



February, 2026

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CITRUS COUNTY

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 email address is lwvcc2013@gmail.com

Our February 14, 2026 General Meeting was supposed to feature Tiarra Alexander as guest speaker. She is unable to make it so we will reschedule. Dr. BJ Ezell, LWV Board member, will speak: DEI-past, present, and future. It will be at the Coastal Region Library, 10 am. See page 4

FIELD TRIP! WE WILL BE GOING TO SUPERVISOR MO BAIRD'S ELECTION OFFICE ON Tuesday, February 24, from 9 to 11 am.

Learn about how our vote is safeguarded and processed.

To sign up, send an email to Vicky at vickyiozzia@gmail.com

Our March 11, 2026 luncheon meeting features Editor of the Citrus County Chronicle, **Jim Gouvellism, "Freedom and the Press"**. It will be at **Texas Roadhouse** in Beverly Hills on 491. Arrive at 11:30. Lunch at noon. Speaker at 12:30. See page 6

Please visit our Facebook page and "like" us!

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

We want to thank the following businesses for their cooperation: FGE Printing, Glory Days Restaurant, Citrus County Chronicle, Pinnacle Printing

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HAPPY FEBRUARY EVERYONE!



We love our Members!

⋮

February Holidays:

February 2, 2026	→ Groundhog Day	Monday
February 12, 2026	→ Lincoln's Birthday	Thursday
February 14, 2026	→ Valentine's Day	Saturday
February 16, 2026	→ Presidents Day and Washington's Birthday	Monday
February 17, 2026	→ Mardi Gras Carnival (New Orleans)	Tuesday

And let's not forget –

International Day of Women and Girls in Science, February 11, Wednesday

Susan B. Anthony Day, February 16, Monday

World Day of Justice, February 20, Friday

League of Women Voters of Citrus County invites the public to
join us to celebrate Black History Month 2026:

***DEI:
Yesterday,
Today, and
Tomorrow***



Dr BJ Ezell, DrPH MSHI BSHA RN

Wed. February 11, 2026, 10:00 AM

Coastal Region Library

8619 W Crystal St., Crystal River, 34428

A well-known and highly respected community leader, "Dr BJ" will define and discuss Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Dr BJ is a life-long healthcare professional with 50+ years as a RN, healthcare consultant, and advocate for the elderly and people that are homeless. A sought-after speaker, she most recently spoke at the Inverness Celebration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Dr BJ always offers an educational, entertaining, and interactive presentation.

For more information, contact lwvcc2013@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of Citrus County is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. LWV never supports or opposes candidates and/or political parties.



This calendar is from our website: Lwvcitrus.org

Events in February 2026										
Grid	List	Month	Week	Day	February	2026	Go	< Previous	Today	Next >
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat				
1	2	3	4 9:00 am: LWV Board meeting on zoom	5	6	7				
8	9	10 1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting 4:00 pm: Citrus County School Board meeting	11 10:00 am: LWV General Meeting Guest Speaker Dr. BJ Ezell	12	13	14				
15	16	17	18	19	20	21				
22	23	24 9:00 am: Library Advisory Board	25 4:00 pm: Social at Cattle Dog Restaurant in Inverness	26 1:00 pm: Board of Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida meeting	27	28				

To register for the luncheon, **click here:** <https://www.lwvcitrus.org/upcoming-events/>

Scroll down below the photo of Jim Gouvellis, **fill in registration form, submit, click donation button and fill in to pay \$20 for your meal.**

The League of Women Voters of Citrus County

presents our spring luncheon

on Wednesday, March 11,

at the Texas Roadhouse Restaurant

on 491 in Beverly Hills

Arrive at 11:30. Lunch will be served at noon.

Our speaker will speak at 12:30.

Our annual meeting and election will follow the speaker.



Jim Gouvellis

Jim Gouvellis, Executive Editor of the Citrus County Chronicle, will speak.

He believes that we should treat the town square like a Publix aisle: clean, calm, and neighborly. He will speak about "Freedom and the Press.", exploring the critical role of journalism in maintaining a transparent and informed society.

The public is invited. For more information, please call 352 613-5056 or email lwvc2013@gmail.com Visit lwvcitrus.org and Facebook page "League of Women Voters of Citrus County". To order your meal and pay go to lwvcitrus.org. Upcoming events and follow the directions.

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

Menu for March 11 luncheon at Texas Roadhouse Restaurant

Each meal will come with a nonalcoholic drink, choice of one side, and roll.

Meal Choices:

Cheeseburger

BBQ Chicken or Sandwich

Fried Catfish

Chicken Critters

House or Cesar Salad (as vegetarian option, or you may also get chicken on it for meal)

Choice of Sides:

Rice

Vegetables- Broccoli or Vegetable medley (broccoli and carrots)

French Fries

Mac N Cheese



Linda Abels, Membership Chair

We have no new members to announce this month, but I thought it might be a good idea to remind everyone of the value of League Membership and encourage you to ask friends and family to join us in our efforts to educate the public regarding current issues.

For over a century, the **League of Women Voters** has been a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to ensuring that every citizen has the freedom and the opportunity to vote. We believe that democracy is not a spectator sport—it requires the active participation of informed citizens like you.

Why Your Membership Matters

When you join the League, you aren't just supporting a cause; you are gaining the tools to lead change in your community. Membership allows you to:

- **Protect Voting Rights:** Fight against voter suppression and advocate for expanded access to the ballot.
- **Influence Policy:** Join advocacy efforts on critical issues ranging from climate change and healthcare to fair redistricting and campaign finance reform.
- **Develop Leadership Skills:** Gain experience in community organizing, public speaking, and legislative advocacy.
- **Who Can Join?**

The League is open to **all genders** and anyone aged 16 or older. Whether you have five minutes a month or five hours a week, there is a place for you here. We value diversity and believe that our mission is strongest when it reflects the voices of all members of our community.

"The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work meets high-level advocacy. We don't just talk about democracy; we do the work to sustain it."



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

I don't like anything that scares me or makes me nauseous. Watching my news feed does both since the new administration took office. I never thought we would get to this place in the Un-United States: American against American, people being taken away in unmarked cars by masked men who seem to love hurting people.

I have often not agreed with what my country has done. I protested the Vietnam War. I remember when Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated. I thought those times were bad. Present times strike me as much worse.

I like to live in a world where things make sense. I can deal with reality. What I cannot deal with is a President who make no sense, and the people who support him. Congress condones everything he says, every executive order, with no pushback.

What is happening to the world? A President was elected who has done whatever he wants and has gotten away with it his whole life. He knows how to bankrupt six businesses and still become a billionaire. He tries to schmooze people to get what he wants, but then he turns on them viciously when they do not show complete loyalty.

I hold the people who elected him responsible for the chaos in this country, the injustice, and the illegal acts that are aimed at immigrants, women, gay people, trans people, anyone else but white men. They are responsible for having his executive orders become the law of the land while they sit on their hands.

Kamala Harris predicted all of this, a President without guardrails. He has majorities in both houses of Congress. He has appointed three justices to the Supreme Court, and they are bending the law in favor of his whims.

What will it take for those who voted for him to wake up and smell the chaos?

When you look at the White House website, it says “This is historical material “frozen in time”. The website is no longer updated and links to external websites and some internal pages may not work.”

Here are the things that have been funded or defunded:

Defunded: (Cuts to “Woke” programs, according to the White House website)

- Cancer and other research projects
- Mental health and addiction services
- Health subsidies for people getting insurance under the Affordable Care Act
- Center for Public Broadcasting
- Suicide hotline
- Preschool development grants
- Teacher quality partnerships (used to “indoctrinate” new teachers to teach “Critical race theory, DEI, social justice activism, and white supremacy)
- Housing grants to promote racial equity
- The minority business development agency
- Community services block grants
- National Science Foundation – ending climate research
- Department of Justice (funding DEI and Marxism)
- Close the Education department
- Organizations that feed people all over the world
- Universities who don’t subscribe to the curriculum he wants them to teach
- STEM programs
- Job Corps, AmeriCorps
- Environment, social services

Funded:

- Increased ICE from \$10 billion to \$85 billion according to NPR
- Build a nuclear power plant on the moon
- Change names of military bases back to Confederate generals
- Consolidate voting rolls from states
- Reopen aging coal plants
- Taking oil from Venezuela

He steals money from the people and then gives it to whomever he deems worthy, and they had better be grateful.

In addition, he pardoned those who tried to have a coup d'etat to take over the American government. And then we have his tariffs; threats and weapons that don't make sense to Americans or to the rest of the world. Throwing the world into a hole of unprecedented uncertainty. Every night I pray that common sense, sanity, and compassion come back to my country. I also hope that more people become involved, whether it is becoming active in the League of Women Voters (hint hint), ACLU, protesting locally, or doing whatever else you can do, facing fear, to help our country get back to being a democracy again.

Things looked pretty bleak during a great deal World War II, but when the American people worked together, they saved the world.

Follow this link, by Robert Reich, with 5 ways to fight for democracy:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8W-IVRQQGtl&t=16s> Robert Reich – what you can do

There is an election coming up for our League in March. For anyone who wants to be an officer, our Nomination chair is Beverly Brown. Send her an email from the Contact page on our website, lwvcitrus.org

Nancy Tomaselli, past President of the League of Women Voters of Citrus County, appeared in the post from her daughter recently.



January 4, 2026 General Meeting



LWV meeting on January 14, 2026, Why Public Schools Matter

A lively discussion on “Why Public Schools Matter” took place at the Citrus League of Women Voters’ public meeting Jan. 14 at the Coastal Region Library. LWVCC Vice President and Education Chair Rosemary Nilles (left, in photo) hosted the speakers Damaris Allen (center) and Ami-Marie Granger Welch of Families for Strong Public Schools, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

After comparing the school-choice options for Florida students, the speakers detailed the impact of the voucher system on public education dollars. They also discussed the controversial charter co-location rules. For more information see their website at [strongflschools.com](https://www.strongflschools.com)

You can see the presentation here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmhoXEkrhU&t=2145s>

LWV Citrus Zoom meeting January 14, 2026 Citrus County Roads



The League of Women Voters of Citrus County is dedicated to educating the community and advocating for issues after careful study.

If you have driven on Citrus County roads, you know that many of them are in need of repair. Where I live, in Pine Ridge, the roads are full of potholes. When the potholes are filled there are bumps. I recently rode and took videos of the roads and sent them to the Commissioners on the Citrus County Board.

Do you want your road fixed yesterday? Do you understand what the county is facing regarding road repair? I didn't understand until I went to a BOCC meeting where there was a presentation from Mott McDonald, the company which has used laser equipment to determine the conditions of all of the 1,800 miles (yes, that is the correct number) of roads in the county.

Attending to clarify and answer questions were: County Commissioner Steve Howard, Public Works Director Carlton Hall, Tech Services Director Walt Eastmond, Engineering Operations Supervisor Charles Leazott, and Senior Project Manager for Mott MacDonald, Katia Delgado.

Katia presented data showing that the county's roads are in generally poor condition, with a current backlog of approximately \$714 million in needed repairs. The county is allocating \$16.2 million for road maintenance this year, but experts suggested that maintaining current conditions would require around \$30 million annually. The presentation outlined various treatment options, from preservation treatments costing \$60,000-80,000 per mile to reconstruction projects at \$1.2 million per mile. County officials explained their strategy of focusing on preservation treatments to extend the life of roads before more expensive repairs are needed. The discussion also covered potential funding sources, including a proposed one-cent sales tax for roads, though no decisions were made on new tax initiatives. This meeting is available for all to see by following this link:

<https://youtu.be/5yKHc0Woacs>

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ON Tuesday, February 24, from 9 to 11 am.

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vickyiozzia@gmail.com**

What has our League been up to?



Protesting at the Inverness Courthouse, January 6

Vigil for Renee Good at the Inverness Courthouse, January 10



Rest in peace, Renee Good and Alex Pretti. We will not forget you.



Martin Luther King day in Inverness



Martin Luther King in Crystal River

It was a cold day in Copeland Park in Crystal River on January 19 when people gathered to celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday. The ceremony was brief and respectful, and it brought me to tears.



Cold, cold weather



Inverness Middle School teacher Tarliece Steed told the Audience, "Our children do not dream any more."



Supervisor of Elections Mo Baird, who is at so many outreach events, was there too.



Braving the cold for the League were Rosemary Nilles, Jeanne Messersmith, and Vicky lozzia

Here's an uplifting song that I found on facebook. How we need some positivity! Sweet Honey in the Rock

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/1814102691630013>



Peg Primeau, 2nd President, Reproductive Health & Justice Chair

On Deck in Tally: Watch and Contact our Lawmakers

SUPPORT: SB1308/HB1151, the **Reproductive Freedom Act**, is sponsored by Sen. Tracie Davis and Rep. Fentrice Driskell, respectively. To date, these companion bills have been referred to committees.

It says “Every individual who becomes pregnant has a fundamental right to choose whether to continue the pregnancy and give birth or to obtain an abortion and to make autonomous decisions about how to exercise this fundamental right. The state may not deny or interfere with an individual’s fundamental right to access reproductive health care.” This includes access to contraception and IVF.

SUPPORT: HB6001, introduced by Rep. Kelly Skidmore (Dis. 92), seeks to repeal Sec. 381.96 of the Florida Statutes, to stop funding private Crisis Pregnancy Centers with almost \$30M annually of taxpayer dollars. As of Jan. 22, it has been “read” in the House. The companion bill, **SB242**, has been referred to committees.

Decisions about obstetrical care belong to the patient and her health care provider. This clinician should be registered and licensed to provide medical services. In contrast, the Florida Pregnancy Care Network’s centers are unregulated and unlicensed. They are not required to follow HIPAA privacy guidelines.

We respect people’s religious beliefs and their prerogative to seek religious counseling on the issues of pregnancy and family planning. We object to state funding for private, faith-based groups that disregard medical knowledge and neglect healthcare standards. People

are entitled to the facts about reproductive health. They deserve access to quality medical care.

.....

OPPOSE: Two bills introduced by Sen. Erin Grall, the sponsor of Florida's near-total abortion ban, would further limit reproductive rights and access to reproductive healthcare.



**Rosemary Nilles, 1st Vice President, Gun Safety Chair,
Education Chair**

Education Legislative Roundup

By Rosemary Nilles, LWV Citrus Education Chair

Many of you attended our January 14th meeting where our partners at Families for Strong Public Schools explained Florida's School Choice and the funding issues around it. This column is not only a follow-up, but a Call to Action.

Here are four bills to consider. League of Women Voters of Florida (LWVFL) continues to support public education as foundational to a democratic society. LWVFL's Education Action Team supports the first two and opposes the other two:

CS/SB 318 Funding and Accountability: SUPPORT

- Late last year, a Florida Auditor General report exposed serious issues with the state's voucher program. Auditors found the program was **\$398 million over budget, \$47 million was improperly sent to families whose children were enrolled in public schools**, and the state **could not track 30,000 students**. In some cases, the report concluded that **money did not follow the child at all!**

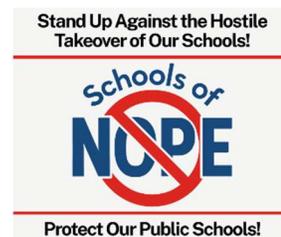
- Last week, the Florida Senate passed CS/SB 318 to provide at least some financial accountability to our school-choice scholarships. SB 318 also gives the scholarship programs more funding stability. It’s a start!
- Financial stability and accountability are just the beginning, though. We also need accountability for the **outcomes** of scholarship-funded private or home education programs... just as public schools must have.
- Meanwhile, our public schools continue to experience shortfalls, as scholarships drain needed funds towards private or home education. Now that scholarship funding is likely to be given a financial backup plan, shouldn’t public schools have that same stability?
- Most Florida families still choose public schools first. It only makes sense to help strengthen them with stable funding done ahead of time, so that they can develop budgets that won’t have to be juggled at the last minute.

Tell our legislators to support CS/SB 318 to ensure stable funding for our public schools.

SB 424 and HB 6023 Repeal Schools of Hope Statute: SUPPORT

- Florida’s [Schools of Hope](#) law allows for-profit, out-of-state charter operators to “co-locate” in public school buildings **without local approval or community consent**. This policy not only displaces students and programs, but also diverts public education dollars to private operators, while stripping communities of control over taxpayer funded schools.
- State lawmakers must **fully repeal the charter co-location authority** and end state-mandated takeovers of public schools.
- Schools of Hope co-location undermines local control, accountability, and destabilizes neighborhood schools.

Tell our legislators to support SB 424 and HB 6023 and Hope co-location statute.



weakens public

REPEAL the Schools of

SB 1692 and HB 1119 Materials Harmful to Minors: Oppose

- These two bills amend the definition of “harmful to minors” and change how instructional and library materials may be challenged by parents or county residents. They would allow the Florida Department of Education to withhold funding from districts not in compliance with this requirement.
- **These bills conflict with established legal standards.** Florida statute currently incorporates the *Miller test*, which requires consideration of literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. Removing or weakening this standard would contradict longstanding state and national legal precedent.
- **These bills will increase censorship of instructional materials.** Narrowing the definition of “harmful to minors” would place classic literature, advanced texts, and historically significant works at risk—particularly harming AP, IB, dual-enrollment, and college-bound students.
- Parents already have the right to opt out of materials they find objectionable.
- Further, **challenges and removals will create significant administrative costs- reviews, staff time, and potential litigation.** The proposed severe penalties for noncompliance create an atmosphere of fear and self-censoring for public schools.

Tell our legislators to oppose SB 1692 & HB 1119 Materials Harmful to Minors.

SB 824 / HB 1147: Charter Schools: Oppose

- **SB 824 and HB 1147** revise charter school law to create a new framework for the use of vacant school district land for school construction. It would force school districts to make unused ("vacant") land available to charter schools.
- ***If a school district does not have an agreement to construct a school on its vacant land by July 1, 2027, it MUST offer that land to charter school operators within the district!***
- **These bills will undermine long-term district planning**, forcing districts to make rushed land-use decisions that conflict with carefully developed long-term growth and enrollment plans.
- **SB 824 & HB 1147 create an uneven playing field.** Charter operators would gain preferential access to high-value public land without an open, competitive bidding process.
- **They erode local control and taxpayer authority.** Land purchased with taxpayer dollars should remain under local control, with decisions made transparently by elected school boards- not legislators or charter school operators.
- **Disrupt enrollment and operations.** Building new schools on district land deemed "unused" would further fragment enrollment, trigger boundary changes, increase transportation costs, and destabilize traditional public schools.

Tell our legislators to oppose SB 824 / HB 1147, and to not force school districts to sell vacant land that they may need in the future.

State Legislators Representing Citrus County:

Sen. Ralph Massullo, FL Senate Dist. 11:

Inverness 352-666-5707 Tallahassee 850-487-5011

Email: massullo.ralph.web@flsenate.gov

Rep. JJ Grow, FL Dist. 23:

Inverness 352-560-6075. Tallahassee 850-717-5023

Email: jj.grow@flhouse.gov

School Choice Brochure

Florida offers many taxpayer funded choices for students' education.

- District-run neighborhood schools
- District-run magnet schools
- Charter schools
- Virtual schools
- Vouchers and Education Savings Accounts
 - Private schools
 - Tutoring
 - Home schooling

Which choice provides the most robust education experience?

Research is mixed on academic outcomes for the various choices. Making an informed choice is essential for providing the best option for each child.

Take a look inside for comparisons...

The Florida Constitution requires a high quality free public education system.

Article IX states that “the education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida.”

Article IX requires that the system be...

- Uniform
- Efficient
- Safe
- Secure
- High quality

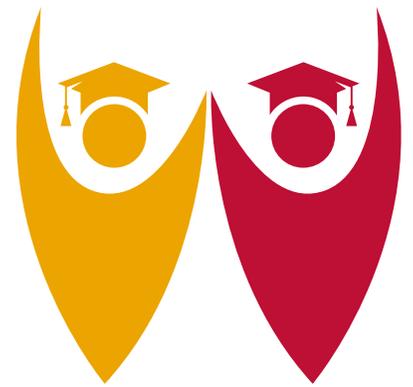
Presented by:



League of Women Voters of Florida
lwwfl.org

"Education is the key to preserving democracy and assuring prosperity for all citizens."

UNDERSTANDING SCHOOL CHOICE



A QUICK GLANCE

Comparing
Transparency/Accountability

	District	Charter	Private
Curriculum covers state standards based on national norms	S	S	N
Certified professional teachers	S	W	W
Certified professional administrators	S	N	N
Governed by an elected school board	S	N	N
Academic achievement assessed through state tests	S	S	N
Financial oversight and accountability from the Florida DOE	S	W	**
Neighborhood school locations	S	N	N
Buildings meet safety and hurricane standards	S	N	N
All students accepted regardless of special needs	S	W	N
All students accepted regardless of gender identity	S	N	N
Transportation provided	S	W	N
Full offering of extracurricular activities	S	W	N
Full offering of art, music, physical education	S	W	N
Discipline policies published for public review	S	N	N
Extra fees assessed and or tuition required	N	S	S

S = Strongly complies with State requirements

W= Weakly or partially complies with State requirements

N= Not required to comply with State requirements

** **NOTE:** Public money for vouchers (scholarships) and Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are managed by a private scholarship funding organization (Step Up for Students) which receives up to 3% of every voucher and ESA awarded. Step Up for Students is among the largest charities in the United States with assets totaling more than \$1B.

References

- <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/>
- <https://www.floridapolicy.org/posts/florida-continues-to-drain-much-needed-funds-away-from-public-schools-to-private-and-home-school-students>
- <https://lwvfl.org/step-up-for-students-preliminary-investigative-report/>

County Meetings

YOUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

- District 1 (Crystal River, Ozello, Citronelle, Red Level): Jeff Kinnard, jeff.kinnard@citrusbocc.com
- District 2 (Homosassa, Sugarmill Woods): Diana Finegan, diana.finegan@citrusbocc.com
- District 3 (Beverly Hills, Pine Ridge, Citrus Springs): Janet Barek, janet.barek@citrusbocc.com
- District 4 (Floral City, part of Inverness): Rebecca Bays, rebecca.bays@citrusbocc.com
- District 5 (part of Inverness, Hernando, Arrowhead): Holly L. Davis, holly.davis@citrusbocc.com

NOTE: Correspondences, including email, are public records once received by commissioners or county staff.

Community Meetings January – April 2026

Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

1:00 PM 2nd & 4th Tuesdays (note exceptions!):

Jan. 6 & 27, Feb. 10 & 26, March 10 & 31, April 14 & 28

Citrus County Courthouse, 110 Apopka Ave. Inverness

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County BOCC/Departments/Commissioners

Meetings are livestreamed on the Citrus County Government You Tube Channel.

Broadcast live: Comcast - Channel 71, Spectrum - Channel 643

Find all county meeting dates:

<https://citrusclerk.org/calendar.aspx>

****Governing Body of the Special Library District****

Thurs. Feb. 10, 9:00 AM; Citrus County Courthouse, Inverness

Citrus County Library Advisory Board (Regular Meetings)

9:00 AM, 4th Tuesdays: Feb. 24, April 28

Lecanto Gov't Bldg., 3600 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto 34461

For more information:

Citrus County/BOCC/Special Library Board

<https://citrusclerk.org/calendar.aspx>

Citrus County Schools District (CCSD) School Board

4:00 PM, 2nd Tuesdays: Jan. 13, Feb. 10, Mar. 10, April 14

1007 Main St. Inverness 34450

Agenda & watch meetings online:

Citrus County School District/School Board tab/ Board Agenda and Minutes:

<https://go.boarddocs.com/fl/citrus/Board.nsf/Public>

View School Board Meetings:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/CitrusSchools>

**State Legislators Representing Citrus
Contact Information:**

Sen. Ralph Massullo, FL Senate Dist. 11:

Inverness 352-666-5707 Tallahassee 850-487-5011

Email: massullo.ralph.web@flsenate.gov

Rep. JJ Grow, FL Dist. 23:

Inverness 352-560-6075. Tallahassee 850-717-5023

Email: jj.grow@flhouse.gov

**US Senators and Representative Representing Citrus
Contact Information:**

Sen. Rick Scott: Tampa 813-225-7040. Washington 202-224-5274

Contact via Senate Website: [Contact Rick Scott](#)

Sen. Ashley Moody: Washington 202-224-3041

Contact via Senate Website: <https://www.moody.senate.gov/>

US Rep. Gus Bilirakis: Inverness 352-654-1004 Washington: 202-225-5755

Contact via House Website: <https://bilirakis.house.gov/>

US Capital Switchboard: 202-224-3121 to contact any federal legislator.

From our Supervisor of Elections, Maureen “Mo” Baird

ELECTION DATES

2025 ELECTIONS

Special Primary Election - September 30th, 2025

Last Day to Register or Change your Party - Sept. 2nd, 2025

Special General Election - December 9th, 2025

Last Day to Register - November 10th, 2025

2026 ELECTIONS

Primary Election - August 18, 2026

Last Day to Register or Change your Party - July 20, 2026

General Election - November 3, 2026

Last Day to Register - October 5, 2026

VOTE BY MAIL

When returning your ballot by U.S. Mail, please allow at least 7 days for delivery. The return postage is prepaid.

POLLS OPEN

7am - 7pm Election Day



VOTE-BY-MAIL REQUESTS HAVE EXPIRED

FLORIDA STATUTE §101.62(1)a

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: Supervisor of Elections, Maureen “Mo” Baird, reminds voters that Vote-by-Mail requests expire on December 31st after each election cycle.

To receive a Vote-by-Mail ballot for the 2025-2026 election cycle, you must request a ballot.



If you have not already requested a Vote-by-Mail ballot after January 1, 2025, you may do so today by scanning the QR code below.



Or visit the Supervisor of Elections website at www.votecitrus.gov and select “Request a Vote by Mail Ballot” under the “Vote by Mail” tab.

SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS: Maureen “Mo” Baird

ELECTIONS OFFICE: The Supervisor of Elections Office is located at 1500 N. Meadowcrest Blvd, Crystal River, in the West Citrus Government Center.

QUESTIONS: Call 352-564-7120.

58107287

FIELD TRIP! WE WILL BE GOING TO SUPERVISOR MO BAIRD’S ELECTION OFFICE

ON Tuesday, February 24, from 9 to 11 am.

Learn about how our vote is safeguarded and processed.

To sign up, send an email to Vicky at vickyiozzia@gmail.com



Come, join us for our Monthly Social! Have a cup of something or a meal. Join the conversation or listen. Our next meeting is at the Cattle Dog Restaurant in Inverness, 4:00, **Wednesday, March 25, 2026**

Wanda Brown has been awarded a grant from the National League of Women Voters. She will be working to inform non-violent felons of their right to get back their vote.

If you are interested in working with her, please contact us at lwvcitrus.org Contact us

From the new League of Women Voters Impact on Issue

THE PRESIDENCY

The League's Position

Statement of Position on the Presidency, as announced by the national board, January 1976, and revised March 1982:

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that presidential power should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a dynamic balance between the executive and legislative branches. Accountability and responsibility to the people require that unnecessary secrecy between the President and Congress be eliminated. Therefore, the League supports the following measures:

Executive Agreements

Presidential authority to negotiate international executive agreements should be preserved. Accountability to the public requires that the President report to Congress the text of all such agreements and that Congress review them periodically.

War Powers

The President should be required to seek the advice of the Congress before introducing US armed forces into situations where hostilities are imminent, to report promptly to Congress any action taken, and to obtain within a specified time congressional approval for continued military activity.

Emergency Powers

Presidential authority to declare a state of national emergency should be subject to periodic congressional review. The President should transmit to Congress yearly notice of all existing national emergencies and significant orders issued under each. Congress should review the emergencies and significant orders issued under each. Congress should review the emergencies every six months and should have the power to terminate them at any time by concurrent resolution. (All states of emergency now in existence should be terminated after a grace period for adjustment.)

Fiscal Powers

The President should exercise executive responsibility for sound management of public funds in a manner consistent with the programs and priorities established by Congress. This requires procedures for congressional consideration of the budget as a whole and measures for congressional disapproval of presidential impoundment of funds.

Succession and Tenure

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the succession procedures spelled out in the 25th Amendment. However, the League favors a limit on the amount of time Congress may take to confirm the Vice President.

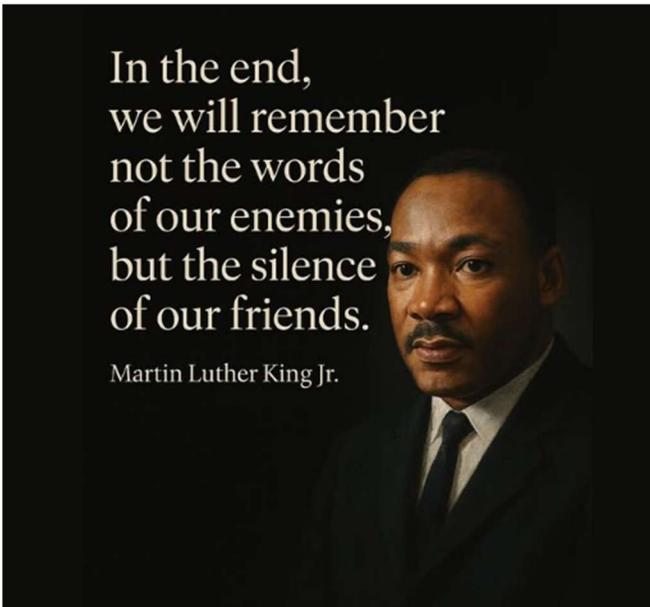
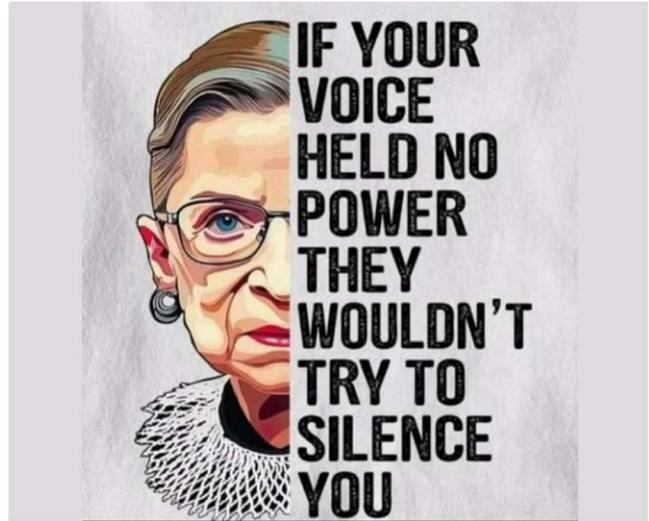
The League also favors retention of a two-term limitation on presidential terms of office.

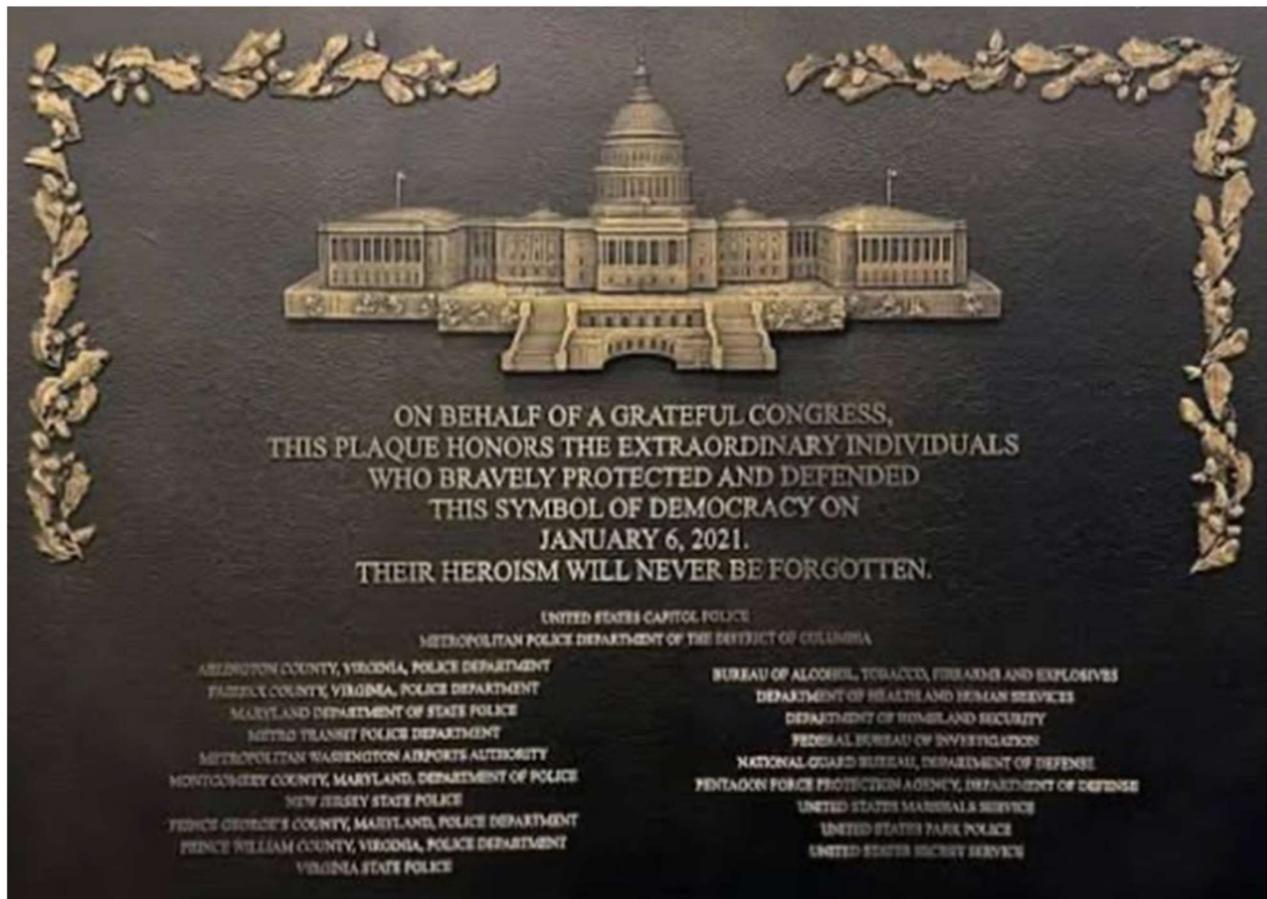
League History

In view of growing public concern about presidential powers, the 1974 Convention adopted a two-year study of the executive branch with emphasis on presidential powers, succession, and tenure. The 1976 position tied closely to earlier positions on Congress and enabled the League to act to promote a dynamic balance between the powers of the President and those of Congress. Such a balance, according to member agreement, requires elimination of unnecessary secrecy between the branches, periodic congressional reviews of executive agreements and states of national emergency, and proper use of the procedures spelled out in the War Powers Resolution. LWVUS support of anti-impoundment measures in 1973 was consistent with the emphasis on the balance of power between the two branches.

In 1985, the League opposed the *Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act* as a threat to this balance of power. In 1986, the US Supreme Court declared unconstitutional the key part of the law that provided for automatic budget cuts to be decided by the Comptroller-General if deficit targets were missed. A revision of the law met the separation-of-powers objection of the Court.

IN THE NEWS





(This plaque was removed from Congress by the present administration.)



From the ACLU:

On his very first day back in office, President Trump began to issue executive orders aimed at dismantling immigrants' rights and due process, striking simultaneously at birthright citizenship, asylum, and any semblance of fairness in the deportation process. The ACLU immediately sprang into action. **Last year, we filed 106 lawsuits to protect immigrants' rights, with a 69% success rate in delaying, diluting, or defeating Trump's immigration agenda.** We also rallied our allies in Congress to stand firm against the administration's efforts.

We also worked to educate our community about their rights — and how to protect the rights of others. **Over 84,000 people attended ACLU-led Know Your Rights trainings, preparing them for protest activations and what to do if confronted by ICE in their own communities.**



Maxine Connor, Natural Resources Chair

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLE FROM LWVCC NATURAL RESOURCES CHAIR
FEBRUARY, 2026**

**Save the Date: Weeki Wachee River Summit
March 27, 2026**

**Citrus County 2050
Comprehensive Plan Update
Updated Rules for
Fertilizing Turf Grass in Citrus County**

**City of Inverness Scheduled to Pass its First Fertilizer Ordinance
at City Council Meeting – 5:30 pm – Tuesday – February 3**

**What is Worth Saving in Citrus County?
3 Public Workshops: Feb. 3, 4, and 5 – at 6-7:30 pm
By North Florida Land Trust**

**Tampa Bay Coastal Master Plan Underway
Flood Risk to Resilience
Take the Survey**

Dunnellon/Chatmire Railroad Tie Removal Process Begins

Sign up with Florida Springs Council to be a Springs Advocate

**Politics and Government
One Year After Trump's Inauguration,
the Damage to Environmental Policy Is Unprecedented**

**Legislative Update with Gene Kelley
Sierra Club Adventure Coast Meetup
Wednesday, February 18**

Sign Up for The Invading Sea Newsletter



Save the date - Friday, March 27th, 2026 - for the Weeki Wachee River Summit at Pasco Hernando State College, Spring Hill Campus, 450 Beverly Court, Spring Hill from 9am to 2pm. Keynote speaker will be Ryan Smart of the Florida Springs Council.

The summit is hosted by Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group in cooperation with the Florida Springs Council, Save the Manatee, and others to communicate present and future conditions of the river and watershed. We'll share initiatives being implemented by Hernando County, state agencies, and Sierra Club to protect, maintain, and restore riverine conditions.

Hernando County staff, Southwest Florida Water Management District scientists, and other agency representatives will provide updates on efforts to improve water quality through watershed nutrient reduction initiatives and implementation of the Weeki Wachee Springs Protection Zone designation.

Sierra Club Adventure Coast leaders will report on efforts currently being implemented in cooperation with the county and state agencies to increase awareness and compliance with the Springs Protection Zone and the Hernando County rainy season fertilizer ban to restore and improve this precious water resource.

Conveying this important work to the public and residents of Hernando County is intended to create a

shared vision that will garner support, showcase solutions, and ultimately, bring the river back to a sustainable condition that will provide a viable future.

Disclaimer: This is not a Pasco Hernando State College event.

Article Courtesy of Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

Citrus County 2050 Comprehensive Plan Update



Citrus County is updating its Comprehensive Plan, with the goal of creating a vision for the county through 2050. The current plan was adopted in 1990, and the update aims to reflect modern community priorities on various topics.

Inspire Placemaking Collective, a community planning and design firm, was contracted by the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to lead the update process and conduct public engagement activities. Key stakeholder groups, including representatives from business, legal, conservation, investment, education, community service, faith, and county government interests, were interviewed ahead of public workshops that began December 8th, 2025.

A second public workshop is scheduled in January 2026, with dates to be announced. Additional workshops will be held in 2026. We urge Citrus residents to participate in this important opportunity to have a say in the future of Citrus County. Your voice can only be heard if you speak up!

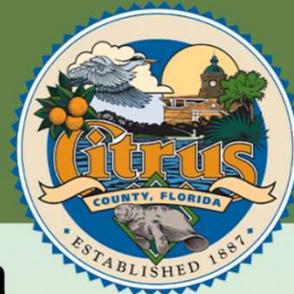
Project Overview: The process will take 16 months, with an anticipated completion between Fall 2025 and Winter 2027. The updated plan will guide key decisions on:

- Land use and development.
- Infrastructure (water, sewer, solid waste, drainage).
- Transportation and multimodal connectivity.
- Conservation, coastal management, parks, and open space.

Public Involvement: Public input is a crucial part of the process, ensuring the plan reflects the community's vision for preserving Citrus County's unique character and quality of life. Residents are invited to participate through workshops, online surveys, and a community forum. Learn more and share your ideas at: <https://tinyurl.com/cbvnm6z>, which includes an online survey and public forum for comments. The county holds various workshops and "pop-up" events at the [Citrus County Government YouTube Channel](#).

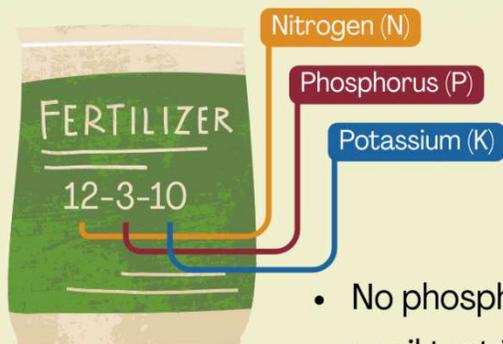
Article Courtesy of Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

Citrus County Rainy Season Fertilizer Ban



Updated Rules for Fertilizing Urban Turfgrass in Citrus County:

- No application of fertilizers containing nitrogen (N) or phosphorus (P) from June 1st through September 30th and November 1st through March 31st. Alternatives are available or apply slow-release before and after these periods.



- Caps application of nitrogen at ½ pound of readily available nitrogen per one thousand square feet.
- No application of fertilizer to newly laid sod for 30 days.

- No phosphorus application without a soil test indicating a deficiency.



- No fertilizer application within 25 feet of waterways and wetlands.
- Requires that at least 65% of applied nitrogen fertilizer be slow-release.



- Exempts fruit trees, vegetable gardens, flowers, and shrubs.

For more information, visit:
https://www.citrusbocc.com/departments/water_resources/florida-friendly_landscaping_program/fertilizing_information/index.php

- Includes commercial applicators.



Graphic Courtesy of Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

City of Inverness Scheduled to Pass its First Fertilizer Ordinance at City Council Meeting – 5:30 pm – Tuesday – February 3

View the agenda packet here: <https://invernessfl.portal.civicclerk.com/event/193/files/agenda/235>

See agenda packet pages 1-10 to view the fertilizer ordinance. It does not include all the provisions that the Citrus County fertilizer ordinance has, but it includes the same dates for the rainy season and dormant season bans. That will help prevent excess nutrients from fertilizer running off into waterways during the rainy season (June through September) and the winter season when grass is dormant (November through March). Fertilizer can be applied in spring (April-May) and fall (October). It also matched Citrus County's fertilizer-free zone (prohibiting fertilizer application within 25 feet from waterways and a low-maintenance zone of 10 feet from waterways).

Why do we need fertilizer ordinances in Florida? Fertilizer ordinances help municipalities counties fulfill their obligations under their respective Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) to reduce nutrients washing into their waterways. Inverness falls under the Chassahowitzka Basin Management Action Plan because it is in the Chassahowitzka River Basin. Basin Management Action Plans are recovery plans that were created under Florida statutes to restore impaired springs/rivers in Florida. There are thousands of pounds of excess nitrogen from fertilizers in these impaired waterbodies. That causes algae blooms that kill fish, destroy native submerged vegetation (food for manatees), and cause respiratory distress/illness in humans. Fertilizer ordinances help stop these nutrients (at their source – fertilizer) from washing into our waterways.

3 Public Workshops: Feb. 3, 4, and 5 – at 6-7:30 pm By North Florida Land Trust

County Commission

What in Citrus County is Worth Saving?

- [By MICHAEL D. BATES Chronicle Reporter](#)
- Jan 20, 2026 Updated Jan 20, 2026

As Citrus County continues to grow, residents are being asked a key question: what parts of the community are worth protecting before they're gone?

That question will guide **three public workshops** hosted next month by the **North Florida Land Trust**, which are designed to give residents a direct voice in how land is conserved.

The discussions will cover a wide range of growth-related issues, from protecting drinking water sources and wildlife habitat to preserving farmland, recreation access and the historic places that help define the county's character.

The meetings come as more and more residents are concerned over development and its impact on Citrus County's natural and agricultural lands.

At the request of county commissioners, the nonprofit is evaluating whether a locally funded land-conservation program could help address those pressures and what it should prioritize if it moves forward.

The public sessions are from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and are scheduled for:

Tuesday, Feb. 3: Citrus Springs Community Center, 1570 W. Citrus Springs Blvd.

Wednesday, Feb. 4: County Chamber of Commerce Crystal River Visitor Center, 915 U.S. 19.

Thursday, Feb. 5: Lecanto Government Building, 3600 W. Sovereign Path.

During each workshop, the North Florida Land Trust will explain how land conservation works and introduce **"Greenprinting,"** a planning approach that helps communities identify priority lands before development pressures make protection more difficult or costly.

Participants will weigh in on conservation values such as threatened and endangered species and habitats, surface water features, drinking water resources, wildlife corridors, agriculture, recreation access, and historic and cultural resources, then identify their top three priorities.

That input will help determine whether a local conservation program is pursued and how it might be structured.

The workshops are part of the Commissioner Holly Davis' **Forever Nature Coast initiative to preserve farmland and conservation land**. Davis said about 38 percent of Citrus County's land is designated for conservation, but only about 400 acres are owned or controlled by the county, with the remainder held by state and federal agencies.

Davis secured enough support at an October County Commission meeting to move forward with a feasibility study, to be funded entirely through \$43,000 in private donations, rather than tax dollars or county funds.

The board voted 4–1 to back the plan. Commissioner Janet Berek said a land trust is a good idea, supports local farms and wouldn't cost taxpayers, but still voted against it without giving a clear reason.

Once the study is complete, commissioners could consider other funding sources if they choose to move ahead.

https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/what-in-citrus-county-is-worth-saving/article_ec3a4050-a69a-5473-80f2-cf287e501d75.html

Tampa Bay Coastal Master Plan Underway Flood Risk to Resilience



Over the past century, the Tampa Bay region has experienced significant population growth and coastal development—often at the expense of wetlands, mangroves, and other natural systems that once helped to regulate flooding. While water is central to the region's identity, economy, and way of life, it also poses serious risks. Both coastal and inland flooding threaten the safety, property, and livelihoods of Tampa Bay's communities. The Tampa Bay region is considered one of the most flood-vulnerable areas in the U.S., facing extreme risk from storm surge, sea-level rise, and heavy rainfall due to its low-lying geography, extensive coastline, shallow continental shelf, and dense development.

To address these escalating challenges, the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council is leading the development of the Tampa Bay Coastal Master Plan (TBCMP)—a comprehensive, four-year, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant-funded initiative covering a seven-

county region: **Citrus, Hernando**, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Manatee, and Sarasota. The planning area spans more than 2,200 square miles and includes both coastal and inland communities, as well as diverse ecosystems such as estuaries, rivers, wetlands, and barrier islands.

The Coastal Master Plan aims to strengthen regional flood resilience by addressing the impacts of sea-level rise, storm surge, extreme rainfall, and high-tide flooding through a coordinated, data-driven, and community-based process. Over the course of the project, the TBCMP will identify flood-vulnerable communities, prioritize restoration and flood-reduction projects, and guide long-term adaptation strategies. This effort represents Florida's first regionally coordinated climate adaptation plan designed to provide a roadmap to help garner funding and guide implementation of flood-risk reduction projects, with a strong emphasis on equity, innovation, and collaboration.

During the past year, the project team has focused on stakeholder engagement, including regional training workshops, pilot listening sessions, and the development of both a Technical and Outreach and Engagement Strategy. These efforts ensure that local governments, community organizations, residents, and technical experts all contribute to shaping the plan. In 2026, the Coastal Master Plan will develop a Regional Flood Risk Assessment that will provide a scientific and analytical foundation for all future project recommendations, including compiling data, developing a flood risk identification framework, priority flood adaptation areas, and hosting public listening sessions. By 2027, the focus will be to design, screen and evaluate projects in priority areas through workshops and deliberative discussions with communities for feedback. In 2028, the plan will be released for final feedback and once finalized, released through symposium and regional presentations.

What you can do now: Take the *Our Coast, Our Future Flood Risk Survey* to help identify areas that flood and/or sign up to get involved in the process at coastaltampabay.org. Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group was involved in a recent Flood Listening Session Facilitation Training and will seek to engage as a non-profit stakeholder in the process for Citrus and Hernando Counties.

Article Courtesy of Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

Dunnellon/Chatmire Railroad Tie Removal Process Begins

Dunnellon/Chatmire Railroad Tie Update

Rainbow River Conservation (RRC)
General Membership Meeting
01/19/26

Prepared by Karrin Gordon*
City of Dunnellon Resident and Member of RRC

- What's happening now
- City of Dunnellon Code Enforcement
- Timeline for removal of railroad ties
- Track Line's move from Newberry to Dunnellon/Chatmire
- Who exactly is involved
- Track Line's business and proposed shredding operation
- Track Line's permits for the Dunnellon/Chatmire site
- Where we stand overall
- What YOU can do

* Information is accurate to the best of my knowledge at the time of writing, but I may not be aware of all facts or recent updates

Presentation by Karrin Gordon of RRC. See all slides [here](#).

On December 17, 2025, the Riverland News reported Marion County received confirmation last week that CSX Transportation Inc. and Track Line, LLC are presently working to “expeditiously” remove the thousands of wooden railroad ties that are staged in Dunnellon.

According to an air permit application filed and now approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Track Line Rail, LLC was planning to shred and grind the creosote-treated railroad ties in Dunnellon and ship them to a cement kiln, which would use the material for alternative fuel.

The ties were apparently brought to Dunnellon from Newberry in Alachua County. Track Line Rail LLC “tried to establish its first Florida site in Newberry earlier last year but left the city after regulators discovered its grinders were running without permits.” Plus, the FDEP required the company to clean up the Newberry site before vacating, since an “analysis found high levels of some volatile organic compounds that were of concern to health and the environment.”

The tens of thousands of rail tie stacks extended as far as the eye could see along the CSX property from near McKinney Avenue to Chatmire, alarming residents of Chatmire and Dunnellon, environmental groups, and local officials.

Rainbow River Conservation, Concerned Citizens for Chatmire, and Sierra Club Florida, along with government officials, led efforts to block the attempted project due to the health and environmental risks it posed, especially given its proximity to Chatmire, the Rainbow River, and downtown Dunnellon.

A legal representative for CSX, J. Patrick Dover, told Assistant Marion County Attorney Linda Blackburn that CSX has sent 22 rail cars to Dunnellon to begin shipping the ties to a location out of state. The cars would then return to Dunnellon to continue exporting the ties until all them were removed, according to a letter released by Blackburn. Sierra Club Florida and partners are continuing to advocate for a speedy removal.

Article Courtesy of Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group

See also: https://www.chronicleonline.com/news/local/railroad-ties-to-be-shipped-out-of-dunnellon/article_543810e2-ec83-58da-aea8-1354e5a9028a.html

Sign Up with Florida Springs Council to Be a Springs Advocate



Sign up [here](#) for updates on threats, victories, and ways to defend our waterways.

To act fast when it's time to make a difference, opt in for text alerts too. No spam, no fundraising, just urgent alerts delivered straight to your phone when it matters most.

Check the Florida Springs Council's [website](#) for updates on current issues and legislative session:

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

Check the Florida Springs Council's [Facebook page](#) for updates:

Watch for Springs Advocacy Facebook/YouTube learning sessions. View past recordings.

POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

One Year After Trump's Inauguration, the Damage to Environmental Policy Is Unprecedented

The administration has taken a wrecking ball to everything from clean energy policy to chemical regulations

By [Dana Drugmand](#)

January 20, 2026

In September, protesters blocked street traffic in Manhattan near the United Nations headquarters to call attention to the Trump administration's elimination of climate regulations. | Photo by Matthew Rodier/Sipa USA via AP

On January 20, 2025, on his first day back in office as president, Donald Trump wasted no time: He [attacked clean energy and environmental protections](#), issuing a flurry of executive orders to "unleash" fossil fuel extraction, remove the United States from the Paris climate agreement, and pause all wind energy permitting and pending environmental regulations.

These moves were just the beginning in what experts and advocates say has become an all-out assault on the environment, climate action, and public health.

Now, one year into Trump's second presidential term, the scale of the damage and the administration's governing approach has become clear. "This is an authoritarian administration," Rachel Cleetus, policy director in the climate and energy program at the [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), told *Sierra*. "It's a deeply anti-science administration. And the huge range of destructive actions they've taken are a direct threat to our health, our economy."

"If Trump's wrecking ball isn't checked soon, we'll be a global pariah when it comes to the environment," [said](#) Stephanie Kurose, deputy government affairs director at [the Center for Biological Diversity](#). "Nobody voted to have their water supply poisoned. Nobody voted for more air pollution so the richest corporations can profit even more. The first year of Trump 2.0 was a national nightmare."

From ordering the shutdown of offshore wind farms already under construction, to opening up millions of acres of public lands to extractive industries, to dismantling federal climate science, here is a look back at some of the major actions the administration has taken on climate and the environment over its first year, and an assessment of where things stand now.

On climate: A sledgehammer to policies and regulations

Speaking on the world stage at the UN General Assembly in New York last September, President Trump doubled down on his climate denialism, calling it "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world." The claim is reckless—it has no basis in reality.

The actions of his administration reflect this climate denialism. In [announcing](#) the rollback of dozens of regulations in March, Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lee Zeldin boasted of "driving a dagger straight into the heart of the climate change religion."

Zeldin has moved to eliminate greenhouse gas controls on power plants and motor vehicles and to [revoke California's Clean Air Act waivers](#) for vehicle standards by submitting them to the Republican-controlled Congress, which voted to yank back the waivers. Zeldin has also proposed ending the EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program, and he tried to withhold or claw back billions of dollars in funding for climate and clean energy initiatives under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund.

Perhaps the biggest move Zeldin made in attacking climate action was to [rescind](#) the EPA's 2009 finding that greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare. This so-called endangerment finding underpins all other regulations on climate pollution under the Clean Air Act, and [experts say](#) that repealing it would be a massive blow to efforts to rein in this pollution and slow down planetary heating.

To support the EPA's proposed rescission of the endangerment finding, Trump's Department of Energy released a report authored by five climate skeptics that contested mainstream climate science and disputed the consensus around the risks and dangers of a warming planet. The report was widely criticized, including by the National Academies, which [issued their own assessment](#) stating that the evidence of harm created by human-caused greenhouse gases is "beyond scientific dispute."

"As much as they try to bury the evidence on climate change, they can't change the facts. They can't change the reality of what people are experiencing around the country with these devastating climate impacts."

The Trump administration has made many other efforts to suppress climate science and scientific research. Among them: [dismantling the US Global Change Research Program](#) and firing all the scientists working on the next National Climate Assessment report while scrubbing the existing reports from government websites; downsizing of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and ending its reporting on billion-dollar weather disasters; shuttering the EPA's Office of Research and Development and removing references to human causes of climate change from EPA websites; and the recent announcement of the [planned closure](#) of the National Center for Atmospheric Research.

"The administration has been absolutely relentless in the destruction they've brought about," Cleetus said. "But as much as they try to bury the evidence on climate change, they can't change the facts. They can't change the reality of what people are experiencing around the country with these devastating climate impacts."

The administration's track of shutting down climate change programs and policies and covering up or outright lying about the science seems set to continue.

Earlier this month, on the heels of Trump's military attack and oil grab in Venezuela, the president announced the US withdrawal from 66 international organizations, treaties, and conventions—including the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Critics say such a move will leave the country more isolated and less safe. "While all other nations are moving forward together, this latest step backward in global leadership, climate cooperation, and science can only harm the US economy, jobs, and living standards as wildfires, floods, megastorms, and droughts rapidly worsen," UNFCCC executive secretary Simon Stiell said in a statement.

It is unclear what will happen with the next National Climate Assessment. *E&E*

News has [reported](#) that the Trump administration [sought to have climate deniers](#), such as the same group of contrarian scientists that authored the controversial DOE report, work on the sixth volume of this national climate report.

"If they do put out a National Climate Assessment, I wouldn't doubt that they will certainly try to stack the authorship full of people who have made a career out of denying climate science, rather than the experts who have been relied on in the past," Patrick Drupp, climate policy director at the [Sierra Club](#), told *Sierra*.

The EPA is now about to finalize its repeal of the endangerment finding. Earlier this month, the agency [submitted its proposal](#) to the Office of Management and Budget, and the final rule could come any day. Litigation is sure to follow as environmental groups and others are expected to challenge the rollback. Axing the endangerment finding could also have unintended consequences, such as opening up polluting industries to potentially greater liability risk under federal tort law, as legal experts warn in a [recent memo](#).

"From illegally keeping coal plants online to gutting clean energy manufacturing and canceling offshore wind and solar farm projects, every action they're taking is raising costs for Americans, while making them less healthy."

On energy: Boosting fossil fuels while blocking renewables

It was clear from the start that the Trump administration's energy agenda was all about fossil fuels. Trump issued a day one [executive order](#) declaring a national energy emergency that explicitly excluded solar and wind in defining the term *energy*. The administration has since undertaken numerous actions intended to maximize fossil fuel production and consumption, from reversing the pause on LNG export approvals, to opening up more federal lands and waters to drilling, to illegally propping up aging coal plants that were slated to shut down with emergency orders.

At the same time, the administration has vehemently attacked two of the cleanest, most affordable and readily available forms of energy: solar and wind.

"The degree to which they've attacked clean energy over the past year was wild and unprecedented," Drupp said. "From illegally keeping coal plants online to gutting clean energy manufacturing and canceling offshore wind and solar farm projects, every action they're taking is raising costs for Americans, while making them less healthy."

Solar is now the fastest growing, and often cheapest, form of energy. But under Trump, solar energy funding and projects have been threatened or terminated. [According to the Solar Energy Industries Association](#), political attacks are putting more than 500 solar and storage projects at risk. These projects account for more than half of all new power planned to be built in the US through 2030. Trump has been particularly aggressive in going after wind energy. "On day one, he issued an executive order targeting wind energy broadly and offshore wind specifically," said Nancy Pyne, senior adviser on offshore wind for the Sierra Club. "And the attacks just kept rolling."

The day one [order](#) halted all leasing, permitting, and approvals of new wind energy projects. In December, a federal court struck down the order, finding it to be arbitrary and capricious and contrary to law.

The administration issued several [stop-work orders to offshore wind projects](#) that were under construction, and moved to reconsider approvals of other projects that had already been permitted. And in December, just three days before Christmas, the Department of the Interior suspended leases

and ordered an immediate halt to construction of all five offshore wind projects currently being built, including several that were nearing completion. Last week, federal courts issued preliminary rulings finding the DOI's actions to be illegal and allowing construction to continue on several of the projects.

"It's pretty clear Trump hates offshore wind and is doing everything in his power to stop the US industry from taking off," Pyne said. "But these five projects are going to get built. And once they do, we're going to have proof of concept that offshore wind is clean, cheap, and reliable."

On public lands: Prioritizing extraction and stripping away protections

When it comes to land conservation, the past year has seen a blitz of actions by the administration to strip away critical protections and make it even easier for corporations to profit from public lands. "It was a tough year for public lands," Drew McConville, senior fellow in conservation policy at [the Center for American Progress](#), told *Sierra*. "Trump was already the only president in US history to remove more protections for public lands than he added. And really it's been clear from the start that conservation, addressing clean water, biodiversity, people's access to nature, was really nowhere on their priority list, and that it was going to be all about promoting the interests of the oil and gas industry, the mining industry, as we've seen."

According to a [CAP analysis](#), actions undertaken or proposed by the Trump administration would strip protections from 88 million acres of public lands. McConville said this "far surpasses the damage" that Trump was able to inflict on public lands during his entire first term.

The administration has broadly proposed policies and issued directives to expand logging, mining, and drilling on millions of acres of public lands and has rolled back regulations and expedited permitting to support extractive industries. The Department of the Interior has [proposed](#) rescinding the Bureau of Land Management's Public Lands Rule, for example, a move that would more than likely lead to the return of prioritizing extractive uses over conservation and ecological protection. The Department of Agriculture, meanwhile, is working to [roll back the Roadless Rule](#), which would open up tens of millions of acres of protected national forest land to logging and development. Utah Senator Mike Lee's proposed amendment to literally sell off millions of acres of public lands was met with public outcry and did not advance. But the Trump administration's actions are effectively working toward the same goal of handing off public lands to corporate interests and extractive industries, conservation advocates say.

"I don't think it's a stretch to say that President Trump is the most anti-conservation president we've seen," McConville said.

McConville noted that the actions and proposals put forward by Trump and Republicans in Congress on public lands were especially unpopular and were met by notable public opposition. "This opposition had an impact at the end of the day too as we saw with that defeat of [Senator Lee's] proposal in Congress."

Still, the attacks on public lands and the stripping away of vital protections seem set to continue. Agencies are operating with diminished staff and budgets. [According to the Center for Biological Diversity](#), 1,817 staff were fired from the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2025, while the National Park Service lost more than 2,700 staff and over 7,000 workers were let go from the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. A spending bill that passed the House earlier this month notably cuts the Fish and Wildlife Service's budget by 44 percent, a cut that CBD [warns](#) "will hamstring the program in charge of determining which animals and plants deserve protection under the Endangered Species Act."

Trump has recently nominated former Republican representative and oilfield services executive Steve Pearce to lead the BLM, a move that has [sparked criticism from conservation groups](#) and the [hunting and angling community](#).

"They have nominated an advocate for public lands sell-off to lead the Bureau of Land Management, which is pretty alarming," McConville said.

"Rescinding the very little progress the Biden administration made on PFAS is dooming us to another generation of carcinogenic chemicals in our water, food, soil, and air."

On chemicals: An environmental watchdog gone astray

Under Trump's EPA, restrictions on dangerous chemicals are being loosened and risk assessments are being altered or delayed. Critics say the public will be paying the price with their health.

"EPA no longer cares about human health," Kyla Bennett, director of science policy [at Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility](#), who previously worked in the EPA's Region 1 office, told *Sierra*.

The EPA has proposed a rule, for example, that would [weaken its chemical review process](#) under the Toxic Substances Control Act. The rule would also preempt state action to limit or ban chemicals like PFAS, also known as forever chemicals. The EPA has even [moved to exempt](#) companies from reporting on their uses of these forever chemicals.

"Rescinding the very little progress the Biden administration made on PFAS is dooming us to another generation of carcinogenic chemicals in our water, food, soil, and air," Bennett said.

Bennett and other advocates told *Sierra* that the EPA under Trump has completely abandoned its mission of protecting public health and the environment. "Their mission now is to make money for big corporations like oil and gas and AI," Bennett said.

As *The New York Times* recently [reported](#), the EPA is now even ceasing to consider the cost of lives saved in setting air pollution limits and will instead only be considering costs to industry. "It is a shameful abdication of EPA's responsibility to protect Americans from harm," Jeremy Symons, senior adviser at the [Environmental Protection Network](#), [said](#) in response to what the *Times* reported. "Under this administration, the Environmental Protection Agency is now the Environmental Pollution Agency, helping polluters at the expense of human health."

Resistance is mounting

In spite of the setbacks, environmental advocates say resistance is mounting, whether in the streets or in the halls of power and the courts.

"People are fighting back in lots of different ways," Cleetus said. "I don't think this is a game-over situation by any means."

Dana Drugmand is a freelance environmental journalist covering topics such as climate accountability and climate change lawsuits, greenwashing and false climate solutions, plastics and petrochemicals, and environmental law and justice. In addition to *Sierra*, her writing has appeared in *DeSmog*, *The New Lede*, *YES! Magazine*, *New Internationalist*, *Common Dreams*, *Truthout*, and *Earth Island Journal*, among other outlets.

Link to this article and [More articles by this author](#)

Legislative Update with Gene Kelley Sierra Club Adventure Coast Meetup Wednesday, February 18

Join the meeting in person or on Zoom. In person: at the Historic Brooksville Women's Club, 131 South Main Street, Brooksville. Public welcome. Bring a friend. Social at 6:30pm and presentation 7-8 pm.

To participate remotely via Zoom, please register in advance at: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/BsWnDzGDRxCVmVTKhUUYNNA>.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Gene Kelley is a conservation biologist, president of the Florida Native Plant Society, and Executive Committee Emeritus of the Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group. He will provide a Florida Legislative Update with emphasis on four areas: Growth Management, Springs Protection Zones, Funding for Florida Forever, and Rodman Dam Removal. Followed by a discussion on the impacts of the proposed legislation and the actions Sierra Club members can take to influence decision makers.

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