

Plastic bag initiative begins with Publix—your help needed

By JANET STANKO

The Florida Sierra Club has launched a state-wide campaign against single-use plastics, first targeting Publix, the state's largest supermarket chain, and we need your help.

We are asking Publix to stop using single-use plastic bags, to encourage shoppers to bring their own reusable bags or to use paper.

Go here to sign the petition:

<https://addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/stop-using-plastic-bags-publix>

The goal now is to have as many people as possible sign a petition urging that Publix take action against single-use plastic bags. We hope other supermarkets will follow. So far, we have more than 2,700 signatures and need many, many more.

Our campaign is more than petitions and post cards. We will conduct a social media campaign, enlist the help of other sister organizations, communicate through major media, and hope to meet with Publix executives.

Why Publix?

Two reasons:

- The state legislature doesn't allow local governments to ban single-use

See Sierra Pushes on page 2



Maia McGuire: what can we do about plastic? (Photo by Lisa Williams)

Plastic pollution a global crisis

By LISA WILLIAMS

Plastic is an enormous and growing problem world-wide, a University of Florida marine scientist says.

Dr. Maia McGuire told the more than 20 people attending the club's January meeting that the stuff is everywhere: in every body of water, no matter how remote; in the air no matter where; and in the most isolated areas of land where people do not live.

Plastic pollution cannot be fixed by recycling alone, McGuire said. Instead, the responsibility is turning to us, as consumers. We need to stop using plastic as much as we can, especially single-use plastics.

The recycling mantra of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, she said, needs another R attached: Refuse.

Refuse means refusing plastic bags, refusing plastic wraps around the things we

buy, refusing plastic straws at restaurants.

Recycling alone is failing, she said, because every municipality's recycling rules differ, depending on where they send the recyclables. That means no one is clear on what can or cannot be recycled.

*Refuse! Reduce.
Reuse. Recycle.*

Plastic bags are especially egregious as people throw them in the recycling can and ruin most if not all of the load. The filmy bags clog the recycling center's sorting machines and force the center to send much of the load to the dump.

Some grocery stores take plastic bags for recycling because they have contracts with recyclers who can handle them.

The basic ideas, she said, are first to use plastic alternatives and then to follow a recycling tip: If in doubt, throw it out!

Who we are

Executive Committee

(This group meets at 6:30 pm on the third Monday of the month at the Southside Library, off Gate Parkway. Meetings are open to all.)

Chair

Janet Stanko
janestan@bellsouth.net

Treasurer Lucille Pendleton
LucillePen@yahoo.com

Members

Cindy Baker
cindysbaker@gmail.com

Robert Blade
rdblade@gmail.com

Logan Cross
jlogancross3@gmail.com

Barbara Gubbin
gubbin01@gmail.com

John Pilecki
johnpilecki@gmail.com

Joel Roberts
joelroberts@me.com

Lisa Williams
lisaow@gmail.com

Committee chairs

Conservation

Volunteer! Call 904.990-3191

Environmental Education

Julianne Mammana
jmm094@bucknell.edu

Outings

Bill Armstrong
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Legislative. *Volunteer!*

Legal

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Website

Bill Armstrong
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Beaches Programs

Brian Paradise
bgparadise@comcast.net

Jacksonville Programs

Cindy Baker
cindysbaker@gmail.com

Use your IRA distribution for Sierra, maybe save a tax bump

By LUCILLE PENDLETON

With the new higher Standard Deduction on the 1040 tax return, many seniors are not itemizing deductions anymore and contributions to charitable organizations are forgotten.

But many seniors want to support conservation programs like Sierra's. What's the solution? Your IRA!

After age 70½, you are required to withdraw some of your IRA savings each year—the Required Minimum Distribution. You can pay taxes on this money if you want—it may even push you into a higher tax bracket.

OR you can contribute all or part of the minimum distribution to a 501(c)(3) charity like the Sierra Club Foundation. It's called a Qualified Charitable Distribution. It means you won't be taxed on the donated amount and you can still claim the Standard Deduction.

Best of all, you will be supporting the important activities of the Sierra Club Foundation.

It's easy: direct your custodian/financial trustee to send the QCD funds directly to the Sierra Club Foundation, 2101 Webster St., Ste 1300, Oakland, CA 94612.

If you note that the contribution should benefit the NE Florida Club, then the funds will be directed to our local conservation efforts.

Many thanks.

(Lucille Pendleton is the Northeast Florida Sierra group's treasurer.)

Sierra push to ban plastic bags targets Publix first

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plastics. While we are working to change that, we want to encourage businesses to voluntarily ban or limit plastics in the check-out lines.

- Publix is a dominant force in Florida and is a natural first step to promote environmental responsibility. If Publix changes, others will follow.

Of course the single use plastic problem is much bigger than grocery bags, but we are starting there. Experts say single-use plastics in the environment is as big a threat as climate change.

So sign our petition at <https://addup.sierraclub.org/campaigns/stop-using-plastic-bags-publix>.

We will share other organizational petitions on bags and other single-use plastics. We are all part of the same



Use a bag like this, not plastic, when you shop.

campaign platform, and we need to support other campaigns as we want our sister organizations to support ours, so we hope you will sign those petitions too when we share them.

(Janet Stanko is chair of the Northeast Florida Sierra Club and leads the state initiative fighting single-use plastics.)

Sierrans support MLK service day at Hannah Park for lopping, chopping

The Northeast Florida Sierra Club's meetup site had 23 Sierrans participate in the city's annual MLK Day of Service on Jan. 22 to pitch in and help the Timucuan Parks Foundation clean, maintain, and beautify Kathryn Abbey Hanna Park.

They were among 100 volunteers to work on invasive plant removal, trail maintenance, and litter cleanup as part of the national service day celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sierra Outings Chair Bill Armstrong reports.

"It was a great day to be outdoors, and we were able to get a lot of work done, thanks to all the volunteers who joined us," said Felicia Boyd, program and outreach director for the parks foundation.

She added, "We got a great group of Sierra Club volunteers who came out and lopped and chopped."

The MLK Day of Service event was done in partnership with the City of Jacksonville's Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services with funding support from REI, the outdoors equipment company.

The foundation hosts cleanup and maintenance projects year-round with its park partners which include Jacksonville, Florida State Parks and National Park Service. To volunteer for the next service event, visit timucuanparks.org/volunteer/.

Meetup at all-time high

At the end of January, our Meetup participants totaled more than 4,500 people! Since our club's membership is about 2,000, more than half of the Meetup participants aren't Sierra members but do have a keen interest in exploring, enjoying, and protecting our Northeast Florida natural environment.

—Bill Armstrong, outings chair.



Hiking along Rice Creek (Photo by Bill Armstrong)

February outings: hike, kayak, serve

Note: To see a full outing description and to RSVP for these outings, see our website or Meetup site:

- Website: www.sierraclub.org/florida/northeastflorida/get-outdoors
- Meetup: 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 are allowed on outings.

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>

Sunday, Feb. 9, 10 a.m. Learn about and hike Ravine Gardens State Park and see the azaleas. Don't miss the blooming azaleas! We'll talk about the history of the park and the geological formation. The hike distance is 2.5 miles over challenging terrain, which winds around trees and curves, up and down stairs, with several elevation changes, narrow paths with stones and roots along the path. There are also several suspension bridges.

Saturday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m. Hike Tillie K. Fowler Regional Park. Beautiful trails, a nature tower, varied terrain, remnants of a WWI camp—what more could you ask for! We'll meet at the Nature Center at the far (north) end of the park and hike about 3 miles on two different trails.

Saturday, Feb. 22, 9:30 a.m. Kayak Deep Creek. Join us for a backwater paddle on Deep Creek. This is a great 2-3 hour leisurely paddle and a lot of fun, maybe even a few challenges.

Saturday, Feb. 29, 9 a.m. Fitness Hike, Cedar Point Preserve to Black Hammock Island. This 7-mile hike will begin in the Cedar Point Preserve, cross Pumpkin Hill Creek to Black Hammock Island and then return. Participants should be capable of hiking at a rapid pace for an extended period.

Saturday, Feb. 29, 9 a.m. Weed Wrangle For National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Join us and Timucuan Parks at Cradle Creek Preserve to remove invasives such as the air potato vine.

Sierra Club, Northeast Florida Group



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Note: To change your mailing address or to change from paper to email, write to sierrasentry@gmail.com. Please include your membership number found on the mailing label.

Your essays, opinions, poetry, and photos are welcome as long as they relate to our mantra of enjoy, explore, and protect the environment. Send submissions, queries, and ideas to rmlblade@gmail.com.



Join the Sierra Club and receive a free Insulated Cooler Tote!

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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

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our advocacy and lobbying efforts. Contributions to The Sierra Club Foundation and Environmental Law Program are tax-deductible.

Animal rights, plastics dominate meeting slate

The Sierra Club's Northeast Florida Group offers meetings in Jacksonville, in Ponte Vedra, and in St. Augustine. Our meetings are free and open to all, both members and non-members.

Feb. 5, Wednesday, 6 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Library. A nationally-known animal rights lawyer will present a different way of looking at animals. "Animals are the only beings capable of suffering whom U.S. law classifies as property," says Elizabeth DeCoux who has taught animal rights law for more than 20 years. "With few limitations, people may do whatever they want with their property. So, until the law changes, the fate of animals depends on each human's morals and ethics. Submitted for your consideration will be one argument for according greater moral status to animals." All are welcome.

March 9, Monday, 7 p.m., at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001 University Blvd W in Jacksonville, in the rear of the education building. The Plastic Problem: Plastic pollution is a pervasive global issue. It can now be found in the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe. How has this come to pass, and what are the solutions? Join us as we discuss the



Lia Colabello, March speaker

rise of plastic pollution, touch on the array of solutions available, and dive into one facet: the need for corporate innovation and design change. Lia Colabello, managing principal of Plastic Pollution Solutions, will be the speaker. Social time starts at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

April 6, Monday, 6 p.m. at the Ponte Vedra Library. A celebration of John Muir, the environmentalist and Sierra Club founder, who was born on April 21, 1838 and died on Dec. 24, 1914. Everyone is welcome.

May 11, Monday, 7 p.m., at Lakewood Presbyterian Church, 2001 University Blvd W in Jacksonville, in the rear of the education building. Josh Gellers, a UNF associate professor of political science, will speak on "Human Rights and the Environment: Origins, Impacts, and New Directions." He will explore different human rights approaches to environmental protection. Social time starts at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.