



COVID-19 Crisis UP-DATE: Sierra Club Cancels in person Meetings, Programs, & Outings Through July 4, 2021!

We urge our members to observe precautions from the Center for Disease Control (CDC): Please wear a cloth mask over your mouth and nose and observe a minimum six foot "social distance" when in public, including periods of outdoor exercise.

April Photography Contest Update: We are pleased to announce the winner of our April photo contest. We received some beautiful photos, and narrowed the winner to the one that best exemplified the call to highlight a Hillsborough County regional park or preserve. **Tessa Whitmore** submitted this amazing view from Edward Medard Conservation Park. Congratulations, Tessa! Thank you to all who submitted photos.

“This photo was taken in spring of this year, atop Sacred Hill - which certainly lives up to its name. On the hill of these amazing oaks, one does truly feel like they're in a magical, scared place. This tree is perhaps one of the crowning jewels in the amazing crown”. Tessa Whitmore

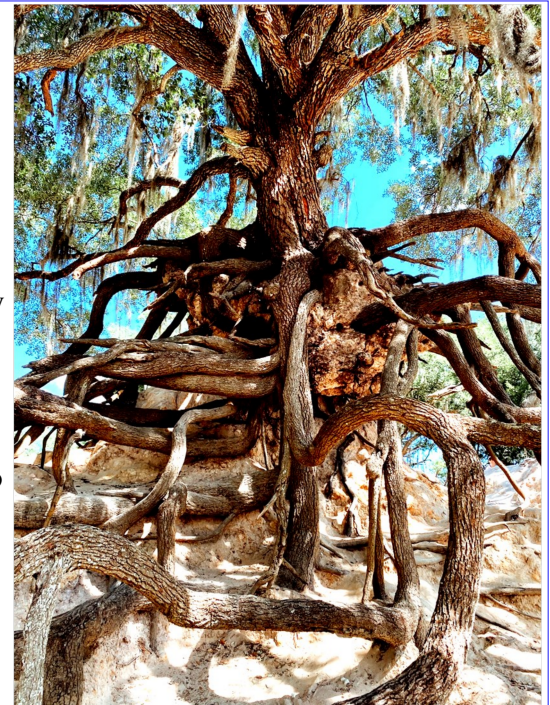
Call for Photographs for next Contest:

The Tampa Bay Group is holding a photography contest. You are invited to submit a digital photograph of either a Tampa Bay Group event or a favorite Hillsborough County regional park or preserve. The winner will receive a Sierra Club shirt and mug and will enjoy having the picture starred in a premier spot on the Group website.

The following rules apply:

1. The photograph must be a minimum of 2048 pixels wide.
2. You must own the photograph. In order for it to be featured on the website or in the newsletter, you must provide written permission for it to be used in those ways. Your photo will be resized as required for the website, but will not be cropped unless you give permission. The website is copyrighted, but if you would like an additional copyright to be placed into the photograph, it will be done.
3. Provide your name as you would like it to be displayed, and provide a brief (1-4 sentence) description of where/when it was taken and anything you would like to share about the photograph.
4. Submit to rjordan2@mail.usf.edu by June 10, 2021.

The winner will be notified by email. If your photograph is not the winner, it will be deleted to protect your ownership.



Oh No! Phil Compton is Retiring?



We have been extremely fortunate to have Phil Compton as a Senior Organizing Representative for the Florida Sierra Club since 2007! Phil has announced his retirement, effective as of April 30, 2021 and he plans to spend more time “exploring” and “enjoying” the outdoors with his wife, Liz Taylor.

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2021 Executive Committee

Group Chair: Rocky Milburn

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Vice-Chair/Parliamentarian

Political Chair: Gary Gibbons

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Conservation: Nancy Stevens

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Co-Treasurer/ Land Development

Chair: Karen Michalski

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Co-Treasurer: Don Kruse

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Outings Chair: Shirley Denton

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Recycling Chair: Barbara Heineken

bjheineken@msn.com

Tabling Chair: Michael Newett

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Transportation Chair: Christopher Gleason

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Other Officers & Assignments

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Program Chair: Bonnie Newett

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Water Co-Chair: Tamara Pierson

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Water Co-Chair: Ben Ochshorn

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Communication Chair: Rob

Jordan rjordan2@mail.usf.edu

ICO Webmaster: Bob Rice

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Newsletter: Corky Crowley

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Tampa Bay Sierra Club Stadium

Recycling Initiative: Dave Varrieur

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Sierra Florida Office: 727 824-8813

Stop plastic pollution at the source.

We use plastics in virtually every shape and form in our daily lives. It carries our drinks,



holds our shampoos, and keeps our veggies fresh. According to the the UN Environment Program, humans are consuming resources and producing waste at a greater scale than ever before, and per capita consumption levels are projected to increase with continued development. Data indicates that during the 20th century, global material resource use rose at about twice the rate of population. Plastic is everywhere! We love it because it is waterproof, relatively cheap, durable, and versatile. Plastic makes our lives incredibly convenient, disposable, and easy, but most people rarely think about the effects it has on the environment. Unlike other materials, it never really goes away. Plastic does break down, but in a landfill it takes up to 400 hundred years; worse, it doesn't ever become other materials, it just breaks into microscopic pieces of plastic that are still non-biodegradable. From there, plastic fragments most often find their way into the oceans. But it's not just the end of a plastic's life cycle we need to worry about. When plastic is produced, it's made from toxic materials such as benzene and vinyl hydrochloride. These chemicals are known to cause cancer, and the manufacturing byproducts contaminate our air and soil.

So what can you do?

We all know the phrase reduce, reuse, recycle, and it's common knowledge that these steps are generally good for the environment. What you might not know is that the order of those words has meaning as well. The words are in order of greatest impact in lowering your carbon footprint, reduce being the most important. If you want to reduce the harmful effects of plastic pollution, follow the hierarchy of steps and tips below.

The first and most important step; Reduce.

The most effective way to reduce plastic pollution is to not create plastics in the first place. Reduce and refuse! Sure, it's great to recycle a plastic water bottle after you are done with it. But it's MUCH better to never use it in the first place, eliminating the extraction of materials from the earth, energy used to manufacture it, and fuels to transport it to wherever it will be sold.



Continued on Page 5

Conservation Committee

The next meetings will be **Monday, May 10 and Monday, June 14 at 6:30 via Zoom.**

What happened at Piney Point? Piney Point is a gypstack - a tall pile of (slightly?) radioactive phosphogypsum formed from the waste of processing fertilizer from rocks taken from nearby strip mines. It contains a 67 acre pool of acidic water that includes contaminants such as phosphorous and nitrogen. The pool suffered a leak and was in imminent danger of collapse so some of the water was released into the Tampa Bay. The Bay is now being monitored for any resulting problems such as algae blooms. For more information and updates, go to: <http://www.sierraclubfloridanews.org/2021/04/piney-point-phosphogypsum-stack.html>

Tampa PURE is the renamed **TAP** proposal to send wastewater from the Howard F Curran Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant into the aquifer and pump it into the Hillsborough River, mixing it with our drinking water supply. Tampa has hired consultants to do a scientific analysis of the proposed PURE/TAP and also an Alternatives Analysis. Friends of the River and Sierra Club are meeting with the City every 3 weeks. Tampa has included 3 scientists recommended by FOTR and 10 Alternatives will be analyzed. They will report at a City Council meeting in May – Stay TUNED.

Pesticide Application on Golf Course. Neighbors of the Babe Zaharias Golf Course contacted Sierra Club with safety concerns about application of the Dow Curfew Pesticide. We have started a conversation with a letter to the Tampa Sports Authority about adopting optimum cultural methods to reduce or eliminate the need for pesticide, and meticulously following safety guidelines when applying this toxic chemical. Ideally, this pesticide would not be needed in the future.

Trees. The Tampa Tree Advocacy Group (T-TAG) is forming. Visit their Facebook page.

Fertilizer Ordinance: Sierra Club is urging Hillsborough County to adopt a fertilizer ordinance similar to Tampa's.

Would you like to get involved in conservation? Have a topic you would like to discuss? Join our zoom meetings or ask to be included in the conservation mailing list. Contact me for further information. Nancy Stevens, Conservation Committee Chair
813-380-1668, Nancy.Stevens@Florida.sierraclub.org



MAY 15, 2021 Hands Across the Sand Virtual Event

Join us for our **2021 Hands Across the Sand LIVE** virtual ZOOM and FACE BOOK event!
We are live this year!! Hear from our founder, our organizers and others talk about what it means to join hands against fossil fuels and promote clean energy!

SATURDAY MAY 15TH at 12:00pm. Eastern standard time, USA!

Tune in and join us!

https://oceana-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tUkFJ6UUQM-UnEZ-30jwdA



Continued from Front Page: **Oh No! Phil Compton is Retiring**



Phil is leaving huge shoes to fill. He has been an invaluable leader for our State in promoting electric vehicles and buses, working to improve air quality, and leading on energy independence from fossil fuels. Phil has been a major driving force in the adoption of Ready For 100% Renewable Energy programs in more than a dozen local cities around the State, not an easy task in today's divisive political climate.



Phil has been a reasoned, passionate voice for the environment, and his work has truly made a difference. Among his many other accomplishments, we can thank Phil for the passage of local fertilizer ordinances that have greatly reduced summertime algae blooms in the Hillsborough River and Tampa Bay.



Phil has been an exemplary Sierra Club representative, always making persuasive factual and science-based presentations in his many appearances before Tampa and St. Petersburg City Councils, the Hillsborough County Commission, community organizations, and many other local governmental bodies. He has been a frequent expert guest on WMNF Community Radio and has been interviewed often by newspapers and local television stations when reporters need to consult a knowledgeable expert.



Phil will also continue his work as Chair (and Founder) of Friends of the Hillsborough River and as a member of Mayor Castor's Advisory Council on Sustainability and Resilience. Phil has promised that he will continue to stay involved with the Tampa Bay Group, working beside us to "protect" our fragile ecosystems, and we will continue to lean on Phil for his help and expertise, as we all continue our volunteer efforts to protect the environment—after he returns from a long and well-deserved vacation.

THANK YOU, PHIL COMPTON!

"It's been the honor of my life to have been able to serve you as an organizer. Phil Compton"



Tampa Summer Fertilizer Ban Kicks in June 1 - September 30!

The City of Tampa Fertilizer Ordinance regulates the use and sale of lawn and landscape fertilizers containing nitrogen and/or phosphorous. The Ordinance was enacted to reduce the potential for these nutrients to be carried into our waters with stormwater runoff.



The summer rainy season is here and the heavy rain doesn't water fertilizer in, it washes it away, right into rivers, lakes and into the Gulf. And fertilizer pollution can cause algae blooms that kill fish. That's why so many communities throughout Florida have restricted the use of lawn and landscape fertilizers from June to September.

If you want to fertilize your lawn, do it in April and early October, using a slow-release product that nourishes the grass gradually over a longer period. In summer, you can use products without nitrogen or phosphorous (look for fertilizer bags where the first two numbers are 0-0) or apply iron in late summer to green up your grass without promoting growth. Mature landscape plants – including trees, shrubs and flowers – usually don't need fertilizer. They do appreciate "good dirt," however – so adding compost to your soil is a great idea.

For information on the ban go to www.BeFloridian.com



Is “PURE” a rebranding of Toilet to Tap?

For many years, the City of Tampa has wanted to adopt a program that will allow the City Water Department to reuse treated wastewater as drinking water. Previously, they called this program, “Tampa Augmentation Project” (or ‘TAP’). Opponents called it “Toilet to Tap” because that is a description of what would have happened under TAP.

Now TAP has been rebranded under a new acronym—“PURE” (“Purify Usable Resources For the Environment”). As proposed, PURE would work like this: Wastewater from residents’ toilets, and wastewater from industrial users would be treated at the City’s wastewater treatment facility, and rather than being discharged into Tampa Bay as is presently done, the City would store the treated wastewater in the aquifer (up to 50 million gallons per day) where it would mix with other groundwater in the zone of injection.

The water would be withdrawn from a different, shallower location in the aquifer and pumped to the reservoir (upper Hillsborough River above the dam) where it would mix with other river water that accumulates in the reservoir from rainfall and runoff. Water would be withdrawn from the reservoir and treated as drinking water for potable use.

One reason that this is occurring is that there are bills pending in the Florida Legislature that would prohibit non-beneficial discharges of wastewater into any surface water bodies of the State (CB 64/HB 236). Once again, Tallahassee is pre-empting local governmental processes without considering whether or not current practices are not causing harm.

Sierra Club opposes the proposed Legislation, and locally, we are working closely with the City of Tampa to ask serious questions about the public health and safety of this proposal, not only to those of us who will drink the water, but also whether this process will cause irreparable harm to the aquifer or to wildlife. We have also pressured the City to utilize a panel of experts to study the myriad of issues presented by PURE and to study other potential uses of the wastewater, other than what the City is currently proposing.

There are many constituent components in this wastewater that are not now found in the water that is currently pulled from the reservoir for our drinking water (pharmaceuticals, PFOAs, heavy metals, hormones, increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, just to name a few).

If you want to get more involved or want to learn more, this is an issue being worked on by our Conservation Committee. Nancy Stevens is the Chair. Nancystevens909@gmail.com

Continued from Page 2: Stop plastic pollution at the source

You might be surprised on how little thought you devote to your plastic use. The straw in your water at a sit-down restaurant, your deodorant tube, extra plastic bags for your produce, and even the plastic wrap your sandwich comes in can be avoided with enough planning, or simply just asking to skip the plastic packaging. Also be aware of hidden plastics you can avoid, such as microbeads in facewash! You can also reduce your plastic usage by simply buying bulk! Instead of needing two bottles of shampoo a month, buy a larger bottle and reduce the overall packaging by only purchasing one.

Be mindful of what you are using and where it is going after you are finished with it, and look for products that use less packaging. Voting with your wallet by picking products that utilize less plastic encourages manufacturers to follow the dollars and reduce their plastic use. This is your power as a consumer!





SIERRA CLUB
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Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group

May / June 2021



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Please call (415) 977-5653 or email address.changes@sierraclub.org
Include your membership number located on the mailing label.

Tampa Bay Group
P.O. Box 1596
Thonotosassa, Florida 33592

Web:
florida.sierraclub.org/tampabay



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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES
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SUPPORTING	\$75	\$100
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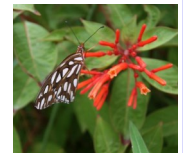
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May & June "Virtual" General Membership Meetings

Wednesday May 12, & June 9, Online Via "Zoom"
6:30 pm Online Social Time, Program at 7:00

May 12 General Meeting: Why Go Native Karina

Veaudrey, native plant landscape designer for residential and businesses will speak about how native, sustainable planting is the key to helping birds, butterflies and pollinators continue to exist in our communities.



June 9 General Meeting: Speaker on phosphate spills as just happened at Piney Point.



Attending a "virtual" Zoom meeting is easy from either your computer, tablet or smart phone. The link to our meeting can be found in our email newsletter, on our Meetup page and on the calendar of our Web Page. Simply "click" on the link and follow the online instructions. To join by phone: dial number, enter the meeting ID followed by the # sign and the 6 digit passcode (also followed by the # sign). If you need any help or have any questions please email Rocky Milburn at rocky.milburn@florida.sierraclub.org



General Outings Status: Outings continue to be on hold until after **July 4**. Outings leaders are eager to start setting up a schedule of outings for the remainder of 2021. Stay informed join our **Meetup Page** online www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Groups-of-the-Greater-Tampa-Bay-Florida-Area