

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

City of New Port Richey

Meeting Agenda

New Port Richey – Public Library

Monday– June 15, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.





ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE

City of New Port Richey

The Environmental Committee of the City of New Port Richey develops and endorses environmental events in the City, renders annual and special reports as members may deem advisable, and explores new environmental initiatives for the City. The ECCNPR was established in 1989 and recreated in 2011.

Meeting Agenda

New Port Richey Public Library

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ANY PERSON DESIRING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION, WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT ANY MEETING OR HEARING, WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS AND MAY NEED TO ENSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE TRANSCRIBED VERBATIM MINUTES; THEREFORE, THE APPLICANT MUST MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS WITH A PRIVATE REPORTER (OR PRIVATE REPORTING FIRM) AND BEAR THE RESULTING EXPENSE. (F.S.286.0105)

Welcome

Roll Call:

Dell deChant, Committee Chair; Rose Mohr, Vice Chair; Margaret (Sophia) Carswell, member; Catherine Capello, Secretary.

City Staff Liaison (non-voting) , Colin Eichenmuller and/or Steve Golubeff

Sierra Club Liaison (non-voting), Sasha Bartenuk

FarmNet Liaison (non-voting) Amanda Zborek

Guests

Vox Pop (3 minutes for members of the audience – on items not on the agenda)

Approval of Minutes May 21, 2026

Regular Business

Liaison Officer (A) Advice on EC agenda, and (B) CC items: A) Advice from City Liaison is requested on all items before committee and (B) items on City Council agenda relevant to Environmental Committee (open)

Business of Committee I – On-going Projects and Events

Library Seed Lending Program (Amanda)

- Note: Seed of the month program. See for June
- Note: Seeds of the Season Program – August 27

Urban Agriculture Program (Chair)

- Revision of garden registration – pending (Chair)

Update on inclusion of City Property in Urban Agriculture Ordinance (All)

- Update from Liaison

Wildflower Installation Initiative & Wildflower Ordinance (Chair & Liaison)

Colin reports on administration's plans for Wildflower Ordinance. This will continue to stay on the agenda until implemented. This item will be on the Annual Report. Combining Wildflower Ordinance with the Landscape Ordinance is not the recommendation of the Environmental Committee.

- Wildflower project update: FarmNet

Fruit Tree Peninsula (Liaison, Rose, Catherine)

- Update from Colin and Rose
- Update from Colin: 2 dwarf mangos will be planted in June

River Report (Liaison, Catherine, Sophia)

- Sturgeon research update
- Please watch this video about Gulf Sturgeon and its restoration (thanks to Catherine)
- <https://youtu.be/Lu4jV-l7Ydc?si=mnE7g4hngMpXaRK8>

Duck Colony (Liaison)

- As per request by a resident, duck colony report is listed again. Colin is asked to report.

Business of Committee II - New Projects and Topics (and projects of limited duration, including annual events)

Move Meeting to 3rd Thursday. Note to All and Judy for reference and official record.

- Next meeting July 16, 2026

HOA Garden Club Story (Sophia and Catherine)

- Update on HOA communications and ways to facilitate changes in HOA landscaping practices
- Update on presentation for HOAs.
- Update on Linda Blake pesticide and herbicide runoff

Mangrove Planting Project (Catherine & Liaison)

- Update on funding from Community Development Block Grant to restore mangroves on Green Key.

Review of City's urban reforestation program (Dell, Sasha, Liaison)

- * Monthly Report on Tree Budget, remaining funds for planting (Colin)
- Next walk (Sasha)

Grey Preserve invasive plant removal project (Sasha, Amanda, Liaison, others)

- Committee member asked to coordinate with FDACS Plant Inspection Department for next project.
- FDACS specialists: report very positive evaluation of turnout for the last invasive plant removal – "remarkable mobilization" .

Low Mow Spring (Sophia)

- Committee decision to include Low Mow Spring in "Recommendations" section of Annual Report
- Language needed. * Details: Low Mow Spring would be implemented from January/February to May.
- Annual Report (Report covers fall 2024 through fall [December] 2025)
- - Note: Report is typically presented in late spring early summer. Suggested date: July.

** For further reflection/action: Additional or related recommendation: Establish/allow herbicide and pesticide free zones and encourage citizens to adopt pesticide-free practices.

*** Reference Note: Relates to policy/promotion of "No Mow May," introduced in Wisconsin in 2020 and proposed for New Port Richey in ENV COM Annual Report of 2021 – Recommendation 4:

4. Create Herbicide/Pesticide-free Zones As is occurring in other areas of the nation and the world, we proposed establishment of herbicide/pesticide-free zones, with the City taking the lead and discontinuing the use of herbicides and pesticides on select public properties – using an incremental approach. This means native plants, insects, and animals would have an opportunity to thrive in these designated zones – which would also be safe and healthy for all of us as well. The City would encourage home owners to adopt this approach in their own yards and gardens. Given sufficient funding this approach could be promoted with educational materials, workshops, and signs. Having these zones is another step toward restabbling a healthy ecosystem in the city and beginning to reverse the impact of poisons on our environment and our health.

A companion proposal establishes a program to allow native vegetation to flower in the spring to nourish insect and bird populations to thrive during breeding season. Dubbed “No Mow May” in other areas, the program encourages property owners not to mow during the month of May to allow native plants a change to flower. Here, we’d probably have to go with No Mow April and May.

Grey Preserve – topic II -Phase II Expansion (new) (Chair, Liaison) – Resident requests update on Grey Preserve Expansion Project, notes sign informing of project has been removed. Expansion was in planning stages in 2020. Environmental Committee recommended several changes to reduce ecological disruption

Burning and Fireworks (new) (Chair, Liaison) –

- Resident requests information on (1) burning ban in City limits, (2) requests committee recommend a prohibition on burning in the City, and (3) requests committee recommend the City Council express opposition to the County’s lifting of its burn ban.
- Related topic: Resident requests information on (1) County and City fireworks policy, and (2) requests committee recommend firework ban in the City, and (3) request committee recommend the City Council propose County ban fireworks’ at least this (severe drought) year.

Fertilizer Ban (June 1 to September 30) (new) (Chair, Liaison) –

- Resident requests information on (1) fertilizer ban in City (notes County ban); (2) requests committee recommend City establish a fertilizer ban (if one is not already in place) . See video on this topic.

<https://www.fox13news.com/news/fertilizer-bans-effect-beginning-june-across-tampa-bay-area>

Annual Report – Our Annual Report will focus on two recommendations: (1) The Wildflower Initiative including Low Mow Spring and (2) River Water Quality and reintroducing Sturgeon into the Cotee River. Will include reference to previous recommendations not taken up, request written response from the City Council

- Will coordinate with Judy for presentation in July.
- Request work Session regarding the Wildflower Initiative
- See LY annual report, attached

Seasonal Events - Note: Events noted here are supported and endorsed by Environmental Committee.

* Volunteers needed for all events.

Calendar 2026 - 2027

September 3, 2026, 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. **The West Pasco Okra Occasion**, 11th annual
(Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet. Host: Host New Port Richey Public Library,)

November 21, 2026 , 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. **New Port Richey Sweet Potato Roundup** 11th annual
(Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet. Host: Host New Port Richey Public Library,)

January 15, 2027 – **Arbor Day** 38th annual (3rd Friday in January) (Host: ENV COM) 10:00 a.m. Frances Ave.
Colin: Contact Genesis School (?)

January 9, 2027 - **Collards Festival** at Grand Gardens, 12th annual (Presented by NPR FarmNet, Host: Grand Gardens)
(Grand Gardens) 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. +

March – April TBA: Events from - **Florida Loquat Festival** 14th annual (Sims Park) (Presented by New Port Richey FarmNet in cooperation with the City of New Port Richey) (Sim's Park/Peace Hall).

Monarch Festival – 6th Annual (May 2, 2027) 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

(Host: New Port Richey ENV COM, New Port Richey Public Library, and New Port Richey FarmNet)

- Short Report
- Event was very successful

Earth Day/Week (April 22, 2027) – 36th annual (1st 1992)

(Tori Ladd, Manager/Director) (Host: Host New Port Richey ENV COM & Library)

Plants & Pints, 4th Tuesday, monthly. Next event, June 23, 2026, 5:30 to 7:30 – Florida Room – Stormwater Smart Solutions Megan Moore and Environmental Program Coordinator Milla Turner

Meeting Schedule for 2026 "The environmental committee shall meet once every ninety (90) days unless it determines to meet more frequently." * Committee has determined it is best to meet monthly.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 18, 2026, 6:00 p.m. – Library