



Dark Skies initiatives help a sea turtle at the GTM estuarine. Dark skies will be the topic at our group's meeting in September. See the article on page 2.

Durbin Creek Preserve decision a big win for the natural environment

Environmental groups across the city celebrated as the developer who had sought to build 1,400 houses within the Julington–Durbin Creek Preserve in exchange for land on Black Hammock Island announced he was bowing to public sentiment and canceling the project.

The decision represents a significant victory for Northeast Florida's environmental activists. A range of groups, led by the St. Johns Riverkeeper, hit hard and fast to create a show of force against the swap.

Timing was important because the project was at the pre-proposal stage—earlier is better to bring our influence.

There were public protests, petitions, newspaper columns and editorials, and threats of lawsuits against the proposal.

The developer announced that he now plans to focus on selling the Black Hammock Island land to the state.

The groups joining with the Riverkeeper were the Sierra Club Northeast Florida Group, the Florida Wildlife Federation, the Florida Native Plant Society, the Duval Audubon Society, League of Women Voters of Jacksonville First Coast, Public Trust Law, Fun 4 First Coast Kids, the Timucuan Parks Foundation, and The Stetson Kennedy Foundation.

Janet Stanko

Don't just gripe, do something!

Electing better officials is the most important thing we can do. Now, more than ever, we must participate in our democratic process. Instead of focusing on Trump's latest antics, let's concentrate on shaping the political system we want. Let's put our time and money to this task.

• **Candidate Endorsements:** We are proud to announce that we endorse Bill Nelson for U.S. Senate, Al Lawson for U.S. House District 5, Tracye Polson for Florida House District 15 (currently held by Jay Fant who is term limited), and Sandy Golding for Jacksonville Beach City Council.

More races are still being evaluated and will be announced later. Rep. Al Lawson's race will be determined in the Democratic primary. All others are general election races so we will tell you more about them later.

Meanwhile, we will be campaigning for our candidates.

Please contact me—janestan@bellsouth.net—to volunteer. And please donate to these candidates' campaigns or to the Sierra Political Action Committee, see below. Any endorsements announced after this

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Who we are

Executive Committee

Chair Janet Stanko
janestan@bellsouth.net
Treasurer Ed Schlessinger
eds.greenmail@gmail.com
Members
Cindy Baker
cindysbaker@gmail.com
Lisa Williams
lisaow@gmail.com
Vijay Satoskar
satoskarvv@yahoo.com
Pam Keramati
kermap@me.com

Committee chairs

Conservation

Volunteer! Call 904.990-3191

Environmental Education

Julianne Mammana
jmm094@bucknell.edu

Outings

Bill Armstrong
armsfam@yahoo.com

Legislative

Volunteer. Call 904.990.3191

Legal

Ken Wright
ken@jacobsonwright.com

Newsletter

Robert Blade
rdblade@gmail.com

Website

Bill Armstrong
armsfam@yahoo.com

Beaches Programs

Brian Paradise
bgparadise@comcast.net

Jacksonville Programs

Cindy Baker
cindysbaker@gmail.com

Publicity

Volunteer! Call 904.990.3191



Just for laughs: Q and A time at a green meeting.

Dark Skies expert to stress key role in environment for star-filled nights

The majesty of dark skies and the harm done by artificial light pollution will be the featured topic in September when our group resumes its regular monthly meetings.

Julie Taylor of the Ancient City Astronomy Club will discuss the serious environmental implications of light pollution at the meeting on Sept. 10 in the education building at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001 University Blvd W.

A social time starts at 6:30 pm; the meeting, which is free and open to all, starts at 7 p.m.

(In October, our meeting will be in Ponte Vedra. After that it will alternate monthly between Lakewood Presbyterian and Ponte Vedra.)

Julie's aim to educate and inform people about the importance of dark skies.

The awareness began years ago with scientists' inability to see stars and planets at night due to the omnipresence of artificial light.

Later studies showed the harmful effects on turtle hatchlings, amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants.

Other studies have shown the negative effects of artificial light on human health and safety as well.

Julie's hope is that more areas will recognize the vital importance of dark skies and will become International Dark Sky Association Communities. These are communities that show exceptional dedication to the preservation of the night sky through rigorous outdoor lighting laws, dark sky education programs, and general support of dark skies initiatives.

Don't just gripe, let's do something

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newsletter will be posted on our Facebook page or website. Thanks to Logan Cross and Barbara Gubbin who helped in this process.

Vote: Early voting for the primary starts August 13. The last date to register or make party changes was July 30.

We are encouraging everyone to register to vote by mail to ensure you have all options to vote. Check out this website for the details: <https://www.duvalelections.com/Voter-Information/Vote-By-Mail#mail>

Donate to our Political Action Committee (PAC). These donations pay for communicating our endorsements to the public along with possible candidate donations. Please consider donating to our PAC.

There are two ways to donate:

- Go to the “donate” button on our website <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/northeast-florida/donate>. In the “notes” section, please specify **POLITICAL DONATION**, and give us your name, address, and occupation. This information is needed to comply with election law.

- Mail a check payable to Sierra Club Florida PAC and mail it to Sierra Club; 6028 Chester Ave, Suite 103; Jacksonville Florida 32217. Please include your name, address and occupation.

(Janet Stanko is the chair of the Sierra Northeast Florida Group's executive committee.)



Washington Oaks during a hike in May (Photo by Bill Armstrong)

Outings: Paddling, hiking in August

Note: To see a full outing description and to RSVP see our web site or our Meetup site:

—<https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/northeast-florida/get-outdoors>

—<https://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group>

Outings are free (except for any park fees) and open to all. Some outings require a greater level of fitness and skill than others. No pets allowed on outings. Outing participants are required to sign a waiver and release of liability at the start of the outing. A link to the waiver can be found at: <https://www.sierraclub.org/florida/northeast-florida/get-outdoors>

Saturday, August 11, 9 a.m.:

Hike the Florida Trail Through Camp Blanding. We'll hike six miles on the Florida Trail through Camp Blanding.

Sunday, August 19, 9 a.m.:

Paddle Sixmile Creek. Paddle Sixmile Creek, a tributary of the St. Johns River in St. Johns County.

Saturday, August 25, 9 a.m.:

Kayak Peters Creek. Let's take a beautiful, leisurely six mile paddle up Peters Creek in Green Cove Springs.

Sunday, August 26, 9 a.m.:

Hike Nocatee Preserve. Take an easy five mile hike in Nocatee Preserve.

Fish camp gathering sure to please

An environmental get-together will be held starting at 4 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 12, at Genung's Fish Camp. Come and meet fellow environmentalists and commune with nature on the banks of the Matanzas River where the sunset is guaranteed to be awesome.

Bring your own pot luck dish, your drink of choice, and your chair. You can rent a kayaks and buy beer on the camp grounds.

Genung's Fish Camp, an old Florida camp, is at 291 Cubbedge Road, St. Augustine, 32080. To get there, starting from the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library, drive south on A1A for about 35 miles until you get to Cubbedge Road on your right. You can also take I-95 south to SR 206, then drive east to A1A. Turn right and Cubbedge Road is on your right.

A car pooling group will meet in the Ponte Vedra Beach Library parking lot at 2.45 p.m.

St. Augustine march seeks fracking ban



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A coalition of groups focused on the earth's increasingly fragile environment will march on Saturday, August 4, in St. Augustine to demand a statewide fracking ban.

The march starts at 11:30 a.m. on the east side of the Bridge of Lions, crosses to the other side and ends with a rally in front of the St. Augustine city hall. The rally is scheduled to end at 1 p.m.

Time and time again, the state legislature has failed to act against this dangerous practice. Fracking threatens our economy, environment, and public health.

Concerned citizens and community leaders are ready to send a strong message to Tallahassee. It is time to put people over polluters.

This is a family-friendly event. Guest speakers include St. Augustine Mayor Nancy Shaver, Matanzas Riverkeeper Jen Lomberk, and retired physician. Gary Bowers.

Marchers should bring their own water—and no plastic bottles please.

Parking is available on Anastasia Island. We will gather at the park on the east side of the Bridge of Lions. The march begins promptly at 11:30 a.m.

Spend the money, judge says

A Tallahassee judge has ruled in favor of the Sierra Club and other Florida groups in a 2015 lawsuit filed to force state officials to spend money approved by voters in a 2014 constitutional amendment election.

Group's fund raiser/social set for Oct. 16

Mark your calendars for the Sierra Club fundraiser and social on Tuesday, Oct. 16, featuring Madison Carr, a Jacksonville singer and songwriter who is also a Sierra Club member and activist.

It will be held at the Mudville Grille, 3105 Beach Blvd, at the intersection of Beach and Atlantic boulevards.

The doors open at 6 p.m. for happy hour. The concert starts at 7 p.m.

Advance tickets for the fundraiser are \$10 per person; the price is \$12 per person payable at the door on the night of the performance, subject to seating availability.

Mudville offers food and drinks at reasonable prices. If you want to eat before the concert, arrive when the doors open or shortly thereafter.

To buy advance tickets, send your check for \$10 per person to Brian Paradise, 13 Arbor Club Drive, # 315, Ponte Vedra Beach. FL. 32082.

Make your check payable to Brian Paradise, a Sierra Club executive committee member and organizer of the event.

The ticket price at the door is \$12. The concert last year was well attended and early reservations are recommended.

Proceeds from the concert will go towards specific environmental programs of the Sierra Club's Northeast Florida Group, including the Sierra Student Coalition, a new organization of area high school and college students.