swamp, and three sinkholes occupy the heavily forested site. Mass site grading will be required to install stormwater infrastructure to provide drainage, and berms to contain wetlands. Previous attempts to develop Betz Farm by stormwater engineering experts for Stephen Tamposi failed. In 2003 he traded the land to the county in exchange for impact fee credits, and suggested it be used for conservation. The county still owns this site, despite the current purchase agreement with Bravo/Ardurra, conditioned on state permitting.

At the hearing, PDC member Richard Barmes moved to postpone the hearing but it was denied. Then he and other commissioners voted against the application he called “a half-hearted conceptual plan.” Board members agreed and objected to the intensity of homes and impacts to surrounding wetlands. PDC member Stuart Bozeman hopes the county will keep the property as a park or preserve. In addition, the plan as presented did not meet the requirements of the county comprehensive plan. Bravo requested the continuance following the Aug. 14th ruling in Pine Ridge Property Owners Association vs. Citrus County where the circuit court found a deficiency in the county’s Land Development Code involving the procedure for amending a Development of Regional Impact through the county’s PUD process, the same process being pursued for Betz Farm.

The item is on the Oct. 13 County Commission agenda for a final vote. Plan to be there.

Hernando Conservation: County Updates Landscape Ordinance



Hernando County has drafted a comprehensive revision of the Community Appearance Regulations for landscaping at new developments, tree preservation, land clearing, buffers, irrigation, invasive plants, fences and walls. Current regulations have been in effect for more than two decades and maintaining Hernando County's rural, agricultural, and residential character has become more challenging.

Community Services Director Omar De Pablo presented the first reading of the ordinance at the County Commission hearing on Aug. 4. Several speakers supported the plan to strengthen tree protection, landscaping and screening requirements in response to new development. Some residents expressed concern that the ordinance did not go far enough, whereas Coastal Engineer's Cliff Manuel said the proposed regulations would make development more complicated and costly. The county voted to hold a community town hall on August 20th to gather more community input. That session also included residents seeking stronger regulations.

Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group submitted comments on the plan on August 15th, noting that several sections addressed shared concerns regarding loss of habitat in Hernando County to development. "The ordinance can be a bridge to allow sustainable growth while preserving native habitat that supports healthy communities, clean air and biodiversity," noted Chair DeeVon Quirolo. We also noted areas of concern, i.e., that "Planned Development Proposals approved by the County Commission can override the standards in the ordinance by granting deviations. Many in our community would like to see laws enforced fairly across the board to all applicants."

The new ordinance provides Tree Preservation Clustering Credits in new developments to protect "specimen" trees measuring at least 18 inches and "majestic" trees measuring at least 36 inches and new residential lots up to 5,000 square feet would require at least two trees, while lots between 5,001 and 10,000 square feet would require three. Larger lots would require an additional tree for every additional 3,000 square feet. Developments would generally have to preserve at least 3% of existing natural vegetation. Developers can remove protected trees by planting replacements or paying into a new tree mitigation fund and certain residential tree removals and bona fide agricultural operations are exempted. The county would create a mitigation bank with proceeds dedicated to planting trees on other public property or acquiring tree-preservation easements. Sierra Club comments noted that "Establishing such a mitigation bank is a challenging endeavor and we would prefer to avoid the impacts on the original site by enforcing the landscape ordinance rules as provided herein without exception."

Other rules address landscape buffers. Developers would post financial guarantees for required landscaping, while HOAs would be responsible for maintaining common landscaping, buffers and tree-preservation areas after construction. The rules apply to new development, not established homes. Sierra Club comments noted that "Every effort to save existing native habitat should be encouraged rather than clearing the land altogether and replanting with sod and lawn. It could save developers funds by allowing existing trees, bushes and ground cover and the wildlife that depends upon it to remain undisturbed around the developed areas."

A final vote before the County Commission has not yet been scheduled.

**New Tower Approved
for Linda Pederson Park**



Linda Pedersen Park Observation Tower,
April 29, 2025 Image by Austyn Szempruch

Linda Pedersen Park is a scenic 135-acre park in Weeki Wachee, across from Jenkins Creek Preserve and a popular destination for families, nature lovers, and water sports enthusiasts. The 40-foot observation tower that offered panoramic views of upland hammocks, Weeki Wachee Preserve, and Jenkins Creek flowing into the Gulf of Mexico was destroyed by past storms and efforts are underway to replace it.

On July 17th, Hernando County planners unveiled three options to replace the tower, to be funded with county tourism dollars and envisioned as a destination for visitors and residents. Representatives of Sierra Club, Hernando Audubon and the Hernando Native Plant Society as well as Tammy Heon of Hernando County Tourism and others attended and expressed support for the project. Sierra Club recommended replacing lawn with native plants, solar panels to power lights, educational signage and more. Everyone preferred a 50' tower made of galvanized steel with a roof.

The plans for three different designs were presented to the Hernando County Commission at their August 11th meeting. Speakers in support included Sierra Adventure Coast chair DeeVon Quirolo. The commissioners approved the project and selected the 40" tower built of galvanized steel.

Sierra Club Magazine

These Volunteers Are Often the Unsung Heroes of Public Lands Management

Meet the people who help support underfunded public lands and the staff who steward them

By Elisabeth Kwak-Hefferan Illustrations by Mark Smith

August 24, 2026

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/2026-3-september-october/feature/these-volunteers-are-often-unsung-heroes-public-land>



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](https://www.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.

