



Sierra Sentry

florida.sierraclub.org/northeast

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Say “No” to Faux (not Pro-) Solar Amendment 1 in November

By: George Cavros, Esq.

Floridians should Vote NO on Amendment 1 in November for three reasons:

FACT 1 – Amendment 1 is funded by Florida’s big utilities to protect their monopoly markets and limit customer-owned solar.

WHY– Follow the money: Florida Power & Light (FPL), Duke Energy and other big power companies want to maintain their monopoly control on profits from electricity sales and limit customer-owned solar. Solar power is poised to grow in the Sunshine State, which would allow customers to generate their own power and buy less from the electric utilities. To date, the monopoly utilities have contributed the majority of the \$20 million collected to promote this Amendment to protect their power sales all the while claiming they are “pro-solar.” In reality, utilities only support limited amounts of solar power they own and from which they can profit. No non-utility solar company supports Amendment 1.

FACT 2 – Amendment 1 paves the way for barriers that would penalize solar customers.

HOW– The utility-backed Amendment 1 would add to the State Constitution the false assumption that solar customers are “subsidized” by non-solar customers and that non-solar customers are in need of additional protections. In fact, reputable studies in 10 states show that solar customers provide a net-benefit for the utility and all electricity customers. The large monopoly utilities are looking for ways to limit customer-owned solar and will use this false claim as a justification to implement unfair fees and discriminatory penalties for solar customers. Restrictions and unfair fees would make solar more expensive, limit the expansion of solar, and hurt consumers by denying a cost effective way to lower power bills.

FACT 3 – Amendment 1 misleads Florida voters by promising rights and protections that Florida citizens already have.

HOW– The monopoly utilities wrote Amendment 1 to sound good by promising that it would add new solar rights and consumer protections. In reality, Floridians *already* have the right to purchase or lease solar equipment and are already fully protected under Florida’s existing consumer protection laws. The false promises of additional rights are designed to gain support for the Amendment not to help grow the solar market in Florida.

On August 30th, voters adopted Amendment 4 to provide solar investments Florida property tax exemptions for the next 20 years, 73% in favor. The legislature will consider enabling legislation in its upcoming 2017 session. Sierra Club Florida will lobby legislators in Tallahassee on those developments. Stay alert for details.

Sierra Club Florida Chapter is opposing Amendment 1. However, we support a proposition that has not yet gained all signatures necessary to qualify for the Florida ballot-- the Solar Choice amendment. This would unleash options for solar investment and businesses that are already operating successfully in most other states. Visit www.flsolarchoice.org for more information and to sign the amendment (download, sign and send it in).



Executive Committee Elections

The annual election for our Group’s Executive Committee (ExCom) is coming. If you want to recommend a nominee (maybe yourself?), contact Candy Rue {Phone [904 629 2959](tel:9046292959), email c.rue@att.net } to submit a name for consideration by the nominating committee. The deadline for submission is November 15, 2016.

-OR -

The bylaws provide that “The name of any Group member proposed in writing by at least 30 Group members prior to the submission deadline, who gives consent, shall also be included on the ballot.” If you would like to petition, please gather the signatures and submit them by November 15, 2016 to Candy Rue.

Executive Committee

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Committee Chairs

Conservation Volunteer for this position! Call 990-3191

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Publicity Volunteer for this position! Call 990-3191

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Meetup: www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group
Facebook: http://tinyurl.com/29v9hsd
Twitter: http://twitter.com/sierranefl

Sierra Club Outings

No pets allowed on outing except where designated in the outings description. Outing participants are required to sign a waiver and release of liability at the start of the outing. The waiver can be found at: sierraclub.org/outings/national/participantforms/forms/individual_waiver.pdf

JOIN US ON MEETUP: OUTINGS HAVE BEEN FILLING UP FAST!

For the most up to date information and to ensure your spot, join our MeetUp site. Details of all outings can be found there with easy access to programs and interactions, or check our website.

www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group

Saturday, October 8, 10:00 a.m.: Hike in Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park

We will hike approximately five miles on a variety of terrains with some elevation changes. While not extreme, this is a moderately challenging trail.

We will meet at the picnic area parking lot. Once you enter the park and pay (\$5.00 per car), drive to the parking lot located 1.8 miles from the ranger station. The picnic area is located at Little Lake Johnson. Look for the Sierra Club sign.

The park is located at 6239 State Road 21, Keystone Heights, Florida 32656. Please bring a picnic lunch, as there is a great picnic area in the shade where we can enjoy lunch together after the hike. Also, bring bug spray and plenty of water. Children capable of a long hike with hills are welcome. No pets, please.

It's a bit of a drive and \$5 per car to get in, so please form carpools on Meetup. RSVP on Meetup or to Bill Armstrong at armsfam@yahoo.com.

Saturday, October 15, 11:00 a.m.: Kayak Pottsburg Creek

We'll put in at the boat ramp next to All Wet Sports at 8550 Beach Boulevard. We'll paddle up the creek (south) for about a 2 1/2 hour round trip. If we want, we can then paddle north toward the St. Johns River.

Bring your own kayak/canoe or rent one from All Wet Sports, 904-646-9887 (first-come, first-serve; limited number of single and tandem kayaks available). You can usually find a coupon on Groupon or Living Social for an all-day kayak rental for \$20.PFD and whistle required. You must WEAR your PFD. If renting, please be there at 10:00 a.m. to rent your kayak so you are ready to go by 11:00 a.m. There are a limited number of kayaks available.

Please state in your RSVP if you are renting. RSVP on Meetup or to Bill Armstrong at armsfam@yahoo.com.

Saturday, October 29, 10:00 a.m.: Hike the Longleaf Pine Trail in the Etoniah Creek State Forest

Let's hike the Longleaf Pine trail, which is 4.75 miles long. The Longleaf Pine Trail, which follows part of the Florida National Scenic Trail, leads hikers to a healthy population of the federally endangered plant Etoniah rosemary at the southern end of the trail.

Meet at 10 am at the trailhead on Tinsley Road, just off Coral Farms Road in Florahome. The address is 331 Tinsley Road, Florahome, FL. It is located generally between Keystone Heights and Palatka. Approximate driving time from Jacksonville is 1.5 hours. Use GPS to obtain directions.

Bring water and insect repellent. No pets. RSVP on Meetup.com (Sierra Club Northeast Florida) or with outing leader Andrea Conover at andrea_conover@live.com.

There Goes the Neighborhood... “Missing Piece” of Guana Threatened

Originally reserved for hunting, the privately-owned Outpost property was carved out of land that was sold to the state in 1984. A rustic lodge and a dirt road are among the few improvements on the otherwise pristine land that has diverse habitats ranging from depression marsh to maritime hammock. If developers have their way, the parcel’s mile-long border on Guana Lake will be lined with 25 houses 35-feet tall (plus 52 more houses behind them). This would create noise pollution during the projected ten years of construction, visual pollution forever, and the potential for pollution of the waterway that flows into nearby GTM-NERR—the only National Estuarine Research Reserve on Florida’s east coast. Furthermore, the Outpost is nearly surrounded by wildlife preserve, making habitat destruction at this location especially devastating since it would disconnect wild spaces.

According to Save Guana Now, the organization that formed to oppose development of the land, 17 imperiled species have the potential to live in or migrate to the Outpost, based a report of those sighted on surrounding land and water. (Seven are designated Threatened and ten are Species of Special Concern). Gate Petroleum, of which Ponte Vedra Corporation is a division, submitted a species and habitat survey which claims some of those species have low – or no probability of existing on the Outpost property. Reports, photographs and sightings by naturalists and scientists contradict Gate’s report.

The Outpost has been on the acquisitions list of the FWC for 14 years, and North Florida Lands Trust is poised to secure funding for its preservation if the land becomes available. Ponte Vedra Corporation is currently in contract with developer Dream Finders Homes.

To help preserve this land – designated conservation since 1984 - please sign up at SaveGuanaNow.org, then go to the Take Action page to locate contact information and key points for letters to elected officials.

Help Save Vilano!

It is easy to get consumed in the specifics of the huge Watermarke Project that has been proposed for a 44-acre ocean-to-intercoastal site on Vilano Beach, about 1.5 miles north of Usina Bridge. Plans call for a 120-room hotel and a whopping 70,000 square feet of commercial space - all on land currently designated for low-density residential development. The development also includes a marina, 50 “resort villas,” and a concrete pedestrian bridge over State Route A1A. Somehow, project advocates think it’s comforting to emphasize that it will be a “five-diamond private resort” with “no biker bar.”



However, community concerns about Watermarke are more fundamental than how many diamonds are attached to it. It requires that Vilano’s comprehensive plan be changed, and many fear opening Vilano’s two-lane segment of A1A to big commercial projects. Vilano’s quiet community of neighborhoods could become another thicket of high-density commercial congestion. Vilano’s road system cannot handle this change. A1A cannot be widened to four lanes, as it was in St. Augustine Beach and Ponte Vedra Beach, to accommodate commercial uses. Even now, traffic congestion along A1A is already a concern, with capacity utilization on the segment into St. Augustine having reached 98 percent.

Increasing densities of development within a Coastal High Hazard Area is also irresponsible and complicates emergency evacuations. The county’s land use policies strongly discourage any comprehensive plan changes that increase densities in these areas. Finally, the scale of development proposed for this site requires extensive reworking of a peninsular land mass bounded by marsh, estuary and intercoastal waters. It is impossible to assess the impacts, since the county doesn’t require submission of site engineering and construction plans to proceed with the land use and zoning actions. The developer is proposing natural buffers and conservation easements, but the extent of paving, regarding, storm drainage and tree removal seems to make it impossible to avoid harmful impacts to wetlands and wildlife. To find out what you can do, please visit our website at www.saveourvilano.com or follow Save Our Vilano on Facebook. Email us at SaveOurVilano@gmail.com to be added to our contact list.

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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club,
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968
or visit our website www.sierraclub.org

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Meeting Calendar

Monday, October 3 @ 6:00pm

Ponte Vedra Program: Sea Shepherd Conservation Society
Ponte Vedra Library- Main Meeting Room

Monday, October 10 @ 7:00pm

Jacksonville Program: Decline of our Urban Tree Canopy
Lakewood Presbyterian Church 2001 University Blvd W

Wednesday, October 19 @ 6:30pm

Combined ExCom and Conservation Committee Meeting
6850 Belfort Oaks Road, Jacksonville

*"Unless someone like you cares
a whole awful lot, nothing is
going to get better. It's not."*

-Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax"



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General Programs

Visit our websites for maps to all meeting locations:

florida.sierraclub.org/northeast

www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group

Ponte Vedra Program Monday, October 3 @ 6:00pm

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

The NE FL Sierra Club in Ponte Vedra will host a presentation by Lisa Blizzard, a volunteer for the Jacksonville Chapter of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. She'll talk about their activities and some of the many events they sponsor, such as the Protect Our Oceans Dinner in St. Augustine, FL and the annual Right Whale Festival in Jacksonville Beach, FL.

Established in 1977, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) is an international non-profit, marine wildlife conservation organization. Their mission is to end the destruction of habitat and the slaughter of wildlife in the world's oceans, in order to conserve and protect ecosystems and species. Sea Shepherd uses innovative direct-action tactics to investigate, document, and take action when necessary, to expose and confront illegal activities on the high seas. By safeguarding the biodiversity of our delicately balanced ocean ecosystems, Sea Shepherd works to ensure their survival for future generations.

*All are welcome! For further information, contact Larry Lickenbrock at (904) 537-6047. The program will be held in the **main meeting room of the Ponte Vedra Beach Public Library** on Library Road at A1A (blinking light south of the intersection of A1A and Solana Road, on A1A about two miles south of Butler Boulevard).*

Jacksonville Program Monday, October 10 @ 7:00pm

Working Towards Solutions to Our Declining Tree Canopy

"TreeRX: Prescribing Urban Trees for Community Health," focuses on assessing tree planting opportunities in the Springfield/Eastside areas, and producing a white paper on the benefits of trees, from health to ecosystem services. UNF Student Project Leaders, Madison Masters, Daniel Norez and Kelly Rhoden will give a brief presentation on their community project.

The main program will be presented by John November, Executive Director for the Public Trust Environmental Legal Institute of Florida. In July 2015, the Public Trust filed a complaint against the City of Jacksonville (COJ) for failing to enforce the tree protection ordinance and the charter amendment (passed by 75% of the electorate in 2000) and for inappropriate spending on activities that were not improving the health and extent of the tree canopy. In upcoming months, the Public Trust will be working with concerned community stakeholders, including the Sierra Club, to enhance the COJ's enforcement processes and spending practices so our beloved canopy can flourish.

All are welcome to attend! The meeting will be held at Lakewood Presbyterian Church: 2001 University Blvd W