



SIERRA CLUB
FLORIDA CHAPTER

Adventure Coast Group

July 27th, 2026

Hernando County Commissioners

Re: BOCC agenda Tues. August 11th New Tower at Linda Pederson Park:

Dear Commissioners:

Linda Pedersen Park is a scenic and popular destination for families, nature lovers, and watersports enthusiasts. One of the key features was a 40-foot observation tower that offered panoramic views of upland hammocks, Weeki Wachee Preserve, and Jenkins Creek flowing into the Gulf of Mexico. The tower was destroyed during past storms and efforts are underway to replace it.

On July 17th, Hernando County planners held a meeting that included representatives of Sierra Club and other conservation interests and Tammy Heon of the Hernando County Tourism. They unveiled three options to replace the now dismantled viewing tower. The project will be funded with county tourism dollars and is envisioned as a destination for visitors and residents, a good use of such funds to benefit our tourism economy.

Sierra Club Adventure Coast group joins the consensus of those at the meeting who preferred the third option made of galvanized aluminum with a roof that was higher than the other options. It will be more durable and long-lasting than wood. Since this is located along a shoreline to Jenkins Creek within the Weeki Wachee Preserve, we recommend that the plan:

- Replace lawns with native plants that will save a lot of money.
- Utilize solar energy, i.e. solar panels on the roof to power lights on the tower and consider motion-activated lighting to reduce impacts to wildlife from prolonged artificial lighting.
- Design and install educational signage for the tower and entry area. We would gladly partner with the county on this to contribute content to increase awareness of the environment within the Weeki Wachee Preserve and Weeki Wachee Springs Protection Zone.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our comments.

Very truly yours,

DeeVon Quirolo

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Chair, Sierra Club Adventure Coast Group