



Winter 2019

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SIERRA CLUB

FLORIDA CHAPTER

The Pelican Sierra Club Florida



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF SIERRA CLUB

INSIDE: TRIBUTE TO SIERRA CLUB'S WHITEY MARKLE

Sierra Together: We Are Powerful

Wonder what's going on around the state in Florida Sierra Club? Sometimes we lose sight of the big picture. We feel like one tree in a forest, small and reaching for the sunlight, perhaps not realizing that we are surrounded by an army of other trees, with roots in the ground, all striving upwards to reach the sky.

Treehugger analogy aside, Sierra Club continues now more than ever to reach out to others, to invite everyone to work together to make change for the better. As opposed to those who wish to divide us, we feel that through the power of people working together, we can and do make positive change for the earth and its people.

With the help of more than 3.5 million members and supporters (more than 30,000 here in Florida), we are the largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization in the US.

What have we been doing? From organizing against polluting power plants to protecting public lands and wildlife, we continue to work diligently to do the right thing ... to support those who run for political office who get it—who realize we only have one planet and we need to protect it now, before it's too late. We rally to show our leaders and the public that it's not too late, we demand action now. We hold meetings and programs and outings to increase awareness of issues that concern us to young people, poor people, our business and political leaders.

It's easy to sit on the sidelines, and for some of us, it's not an option to get involved. But for



Sierra Club members work with the community to make positive change for the health of our land, water, air and wildlife.



others, we encourage you take that first step to getting involved. Check your local group's Facebook and Meetup pages, visit their web site, show up at a hike, a meeting, or go to your county commission meeting. Find new friends and a new passion to life. Sierra Club is ready.

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

ALYSSA CADWALADER



As the end of the year approaches, we reflect back on another year of fighting back to protect our beloved state from environmental degradation and the catastrophe of climate change. This year the Chapter's Conservation Committee formed three working groups to address challenges across the state. The groups focused on water quality, growth management, and ending single-use plastics. The Conservation Committee, unified with Sierra Club organizers working in Florida, fought and continue to fight M-CORES (Multiuse Corridors of Regional Economic Significance) passed by the legislature earlier this year. These "Roads to Ruin" would build three new toll roads into undeveloped parts of northern, central, and southwest Florida. Stay tuned for how you can help with this fight as we move into the new year.

In the second half of this year, the Florida Chapter chartered a new energy committee with members representing volunteers from different areas of the state, as well as Sierra Club staff working on energy campaigns in the state. The mission of the committee is to develop and implement strategies to move Florida towards a 100% clean energy and 100% clean transportation future. Successes this year included convincing the state Department of Transportation to direct money from the Volkswagen settlement to more electric buses instead of dirty diesel, as well as the addition of Satellite Beach, Safety Harbor, South Miami and Tallahassee to the list of cities in Florida committing to 100% Clean Energy.

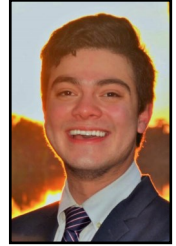
Just recently, the Florida Chapter also marked the passing of Whitey Markle, a chapter executive committee member and one of Florida's staunchest and most successful environmental activists. Shortly before his passing, Whitey was recognized with an award from the national Sierra Club in Oakland for his conservation work.

There were many ups and downs this year, there are many challenges still to come. With your help, we can beat the challenges ahead in 2020! From our Sierra Club Florida family to yours, we wish you a very happy and healthy holiday season and new year!

Meet the Staff

Florida Chapter welcomes two new staffers, who will share duties working on water quality issues and land/habitat conservation:

Herman Younger will be based in Gainesville to focus on North Florida. He was born in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and emigrated to Miami at the age of 6 and is a fluent Spanish speaker. Herman has a BA in political science and philosophy with a concentration in ethics and moral law. His background is in federal campaign elections, labor union organizing, and civil rights activism. herman.younger@sierraclub.org



Michael McGrath will be working as an organizer to help improve water quality and protect critical habitats across the South Florida region and will be based out of Fort Myers. He brings a background in movement and political organizing having worked for a regional land trust on conservation projects in Massachusetts and on a variety of campaigns and community efforts in Ohio that address issues such as immigration, criminal justice, food justice and sustainable agriculture. michael.mcgrath@sierraclub.org



The Pelican, Vol. 52 No. 3

Marcia Biggs, Editor

The Pelican is published by Sierra Club Florida and mailed to Sierra Club Florida members. Annual membership dues include the Pelican newsletter. Address all inquiries to Sierra Club Florida, 1990 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg, Florida 33712 or e-mail marcia.biggs@florida.sierraclub.org

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Grant Gelhardt, Big Bend Group
Stephen Mahoney, Miami Group
Rocky Milburn, Tampa Bay Group
Daniel Marien, Turtle Coast Group

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New Sierra Campaign Targets Plastic Shopping Bags

By Maryvonne Devensky

The State of Florida does not allow cities and counties to ban single-use plastic (SUP) bags. This state decision is allowing a lot more plastic bags to be used every day (about 160,000 bags a day). Many states and even other countries have passed laws to ban SUP bags. Plastic bags are petroleum based. Any reduction in plastic production means a reduction of fracked gas being used, less waste in the landfills, less pollution in communities where plastic chemical plants are based. So we need to take action!

While we wait for the Florida government to act, we hope to encourage businesses to voluntarily eliminate single-use plastic bags in their checkout aisles. Florida Sierra Club's Single-Use Plastics Working Group, led by Janet Stanko, chair of the Northeast Florida group, has spent the summer months planning this campaign. The goal: Get Publix supermarkets to stop distributing SUP bags at their checkout, and promote the use of reusable bags.

But this campaign will not be successful without the support of our groups and members around the state. As a member of the Suwannee St Johns group, I volunteered to assist the committee to ask all group chairs/conservation chairs to find a contact person who would be in charge of leading the local effort. Are you interested in being a part of the exciting campaign in your community?

In order to be successful, this campaign must involve all the Florida Sierra Club groups and other "sister" environmental organizations. We know that some of you have worked on a similar statewide campaign a few years back without success. Yet we are at a critical point:

- We need to reduce plastic production derived from oil and fracked gas, sources of greenhouse gas emissions.
- Plastic bags are not biodegradable. Marine debris has impacted over 600 species of wildlife, and scientists estimate that over 200,000 tons of plastic particles are floating in our oceans.
- We need to reduce waste. In 2015, it was estimated that 8,300 million metric tons of plastic has been produced and only 9% was recycled.

The problem with plastics has reached a critical mass tipping point in our country. Single use plastics from soda and juice bottles to plastic shopping bags, needless product packaging, soft drink cups and straws negatively impact our wildlife,



Wikimedia Commons photo

WORK WITH US

Want to be a part of the campaign to encourage Publix to stop distributing plastic shopping bags? Sierra Club's Single-Use Plastics Committee has planned a strategy approved by the Florida Chapter Executive Committee. We are finalizing a petition, a fact sheet, postcards, etc. for each group in Florida. Contact your local group chair or Janet Stanko at janet.stanko@florida.sierraclub.org

DID YOU KNOW

Sea turtles often mistake plastic shopping bags for jelly fish, one of their primary food sources. The bags block their digestive systems and they end up starving to death. Over 1 million marine animals (including mammals, fish, sharks, turtles, and birds) are killed each year due to plastic debris in the ocean.

our public lands, our waterways, and our way of life. The people are ready for change! We hope this campaign will encourage our leaders in business and government to follow suit. All of us working together can make a difference !

Save a Tree ... Get Your Pelican Online

Help Sierra Club in our efforts to reduce newsprint and mailing costs by opting to receive this newsletter by email. Drop out of the print Pelican by sending an email with NEWSLETTER OPTOUT in the subject line to editor@florida.sierraclub.org. Include your current address and the email you wish to receive the newsletter.

Tampa Bay Stadium Recycling Effort Gets NFL High-5

The NFL has recognized nationwide the Tampa Bay Sierra Club Stadium Recycling Initiative at Raymond James Stadium in its "Huddle for 100" program! In honor of the National Football League's 100th season, the NFL has created the "Huddle for 100" program which invites fans to partner with them, the players and their teams to choose a cause, volunteer 100 minutes of their time and help shape their community in a positive manner. The NFL's goal is to record 100 million volunteer minutes in one season across the United States.

Tampa Bay's stadium recycling lead volunteer David Varrieur submitted the application on behalf of the Tampa Bay Group. The application basically stated: "This is the Tampa Bay Sierra Club's Stadium Recycling Initiative. It's the first NFL recycling program started in 1990. We have 20 volunteers @ 2 hours per event for all events. 120 minutes per person per event. 2,400 minutes per person annually. 48,000 minutes annually as a group. We recycled with Jack Groh (Director of the NFL Environmental Program) for Superbowl XLIII."

Thousands of entries were submitted from all over the United States. But only one could be featured on the prestigious "20 million milestone reached!" section of the NFL Huddle for 100 web-



Sierra Club members volunteer to work as "recycling ambassadors" at Tampa Bay Buccaneer games and other stadium events.

site. That one is the Tampa Bay Sierra Club Group. The effort encourages game, event and concert attendees to recycle on the spot and at home.

The Stadium Recycling Initiative continues to be an incredible recycling success story for the Tampa Bay community and fundraiser for the Tampa Bay Group. At each Buccaneers home game, Sierra Club volunteers act as education ambassadors, encouraging fans to recycle

using the recycling bins both in and out of the stadium. Usually up to 20 volunteers handle each stadium event. After their shift, they are compensated by free entry into the event. This season events include the Gasparilla Bowl, the Outback Bowl, the first XFL game and WrestleMania.

The volunteers are also hopeful that the group will be invited to work the Superbowl in 2021.

New Florida Chapter Energy Committee Announced

The Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club has officially announced the formation of the new state Energy Committee. The Energy Committee will work to move our state to a 100% clean energy future in an equitable, just and resilient manner.

The committee has nine members, including both staff and chapter volunteers. Its responsibilities include making recommendations to the chapter executive committee on statewide energy policy issues, advising the state chapter executive committee on energy policies in accordance with relevant national Sierra Club policies, and assisting group energy committees with local energy issues. The Committee's purview also includes transportation, our primary source of carbon pollution and smog.

Members are: Chapter volunteers Leighanne Connery Boone and Jim Davis of the Big Bend Group, Daniel Marien of the Turtle Coast Group, Lynn Nilssen of the Manatee-Sarasota Group, Joshua F. Sprout of the Miami Group. Staff representatives are Emily Gorman and Phil Compton of the Ready for 100% Clean Energy for All Campaign, and Susannah Randolph and Gonzalo Valdes of the FL Beyond Coal Campaign.

STAY IN TOUCH

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

1) Text SIERRA to 69866 to opt in and receive Sierra Club's mobile alerts.

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

4) Subscribe to thenews blog at www.sierraclubfloridanews.org

REMEMBERING WHITEY MARKLE

Richard “Whitey” Markle, one of Florida’s staunchest environmental advocates, passed away after a brief illness on Nov. 4.

By Kathryn Taubert

Best known for his successful efforts to restore, protect and preserve Florida’s natural resources as a leader of the Florida Sierra Club at both state and local levels, Markle served on the Executive Committee of the Suwannee-St. Johns Group for nearly 17 years, as Chair and Conservation Chair, representing 15 counties in North Central Florida. He was elected to the Sierra Club’s state Executive Committee in 2018. His sometimes “in your face” style earned both the respect and dedication of a cadre of conservation advocates who saw him as both

role model and bold spokesperson unafraid to confront the issues of overdevelopment and those who would encourage it.

Markle was also an accomplished writer and musician with Whitey Markle and the Swamprooters, performing at festivals all over North Central Florida and featuring a dozen of his original recorded songs written in the “Florida Cracker” genre. His book, *Whitey Markle’s Recipes with Tales and Tunes* is an example of folksy intelligence and down-home humor equivalent to the Foxfire series of life in Appalachia.

What many didn’t know is that with his Masters Degree in Urban Planning from the University of Florida, Markle also taught Building Trades, Structures and Soils Labs and Woodshop for the McPherson School in Ocala; a

State of Florida correctional institution; and the Dept. of Architecture at UF. Markle’s work on his Masters thesis ultimately resulted in the establishment, by ballot initiative, of a noise curfew on airboat noise in Alachua County in 2010. His efforts to restore the Ocklawaha River to its natural state was among his most ardent efforts, even inspiring an original recorded song.

The recipient of a host of awards by various conservation organizations, Markle was recently honored with an award in San Francisco by the National Sierra Club for Special Service for his conservation work.

Plans are underway for a Celebration of Life for Whitey Markle on the Ocklawaha River in the near future. Details will be posted on the Sierra Club, Suwannee-St. John’s Group.



Photo/Jim Tatum



Whitey never passed up a chance to speak out for important environmental causes.



Whitey and the Swamprooters

“Nobody loved Florida’s wildlife, rivers, springs, forests and coastal islands more than Whitey Markle, and no Floridian was a stronger environmental advocate than he. His fellow hikers, paddlers and conservation activists in Florida are in deep mourning with his passing, but we are also dedicated to carry on his work. I can think of no better way for all of us who were inspired by Whitey to complete his mission than to secure removal of the Rodman Dam and restore the natural flow of the Ocklawaha River.” —Florida Sierra Club Chapter Director Frank Jackalone

“What always fascinated me about him was his intense drive to help the environment. He seemed to think that it was his very best friend that he was fighting for.” — Jon Brainard, SSJ

“Whitey’s departure is something akin to an animal species going extinct. He cannot be replaced and even though life will go on, the planet will be the poorer in his absence.” — Jim Tatum, SSJ

“He never said no to a government or agency meeting where we needed someone to be present and attend to speak out. When he approached the podium, the powers that be would always know he would have something meaningful to say with consequences one way or the other.” — Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson, SSJ

Around the State



Photo/Patrick Ferguson

For more information on Sierra's Stop the Burn campaign, contact Patrick Ferguson at patrick.ferguson@sierraclub.org

Stop the Burn! We Want Protection!

Steve Messam, center, of Sierra Club's *Stop the Burn-Go Green* campaign joins other community activists in a rally on Nov. 23 in Belle Glade calling for an end to pre-harvest sugarcane field burning and a move to green harvesting.

Messam pointed out the resulting air pollution when sugar growers burn cane, and failure of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to protect the health and safety of residents in and around the Everglades Agricultural area. Posters at the rally showed screen shots from the Florida Forest Service's active burn tracking tool showing ash plumes up to 26 miles long. "We are still choked by black snow while residents in Eastern Palm Beach County are protected by burn wind restrictions," said Messam. "I refuse to accept that my people are less worthy of protection. The industry needs to stop pre-harvest sugar field burning and switch to green harvesting now."

Explore on Sierra Outings

Sunny days, crisp mornings, low humidity—this is the time of year Floridians have been waiting for! If you are yearning to take a hike, walk in the woods or go for a paddle, check with your local group to see if they have some outings on tap. Remember, you can join other Sierra Club groups around the state, too.

Many groups post outings on Facebook and Meetup pages, or check out events and outings around the state on the Florida Chapter web page at sierraclub.org/florida. Find a link to all groups or scroll to the bottom of the page to see a list of upcoming activities. Looking for bigger adventures? You don't need a partner to sign up for a national Sierra Club trip. Check out Sierra Club outings for national and international trips at www.content.sierraclub.org/outings



Above, the Big Bend Group explores the Riversink Tract in North Florida, checking out 9 sinkholes in the area.

No Roads to Ruin Coalition Announced

On December 5, Sierra Club joined other groups from across the state at the State Capitol to announce the No Roads to Ruin Coalition, a cohesive effort to work against three proposed toll roads through rural Florida. Earlier this year, the state passed legislation to fast-track three major new toll roads that will destroy large swaths of Florida's last remaining rural lands, pollute waterways, and threaten endangered wildlife, including the iconic Florida panther. If completed, 330 miles of toll roads could be constructed by 2030. Road building alone will immediately destroy more than 52,800 acres of undeveloped areas and promote unsustainable sprawl, destroying hundreds of thousands of additional acres. Watch for more information in your email, on Facebook and join us in this very important endeavor. For more information, contact Cris Costello at cris.costello@sierraclub.org



Youth Climate March an Urgent Call for Action

By Timothy Martin
Chapter Conservation Chair

The Youth Climate Strike and March the week of Sept. 20-27 brought millions out in their communities to demand climate action. Sierra members took to the streets, rallying with local youth, in support of immediate action to address global climate change. There were over 7 million people taking part in over 6,000 actions in 185 countries across the world, including over 30 in Florida.

In St. Petersburg, we assembled one of the largest mass demonstrations in recent years with over 1,200 people gathering on Sept. 20 for an energetic march through the city's downtown. Suncoast Sierra joined students from our local colleges, two dozen community organizations, local businesses, city workers, and hundreds of concerned residents to answer the challenge for us all to take action.

The message is dire – we are out of time. We must change course by 2020, the UN Secretary General has said, or we risk missing the point where we can avoid the “disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us.”

Here's what Sierra Club is calling for:

A Green New Deal – Transform our economy to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2030 and phase out all fossil fuel extraction through a just and equitable transition, creating millions of good jobs. This means halting all leasing and permitting for fossil fuel extraction, processing and infrastructure projects.

Respect of Indigenous Lands and Sovereignty - Honor the treaties protecting Indigenous lands, waters, and sovereignty by the immediate halt of all construction, leasing, and permitting for resource extraction, processing and infrastructure projects



jects affecting or on Indigenous lands. We must also recognize the Rights of Nature into law to protect our sacred ecosystems and align human law with natural law to ban resource extraction in defense of our environment and people.

Environmental Justice - A transition that invests in prosperity for communities on the frontlines of poverty and pollution. We must welcome those displaced by the cumulative effects of the climate crisis, economic inequality, violence, and lack of opportunity. We demand the protection and restoration of biodiversity, including 50% of the world's lands and oceans including a halt to all deforestation by 2030.

We know we can't stop here. Rallies and marches are good at bringing people together, but they are not enough. We need to continue building momentum and push for the dramatic changes needed to save our planet. Don't wait until the next Climate March to take action. Contact your local group and let them know you want to get involved. Time is running out!

Everglades Coalition Conference

A coalition of more than 60 environmental, conservation and wildlife groups will be meeting January 9-11 at South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island for the 35th annual Everglades Coalition Conference.

Hosted this year by the Ding Darling Wildlife Society, the weekend promises many interesting sessions, panels, field trips and keynote speakers. Sierra staff will be in attendance (we are hosting the Friday breakfast and speaker) and all members are invited to join us. This year's conference theme is “America's Everglades: All Hands on Deck” recognizing that the year 2020 marks the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan's 20th anniversary.



The conference is attended by decision-makers from federal, state, local and tribal governments, agency representatives, stakeholders and a vast array of public and private interests including scientists, educators, contractors, conservationists, the media, students and the general public. The conference is the largest annual forum to advance Everglades conservation and restoration and is open to the public.

To see a complete schedule of events and register, go to www.evergladescoalition.org/conference. Registration is now open.

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number located on the mailing label.



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Donate your vehicle to Sierra Club for tax benefit

If you have an extra car, truck or boat, you can turn it into a tax-deductible gift. You have until December 31 at midnight to officially pledge your donation and count it as a 2019 charitable contribution. After Jan. 1, your donation will simply count for 2020. Best of all, your vehicle, if it qualifies, will be picked up for free!

Completing your donation is easy:

Call (855) 337-5377 or go online to careasy.org/nonprofit/The-Sierra-Club-Foundation and submit an online form. Within 48 hours, a Vehicle Donor Support Representative will contact you to complete the donation. **It is important that you indicate that you wish this donation to go to the Florida Chapter.**

In most cases, you will receive an initial donation receipt from the tow driver at the time of your vehicle pick-up. Within 30 days of the sale, a thank-you letter on behalf of the Sierra Club Foundation will be mailed to you, which serves as a tax receipt. If you have questions about the process, you can email donorsupport@careasy.org. During the call, please have the title in hand to make the process even faster.

Time is Running Out!
Donate your vehicle before January 1st
and you may qualify for a tax deduction.

Learn more about how you can receive a
Tax Deduction

Call 1-855-337-5377

Individual tax situations vary. For specific tax-related questions, please consult your tax advisor or refer to IRS Publication 4303 to learn more about vehicle donations as tax-deductible gifts.