



FALL 2025 TEAM REPORT

Natural Resources

Submitted by Pattie Gertenbach

The Natural Resources Action Team has had to roll up our sleeves these past few months, so much going on! We lent our voices to many others county-wide that were against the County using ECHO and Volusia Forever funding for a motocross facility. Unfortunately, the county council voted to go ahead with purchasing the land with the expectation of using part of it for a motocross facility. Many of us are extremely discouraged that the County set aside \$5M for the motocross facility, but did not fund \$600K for the Cultural Grants program.

We (LWVFL) signed onto a letter to the Florida Legislature regarding concerns the League and numerous other organizations (over 60) had about certain provisions of SB180 that preempt local government's ability to manage growth. It was noted that due to the onerous provisions of SB180, the recommendations from ENRAC for updating Volusia County's stormwater regulations had to be put on hold. Several members of our Natural Resources team worked hard on these updates strengthening our stormwater rules in response to the widespread flooding in our county.

Once again, the Natural Resources Team seemed to have a crystal ball when it came to deciding on a Hot Topic. The subject of our April 2026 Hot Topic panel will be legislative impacts to Home Rule. If we are all lucky, in the upcoming session, the legislature will revise the onerous sections of SB180 before our Home Rule discussion. The Hot Topic (What is Home Rule and How Does It Affect You) will take place April 23, 2026, 4 – 6 pm at the Anderson-Price Memorial Building in Ormond Beach. Please save the date!

Talk about rolling up our sleeves, several of our members participated in various parts of the county in the 40th Annual International Coastal Cleanup Day, September 20th.

At our September meeting, our team discussed all the issues we are facing that affect our quality of life at the local, state and even national level: Climate Change is a hoax, almost all of Florida's surface waters are impaired under the Clean Water Act, bear hunting, and the State underfunding Florida Forever to name a few. Our team emphasized the importance of not only making our voices heard but of encouraging our family, friends and neighbors to write or call their legislators

Several of our LWVVC members attended and spoke at the Volusia County Legislative Delegation meeting October 29th. As with last year's meeting, most cities' presentations were requests for matching funds to address flooding and resilience. Last year, \$4 million of Volusia County's requests from the legislature for funding such projects were vetoed by Governor DeSantis. Let's hope we fare better this year.



Also in October, the LWVVC sponsored a Lunch and Learn with Volusia County about our beaches. This was a follow up to the meeting LWVVC sponsored in April 2024. Both of these meetings can be viewed on the Volusia County Coastal Division Sand Placement Projects Beach Management Feasibility Study website:

<https://www.volusia.org/services/public-works/coastal-division/sand-placement-project/beach-management-feasibility-study.shtml> You are all encouraged to look at these meetings as well as the other materials on this website and take the survey. This affects us all, as beach tourism is the primary economic driver in our county.

During our NR Team November meeting a few concerns were raised:

- There is a misconception in our community, including by our elected officials, that the sand that was placed and then washed away during the recent nor'easters illustrated sand placement is a waste of money. It is quite the opposite. The sand did exactly what it was supposed to do – save the structures! (If only everyone would watch the videos noted above.)
- Another misconception recently cited in a Volusia County Council meeting was that Volusia Forever wants to buy 50% of county land. That is not true! This seems to be part of an effort by the Council to undo Volusia Forever, a program that was supported by a large majority of Volusia County voters in 2020 to protect environmentally valuable lands. There are myriad solutions that do not require outright purchasing to protect lands.
- Several attendees indicated there was some talk by the City of Deltona to develop part of the Lyonia Preserve. Nothing formal has been presented at this time. We will keep you posted on developments to developing this treasured preserve!

We have a wonderful Team that has been kept busy in 2025. Wishing all the best in 2026.