

Bios for Executive Committee Candidates

Tampa Bay Sierra Club

1. Gary A. Gibbons (Incumbent)

I am a native Floridian; I was born in Tampa and now live in St. Pete, moving to higher ground because of sea level rise. At an early age, I learned to love and respect the woods and the Gulf and our amazing rivers. I'm deeply concerned with the degradation of our springs and water quality throughout Florida. Growing up I enjoyed our beautiful Gulf and rivers; hiking in the woods and swimming in Crystal River. I want to work to restore and protect our precious resources, wetlands, and watersheds before it is too late.

I am a semi-retired attorney. In my spare time, I like to stand-up paddle board, kayak, hike, fish, and take nature photographs. I am a certified Outings Leader for Sierra Club and love leading Outings and inspiring others to get active in protecting our fragile ecosystem.

I now serve on the ExCom of the Tampa Bay Sierra Club as the Membership and Vice Chair and on the Political Committee, interviewing political candidates for local elections. With that information we are able to endorse candidates who will work to protect the environment in every decision they make.

2. Christopher Gleason (Incumbent)

I am currently serving on the **Ex-Com** and seeking a second term to continue the work that I have seen from my seat the last two years. I first become active with the Tampa Bay Group in the Conservation Committee, and with my extreme interest become **Transportation Chair** for the last couple years.

Since the 2018 election cycle I have been part of the **Political Committee** with our main focus being endorsements. Conservation of lands, transit for all, and electing like-minded officials are my most ardent endeavors for the future.

3. Barbara Heineken

Barbara has been working in the recycling and solid waste world for over 40 years. She was the City of Tampa's first recycling coordinator and implemented many programs in the city over an 18-year period, including the stadium recycling program. Early on she brought Sierra Club in to volunteer with the program, which has been one of the club's biggest fundraisers. Barbara is known throughout FL for her expertise in recycling and is passionate about reducing waste and educating people about the importance of it.

Barbara moved to FL in 1989 and got involved with Sierra Club in the early 90's. She is a trained outings leader and has been involved with the ICO program for the past 5 years. She loves exposing adults and kids to the many outdoor activities we have here in FL. She can't wait to be able to get everyone out on the trail again!

4. Tom Krumreich

I have been involved with political and environmental activism for many years. From 1994 – 1999 I was the phone canvas crew manager for the Citizen's Action Coalition in Indianapolis, IN. My crew and I won numerous awards for our lobbying efforts.

In 1999 I moved to Florida and worked as general office manager and phone canvass director for the Florida Consumer Action Network, where I trained and managed a nationally recognized bank of grass-roots fundraising phone canvassers.

Since 2012 I have become involved with the Florida Sierra Club and have worked on many campaigns including education, tabling, and phone banks. Recently, for the Sierra Club Independent Action group, I helped to create a list of over one million likely Biden/Harris voters who we are now contacting to confirm their plans to vote.

In 2014 my work for the Tampa Bay Sierra Club was recognized with the Black Bear Award, their highest recognition for service. I believe my many years of political organizing and educating the public for Sierra Club and other non-profit lobbying groups qualify me for consideration to join the Florida Sierra Club ExComm.

5. Don Kruse (Incumbent)

A third generation Floridian and a lifelong Tampa resident, active in the Tampa Bay community, I am proud to have served as the 2012 event chair for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life in Town 'N' Country. I am a past president of the board of directors for Wheels of Success, a non-profit which provides help for needy individuals and families. I also served on the board of The Nominating Committee of the Tampa Bay Sierra Club Group presents the 2017-2018 Executive Committee (Ex-Com) Candidates for election. Director of the Veterans Day Parade Group of Tampa.

I have always tried to lead by example. I joined the Sierra Club Growth Management team in 2012 to stay abreast on growth in our community and do what I can to help guide it in the right direction.

6. Michael Newett

I've probably always been an environmentalist. When I owned a farm in Indiana, I chaired a County Group we started called the Porter County Wildlife Management to monitor deer and other local wildlife issues. I learned a lot.

I have been involved with Sierra Club since my arrival in Florida 11 years ago, and have served on ExCom, tabled at hundreds of events, given numerous presentations, served as treasurer, helped put on seasonal events, participated with Dave Varrieur and the Raymond James Recycling initiative, managed the Conservation Committee, worked with community outreach, and tried to be a good participating member to the Group, and an advocate for local environmental issues, according to Sierra Club National Guidelines.

I am asking for your vote to rejoin the Executive Committee and help Rocky and the Team manage the myriad of issues which will follow the Covid pandemic, address many of the community related opportunities which may surface, and help members and potential members understand the meaning of "explore, enjoy, and protect the planet".

7. Steve Newhouse

I grew up in Queens, NY, and moved to Florida in 1975 to attend USF. During college I enjoyed swimming and snorkeling in the state's springs and canoeing its rivers. I learned more about the state's aquifer and water supply system through workshops and volunteer work with Michael Mullins, Hillsborough County Schools' Environmental Education Supervisor, and through eco-tour paddling trips on local rivers.

I've been a member of our local chapter since 2015. I have attended Sierra club monthly meetings regularly and participated in many Sierra Club events and outings, including: Earth Day river cleanup and bird walk, anti-fracking and TECO demonstrations, the Raymond James stadium recycling effort, and solar seminars.

I have found my recreational enjoyment has combined with a great feeling for conservation. The preservation of the springs and our public lands is not only for recreation, but critical to our quality of life. But there are so many issues that threaten our state's environment, as a member of the Sierra Club and serving on the ExCom, I believe I can help make a difference.

8. Walter L. Smith II

Walter L. Smith, II is a community advocate, political analyst, radio talk show personality, instructor and twenty-year veteran in the field of environmental engineering, land use, and impact.

Mr. Smith has a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Florida A&M University and a master's degree in Africana Studies from the University of South Florida. Early in his career he worked at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District. He later worked as a private consultant on due diligence assessments, environmental impact analyses, and community revitalization projects.

In the Environmental Safety field, Mr. Smith has trained and certified hundreds of people for OSHA, ISO, ASTM, and MSHA standards. More recently he has worked to create jobs and educate people on employees' rights and Public health. He was the Team Leader in charge of two FEMA teams assigned to assist the victims of Hurricane Matthew.

He is active on community boards, social media, video broadcasts and his two-hour weekly public relations radio show, "The Sunday Forum," on WMNF-88.5FM. He is currently leading the Tampa-Hillsborough Disaster Resilience Initiative with Organize Florida.

9. Barbara Toepke

As a member of the Conservation committee for two years I've learned about local issues with water, trees, and transportation, and have spoken at BOCC and HART meetings. This past year I attended eight MCORES task force meetings in person or virtually, spoke and wrote letters, and sent local reports. I've seen the wisdom and experience of our local leaders in action at board meetings, outings, and at membership meetings, and look forward to joining them.