

Stay in Touch

Here are ways you can connect online with Sierra Club Florida:

1) To opt-in to the Pelican newsletter by e-mail, go to florida.sierraclub.org and look for SIGN UP FOR THE FL NEWSLETTER on the right side of the home page.

2) Click LIKE to become a Facebook fan of Sierra Club Florida at www.facebook.com/sierraclubfl

3) Follow @SierraClubFL on Twitter at www.twitter.org/sierraclubfl

Pelican is Going Digital, Are You?

Starting in 2023, Sierra Club Florida is transitioning to a stronger digital communications strategy which includes distributing this quarterly newsletter by e-mail. By moving to digital, we will dramatically reduce our carbon footprint, save trees, and increase our important outreach efforts.

If you already receive e-mails from Sierra Club, you are signed up. If not, just go to sierraclub.org/florida and look for Sign Up for the FL Newsletter on the right side.

Members who did not provide an e-mail on their membership forms, or are not sure, should contact our Member Care department at member.care@sierraclub.org to provide or update your e-mail. (Your member number is the last line in the address label on this newsletter.)

Those who requested "No Contact" on their membership forms will not receive e-mails.



florida.sierraclub.org

The Pelican

Newsletter of Sierra Club Florida



INSIDE: ELECTION ENDORSEMENTS

Sierra Club Picks: Governor

Charlie Crist Environmental Champion

BY LUIGI GUADARRAMA
Sierra Florida Political Director

Sierra Club is proud to endorse Charlie Crist to be the next Governor of Florida. The why is pretty simple: Charlie Crist is far and away the best choice to protect Florida's environment and communities. When he was Governor from 2007 to 2011, he created a climate task force and set ambitious emissions goals for the state; more recently as a Congressman he was a vocal champion for the environment, and helped protect our coasts from offshore drilling. As a candidate and citizen he has always advocated for clean water and clean air.

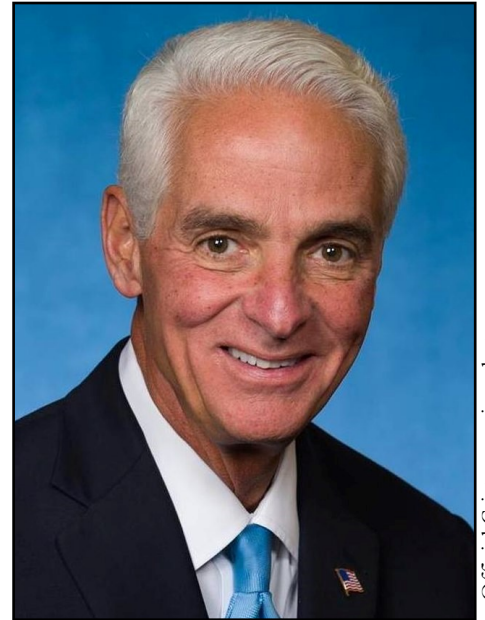
His record speaks for itself.

The current Governor on the other hand, can't even mention the ongoing climate crisis. He's failed to stop the poisoning of our water in the multiple ongoing algal bloom crises, failed to address the property insurance crisis plaguing homeowners, and failed to hold Florida Power & Light and other dark money groups accountable for interfering in our elections. Ron DeSantis' legacy is failure.

Don't vote for failure. Vote for Charlie Crist.

If you're wondering what you can do to help, here's what we need from you.

First, vote. Second, *vote*. There is no more important activity than making your voice



Official Crist campaign photo

heard. I don't need to remind you about what's at stake here. Clean air. Clean water. A free and fair Florida. We're all proud to keep this beautiful state home, now we need to work to keep it that way.

Third, reach out to your local political committee and sign up to help the cause. There are 14,395,000 registered voters in Florida, and that number grows day by day. If we want to stand a chance at reaching out to everyone, *we need you*. Reach out to me at luigi.guadarrama@sierraclub.org and we'll get you signed up.

Fourth, donate to our Sierra Club Florida Political Action Committee at sierraclub.org/florida/florida-political-program

Reaching out to those 14 million voters isn't cheap, and we need more help.

So make sure you vote, volunteer, and donate so that we can dethrone Ron DeSantis. Let's finish strong!





Outings Leader Weekend on Tap

All current outings leaders and anyone wanting to learn more about becoming a certified outings leader for Sierra Club is invited to a weekend of learning, discussion and camaraderie October 28-30 at Myakka State Park in Sarasota. We'll be camping at a primitive group campsite, but sites with electricity and cabins can be arranged.

We'll have roundtable discussions and short workshops on topics such as training, first aide and new tools to help build and grow the Sierra Club Outings Program, including Inspiring Connections Outdoors, our youth outing program, and Military Outings.

Come and bring your ideas; you'll leave the weekend gathering inspired to start or grow new and innovative outdoor programs where you live.

To sign up or for more information, go online to tinyurl.com/ybvamtvj Cost is \$5 per person per night. Each person is responsible for their own food and camping gear.



Call for Chapter Award Nominations

The Florida Awards Committee is seeking nominations for Chapter Awards. Do you know someone who has done exemplary work on an issue of critical importance for the club? Awards recognize outstanding effort and achievement in activism, group leadership, educating the public, tackling a conservation issue and much more.

Club members and supporting community-at-large are eligible to be nominated. All nominations must be approved and submitted by your local Group.

To learn more and find nomination forms, go to sierraclub.org/florida/awards-recognitions. To find your group, check out sierraclub.org/florida/groups.

Deadline is November 1, 2022.

Call for Candidates: Are You Ready for a Leadership Role?

Do you have the passion, background, and dedication to make a good Chapter Executive Committee member? Three of seven Florida ExCom seats are up for election in December. If you're interested in serving a two-year term, please send an e-mail to SierraClub.Florida.NomCom@gmail.com to find out how to become a candidate.

Deadline to submit your nomination is **October 31**.

Interested in serving on or working with a state-level committee other than the Executive Committee? We're always on the lookout for new teammates for Chapter Committees including Political; Conservation; Equity, Inclusion, and Justice; Energy; Everglades; Group Empowerment; Legal; Nominating; and Outings.

Please send an email to the address above to find out more.

Candidates should be willing to dedicate a number of hours each month and be able to communicate comfortably via computer. The Florida ExCom meets four times a year, with phone and Zoom meetings as needed to make decisions on issues of importance.

For more information, contact Mary-Slater Linn by Oct. 31: sierraclub01@yahoo.com or call/text 407-701-6475.

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Marcia Biggs, Editor

To subscribe for e-mail delivery of The Pelican, go to www.florida.sierraclub.org and look for Sign Up for the FL Newsletter on the right side of the home page.

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Sierra Club Florida Executive Committee

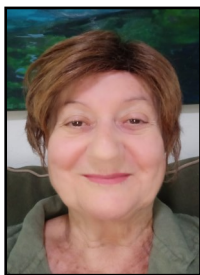
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Craig Diamond, Big Bend Group, Vice-Chair
Debbie Matthews, Miami Group
James Scott, Suncoast Group
Erica Hall, Suncoast Group
Christina Hammond, Loxahatchee Group
Karen Freedman, Ancient Islands Group

Florida Outings Leaders Receive National Awards

BY RON HAINES

Two Sierra Club Florida leaders were honored by the National Sierra Club during the annual awards ceremony in September. Other Floridians among the 30 people nationwide receiving honors this year were a Broward County Commissioner, a Dunnellon musician/activist, and a St. Petersburg journalist.

Maryvonne Devensky of the Suwannee-St. Johns Group received the Madelyn Pyeatt Outdoors for All Award, which honors volunteers who have worked proactively to make outings more accessible and more inclusive for persons of any age. It is named after the founder of the Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO) program.



She founded the ICO program for the Suwannee-St Johns Group in 2010 and she has been head of it ever since, except for a couple years when she slacked off to become chair of the whole group! Maryvonne has quietly and capably managed the challenges of recruiting volunteers, training outings leaders, garnering fundraising efforts and developing age-appropriate programming.

Even a pandemic didn't slow her down. During Covid she continued to her work with Zoom meetings with her volunteer leaders and her team launched an Instagram campaign for outreach to younger audiences about the ICO program.

Maryvonne is a kind and generous person, whose ability to remain calm has helped her to be a great outings leader as well as a great leader to her group at large. And she has touched the lives of countless children through her passionate work.

Rocky Milburn of Tampa Bay Group was given the Club's Outings for Action Award, which honors volunteers who combine outings with education

and/or advocacy work to connect people to environmental issues.

For 20 years he has devoted countless volunteer hours to sharing his passion and knowledge of the natural world through hands-on introductions to hundreds of children in the ICO program who might never have otherwise experienced the great outdoors.

Of the youth, he says, "Kids who come face to face with the wilderness learn to love it — and then they learn to protect it."

His adult outings are often combined with a land-use or development issue. Rocky believes that taking adults out to look at the area which is being threatened is the best way to motivate them to advocate to preserve and protect it.



Rocky is also chair of the Tampa Bay Group and a member of the Sierra Club's National Youth Leader Advisory Council.

Other Floridians receiving national awards were:

Broward County Commissioner Beam Furr received an Environmental Service Award, which honors persons in public service for strong and consistent commitment to the environment and/or environmental justice.

As an elected official, Commissioner Furr works for the future, a healthy environment, public transportation, developing policies that promote the reduction of carbon emissions, increasing clean energy options and the well-being of the next generation.

He established the Resilience Dashboard, an online tool that represents a shared approach for a changing climate. This is a story map to illustrate approaches Broward County and its municipalities can take to mitigate climate change and strengthen the resilience of the community to its impacts.

He also sponsored a successful move to restrict the distribution, sale, and use of expanded polystyrene foam items and single-use plastic straws on County properties - including parks, airport terminals, and cruise ship terminals.

Dunnellon activist/musician Dane Myers received the Ansel Adams Award – Film, given for superlative use of film or video to further an environmental cause.

Dane's powerful "rap-umentary," *Clouds of Different Colors* has become a valuable tool for citizen activists fighting unnecessary sugarcane burning harmful to communities in South Florida.

He worked for a year on the project, visiting the area and collaborating with leaders of the Stop the Burn-Go Green Campaign, a grassroots environmental justice campaign to replace pre-harvest sugar field burning with modern, sustainable, burn-free green harvesting.

Craig Pittman of St. Petersburg received the Rachel Carson Award for Excellence in Environmental Writing or Journalism, which recognizes journalists or authors whose work has contributed to a better understanding of environmental issues.

Craig is a Florida native and an award-winning environmental reporter and book author. His career included 22 years at the Tampa Bay Times, and continues today as a columnist for Florida Phoenix, a non-profit, online news organization covering state government and politics.

Craig has covered a myriad of events affecting the state and authored investigative reports on a wide array of topics, including the Florida panther, manatees, hurricanes, offshore drilling, wetlands, water wars, Everglades restoration and climate change.

His books include *Paving Paradise: Florida's Vanishing Wetlands and the Failure of No Net Loss* in 2009, *Manatee Insanity: Inside the War Over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species* in 2010, *The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid* in 2012, and *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther* in 2020.



2022 SIERRA CLUB ENDORSEMENTS

Florida Chapter supports the following candidates for the November elections.

GOVERNOR

Charlie Crist

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Adam Hattersley

U.S. CONGRESS

DISTRICT CANDIDATE

2	Al Lawson
9	Darren Soto
10	Maxwell Alejandro Frost
13	Eric Lynn
14	Kathy Castor
22	Lois Frankel
23	Jared Moskowitz
24	Frederica Wilson
25	Debbie Wasserman-Schultz
27	Annette Taddeo

Paid for by Sierra Club Independent Action, www.sierraclubindependentaction.org, and not authorized by an candidate or candidates committee.

FLORIDA SENATE

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CANDIDATE</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CANDIDATE</u>
3	Loranne Ausley	18	Eunic Ortiz
10	Joy Goff Marcil	26	Lori Berman
14	Janet Cruz	30	Tina Polsky
16	Darryl Rouson	36	Raquel Pacheco
17	Linda Stewart	38	Janelle Perez

FLORIDA HOUSE

<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CANDIDATE</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>CANDIDATE</u>
21	Yvonne Hinson	69	Andrew Learned
33	Anthony Yantz	92	Kelly Skidmore
37	Carlos Guillermo Smith	94	Terence Davis
39	Tiffany Hughes	96	Dan Daley
42	Anna Eskamani	100	Linda Thompson Gonzalez
58	Bernie Fensterwald	101	Hillary Cassell
60	Lindsay Cross	103	Robin Bartleman
61	Janet Varnell Warwick	105	Marie Woodson
62	Michele Raynor	114	Adam Benna
67	Fentrice Driskell	120	Adam Gentle

Paid political advertisement paid for by the Sierra Club Florida PAC, 28 W. Flagler St., Suite 300, Miami FL 33130 independently of any candidate. This advertisement was not approved by any candidate.

To find endorsements in local races: sierraclub.org/florida/florida-sierra-club-political-endorsements-list

Rep. Carlos Smith deserves re-election in HD-37

As many of you know, Rep. Carlos G. Smith has been one of our strongest environmental champions in the state legislature, and he needs our help to get reelected! Rep. Smith is currently running for reelection in State House District 37 against Susan Placencia.

While Carlos is a strong and formidable candidate, don't let your guard down. His opponent this round is a significant threat



in a year where we simply can't afford to lose a single seat, and much less a legislator like Rep. Smith. As far back as we can remember, Rep. Smith has been a consistent and vocal vote for the environment, always notching the highest possible scores on his record. In times like these

we have to have the back of environmental champions. If we want them to do their job, we have to do ours.



Photo/Wikipedia

V SIGNS OF VICTORY

In the autumn of 2021, four potential routes of the Northern Turnpike Extension were announced. After almost a full year of historic levels of organizing across Citrus, Levy, Marion, and Sumter counties, and the adoption of “No Build” resolutions by Levy County Commission, Citrus County Commission, Dunnellon City Council, Inverness City Council, Inglis Town Commission, Yankeetown Council, and Bronson Town Council, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) announced on August 4, 2022, that it was pausing the project due to its failure to identify any viable corridor.

Thousands of “NO BUILD” Sierra Club members and community supporters from across the four counties celebrated this major victory. The unnecessary toll road would have negatively impacted rural communities, displaced wildlife and threatened north central Florida’s water resources, encouraging sprawl and affecting many lives forever.

The No Roads to Ruin Steering Committee, spearheaded by Florida Sierra Organizing Manager Cris Costello, worked with powerhouse Sierra Organizer Michael McGrath, diligently organizing rallies, writing press releases and posting social media, attending public meetings and sign waving, and galvanizing support from landowners, small businesses, ally groups and organizations, who showed up to let their voices be heard.

The “NO BUILD” rallying cry was loud and clear.

The No Roads to Ruin Steering Committee is in the process of requesting information from FDOT to provide greater clarity on the true nature of the “pause.” When we get details from FDOT, we will share them. For now, 2022 and onward, our mantra will continue to be “no new toll roads in rural Florida.”

Here’s a look back at the campaign.



Sierra Organizer Michael McGrath, center, motions during a victory rally in September. Photos below show supporters from across Levy, Citrus, Marion and Sumter counties at various events.



Photos provided by Michael McGrath/Sierra Club



Stop The Burn-Go Green Wins Big With Music Video

The Sierra Club Belle Glade office was the venue for an historic event on August 21, when the Stop The Burn-Go Green Campaign held an award ceremony to honor Dunnellon musician Dane Myers for winning the National Sierra Club's Ansel Adams Film Award.

Sierra Club works with local activists in the Glades to stop the toxic, racist, outdated practice of pre-harvest sugar field burning in South Florida.

The award was in recognition for Myers' "rap-umentary" titled "Clouds of Different Colors," which tells the powerful truth of the injustice inflicted on those living in and near the Everglades Agricultural Area by both South Florida sugar growers and the elected officials complicit in the injustice.

"This video should make you angry. It's clever and artistic, but the truths told will horrify you," said Sierra Club Florida Director Emily Gorman. "Sugar cane field burning is poisoning the Glades communities while officials claim profits are more important than lives. Dane Myers used his art to amplify Glades resident voices demanding the same consideration already afforded to their neighboring communities – clean, safe, healthy air."

After Gorman and campaign leader Kina Phillips presented the award to Myers, campaign leader Steve Messam moderated a panel discussion featuring Myers and Kina Phillips and Kil'Mari Phillips (both featured in "Clouds of Different



Dane Myers, center, receives his national Sierra Club award from Florida Chapter Director Emily Gorman and Stop The Burn-Go Green Sierra Club Organizer Patrick Ferguson. /Photo by Chris Felton of Perfect-Shot Photos

Colors."

The panelists discussed the impacts of the nearly 5-minute video to date, both on themselves and the campaign, including the historic momentum the campaign has garnered since the release of the rap-umentary last April.

* * *

To see the video and read lyrics for Clouds of Different Colors go to: danemyers.com/clouds/ or search for it on YouTube.com

What is Sugar Field Burning?

Pre-harvest sugar field burning is a toxic and outdated harvesting practice that takes place every year from October through May over the approximately 400,000 acres of sugarcane fields in and around the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA).

Farmers burn sugarcane crops before harvest to remove the leaves and tops of the sugarcane plant leaving only the sugar-bearing stalk to be harvested. This unnecessary harvesting practice negatively impacts the health, quality of life, and economic opportunity of residents living in and around the EAA.

Discriminatory burn regulations based on wind direction ensure more affluent communities to the east are spared when the wind blows their way, while residents in and around the Glades (predominantly lower-income communities of color) remain unprotected from the smoke and ash — when the wind blows toward them, burning permits are granted.

The Stop the Burn Campaign works to replace pre-harvest sugar field burning with modern, sustainable, burn-free green harvesting.

For more information
StopSugarBurning.org

Sugar field burning overwhelms neighborhoods, schools, and businesses and affects the health of those living in the nearby communities.

Photo by Patrick Ferguson



The **Adventure Coast Group** has been working hard to designate the **Weeki Wachee River** in Hernando County as a Spring Protection Zone (SPZ). The river is in rapid decline with loss of sand bars due to visitor standing and anchoring. A contractor was recently halted after beginning a dredge process when water quality along the spring-fed river suffered.

The SPZ designation will authorize marking off damaged areas for no access or anchoring while the restoration is underway. The Florida Wildlife and Conservation Commission has been holding public hearings and will require a management plan for implementation and enforcing new watercraft restrictions. A decision is expected this fall.

The adjacent **Weeki Wachee Preserve** is also being monitored as an area of concern since a public recreational swimming area has been proposed for an abandoned mine pit.

Toxic Bus Tour No. 4: Kickin' Coal Ash took place Sept. 24 in Hillsborough County led by Sierra Club Beyond Coal Organizer Walter L. Smith II. The tours aim to show Tampa Bay residents the danger of coal ash coming from power utilities like Tampa Electric Co., making people in frontline communities sick. The tours give residents important information on burning fossil fuels, and the environmental and economic burdens associated and what they can do to create change.

Florida Chapter and the **Suwannee-St. Johns Group** are hosting **Energize Alachua**, an expo with energy saving information, demonstrations and activities to help reduce electricity costs and increase efficiency. Set for 11 am to 3 pm November 12 at Santa Fe College Blount Center in Gainesville, the fair will provide info on how to reduce your energy costs, finance solar power for your home, and take advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act. A Career Fair



Trail Named for Kent Bailey

A trail at the Lower Green Swamp Preserve in South Hillsborough County was dedicated to late Tampa Bay Sierra Club Chair and conservation activist Kent Bailey on September 18.

The ceremony unveiling the bronze trail marker brought dozens of Sierra members, supporters, county park staff and political officials together in a tribute to Bailey, who was recognized for his diligent work to save the 3,000-acre property as a nature preserve through a county environmental land acquisition program.

The land serves as a critical recharge area for the Floridan Aquifer and feeds the Hillsborough River, a main source of drinking water.



will address clean energy jobs, how to start a clean energy business, and entering the clean energy economy.

For more information or to partner with the event, contact Jyoti Parmar at jyoti.parmar@sierraclub.org, (908) 720-6584.

Did you know: With passage of the Inflation Reduction Act there is now federal assistance for certain income levels to fund the transition to renewable energy, electric vehicles and increase energy efficiency in homes.



The Northeast Florida Group schedules several hikes monthly.
sierraclub.org/florida/northeast-florida

Sierra Club Florida
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and include your membership ID
number located on the mailing label.

Email changes can be made at
member.care@sierraclub.org

Sierra Webinar Series Offers Conservation Updates

Over the last several months, the Conservation Committee has been putting on educational webinars for some of Florida's iconic species. The first webinar was a presentation from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Committee on the status of the Florida manatee. The second webinar was a presentation by the Save the Manatee Club and the Center for Biological Diversity on their view of the status of the manatee.

The next webinar was a presentation by The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on the status of the Florida panther followed by a webinar from staff of the Southwest Conservancy regarding their view of the status of the manatee.

Most of these webinars are available on YouTube. Search for Florida Sierra Club Educational Webinar. Over the next several months the Conservation Committee hopes to have educational webinars on the status of the gopher tortoise and the Florida Wildlife Corridor.

Watch the Chapter Facebook page at www.facebook.com/sierraclubfl for updates or contact Conservation Chair Grant Gelhardt at grant.gelhardt@florida.sierraclub.org for more information.

