



COVID-19 UP-DATE:

Sierra Club Cancels General Meetings, Programs and Outings Through August 31!

In the interests of public health and safety, all Sierra Club in-person meetings, activities and outings have been canceled through August 31. We urge our members to observe precautions from the Center for Disease Control (CDC): Avoid going out in public when possible, otherwise please wear a cloth mask over your mouth and nose and observe a minimum 6 foot “social distance” when in public, including periods of outdoor exercise.

We regret this necessary accommodation to current public health safety concerns. But the safety of our members and the general public are of paramount concern.

For more information contact Kent Bailey at kent.bailey@florida.sierraclub.org

ANNUAL JOINT MEETING: Tampa Bay Sierra Club, Suncoast Native Plant Society & Tampa Audubon Society is Going Virtual using GoToMeeting! Wednesday, July 15th at 7 pm.

This annual meeting is a great time for us to socialize with environmentalists from our sister organizations only now we will be doing this ONLINE! Details on how to join will be on our WEB site soon.

Speaker: Valerie Anderson, a geographical information science analyst

Valerie Anderson will talk about her attempt to save an area in Osceola County, Split Oak, from road development. Split Oak Preserve lies on the outskirts of Orlando’s Lake Nona community and sprawls into Osceola and Orange counties, and is home to over 700 species, 30 of which are either endangered or threatened, including the gopher tortoise, Florida scrub jay and bald eagle. In the mid-1990s, Osceola and Orange counties purchased the conservation as a mitigation bank to protect the wetlands and wildlife there.

Central Florida Expressway Authority wants to put a toll road right through it. Building a multilane toll highway through a conservation land that holds restrictive covenants - as Split Oak does through the **Preservation 2000 Program**, which protects it from developments in perpetuity is about setting a precedent. If easements meant to protect natural habitats can be infringed upon, then what conservation areas, if any, are safe?

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), which now manages the property, preserves the area by conducting prescribed burns, mechanical treatments and chemical removal of invasive species.

Map of Central Florida Expressway Authority’s preferred alignment. The green cuts through the southern tip of Split Oak. Photo: CFX



August 12 “Virtual ONLINE” Program & Membership Meeting:

When: Wednesday August 12 at 7 pm **Where:** Online thru a computer near you!

Program: To Be Determined As we develop our technical skills, we will learn how to best manage a “virtual” membership meeting. With this experience we could stream all our membership meetings online even after we go back to meeting in person! All Tampa Bay Sierra Club meetings are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Kent Bailey kent.bailey@florida.sierraclub.org

2020 Executive Committee

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Energy Chair: Bob Howell
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Ex-Com: Pat Kemp
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Other Officers & Assignments

Secretary: Linda Hugues
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Recycling Chair: Barbara Heineken

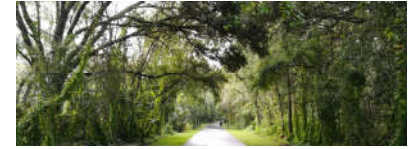
Stadium Recycling Initiative: Dave Varrieur (813) 503-6970
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Social Media Coordinator: Rob Jordan.

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Upper Tampa Bay Trail SAVED!



The Hillsborough County Commission has unanimously approved the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program (ELAPP) purchase of 5.7 acres that straddle the Upper Tampa Bay Trail. Located just south of Ehrlich Road and next to Gunn Highway, a planned apartment complex proposed to cross the Trail there with a dangerously busy driveway. If approved, this would have created a serious safety hazard for trail users and resulted in the loss of the beautiful oak canopy that shelters this section of the trail, according to Commissioner Pat Kemp. She led a 20 month fight against the proposed project and was joined by the Sierra Club, Run Tampa and a host of community activists in opposition. Following the announcement of the purchase, Commissioner Kemp was quoted in the Tampa Bay Times as saying, "I just want to say I'm thrilled about this acquisition. This is the number one park amenity in Hillsborough County - 300,000 people a year use the Upper Tampa Bay Trail." The County hopes to acquire adjacent parcels and expand the preserved area.

Hillsborough County Approves Updated Impact Fees

The Hillsborough County Board of Commissioners has voted to increase impacts fees, some of which had not been adjusted since 1985. Critics of the increased fees predict that rising costs will stifle development, slow growth and negatively impact Hillsborough's economy. However, studies have shown that there is no relationship between impact fees and growth rates. This is borne out by the fact that both Pasco and Manatee Counties, which have long had higher development fees than Hillsborough County are actually growing faster. Under Florida state law, it is virtually impossible to fully assess the full cost of development to developers because of "proportional impact". But the increased fees will allow the County to improve parks and recreation areas, upgrade streets and roads, reduce response times for first responders and make other "quality of life" improvements that do impact growth rates. The Sierra Club has always believed that development should pay for itself. The new fees are an important first step in that direction.

The Sierra Club PAC Fund Needs Your Help! Help elect environmental candidates this November. Please donate to the Sierra Club Political Action Committee (PAC). Send your check to: Sierra Club Florida PAC, c/o Max Goldstein, 220 Lakeview Drive, #305, Weston, FL 33326. For more information, contact David Harbeitner, Chapter Political Chair, davidh@suncoastsierra.org. Election laws require that you report your employment information with your donation. *Contributions to the Sierra Club Florida PAC are NOT tax-deductible*





M-CORES UPDATE: Task Force meetings for M-CORES, the three toll roads from Naples to Georgia, are set to resume in **July**. FDOT held webinars for task force members and the public in April, May, and June. The First Amendment Foundation said that the webinars violated Florida's Sunshine Law and should be canceled, especially with connection difficulties. The Sierra Club and the No Roads to Ruin Coalition continue to say that "No Build" should be an option because of probable environmental devastation.

The April webinar added Attractor Areas for consideration. Members had previously listed Avoidance Areas such as springs and watersheds, parks and forests, wildlife habitat and agricultural lands. Now they are directed to consider the needs of business, job creation, and opportunity zones.

The May webinar featured emerging technologies in transportation such as CAV, connected and automated vehicles, plus special paint and lane markers that increase bicycle and pedestrian safety (on a toll road?!). Task force members asked if current roads could be improved, if wildlife protections were built in, and if electric vehicles were considered before CAVs.

The June topic was the lack of rural broadband and the ease of installation with new construction. M-CORES budget now sets aside \$5 million annually with hopes for additional private, state and federal funding. Members asked about towers and wireless, the high cost of the toll roads, and if broadband should be a public utility. 1000 Friends of Florida wrote that while "improving and sustaining the economy of Florida's rural areas required broadband service immediately, it does not require new highways" to do that. Visit their website to learn more about M-CORES. Add your comments at FDOT.Listens@dot.state.fl.us. Call and write the governor and your legislators. Google "No Roads to Ruin" to read media coverage and visit <https://www.facebook.com/NoRoadsToRuin>.



ACTION NEEDED: Sierra Activists

Governor DeSantis has now received Florida's budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 2020. He may choose to delete items. 1000 Friends of Florida has asked everyone to contact the Governor and request the following: **Keep the \$100 million in the budget for Florida Forever land conservation.** This program is essential to protect Florida's drinking water supply and finite natural resources.

Veto the \$90 million allocated for the M-CORES toll roads. The need for these roads has never been determined, and there are higher, more pressing economic priorities for Florida.

Email: GovernorRon.DeSantis@eog.myflorida.com. **Call:** (850)-717-9337

Write: Office of Governor Ron DeSantis The Capitol 400 South Monroe St Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Public Absent From Public Hearings! Drastic changes to development rules are being pushed forward under cover of COV-19. Legally required public meetings can't be scheduled in affected communities; instead, "virtual" meetings with Developers represented are the alternative. Where are residents wearing "Stop Sprawl" t-shirts filling the BOCC meeting room? With limited notification and connectivity, how will residents be heard and seen? During the June 18th, Hillsborough County Planning Commission introducing drastic rural housing density policy option or legal massive rural sprawl, Mike Fabbro, President of the Balm Civic Association, could not speak due to technical limitations. This policy option will require the County to provide water and sewer far outside the Urban Service Area not to mention additional road and school improvements. The legal justification for substituting "virtual" for actual public meetings is doubtful and untested in the courts. We need in-person public meetings for legal public participation. What is the RUSH? These proposed changes will resonate for decades to come. Will rural area still be here?

Tampa Summer Fertilizer Ban Kicks in June 1 - September 30! The summer rainy season is here and the heavy rain doesn't water fertilizer in, it washes it away, right into rivers, lakes and the Gulf. And fertilizer pollution can cause algae blooms that kill fish. For information on the ban go to www.BeFloridian.com



Sierra Club Tampa Bay Group

July / August 2020



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Address Changes:

Please call (415) 977-5653 or email address.changes@sierraclub.org
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Membership: Join today for just \$15.00 and receive a FREE Sierra Club 1892 style Rucksack at www.sierraclub.org



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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

INDIVIDUAL JOINT

INTRODUCTORY	\$15	\$20
REGULAR	\$39	\$49
SUPPORTING	\$75	\$100
CONTRIBUTING	\$150	\$175
LIFE	\$1000	\$1250
SENIOR	\$25	\$35
STUDENT	\$25	\$35
LIMITED INCOME	\$25	\$35

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The Sierra Club Stands in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter

The Sierra Club mission is directly connected to ensuring that black lives matter. The last few weeks have been tough, and across Sierra Club Florida we are experiencing anger, heartbreak, grief and pain that our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) members, friends, partners, and communities continue to experience as a result of systemic racism, police brutality and the heightened risk from COVID-19.

The climate crisis is a product of the same economic system that dehumanized the labor of enslaved people. The industries that brought us coal mining and oil and natural gas extraction were built on racism and patriarchy. In Florida, we see that people of color, indigenous people, and low-income communities face more environmental injustice than their whiter, wealthier counterparts. These communities are often excluded from feeling safe to explore and enjoy our outdoor spaces.

Environmental issues cannot be separated from racial and social justice. We can't succeed in enlisting humanity in protecting the human and natural world while racism continues to divide us and inflict suffering. Sierra Club is on a journey to becoming a better ally and accomplice against racism. We commit to centering and uplifting the voices and experiences of BIPOC people. Please join us.

Alyssa Cadwalader - Executive Committee Chair
Frank Jackalone - Sierra Club Florida Director

Environmentalists For Black Lives Matter
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