

## Weeds take center stage at meeting

Weeds are a valuable part of the ecosystem, Sierra Club members were told last month.

Dr. Jim Moore, the speaker at the January Sierra Club meeting at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, said plant diversity — including much-maligned weeds — is vital to insect diversity which, in turn, is vital to a resilient ecosystem.

He brought a variety of seeds and wild plants along with some wearable microscopes to illustrate his point.

The 40 or so people attending had a chance to take a close look at the



*Taking a close look*

plants and the insects inside them. These wild plants, Moore said, are normally called weeds,

but he is out to change that mindset. They're actually valuable members of the community, he said.

Moore is a former physician who is passionate about biology and has studied plants since 2015. Lisa Williams, the program coordinator, said Moore drew one of the larger crowds in recent years.



*Student group ready for a beach cleanup.*

## Student Coalition cleaning up

By Amanda Brust

The Sierra Club of Northeast Florida's Student Coalition is jumping into 2019 with enthusiasm.

We are going to try to do a school program where we host a seminar about the importance of keeping our beaches clean and, possibly, host a beach party centered on clean beaches.

Through our school program, the environmental club at Ponte Vedra High School, we have hosted many successful beach and park clean-ups as well as conversations on sustainability.

There are about 40 club members and most participate in the Sierra Club's activities.

We had several students go to the Beaches Go Green clean-up last year.

Things are going well for us. The only problem is spreading the word and getting members outside of our high school.

We have connected with Nease High School's environmental club so there are potential Sierra members there.

But we're always interested in students from high schools all over the area.

We'll keep you updated on our progress. (Amanda Brust, amandaskye321@gmail.com, and Jason Routsis, jroutsis2@gmail.com, are the co-chairs of the Sierra Student Coalition.)

# Who we are

## *Executive Committee*

**Chair** Janet Stanko

janestan@bellsouth.net

**Treasurer** Lucille Pendleton

LucillePen@yahoo.com

## **Members**

Cindy Baker

cindysbaker@gmail.com

Robert Blade

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Logan Cross

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Barbara Gubbin

gubbin01@gmail.com

John Pilecki

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Joel Roberts

joelhroberts@me.com

Lisa Williams

lisaow@gmail.com

## *Committee chairs*

### **Conservation**

*Volunteer! Call 904.990-3191*

### **Environmental Education.**

Julianne Mammana

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### **Outings.**

Bill Armstrong

armstrongjax@att.net

**Legislative.** *Volunteer! Call 904.990.3191*

### **Legal.**

Ken Wright

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### **Newsletter.**

Robert Blade

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### **Website.**

Bill Armstrong

armstrongjax@att.net

### **Beaches Programs.**

Brian Paradise

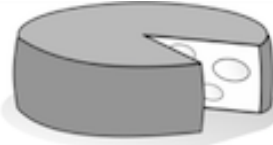
bgparadise@comcast.net

### **Jacksonville Programs.** Cindy Baker

cindysbaker@gmail.com

### **Publicity.** *Volunteer! Call*

*904.990.3191*



## Wine & cheese will greet, inform new members

A wine and cheese reception for new Sierra Club members will take place Feb. 23 in Ponte Vedra.

All new members — those who have joined the Sierra Club within a the past year — are invited to attend.

The reception will give people a chance to meet the Northeast Florida Group's leaders, to get acquainted with the wide range of activities the club is involved in, and to volunteer for activities they find interesting

The reception will be at 6 p.m. Feb. 23, at the Clubhouse of the Ocean Grove Condominiums at 1, Arbor Club Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach. For more information, email Brian Paradise, bgparadise@comcast.net.

## One message on Amendment 1 money

One of the Club main themes during this year's Legislative session is to keep Land Acquisition Trust Fund money focused on its original purpose and not be diverted to other projects, the club's lobbyist says.

The fund, from the 2014 Amendment 1 ballot initiative, sets up dedicated source of money for conservation land. But since the approval, the Legislature has used some of the money to fund unrelated areas. The Sierra Club and other groups sued over the action are now waiting for an appellate court ruling.

Meanwhile, Dave Cullen, the club's longtime lobbyist, said that while the case is pending, it is vital for Sierrans to speak against initiatives that propose using the trust fund money for other projects, even though they are worthwhile.

## Three chosen for excom terms in election

Three Sierrans were elected to the club's executive committee during a recent membership ballot.

Barbara Gubbin, John Pilecki, and Robert Blade were elected to two-year terms on the eight-member committee which serves are the board of directors for the Northeast Florida Group.

The committee usually meets on the third Monday of the month at the Southeast Regional Library on Deerwood Park Blvd. The meetings are open to to all.

Barbara Gubbin, gubbin01@gmail.com, is a long-time environmental advocate who enjoys the outdoors and who works to advance the club mission through political action. John Pilecki, johnpilecki@gmail.com, is active in the St. Johns County area and founded the Democratic Environmental Caucus there in 2017. Robert Blade, rmlblade@gmail.com, is an environmental advocate who is working to advance public awareness of climate change.

The national Sierra Club is divided into state chapters; the chapters are divided into regional groups. Our club is formally known as Sierra Club, Florida Chapter, Northeast Florida Group.

## Great thought for the month

*Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught will we realize that we cannot eat money.*  
— Native American proverb

# Cut beef, eat veggies, report says

From TheGuardian.com, via Allen Tilley's climate change newsletter. More information is available at <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/>.

The first science-based diet that tackles both the poor food eaten by billions of people and averts global environmental catastrophe recommends huge cuts in red meat-eating in western countries.

The "planetary health diet" was created by an international commission seeking to draw up guidelines that provide nutritious food to the world's fast-growing population. At the same time, the diet addresses the major role of farming – especially livestock – in driving climate change.

Globally, the diet requires red meat and sugar consumption to be cut by half, while vegetables, fruit, pulses and nuts must double. But in specific places the changes are stark. North Americans need to eat 84% less red meat but six times more beans and lentils.

The diet is a "win-win", according to the scientists, as it would save at least 11 million people a year from deaths caused by unhealthy food, while preventing the collapse of the natural world that humanity depends upon. With 10 billion people expected to live on Earth by 2050, continuing today's diets would inevitably mean greater health problems and severe global warming.

"The world's diets must change dramatically," said Walter Willett of Harvard, a leader of the commission convened by the Lancet medical journal and the Eat Forum NGO.



## Outings: Hike & paddle in February

Note: To see a full outing description and to RSVP see our website 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 or firearms 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, Feb. 2, 9 a.m.** — UNF Trails Hike. We'll hike at a moderate pace on parts of the Goldenrod Trail, Big Cypress Trail, Gopher Tortoise Trail, Blueberry Trail, and Red Maple Boardwalk for an approximately 4-mile loop.

**Thursday, Feb. 7, 10 a.m.** — Weekday Kayak on Trout Creek.

Join us for a lovely trip on a wide open picturesque river which flows into St. John's River. We will paddle upstream for about 3 miles.

**Saturday, Feb. 16, 9 a.m.** — Fitness Hike: City Cedar Point Preserve and Black Hammock Island. We will begin in the Jacksonville city's Cedar Point Preserve, cross Pumpkin Hill Creek to Black Hammock Island, continue the hike, and then return.

**Saturday, Feb. 16 to Tuesday, Feb. 19** — Two- or four-day backpacking trip. Join us for a two- or a four-day backpacking trip along the Florida Trail in the Little-Big Econ / Bronson State Forest area northeast of Orlando. (This one is full; no room for more hikers.)

**Sunday, Feb. 17, 10 a.m.** — Hike The Bluffs Scenic Shoreline at Big Talbot Island State Park. Our hike takes us along the boardwalk next to Heckscher Drive to Boneyard Beach, a total of about 4 miles.

**Thursday, Feb. 21, 10 a.m.** — Weekday Hike in Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park. We'll hike 5 to 6 miles along varied trails with good views of lakes and the ravine in this lovely state park.

**Saturday, Feb. 23, 10 a.m.** — Kayak Julington Creek. Let's kayak down beautiful Julington Creek and go to Clark's Fish Camp for a great lunch.

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Northeast Florida Group**

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Facebook

[www.facebook.com/NEFLSierraClub/](http://www.facebook.com/NEFLSierraClub/)

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**Mail this form to:** Sierra Club  
Member Services, 2101 Webster St.,  
Suite 1300, Oakland, CA 94612 or go  
to [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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**Club's February, March meetings  
feature Matanzas and St. Johns rivers**

Water tops the agenda for the both this month's and March's Sierra Club meetings. All our meetings are free and open to all.

**February**

"Protecting the Matanzas River." Monday, Feb. 4, at 6 p.m. in the Clubhouse of the Ocean Grove Condominiums at 1, Arbor Club Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach.

Jen Lomberk, the Matanzas Riverkeeper, will speak on the work of waterkeepers around the globe as well as her work to protect local waterways. The Matanzas River remains one of the last healthy rivers in Florida.

She will also speak about the opportunities for people to enjoy the river and protect.

For further information email Brian Paradise at [bgparadise@comcast.net](mailto:bgparadise@comcast.net).

**March**

"River UPRising." Monday, March 11, in Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001

University Blvd W, rear of the education building. Social time starts at 6:30; the meeting starts at 7 p.m.

Shannon Blankinship, advocacy director for the St Johns Riverkeeper, will speak about taking action in the face of rising waters. Hurricane Irma was a wake-up call that showed the importance of being ready to protect our community and the St. Johns River BEFORE the next big storm.

Shannon will tell us how we can work together to become more resilient. That way, we can truly protect our communities and waterways while improving our quality of life, health and local economy.

As advocacy director, Shannon works with the St. Johns Riverkeeper to evaluate and prioritize issues and emerging threats to the watershed and develop and implement advocacy action plans.