



# Manatee-Sarasota Group Boca Sierra



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress

OCTOBER 2020

## **SPECIAL 2020 ELECTORAL EDITION**

**YOU HAVE A CHOICE AND YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

**VOTE FOR CHANGE!**

**In The General Election On November 3rd.**

- Vote by mail ballots will be sent to voters on September 24, 2020 . For both Manatee and Sarasota Counties early, in person voting will be possible starting on October 19, up until November 1, from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm. For voting locations and added details see [Sarasotavotes.com](http://Sarasotavotes.com) and [Votemanatee.com](http://Votemanatee.com).
- To Learn more about the candidates **Endorsed by the Sierra Club**. See pages 2, 3 and 4 for our endorsed Candidates and brief statements of their experience and interests. Also, **the Sierra Club is endorsing the adoption of a referendum in Manatee County**. See page 5 for details.
- If you are not satisfied with the direction that Sarasota and Manatee County is taking regarding urban sprawl in Rural Heritage Lands, traffic congestion, water pollution, overburdened infrastructure and over development, **consider voting for the Sierra Club's endorsed candidates** who can make a real difference.
- Voting in the November 3 general election is your best chance to turn things around.

***It is up to us to make change happen - VOTE either in person or by mail in the General election on November 3rd!***

***YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE IS AT STAKE***

# Sierra Club's Endorsed Candidates for 2020

## Margaret Good: Candidate for Florida Congressional District 16



Margaret Good, current Florida State Representative for District 72, is a Civil Litigation and Trial Practice Attorney, she is a longtime environmentalist who has taken her desire to protect and preserve Florida's precious natural resources to the halls of the Capitol in Tallahassee. During her short time in Tallahassee, she helped lead the charge against the Toilet to Tap bill, she opposed the loosening of dredging regulations and fought to fund Florida Forever. Margaret has pledged to conduct her public service in a transparent and accountable manner. Additional information about Margaret can be found at her website, <https://margaretgood.com>



## Matt Bower: Candidate for the Manatee County Commission, District 3

Matt Bower has been serving this country and our community since graduation from Bayshore High School beginning with seven years active duty US Army and, most recently four years on the Manatee County Planning Commission. Matt has taken on several leadership roles within various community events including rescue animals and veterans suffering from PTSD through Paws And Warriors, environmental impact events, confronting developers like Long Bar Pointe to hold them accountable thus ensuring that our environment and vital coastline is protected. Additional information about Matt can be found at his website, <https://vote4mattbower.com/>

## Alice White: Candidate for Sarasota County Commission District 5



Alice White, a stalwart conservationist, believes in sustainable growth and that impacts to natural resources and infrastructure must be considered before approving new development. She opposes the endless dismantling of protective regulations that developers have employed to dismantle the County's long-range planning. In 1997 Alice founded "People for Trees, Inc." a non-profit, native tree advocacy group to enhance the need to protect and maintain our native tree canopy. The group hosts an annual Tree Fair and the Tour de North Port bicycle ride fundraiser. Alice, former Sierra Club board member, is the recipient of many community awards for stewardship. She has drafted protective environmental ordinances that passed in North Port. She holds a teaching degree from Kean University, NJ. Additional information about Alice can be found at her website: <https://Alice4sarasota.com>

## Terry Turner: Sarasota City Commission District 2



Terry Turner is running for Sarasota City Commission because he is concerned about the legacy we pass to our children and grandchildren. Our future is at risk from divisive politics, misguided financial policies and degradation of the natural environment. Significant progress is possible at the local level by restoring the environment, combating climate change, adopting prudent financial policies and encouraging inclusive political discourse.

Terry Turner has previously served as a Sarasota City Commissioner. He supports a livable, sustainable environment, slow and controlled growth, preservation and expansion of public parks and open spaces and protection of our bays and estuaries. We are confident that Mr. Turner will work to protect our environment and insure better planning for our city, our families and our future. For more see [terryturner4sarasota.com](http://terryturner4sarasota.com)

## Sierra Club's Endorsed Candidates for 2020



**Andy Mele for Representative to the Florida House from District 71.** As an Environmental Activist for both the Sierra Club, where he served as Vice Chair and for the Suncoast Waterkeeper where he served as Executive Director, Andy Mele has watched with dismay as the Florida Legislature responded half-heartedly to crisis after crisis: overdevelopment, disastrous red tide, declining water quality, for example. They came up with virtually nothing. Working to halt the expansion of phosphate mining as it gobbled up valuable farmland, Andy fought tirelessly to stop Mosaic Company from polluting drinking water aquifers and to end the shameless excavation of the land through disposal of tailings and sludge much of which is radioactive. He is the author of numerous Op-Ed articles in local newspapers and in Sierra Club's newsletter, *The Boca Sierra*. His website is a trove of sound analyses of the environmental problems we face in Manatee and Sarasota counties, as well as ways to address them. For further information on Andy's candidacy see

<https://www.andymeleforflhouse.com/>



**BRIAN KELLY for Venice City Council Seat 2.** Brian Kelly, a passionate environmental advocate frequently appeared before Venice City Council in 2018 as the region suffered through red tide. "What really got me involved also was with Hands Along the Water, when the devastating red tide hit in 2018," said Kelly, a 40-year-old construction manager called the lack of response from elected leaders 'baffling'. "I think my message is strong and clear," Kelly said. "We need to stop what we've been doing, we need to start looking ahead to future generations — and that means more environmentally sustainable construction practices." For more about Brian visit <https://www.briankellyforvenice.com/>



**CORY HUTCHINSON for Sarasota County Commission District 3.** He has a strong environmental platform that he will work to push forward. He believes that we have many precious natural resources in Sarasota County, and we must protect them! Cory, with his M.B.A. is a Career Advisor with Sarasota County Schools, North Port, Florida. For more about Cory visit <https://demcastusa.com/2020/01/17/meet-the-candidate-cory-hutchinson-florida/>

## Sierra Club's Endorsed Candidates for 2020



**Drake Buckman is a candidate for the Florida House of Representatives, District 72.** Sierra Club Florida has endorsed Drake Buckman, candidate for FL HD 72. The red tide that devastated Sarasota in 2018 was a call to action for Drake and greatly influenced his decision to run for office. Drake has a deep knowledge and understanding of FL HD 72 and issues that are of concern to the residents of FL HD 72. Drake has lived in Sarasota for 30 years and is deeply invested in the community. He is an attorney and has a law practice in Sarasota with his wife, 2 of their children and a son-in-law. For additional information about Drake see <https://buckmanforfl.com/>



**David Fairey is a candidate for the Florida State House of Representatives District 73.** I've made a career out of standing up to governments and large corporations based on that principle. While serving on local neighborhood associations, I've witnessed the high price that many neighborhoods have paid for neglectful government. The same is true for us here in House District 73. For additional information about David see <https://www.fairey2020.com/>



**Mark Pienkos, is candidate for Sarasota County Commission, District 1.** He enjoyed a 45-year career in Education in Wisconsin working as a teacher, school counselor, associate principal, principal, and School District Superintendent. Mark has an extensive background as public servant and elected official. He was elected twice as Alderman, City of Muskego, WI, was President of the Police and Fire Commission, Lake Geneva, WI, and was President, Wisconsin School Counselors Association, and Midwest Vice President for the American School Counselor Association.

Mark is running for Sarasota County Commission because he believes that "the current Board of County Commission has stopped listening to 'all people' in most of its decisions including those concerning redistricting, land use and development, and the impact on the environment, traffic congestion, and water quality issues." To learn more about Mark Pienkos please visit <https://www.electmarkpienkos.com/>



# Sierra Club Endorsed Referendum for Manatee County

## Let Manatee County Voters Decide:

### **Citizen-led effort brings referendum on conservation and park land funding to the November ballot**

Voters in Manatee County will have a chance to vote for or against **“Water Quality Protection, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Preservation, and Park Ad Valorem Tax and Bonds”** on the November 3 ballot. Manatee County is growing fast, with developers gobbling up open spaces all over the county. While large-scale developments like Lakewood Ranch build conservation land into the overall plan, the rest of the county ends up with back to back subdivisions with little breathing space in between. Getting our elected officials to say no to development rarely happens, so purchasing those breathing spaces is the only option. A “YES” vote for this referendum authorizes a small increase to our property taxes to fund the acquisition of conservation and park land. A “NO” vote indicates lack of support for land acquisition for conservation.

**How have we bought land in the past?** Bonds have been issued for specific acquisitions such as Riverview Pointe (next to DeSoto National Memorial) and Duette Preserve. Manatee County has built successful partnerships with state and federal agencies wherein the County’s purchase of a given property has been leveraged as matching funds to compete for grants that have facilitated significant habitat restoration projects in the County. Examples over the past decade are habitat restoration projects at Perico Preserve, Neal Preserve, Robinson Preserve Expansion, Tom Bennett Park, the Perico-Robinson Connector Parcel, and Ungarelli Preserve . Johnson Preserve in East Manatee was purchased with a contribution from the Conservation Foundation and funds drawn out of the Parks and Natural Resources budget – an unsustainable source .

**What does the acquisition of conservation land buy us?** After years in the restoration process, Robinson Preserve is now 682 acres of pine scrub, ponds and sandy flats full of crustaceans, where shorebirds feed frequently. The land is laced with trails for walking and bicycling with water trails for kayaks Emerson Preserve has 3 miles of land trails and kayak access to Terra Ceia Preserve, a shallow estuary with sharks, rays and an Audubon rookery island. Another example is Duette Preserve in East County, where 21,000 acres of upland woods and scrub provide habitat for birds such as the endangered scrub jay, while protecting the headwaters of the Manatee River for our drinking water supply. Sometimes the highest use for a piece of land comes from it just being there.

**Over 25 counties in Florida** have some kind of sales or property tax dedicated to the acquisition of conservation or park land. Sarasota County has protected over 35,000 acres with bond issues passed in 1999 and 2005. Acquisition is governed by an Oversight Committee and the Parks Advisory and Recreation Council. Hillsborough County approved its first ordinance in 1987, providing over \$21 million over 4 years to acquire conservation land, with voters approving subsequent referendums on bond issues in 1990, 1992, and 2008. This citizen-led effort has acquired over 60,000 acres for conservation in 30 years Pinellas County approved its first referendum called the Parkland Acquisition Fund in 1972, with additional referendums in 2007 and 2017. The “Penny for Pinellas” sales tax has helped implement the Comprehensive Plan, calling for some lands to be acquired for a preservation category. Shell Key, a popular destination for boaters, was acquired using these funds. **Article continued on Page 6**

### **Let Manatee County Voters Decide — Article cont'd from page 5**

Manatee County is now decades behind. As development stretches east, no new acquisitions are planned, leaving residents driving through heavy beach-bound traffic to reach existing preserves. Planners recommend a certain amount of open land be set aside for every resident Manatee County has. A sales tax measure made it to the ballot in 2004, losing by a small margin. Fortunately, some private citizens have come together recently with the belief it was time for voters to look again at this issue.

The result is a bond referendum proposed for the November ballot for the purpose of raising funds dedicated to the acquisition and management of conservation and park lands in Manatee County. Purposefully, there are no specific parcels targeted for purchase. If passed, the task of identifying priorities for acquisition will lie with county Parks and Natural Resources staff and the existing Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Advisory Committee (ELMAAC), citizen volunteers nominated by their District Commissioner. The Board of County Commissioners is placing this referendum on the ballot to determine voter support for up to 0.15 mil increase in property taxes (about \$29/household/year for 20 years) to finance a bond issue for up to \$50 million for the purpose of land acquisition and management for conservation and parks. If the voters say yes, the Commission then moves to add the millage to property taxes. If the Commission decides they need less money, the millage could also be less.

This is an idea whose time has come. The Sierra Club urges you to VOTE in the November election and that you vote in favor of the **“Water Quality Protection, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Preservation, and Park Ad Valorem Tax and Bonds”**.

If you have questions, please contact Marsha Wikle [mw121150@gmail.com](mailto:mw121150@gmail.com). For more information see: <http://www.voteformwaterandland.org/>