



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
CITRUS COUNTY FLORIDA**

Vicky Iozzia is the Editor of this newsletter.

Our mailing address is LWVCC. P. O. Box 1903, Lecanto, FL 34460

Our website is lwvcitrus.org

Our January 8, 2025 meeting will be at 10 am at the Coastal Region Library in Crystal River. Our speaker will be Mary Darling, who will speak about the Seniors vs Crime unit of the Sheriff Department

Our February 12, 2025 meeting will be at 10 am at the Coastal Region Library in Crystal River. It will feature our own Dr. BJ Ezell, who will speak to us about Black history.

Please visit our Facebook page and "like" us!

<https://www.facebook.com/leagueofwomenvotersofcitruscountH>

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO READ THE NEWSLETTER AND ATTEND OUR MEETINGS, THERE WILL BE TWO QUESTIONS ASKED ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE NEWSLETTER. IF YOU KNOW THE ANSWER AND ARE CALLED ON, YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE! STUDY FOR THE NEWSLETTER QUIZ!

Events in January 2025

Grid List Month Week Day January 2025 Go < Previous Today Next >

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 9:00 am: LWV Board meeting on zoom	3	4
5	6	7	8 10:00 am: LWV of Citrus General Meeting	9	10	11
12	13	14 1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting 4:00 pm: Citrus County School	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 8:00 am: Library Advisory Board 1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting	29	30	31	

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!



League of Women Voters of Citrus County

When: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 at 10:00 AM

Where: Coastal Region Library
8619 W Crystal St. Crystal River, Fl. 34428

SENIORS VS. CRIME

Don't get scammed!

- Get your documents, proposals, and offers reviewed to prevent a scam
- Get help if you've already been scammed



Seniors are all too often targeted by scammers and con artists, thinking they have easy prey. With the appropriate information, we can foil their plans.

Mary Darling, of the Citrus County Sheriff's Office, Seniors vs. Crime will be addressing these issues at the League of Women Voters meeting on Wednesday, January 8. It will be held at 10:00 AM at the Coastal Region Library, 8619 W Crystal St., Crystal River, Fl. 34428.

Maxine Connor, League Environmental Chair, will give an update on the controversial Cabot Land Swap deal.

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Celebrate Black History Month with the League of Women Voters *The Black Vote in Citrus County FL Then, Now, & Beyond*



Dr. BJ Ezell

Dr. BJ Ezell, DrPH, MSHI, BSHA, ASRN, RN board member of the League of Women Voters of Citrus County, will be the speaker for their February 12 meeting. Her presentation, *"The Black Vote in Citrus County FL; Then, Now, & Beyond"* offers an educational, entertaining, and, at times, interactive slide show presentation.

Dr. BJ, as she prefers to be called, is a well-known and highly respected addition to the Citrus County community. Prior to retiring this year, she was Director of Clinical Informatics at HCA FL Citrus Hospital and Health Educator Consultant with the Florida Department of Health Citrus County. She is the Citrus County Chronicle 2022 Healthcare Hero - Community Outreach. She is past secretary for the Nature Coast EMS Board.

She has been an active member of many of our local organizations, including the Afro-American Club of Citrus County and the Democratic Black Caucus of Citrus County. She is often found participating in events at the George Washington Carver Community Center and in other venues.

WHEN: Wednesday, February 12. 10:00 AM
WHERE: Coastal Region Library
8619 W Crystal St, Crystal River, FL 34428

The Public is Invited: For more information please call 352-613-5056 or email lwwcc2013@gmail.com. Visit lwwcitrus.org and Facebook page "League of Women Voters of Citrus County".

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization, never endorsing or opposing political parties or candidates. LWWFL develops positions on issues only after careful study and consensus

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If you are interested in joining the League of Women Voters of Citrus County,

Fill out the form below and mail it to us at

LWVCC, P. O. Box 1903, Lecanto, FL 34460

Name _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Phone (home) _____

Phone (cell) _____

Individual \$65 _____

Household \$90 _____

Student Free _____

Susan B. Anthony \$105* _____

Household \$150* _____

*Includes \$40 donation _____

Credit card name _____

Credit card number _____

Expiration Date, month and year _____



**Vicky Iozzia, 1st President, Speakers Bureau Chair,
Newsletter Editor, Webmaster**

Here we are, folks. By the time you read this, 2024 will be a memory and baby 2025 will be here.

I have been saying that we have our work cut out for us, and we certainly will. By that I mean that we must continue to fight for the rights of citizens, to push against those who use their power to hurt others, and to help those who cannot help themselves.

All of the Leagues of Women Voters will absolutely continue to fight for the right to vote. Although our efforts have been lessened due to the restrictive laws here in Florida, the members of and attorneys for the League of Women Voters will not give up, continuing to monitor to see that the constitution is followed.

I have been saying that I hope that our members will be involved in the process. I am happy to report that our League is working on issues that concern them.

Something wonderful happened at our Luncheon. First, Wanda Brown has offered to work on sending postcards to people who have committed nonviolent crimes to give them information on how to get their voting rights back. (Our League members wrote 3.000 postcards in 2024, but the program was set aside during the frenzy of the election.)

Wanda also goes to the local women's prison. She is developing a course about voting to offer to the inmates.

Cassie DeCoulette came up to introduce me to Sue Motley, a retired attorney. Both of them want to work with Wanda. Scott Baldwin wants to help, and so does Debbie Savarese.

That's how it happens. People connect with people, work together, and things get done. A little at a time. That is my goal for this League chapter. Involvement in these political issues will not only help the cause but will result in your meeting some terrific people and making good friends. It's up to you to decide to participate. If you don't you will never know what you missed.

Our next luncheon is March 12, 2025. Spoiler alert – our guest speaker will be Sheriff David Vincent!

Read about our December Luncheon after the photos.

Here are the photos from the December 11, 2024 luncheon. Thank you Dr. BJ Ezell for taking them! As you can see, we had a very successful, happy luncheon!











Our Guest Speaker, Trina Murphy, Publisher of the Citrus County Chronicle,

had an excellent presentation, after which she took all of the questions that the audience asked.

She spoke about her career at the Chronicle, how newspapers have changed over the years, and what the present-day challenges are.

If you were unable to attend, you can view it with the following link:

<https://youtu.be/qMLLU207R0Y>

If you can find it in your heart and your purse, please give a donation to the League of Women Voters of Citrus County. You can write a check to LWVCC and mail to: LWVCC, PO Box 1903, Lecanto, FL 34460-1903 OR go to lwvcitrus.org Then go to the membership section and press “donation” and fill in your info for payment by card.

You need to request a new vote by mail for the new year, because your old request will no longer be in effect. You can call the Supervisor of Elections Office, 352 564-7120, go on the website, or go to the office in person. I will publish the exact information in the next newsletter after it is posted on the SOE website.

IN THE NEWS

From the ACLU Executive Director Anthony D. Romero:

As soon as the 119th Congress is sworn in, we will urge members to use their constitutional powers to provide oversight, investigate wrongdoing, and reject restrictive executive branch policies. At the state level, we'll work with lawmakers to build a [firewall for freedom](#) and enact laws that protect people from government abuse. In our communities, we're working to educate people on what is at risk, what happens next, and how we can fight for our freedoms together.

What will happen in 2025? ACLU headlines from their last newsletter which you can Google if you want to read:

[Supreme Court Adjourns Oral Arguments in Historic Transgender Rights Hearing](#)

[In Trump Country, Ballot Measures Safeguard Abortion Rights](#)

[Civil Rights Groups Respond to Flawed Trial Court Opinion on New York Voting Rights Act](#)

[U.S. Universities Brace for Education Policies Overhaul Under Trump](#)

[I'm a Doctor. I've Seen How Vital it is to Speak with Young People About Gender](#)

[How Biden Can Act Now to Limit Trump's Mass Deportation Agenda](#)

[Incarceration Should Not be a Death Sentence for Individuals Who Use Opioids](#)

[Firewall For Freedom: States Must Safeguard Our Rights](#)

From CBS News 24/7: President Biden signed 50 bills into law on Christmas Eve. Included are "[Paris Hilton's bill](#) to protect teenagers living in residential treatment facilities, a bill setting anti-hazing standards on college campuses, and a bill preventing members of Congress from collecting pensions if convicted of certain crimes, and [S. 4610](#), makes the bald eagle the [official bird of the U.S.](#) The federal government had never designated an official bird. "

From the League of Women Voters, Impact on Issues

Summary of Public Policy Positions *League of Women Voters® of the United States*

REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.

Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

Election Process

Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Redistricting. Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

Money in Politics. (formerly Campaign Finance) Support campaign finance/MIP regulations that enhance political equality for all citizens, ensure transparency, protect representative democracy from distortion by undisclosed contributions and big money, and combat corruption and undue influence in government. Support campaign spending that is restricted but not banned. Support public financing, full disclosure, abolishing super PACs, and creating an effective enforcement agency.

Selection of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote.

Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

Voter Representation/Electoral Systems. Support electoral systems at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters.

Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making.

Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals and Constitutional Conventions

Amendment Proposals. Consider whether a proposal addresses matters of abiding importance, makes our political system more democratic, protects individual rights, could be achieved by a constitutional amendment or legislative proposal, and is consistent with other League positions.

Constitutional Conventions. Hold constitutional conventions only when certain conditions are in place, including limited to a specific topic, full transparency, delegates selected by population, and voting by delegates not by states.

Congress and the Presidency

Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decisionmaking capability, effective performance, and transparency.

The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

Privatization

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact, and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets, and/or functions to the private sector.

Digital Equity

High-speed affordable internet access is an essential service that should be readily available to all US residents and businesses.



Linda Abels, Membership Chair

Happy New Year! I wish all of you a Happy and Healthy 2025. As I've mentioned in past newsletters changes are coming on February 1st to the way you renew your membership with the League of Women Voters as well as the way new members join. Before I get into that, I'd like to welcome our new members.

We added four new members at our December Holiday Luncheon. Please join me in welcoming **Kathleen Chase, Anita Olbek-Tooker, Nikki Smith and Gayle Weltmann**. Please introduce yourself to our new members and welcome them at our next meeting.

As I mentioned earlier, beginning February 1st, renewal dues will need to be done via the LWV Citrus County Website - LWV Citrus County.org. The suggested dues amount is \$75 per year, per person. There will no longer be household memberships, student memberships, etc. just individual memberships. The dues amount of \$75 is suggested. If your dues are due in January, February or March, you may want to pay prior to February 1. If you do pay earlier than your renewal date, your membership date doesn't change. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at LWVCC2013@gmail.com. The LWVUS are making these changes to all local and state chapters throughout the country.

Please bear with us as we all learn the new system. Have a Great January!



Peg Primeau, 2nd President, Reproductive Rights Chair

RH&J: Where are we going next?

In the December 6 Lunch & Learn, we heard leaders from the Florida League and the Amendment 4 campaign articulate some RH&J actions for the coming year. They include:

- 1) keep reminding our lawmakers that 57% of their constituents rejected the current abortion ban,
- 2) require transparency about the consequences of the extreme ban—especially data on infant and maternal mortality,
- 3) oppose even worse bills,
- 4) continue to emphasize that reproductive choice is health care,
- 5) help women locally, and
- 6) address mis/disinformation about reproduction, particularly concerning the myriad, unpredictable complications of pregnancy (because these make the extreme ban so cruel), and exactly how one can prevent pregnancy.

Let's start there. Regressive conservatives want voters and politicians to be confused about the difference between contraception methods and abortion

methods. Crazy fact: not even physicians understand this!

From NPR's Morning Edition on December 16: "A recent survey published in a medical journal found that 17% of doctors from different specialties believe an IUD

causes abortion. In fact, IUDs prevent fertilization and conception in the first place."

It gets worse. "A group called Students for Life goes further, calling birth control pills,

IUDs, birth control implants and emergency contraception all abortifacients, saying only

condoms, diaphragms, vaginal sponges, spermicide and "natural family planning" are

acceptable forms of birth control." (USA Today, Oct. 22).

Memorize this!

1) Condoms and diaphragms prevent fertilization, as do IUDs.

2) Hormonal methods (birth control pills, morning-after pills, IUDs with hormone release, and hormonal rings, patches or injections) prevent ovulation.

3) We need to broadcast that Plan B pills (aka emergency contraception, morning-

after pills) are just ovulation-suppressing hormones. They work only if ovulation hasn't happened yet.

If you prevent ovulation or fertilization, then conception cannot happen and, therefore,

abortion cannot happen. Let us be informed and assertive in the community to increase

people's knowledge of these basic facts.



**Rosemary Nilles, 1st Vice President, Gun Safety Chair,
Education Chair,
Legislative Priorities and Getting Involved**

Happy New Year! We asked and our members spoke! Twenty eight (28)

LWVCC members responded to our requests to submit their top three choices for LWVFL 2025 Legislative Priorities. Our top four local choices were, in order

of votes, Education, Reproductive Health & Justice, Gun Violence

Prevention, and Poverty & Affordable Housing.

At the time of this writing, LWVFL has not yet announced its final priorities, other than Elections & Voting Rights. The League's lobbying resources will be directed to these areas as the Legislative session formally begins on March 4.

Regardless of LWVFL's priorities, our Citrus League will continue to pursue our local issues. Here are some ideas and LWVCC contacts to learn what's happening and get involved:

- Gun Violence Prevention; Education: Rosemary Nilles
- Reproductive Health; Justice: Peggy Primeau
- Health Care, and Poverty; Affordable Housing: Dr. B.J. Ezell
- Natural Resources; Clean Energy: Maxine Connor
- Voting; Elections: Vicky Iozzia

- Citrus County Detention Center: Wanda Brown is doing amazing work!
- Attend local meetings such as BOCC, Citrus County School District, and Legislative Delegation. (see January Calendar)
- Join LWFVFL's biweekly Lunch & Learn Zoom meetings to delve into specific issues. Watch email for announcements a few days before.
- Pay attention to LWFVFL's The Florida Voter and Legislative Alerts for specific actions and links to sources.

How will YOU be involved? Come to our meetings or contact us to learn more!

From the Department of Health



We can help YOU take CONTROL of your diabetes!

Program Goals Include:

- Enhance and maintain your quality of life.
- Prevent complications.
- Learn mindful choices for proper nutrition.
- Enhance physical activity.
- Strengthen personal support systems.
- Foster relationships with healthcare providers.

Central Ridge Library



425 W. Roosevelt Blvd., Beverly Hills, FL 34465

Dates: 1/27/25 -

3/17/25

Day: Mondays

Time: 4PM-6PM

This is a FREE 8 week workshop.

Registration is Required

Contact:

Kathryn Defranco

Kathryn.Defranco@flhealth.gov

OR

Mark Pagan

Mark.Pagan@flhealth.gov

Scan QR code:





Tai Chi for Arthritis



Elder Options & The Citrus County Health Department is offering a **FREE** Tai Chi for Arthritis workshop.

East Citrus Community Center

9907 E Gulf to Lake Hwy

Inverness, FL, 34450

2/11/25 - 4/4/25

Tuesdays and Fridays

9am-10am

This is an 8 week workshop

Registration paperwork will be completed during the first class.

Please wear comfortable clothing and non slip closed toe shoes.



To reserve your place please contact:

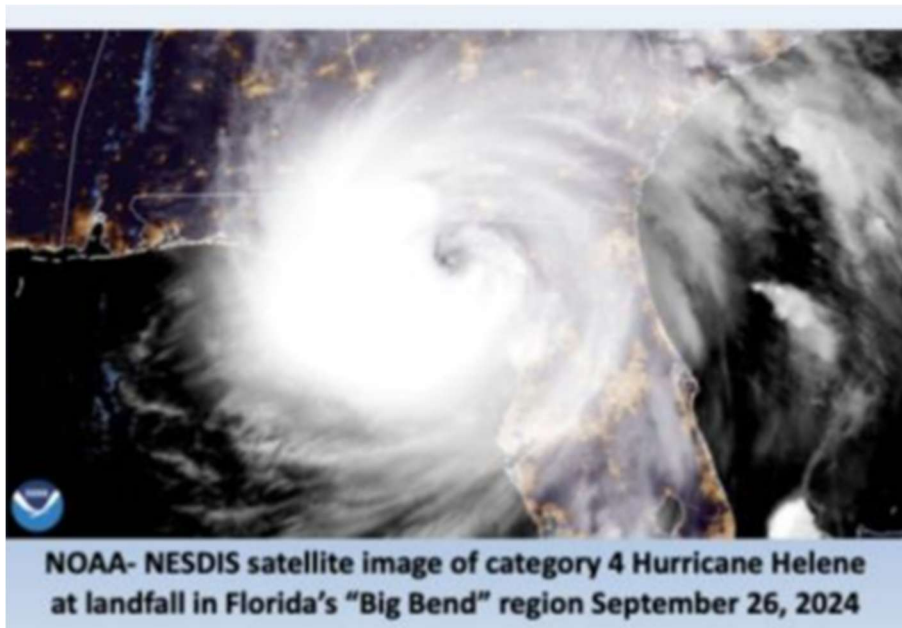
Mark Pagan



Adapting the Nature Coast to a Wet Future

A free community forum hosted by The Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists Fellowship
7633 North Florida Avenue Citrus Springs, FL 34434 (Dunnellon for GPS) Saturday,
January 25, 2025, 3:00 PM-5:00 PM

The vulnerability of the Nature Coast to storm surge flooding has been highlighted by the recent impacts of Hurricanes Ian, Helene, and Milton. The US Global Change Research Program concludes that the severity and risks of coastal hazards are rapidly increasing. In this free community forum, we will begin with a review of some of the short-term and long-term strategies that can help promote resilience. Professor Gary Zarillo of Florida Institute of Technology (<https://www.fit.edu/faculty-profiles/z/zarillo-gary/>) will outline some of the mitigating approaches that can help residents stay safe and be resilient now and, in the decades, ahead. The key themes of this event will be Short Term Resilience and Post-storm Recovery and Long-term Adaptation to a Wet Future. Professor Zarillo's overview presentation will be directly followed by an open-forum discussion and Q&A session. During the discussion hour, Nature Coast residents, particularly those impacted by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, will have opportunities to briefly share their experiences and lessons learned. Professor Zarillo will orchestrate the discussion and take questions.





January 2025 Newsletter Article - LWVCC Natural Resources/Environmental Chair

RYAN SMART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL, GUEST SPEAKER AT THE HERNANDO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING AND PUBLIC PROGRAM, MONDAY JANUARY 6 AT 7 PM: *ADVOCACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT*

Come to the South Brooksville Community Center, 601 E Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Brooksville, FL 34601. Contact: hcfnps@gmail.com. Logistics – Regular monthly meetings are held on the first Monday of most months. Arrive the South Brooksville Community Center at 6:30 pm for snacks and socializing; the formal meeting and program starts at 7:00 pm. <https://tinyurl.com/y98wbrbr>

RYAN SMART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL, GUEST SPEAKER AT THE HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE MONTHLY MEETING, THURSDAY, JANUARY 9 @ 7 PM

Join us Thursday, January 9, at 7 pm at the Homosassa Civic Club, 5530 S Mason Creek Rd, Homosassa, FL 34448. Learn about current springs issues and get your questions answered.

FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL SPRINGS SUMMIT – RESCHEDULED TO FEBRUARY 8, 2025 AT STETSON LAW SCHOOL, GULFPORT, FLORIDA

A one-day event, has been rescheduled because of the recent hurricanes. Come and learn about Florida’s iconic springs and what we can do to protect them through advocacy, policy, and law. Free to attend but you must register (don’t delay as we expect a full house): <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/summit>

THE NONPROFIT FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL SUED THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (FDEP) RE: THE HARM RULE

There are 30 Outstanding Florida Springs (OFS). The Florida Springs Council (FSC) filed a lawsuit alleging that these springs have been harmed because the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has delayed in adopting a “harm rule.” This rule was mandated by the State Legislature via a 2016 law (SB 552) ordering FDEP to adopt rules to better protect Outstanding Florida Springs against water withdrawals that reduce water flows and thereby harm springs. (Pollution makes it worse.)

Such a rule should define the meaning of “harmful” to prevent harmful groundwater withdrawals from OFS and spring runs. Meanwhile, the Water Management Districts have continued to issue water use permits, harming OFS. Read this great article covering the story to that point by WUFT, PBS, NPR:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/120QwOJKmLxx4zxXWMBwhGID4EUAhNz2N/view>

UPDATE:

FDEP has finally released another draft of proposed “harm” rules: 62-41.400 - 62-41.403, on August 29, 2024, which will not adequately protect springs.

<https://naturecoaster.com/under-court-pressure-fdep-finally-proposes-springs-harm-rule/#:~:text=On%20Dec.,Springs%20from%20harmful%20water%20withdrawals.>

A rule hearing has been requested for the above-referenced proposed rules, and it will be held on **Jan. 6, 2025** starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building, Room 137, 3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, Tallahassee, FL, 32399-3000. **Florida Springs Council invites you to go. Share this information.**

Listen to this update from Florida Springs Council on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1098016581630099>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=903168978650451&set=pcb.903169071983775>

BMAPS (BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS) MEETINGS FOR WEEKI WACHEE, CHASSAHOWITZKA, HOMOSASSA, AND CRYSTAL RIVER/KINGS BAY WERE HELD BY FDEP ON NOVEMBER 7TH IN HERNANDO COUNTY

UPDATE:

The Springs and Aquifer Protection Act, which was passed in 2016, requires the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to develop Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPS), which are recovery plans for Florida's nitrate-impaired springs.

The Florida Springs Council sued the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 2019 because it noticed gaps in the BMAPs. After four years, in 2023, the 1st District Court of Appeals ruled that FDEP must rewrite the BMAPs by July 2025.

As part of a state-wide effort, on November 7th in Brooksville, Hernando County, Florida, the FDEP hosted a public meeting, gave a presentation on the draft BMAPS for our local springs, Weeki Wachee, Chassahowitzka, Homosassa, and Crystal River/Kings Bay Basins. They put up posters with statistics and information, and invited participants to ask questions and make comments on cards which they supplied. Those comments were to be included in FDEP's final report of the meeting. **The final BMAPs will be reviewed at public hearings by January 2025.**

FLORIDA RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR THE 2026 ELECTION – HOW TO VOLUNTEER AND GET INVOLVED

Florida Right To Clean Water.org is a grassroots, volunteer, nonpartisan organization formed to place an amendment to the [state constitution](#) on the November 3, 2026 ballot by citizens before the voters of the [U.S. state of Florida](#), using a [direct initiative](#) petition that will give citizens of the state a right to clean and healthy waters. Go here to learn about the campaign and sign up for email notifications:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florida_Right_to_Clean_Water#:~:text=Florida%20Right%20To%20Clean%20Water.org%20is%20a%20grassroots%2C%20volunteer,to%20clean%20and%20healthy%20waters.

<https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/>

HOW TO VOLUNTEER: We are in the West Central Region. See the following link to contact our regional coordinator.

<https://www.floridarighttocleanwater.org/regions>

Regional Coordinators support County Captains and other key ambassadors to ensure everyone has what they need (which includes recruiting, training, resourcing, and organizing support) to accomplish the mission.

CITRUS COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENT APPLICATION NO. - CPA-2024-00005 ROBERT BATSEL, JR. for 1728 INVESTMENTS, LLC – REVISION TO CHAPTER 13 – MANATEE PROTECTION ELEMENT

This application would amend the objectives and policies associated with residential dock densities in the Manatee Protection Element of the Comprehensive Plan. This application was scheduled to have its final hearing before the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners at 5:05 pm on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, but this Item I. The 12/10 Public hearing to approve CPA-2024-00005 Comprehensive Plan Manatee Element Changes: was removed from the agenda. Instead, the applicant for the amendment has requested a 180-day extension for approval while trying to work out concerns with FWC and US Fish and Wildlife.

The link to that specific agenda item **E 13** is here: <https://citrusclerk.portal.civicclerk.com/event/8431/files/report/7585>

STATE LEGISLATION FILED TO DEFINE USES OF FLORIDA **STATE PARKS AND WHAT WILL BE PROHIBITED**

On December 4th, Florida State Senator Gayle Harrell filed legislation: Senate Bill 80: State Land Management; Citing this act as the "State Park Preservation Act." <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2025/80>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xECC7mo-G0>

This bill was filed as a result of Florida Department of Environmental Protection's attempt to allow tennis courts, golf courses, and pickleball courts to be built on nine of the Florida State Parks. There was huge public outcry, demonstrations, and bipartisan opposition to this. Read the Tampa Bay Times 12/20/24 article: The behind-the-scenes story of the Florida state park scandal - Here's how one of the state's biggest controversies of the year came together — and quickly fell apart.

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/2024/12/20/florida-state-park-scandal-desantis-golf-nicklaus-charity-jonathan-dickinson/>

Senator Harrell's bill is intended to define how to preserve and protect the natural habitat and endangered species in our state parks and to open it up to people to enjoy. Some things it would allow are horseback riding, bike paths, swimming and hiking. It would prevent tennis courts, golf courses, pickleball courts and ball fields from being built in Florida state parks for recreational use. The bill would also require a 30-day notice for any proposed changes to allow the public's voices to be heard.

Action Item:

Tell our state legislators to support this bill.

<https://www.flhouse.gov/FindYourRepresentative>

Citrus County: Rep. J. J. Grow, District Office, 2943 Landover Blvd., Spring Hill, FL 34608, (352) 666-5707

<https://flsenate.gov/Senators/S11>

Citrus County: Senator Blaise Ingolia, District Office, 2943 Landover Blvd., Spring Hill, FL 34608, (352) 666-5707

UPDATE ON LAND SWAP DEAL TO OBTAIN STATE FOREST LAND IN HERNANDO COUNTY FOR GOLF

According to the 2025 Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) calendar for 2025, the next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2025, at the DEP in Tallahassee.

The item of the land swap deal has not been on the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) agenda since the issue came up. It was not on the agenda for the December 12th and 13th meeting.

https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DSL/OES/ARC/Calendars/2025_ARC_Calendar.pdf

People and many organizations have been watching the ARC agendas to see if the proposed land swap deal will show up on the agenda.

The following provides background on the issue:

This article is reprinted here courtesy of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group. It appeared in the Natural Resources article in LWVCC November 2024 Newsletter.

WITHLACOCHEE STATE FOREST LAND GRAB

OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED SWAP OF 324 ACRES OF CONSERVATION LANDS



Withlacoochee State Forest parcel earmarked for land swap

This past June, without any public input, nor any discussion on the part of its members, the Florida Governor and Cabinet voted to approve transfer of 324 acres of land within the Withlacoochee State Forest in Hernando County to Cabot Citrus OpCo LLC, a Canadian corporation, to expand its adjoining luxury golf course/resort development in exchange for 861 acres of pine plantation in Levy County. It had obtained approval earlier from the Hernando County Commission to build 1770 residential units and a large area of commercial development on the land it already owns adjacent to this part of the Withlacoochee State Forest.

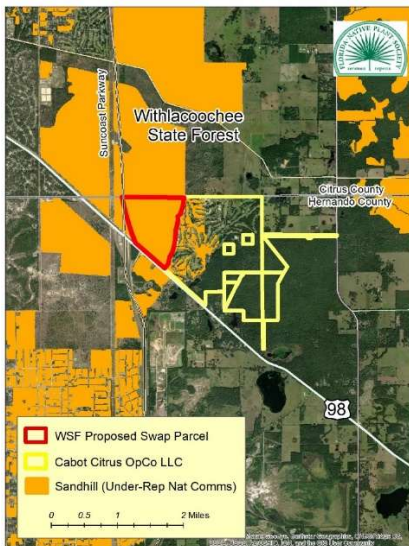
Click below to see the video produced by the Sierra Club Florida Chapter:

[Play Video](#)

Numerous letters of opposition have been sent to Rick Dolan, Director of the Florida Forest Service and his direct supervisor Wilton Simpson, Florida Secretary of Agriculture & Consumer Affairs including [Sierra Club Florida Chapter's letter](#) with 67 sign-ons from other organizations, Sierra Club Florida Chapter Conservation Committee's letter enclosing an expert assessment of the value of these conservation lands ([Eval Withlacoochee State Forest Tract Being Considered in Land Swap](#)), Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group's, one from Sonny Vergara - former Executive Director of SWFWMD, and letters from many other conservation organizations and individuals. We have all been stonewalled and no replies nor even acknowledgment has been received to our letters.

Adventure Coast Group noted our three major objections: The proposed land swap establishes a dangerous precedent for other public lands desired by developers. The Withlacoochee State Forest Parcel has considerable conservation value due to its contiguity with other public conservation lands and its role as a link in the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Value as a High Groundwater Recharge Area within the Chassahowitzka Springshed, a declared Outstanding Florida Spring.

The land swap is contingent upon review and approval by both the Florida Forest Service (FFS) and the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC). This item was not included in the agenda of their October meeting that was canceled due to weather, nor is it on the agenda for their November meeting.



This land swap is contrary to good public policy and Government in the Sunshine. It is contrary to the goal of Florida Forever—protecting lands with significant natural resource values in perpetuity for all Floridians. It undermines a long record of successful conservation of Florida's valuable lands that protect our environment, support our tourist-based economy, and provide clean water to support both nature and people. We hope that input from the conservation community will encourage state officials to end this ill-advised gift to private development interests. Stay tuned! When we learn more, we'll let you know.

ARTICLES RELATED TO THE PROPOSED SWAP OF 325 ACRES OF STATE FOREST CONSERVATION LANDS

Citrus County Chronicle, (9/30): https://www.chronicleonline.com/opinion/columnists/stop-the-swap-protect-withlacoochee-state-forest-and-florida-s-public-lands/article_121ca65c-70a1-5398-af37-9b4d7be3194d.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share

Tampa Bay Times, (9/2): [Florida OK'd giving 324 acres of state forest to golf course company *The land swap, which still need final approval, was separate from the controversial initiative embroiling Florida's environmental agency*](#)

Golfweek, (9/6): [Cabot, environmentalists at odds over proposed state land swap to expand Citrus Farms in Florida](#)

LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION FOR CITRUS COUNTY

Senator Blaise Ingoglia, Chair of the Citrus County Legislative Delegation, announces the annual Legislative Delegation meeting to be held on Monday, January 27, 2025, from 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm at the Board of County Commissioners Chamber, 110 N. Apopka Ave., Inverness, FL 34450. The purpose of this meeting is the discussion and consideration of local bills scheduled to be filed in the Florida Legislature, to provide a forum for the public to address members of the Legislative Delegation and conduct other delegation business in preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session.

If you would like to be placed on the agenda for discussion relating to the local bill(s) or any issue, please fill out the required Speaker Request Form. The deadline for submitting all speaker request forms is Friday January 24, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Please fill out the form and submit it to Ivie.Jordyn@flsenate.gov

<https://1000fof.org/events/citrus-county-legislative-delegation-meeting-3/>

LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOR FLORIDA

Regular session convenes Tuesday, March 4, 2025. Last day of regular session is May 2, 2025, 60th day. April 22, 2025 50th day – Last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings. View complete calendar here:

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Calendar/2025/Session%20Dates%202024-11-20%20161138.PDF>

Interim Committee Meetings

The [Interim Committee Meeting Schedule](#) (PDF) is available. Weekly schedules and meeting notices will be posted prior to the meetings.

<https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Calendar/2025/Session%20Dates%202024-11-20%20161138.PDF>

HEAT ILLNESS AND LEGISLATION

During the 2024 Florida legislative session, Governor DeSantis signed a bill HB 433 Employment Regulations, that prevented local governments in Florida from requiring heat protection for outdoor workers. NPR pointed out that roughly two million people in Florida, from construction to agriculture, work outside as of Apr 15, 2024. Workers continue to suffer from heat illness and some have died from it.

OSHA (the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration) has written and published a Rule on Heat Illness. The comment period has been extended until January 14, 2025. An informal public hearing on the proposed rule will be held virtually and begin on June 16, 2025. Get the facts and all the details and see what you can do here:

<https://www.osha.gov/heat-exposure/rulemaking>

FROM THE FLORIDA SPRINGS COUNCIL

Become an informed member – sign up for their email list to get action alerts to your Inbox. Add a book to your 2024 reading list: *Florida Springs* by Dr. Chris Meindl. <https://www.floridaspringscouncil.org/>

From out Florida League Co-Presidents, Cecile Scoon and Debbie Chandler



From Cecile:

Here is a list of some time-sensitive League focused work. If we plan and try to be as efficient as possible, we will be able to do many of these actions.

- **Legislative Priorities:** As stated in prior notices, the deadline for each Local league to submit their League's ranking of Legislative priorities is this Sunday, December 15. Our state board will use those rankings to establish our four legislative priorities for 2025. The recordings of the two Listening sessions are available below and we encourage each member who did not attend a listening session to view one of the recordings before you vote with your League.
- **Vote-by-Mail Requests:** We need to educate one and all about the need to request a new vote-by-mail after December 31 as the old requests timeout. You can call your SOE's office, send an email, or go down in person. We need to share this information on all of our social media channels that we use like Facebook, Twitter/X, Instagram, Tik Tok, and any other social media platforms you may use.
- **Local Delegation Meetings:** Some meetings are occurring before Christmas and some in January. Several deadlines to request a meeting with your local state representative are occurring this week. Please be aware of what is going on with your local legislative delegation.
- **Special & Municipal Elections:** There are several elections coming up across the state. Two specifically are for Congressional District 1 in North Florida (to replace Gaetz) and one is Congressional District 6 in Central Florida (to replace Waltz). The primary date for these two offices is on January 28 and the general election will take place on April 1. LWVFL

hopes to have a presence in supporting the communities faced with these special elections.

- **Take a Moment or Two for Yourself:** Do you have a book in mind? Watching a movie with someone you care about, going to the theater, getting a manicure/pedicure, a dinner out treat? Whatever strikes your fancy, let's put several of those events on our calendars!

Thank you for all the work that you do to empower voters and protect democracy.

From Debbie:

Hello League members,

This is my third draft of this article. I know what I want to say, but I want to strike a balanced tone. To be honest, I'm tired. This is such a busy time of year and I feel like I'm dog paddling in the deep end of the pool and barely keeping my head above water. This, of course is following on the heels of the election and all the work we each put into it. Add a heavy dose of family and friend gatherings to the mix and I'm pooped! **Do you feel the same way?**

Don't get me wrong, I love friends and family and the holidays. Most years I can't wait to put up decorations and play holiday music. I love to escape with Hallmark movies that can be relied upon to have a happy endings. I love to shop for the perfect gift for each person on my list, especially on line, where I have options galore. And I definitely don't want to whine or give the impression that I am depressed or overwhelmed. **I want to share that it is okay to be fatigued. And it's ok to ask for help. League members that I have met tend to be strong and self-reliant.** Generally speaking, we don't ask others to assist. We should, though.

Now let me get to the important stuff. From the bottom of my heart, I want to wish each of you a joyful, prosperous holiday, whether you celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Bodhi Day, Yule, Boxing Day, or something else. **I hope your hearts are full of love and peace and that 2025 will bring unexpected happiness.**