

# Scenic Watch



News  
October  
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## Clearwater's Big Cleanup Event

Thousands picked up litter "Hoping to inspire new habits"



Photo: John Pendency, Tampa Bay Times

"Earlier this year, Sheri Heilman knew she wasn't the only one fed up with the litter strewn on Clearwater Beach's famous sugar sand and the bottles and

wrappers stuck in storm drains.

In April, business owners and community leaders spent nearly all of a two-hour meeting that was supposed to be about general beach issues talking about the trash problem.

Over the next few months, Heilman and other stakeholders came up with a plan to send a message to all of Tampa Bay to get serious about the litter that strangles wildlife, fouls waterways and erodes general decency.

Throughout this week, about 1,500 volunteers and 50 businesses and organizations are estimated to have participated in The Big Cleanup, said to be the largest community-wide litter effort in city history. Organized by the Ocean Allies nonprofit founded by Heilman, Keep Pinellas Beautiful, Amplify Clearwater and other groups, the goal is for visibility of the six-day event to initiate a culture shift.

'We hope that this is going to be just the start of the conversation and that this conversation continues into a lifestyle change,' said Heilman, who also owns Bob Heilman's Beachcomber restaurant on Clearwater Beach...

Heilman said The Big Cleanup reflects the education about avoidable waste that Ocean Allies has been trying to spread to businesses in Clearwater. Formed in 2018, Ocean Allies certifies businesses as ocean friendly if they meet certain criteria, like banning single-use plastics and foam, enforcing recycling, and other standards.

So far about 40 restaurants, vendors, salons, hotels and other businesses have been certified, according to the Ocean Allies website.

The Big Cleanup stopped calling for volunteers this week because of the massive response, but Heilman said she hopes residents carry on the spirit of the event every day in their own lives."

-- John Pandygraft, Tampa Bay Times

[Read entire article](#)

## Graffiti Vs. Art



Photo: WFTS

"An average of 250,000 people bike, walk or jog the Pinellas Trail every month. However, those in charge of the 70-mile-path say they want it to be more than just a place of exercise but an overall cultural experience.

So they are giving cyclists a reason to pump the brakes and take a picture along the Pinellas Trail this week.

'Its like a stamp of approval from the community saying that my work is valuable and that I'm an asset and that's nice, I love it,' said artist Yhali Ilan.

Ilan said it was an honor to be one of four local artists chosen to paint two overpasses along the trail, one in Palm Harbor and the other in Tarpon Springs. Each one has a different Florida theme...

'Our parks department will go and paint over in plain gray paint and the next day they'll come back and they'll be graffiti on the tunnels,' said Alexis Ferguson with Pinellas County Public Works.

Ferguson is not only a public works employee but she rides the trail all the time. She said it's been proven these murals detract from crime.

'There is a respect among graffiti artists and our local artists here painting murals that they don't tag the art murals and that's been seen throughout the county,'said Ferguson...

The plan is to continue to add more art to the trail every year."



-- Robert Boyd, WFTS

[Read entire article](#)

## "Museum, urban park reveal diverse heritage of Tampa's Ybor City"



Photo: Joy Wallace Dickinson

The Ybor City Museum at 9th Avenue and 19th Street in Tampa is housed in the historic Ferlita Bakery building and is part of the Florida State Park system.

...People from Cuba, Spain, Sicily and other locations arrived to form what Florida historian Gary Mormino has called 'one of the great immigrant communities in America' in the late 19th and early 20th centuries...

The Ybor City Museum State Park is an urban park and historical museum in the heart of the National Historic Landmark District at 1818 9th Ave., Tampa. It's about a 90-minute drive from downtown Orlando and consists of a main exhibit space, housed in the historic Ferlita Bakery building, as well as a Mediterranean-

style garden and a recreated cigar worker's house..."

-- Joy Wallace Dickinson, Florida Flashback in the Orlando Sentinel

[Read entire article](#)

"Wild Florida: Your guide to 9 great kayaking spots in Volusia County's rivers & springs"



Photo: City of Ormond Beach

"The impending winter means something a little different for Floridians.

No need to bundle up indoors with hot cocoa and a cozy blanket. No, as the humidity wanes and the scorching summer temperatures give way to 70 degree highs, now is the time we head outdoors.

One of the best ways to spend time in the sun is by kayaking or canoeing into the wilderness. Central Florida is home to some of the country's finest springs, and the Indian River Lagoon is the most biodiverse estuary in North America.

Here's a guide to nine of the best places to go kayaking in Volusia County.

**Cracker Creek** - The slow-moving water of western Spruce Creek cuts through a gorgeous blackwater cypress swamp with palm trees and ample ferns lending the water a tropical charm.

It's located on 20 acres historically owned by the caretaker of James Gamble's winter retreat, according to the Daytona Beach Museum of Arts & Sciences. Gamble worked for his father's company, Proctor & Gamble, for decades and was best known for devising the formula for Ivory soap. Some historical buildings remain standing on the property.

**De Leon Springs** - The two oldest canoes ever found in the Western Hemisphere were discovered in this spring and 6,000 years later, De Leon Springs State Park continues to provide access to 22,000 acres of serene lakes, creeks and marshes in Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge...

The cool, clear waters provide excellent opportunities for fishing and birdwatching, and run a constant 68 degrees. You might spot otters, alligators, manatees, osprey, bald eagles, sandhill cranes and — if you're lucky, a black bear out for a swim...

**Tomoka River State Park** - The Tomoka River, which extends 13 miles upstream (south) from Tomoka State Park, is part of Florida's 4,000-mile network of designated paddling trails.

A manatee refuge and excellent site for birdwatching, the views vary from lush, narrow canopies to wide, grassy marshes that empty into the wide Halifax River. The land was once occupied by the indigenous Timucua tribe, from which the name Tomoka was derived...

**Hontoon Island State Park** - Hontoon Island is a natural freshwater island that is surrounded by the St. Johns River, Hontoon Dead River and Snake Creek. It's nestled in between Lake Beresford and Blue Spring...

The island can only be reached by boat and features 8 miles of trails that wind through swamps, marshes, pine flatwoods and oak hammocks. The Mayaca natives were believed to inhabit the island some 12,000 years ago and a shell midden remains on the shore of Hontoon Dead River today...

**Gemini Springs** - Gemini Springs Park is named for its crystal-clear twin springs, where an estimated 6.5 million gallons of pristine fresh water bubbles up every day...

**Ormond Beach's Central Park** - This city park contains five interconnected lakes surrounded by forest and gardens in the heart of Ormond Beach. It's an excellent

birdwatching spot, and encompasses 149 acres...

**Highbridge Park on the Ormond Loop** - Highbridge Park is a county park that sits on the banks of Halifax River in the northernmost reaches of Volusia County.

Navigate up to 11 miles along Bulow Creek, part of Florida's 4,000-mile network of designated paddling trails and witness the transition from wide tidal marsh to a tree and cabbage palm-lined paradise...

**Blue Spring State Park** - Blue Spring contains refreshingly cool, crystal-clear fresh water and is best known as a winter refuge for manatees. Hundreds of sea cows huddle in the spring during cold snaps, as the temperature remains 72 degrees year-round.

Kayaks and canoes can't enter the spring run, but may be paddled on the St. Johns River, which is also home to alligators, fish and a spectacular array of birds...

**Mosquito Lagoon** - The mangrove mazes of the Mosquito Lagoon are vibrant places to explore, home to dolphins, manatees and coastal birds. The Mosquito Lagoon constitutes the uppermost reaches of the Indian River Lagoon, believed to be the most biodiverse estuary in North America..."

-- Mary Helen Moore, The Daytona Beach News-Journal

For details about paddling routes, rentals, launch sites, guides and gear [please click here to read entire article](#)

## Update Undergrounding Projects: Brandon





Photo: Fox 13 News

"When the massive power of a hurricane whips through, underground power lines could keep the lights on.

"This year we are installing about 80 miles of power lines in the ground and next year that will grow to 100 miles," said Cherie Jacobs, Tampa Electric spokesperson...

Virtually every power company in Florida is putting lines in the ground.

"When the power goes out, it puts people's lives at risk and it really puts a crimp in our economy," said State Rep. Randy Fine, a Republican from Palm Bay. "So spending this money is going to have a massive return on investment both for health as well as the economy."

Some estimates say massive power outages, as Florida saw with Hurricane Irma, can cost \$1 billion a day, not to mention the health and safety risks.

The Florida Legislature passed a bill in 2019 requiring power companies to put lines underground. Opponents warned it will drive up power bills...

So far, local power companies in the Tampa Bay area say they've buried from 35 to 45 percent of their lines. They have a process for choosing where to bury them next, based on a number of factors.

'Things like what wind zone it is in, what flood zone it is in, how the tree canopy is in the area, what the age of the equipment is, and how did that equipment fare in



previous severe weather,' Jacobs explained."

-- Lloyd Sowers, Fox 13 News

[View video and read entire article](#)

## Legal: Additional decision "Cincinnati billboard tax violates First Amendment"



A tax levied by the city of Cincinnati on billboard companies in an effort to close a budget shortfall is an unconstitutional of First Amendment rights to free speech, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled Thursday.

Justice Sharon Kennedy, writing the court's unanimous opinion, said the companies, as publishers of speech, can't be singled out for engaging in protected expression. She also noted that because of various exceptions, the tax applied mainly to two companies.

Those businesses, Lamar Advertising and Norton Outdoor Advertising, indicated the tax would require them to remove less profitable billboards, which has the effect of limiting protected speech, Kennedy said.

"That the tax involves billboards rather than the institutional press is of no consequence, and strict scrutiny applies," Kennedy said.

Cincinnati imposed the tax three years ago to raise \$709,000 to help cover a \$2.5 million budget shortfall. The city argued unsuccessfully that the tax was only a commercial transaction and didn't target billboard messages."

-- Cincinnati.com, The Enquirer

[Read entire article](#)

## Legal: Ongoing Updates Available on SCOTUSblog City of Austin, Texas v. Reagan National Advertising of Texas Inc.



SCOTUSblog has been maintaining an ongoing list of various proceedings and orders on their site leading up to November 10 argument:

"Whether the Austin city code's distinction between on-premise signs, which may be digitized, and off-premise signs, which may not, is a facially unconstitutional content-based regulation under *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*."

-- SCOTUSblog

[To track proceedings and orders via SCOTUSblog](#)

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