



Ancient Islands

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Sumter and Polk Counties of Florida

Issue: 12-1, 2

February—March 2012

FROM THE CHAIR...Andy Quinn

Who Cares?

The answer for me is easy. We all do!! Well it appears as if most all of us do. How we bonded together after the recent disasters of Katrina and 9/11 is plenty of evidence for me. In fact, real survivors look for human connection and to assist in crisis situations. Do not worry about those very few people who do not appear to care about the destruction their Corporations invite. Those types consistently tumble because of their pathologies. Just watch.

So what do we do with this formidable challenge to protect the earth? Everyone has a role. Just by joining Sierra Club or whatever conservation organization, you are saying "I care." You are saying "I care, and I love this beautiful earth so much that I will take action to protect it." From there, for some of us, it gets complicated. What do I do? Everybody has a role and everything counts. The smallest action creates its own energy and builds individual and group esteem. The smallest action also gives confidence that one can do more. And by doing more we end up doing great things. We at Ancient Islands have done great things!

Have you ever noticed that at parties and gatherings that people want to talk about the environment and the outdoors? Have you ever noticed that people's fondest memories have the seashore or the mountains as a backdrop? They care too! These are incredible moments to connect with a common love, our wilderness. These are also moments to say proudly "I am a member of Sierra Club, and just last week we helped defeat Senate Bill 1369!" or maybe "My Sierra Club has the most successful outings program in the world (we do!!)" People love to talk about the outdoors and the environment. They want to know that someone is doing something. We have to let people know we are here. People have a need to know that there are people who care enough to take action. Then they will say "I care enough to do it too!"

Our Ancient Islands Group has accomplished mind-boggling tasks over the years, like spearheading the Kissimmee River Restoration, coordinating Green Swamp land acquisitions and stopping the location of hazardous waste incinerators. For some of us these tasks can be technically laden and exhausting. There may be a tendency to say "this is too big for me, I cannot possibly accomplish anything here. It is too technical and I feel unknowledge-

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FEBRUARY 9th MEETING IN SEBRING

Our Ancient Islands Group represents Sierrans in Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, Sumter and Polk Counties. Periodically we meet to the south of Polk to network with activists there. Join us at Homer's Original Smorgasbord, 1000 Sebring Square, Sebring (863 386-1440) for one of our "circuit riding specials." We will start to eat at **6:00PM** and by 6:45 Dr. Betsie Rothermel will begin a power point presentation on Ecological Research and Restoration on the Archbold Reserve; this will include an overview of habitats (such as cutthroat seeps), the species that inhabit them, and the challenges to restoring them both.

Homer's is in a shopping center at the intersection of US 27 and Memorial Drive across the street from Walmart. You can't see Homer's from the highway; you have to drive into the shopping center that includes a Winn-Dixie. Dinner is approximately \$10.00 for the buffet and we have a room reserved. Those from Polk wishing to carpool should call AI at 863 967-6783.



Limpkin with Babies—photo taken at Circle B Bar Reserve

MARCH 8th MEETING AT CIRCLE B

Exciting changes are in the works at Circle B. Driving in there's the new ranching/corral project which will provide users with background on one aspect of man's impact on the site. Already designed is a unique nature-based outside kids zone which will, hopefully, draw very young kids into the out-of-doors away from the fantastically popular inside live oak. And when's that trail from the Hampton property going to happen? What's with the new pavilions and the 'thousands' of flags denoting new trees planted? Any news on the ramp? And visitors keep asking for a gift shop. An update on all this and more will be yours with the Mar. 8th presentation by Gaye Sharpe, Natural Areas Manager with Polk's Park and Recreation Division. See page 4 for directions to Circle B.

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able.” We all feel that way because the issues are complicated. There are technical aspects and many players that have a stake in the game. Realize that you are needed by Sierra Club and the Earth, that there is a lot that you can do without getting overwhelmed, and that there are folks who are more than willing to guide you. Find your one passion, that one issue, be it water, energy, land acquisition or fertilizer or whatever and go after it.

I think it so important that we move from “us and them” to “us.” There is now and has been sometimes the theory that our society’s woes can be traced to the lack of connection and relationship to the Earth. With the advent of the Industrial Age and Information Age, there has been more reliance on machines to meet some of our psychological needs. With this comes a lack of connection to others, a kind of separateness that works against teamwork and inspiring others to protect the Earth. Native folks felt connected to everything on the Earth, the wind, the sun, the rocks. We would all agree that effective leadership in the conservation movement is best served by a positive outlook, the person who looks to connect instead of the person who is consistently angry about “those guys.”

The “us and them” attitude almost took down Sierra Club in the 1960s when the first Executive Director David Brower of the Sierra Club, with much finesse and creativity, stopped the ill-conceived water project involving the flooding of the Grand Canyon. David’s attitude was “No Compromise” when it came to interacting with industry and government. There were many others within the club who felt that we needed to work with the government to promote change. Both stances are important, without it being “us versus them.”

We need to realize and embrace that many people, government and industry do care, and spend a lifetime attempting to promote change. They also feel frustrated at times with greed and low-minded decision making. If we treat them as “those guys,” we are likely to get treated the same way. Most people throughout the world realize the value of service. The great psychiatrist and humanist Alfred Adler, believed mankind’s greatest calling was in social interest. There are folks out there who are spending time helping the homeless, ministering to the sick and needy, and numerous other callings to help. These helpers are also conservationists: they are our allies. These folks are also attempting to create a healthy society. We are on the same team. As the human heals it recognizes this connection with the Earth and cares more for it. Let us all work together, a step at a time for a cleaner more prosperous Earth.

POLK DEVELOPING FERTILIZER ORDINANCE

Polk County is required by its National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit to develop a fertilizer use ordinance. The ordinance is to be adopted within 24 months of the issuance of the NPDES permit which was September 12, 2011. The ordinance must be at least as stringent as the statewide model ordinance developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) in 2010. This is Polk’s

first attempt at drafting this ordinance and input from all interested parties will be considered for the final product.

The Ancient Islands Group supports the adoption of a strong fertilizer ordinance. Our county hosts 554 natural lakes, the headwaters of 5 major rivers and vast wetland systems. These waters, as well as downstream waters, are at risk of nutrient pollution and resulting algae blooms. Blue-green algae and *Karenia brevis* algae (which causes red tide) can make you sick. Swimming in water with toxic blue-green algae can cause skin rashes, runny nose and irritated eyes. Swallowing such water can cause vomiting or diarrhea, affect your liver and poison pets. The Red Tide blooms that occur along Florida’s coasts produce a toxin that can affect the central nervous system of fish, birds, mammals and other animals. It causes large fish kills as well as respiratory problems in people, especially those with asthma or bronchitis. A red tide bloom formed in the Gulf of Mexico just a few weeks ago and fish kills have been reported off both Lee and Charlotte counties.

Polk should be a leader in the wise use of fertilizer and the sustainable management of turf grass and landscaping. Pollution prevention is always cheaper than pollution cleanup. Swimable, fishable waters are key to our local and state economies. We need to protect them with the adoption of a strong urban fertilizer ordinance. To get an idea of the magnitude of the problem, visit the Florida Slime Crime Tracker:

<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?hl=en&mpa=0&ctz=300&mpf=0&vps=15&ie=UTF8&oe=UTF8&msa=0&msid=211539618625491573613.0004b1b520a27d0c8cb86>

The Ancient Islands Group is a stakeholder who is participating in the review and development of the ordinance which will then be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. A Stakeholders meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8th at 6:30 PM.*Marian Ryan*

EVERGLADES HEADWATERS NWR

On Wednesday, January 18th, a 10-acre tract on the east side of Polk County became the first building block of the new Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area. U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson, and Dan Ashe, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made the announcement at the Future Farmers of America Center on Lake Pierce. The Nature Conservancy donated the parcel.

The refuge, which is an additional effort to restore the Everglades, will also conserve lands with high water and wildlife resource values in Polk, Highlands, Osceola, Orange and Okeechobee counties. 50,000 acres are targeted for protection through direct purchases while an additional 100,000 acres of ranch lands will be protected via conservation easements.

Approval for the appropriation of funding must come from Congress. We will keep you informed of project progress and will ask for letters of support from our members when needed.

To learn more about the project and view a map of proposed refuge lands go to <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/evergladesheadwaters/index.html>*Marian Ryan*

**THE FLORIDA REPORT
HELP STOP BAD BILLS**

The Florida Legislature is in session and bad environmental bills are flying, but YOU CAN HELP! Subscribe to the Florida Report to receive action alerts on specific bills and updates on what's happening in Tallahassee: Go to www.sierraclub.org/memberlists?listname=FL-FLORIDA-

REPORT (have your membership number available). Or contact the owner of the list at FL-FLORIDA-REPORT-Request@LISTS.SIERRACLUB.ORG. Also, be sure to go to Sierra Club Florida's news blog at <http://www.sierraclubfloridanews.org/> and subscribe by entering your email address. Don't forget our Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/sierraclubfl> These links will keep you "in the loop"!

OUTINGS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

For more activities/events, please visit our web site at <http://florida.sierraclub.org/polk/> - links to Ancient Islands

Feb. 25 Hike Lake Kissimmee State Park - Lake Wales. Join us for this moderate-level hike, appropriate for adults and supervised teens, of the Buster Loop Trail from 9 until 3. This park is known for its great variety of animal and plant life and its 19th century cowcamp. Bring your lunch, a snack and park entrance fee. Register with leader Gail Bagley at 863 683-3334 or gail_bagley@msn.com

Mar 10 Bike Van Fleet State Trail. Cycle the edge of the Withlacoochee State Forest and, possibly, spot deer and bobcat. Bring your own bike. Register with Gail at 863 683-3334 or gail_bagley@msn.com

Mar. 23-25 Kayak Alexander Springs Run - Lake County. Marvel at the dazzling array of wildlife and remarkable water clarity - contact Andy 863 683-9600 or abquinn2010@gmail.com for camping information and to reserve an UPKEEP kayak. This is a family outing.

Mar. 31 Hike Colt Creek State Park - Lakeland. Join us for this moderate-level hike, appropriate for adults and supervised teens, from 9 until 3, through pine flatwoods and cypress domes which are home to animals as diverse as Sherman's fox squirrels and gopher tortoise. Bring snack, lunch, and park entrance fee. Register with leader Ann Marie at 813 817-3240 or annmarie0325@hotmail.com

Circle B Bar Reserve

Each month Circle B Bar Reserve offers a variety of guided hikes, nature oriented presentations, nature photography tutorials, and tram rides. Because space is limited (especially on the tram rides) and additional events are added, call Tabitha Biehl-Gabbard, Environmental Lands Stewardship Coordinator at 863 668-4673 to find out what is available and to reserve a space. Experience dictates that to get a tram seat it is best to call during the first week of the month.

Trek Ten Trails

Hikes start at 9AM - contact Marian Ryan at 863 207-5206 or marianryan@gmail.com or <http://www.friendsoftheparks.net> for more information

Feb. 18 Catfish Creek State Park - Haines City. Habitat varies from scrub to flatwoods providing the possibility of seeing scrub jays and scrub morning glory.

Mar. 17 Hilochee WMA Four Corners - off US 27 at the end of Homerun Blvd. Excellent butterfly habitat.

Service at Circle B Bar Reserve

Volunteers are always needed to help at the reception desk, create signs for special events, check the trails, etc. For more information and to volunteer call Tabitha Biehl-Gabbard at 863 668-4673 or email tabithabiehl@polk-county.net

Service - These events are Ridge ranger projects.

These stewardship projects run from 8AM until 11 unless otherwise noted. For more details and to register call the Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Parken, at 863 699-3742 or email bill.parken@myFWC.com

Feb. 6 Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales. National collection bed maintenance.

Feb. 15 MacKay Gardens - Lake Alfred. Reintroduction of scrub lupine.

Feb. 25 Avon Park Air Force Range. Red-cockaded woodpecker support and education session. Until noon.

Mar. 17 TNC Tiger Creek - Babson Park. Fencing and posting.

Mar. 27 FWC Lake Blue Scrub - Auburndale. Collect scrub lupine demographic data. Until noon.

Wildlife Rehab

Small mammals, from rabbits to fawns, and birds, from sparrows to eagles and owls, may be taken to Joan Waters, Woodland Wonders, 2110 Betty Ann Drive, Auburndale 863 967-3298.

In order to participate in one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver which will be furnished at the beginning of the outing. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5528. In the interests of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. Please note that most of the above listed activities are events that we think you will find interesting and fun, but they are not official outings. Florida Seller of Travel Ref. No. ST37115



Sierra Club

Ancient Islands - FL Sierra
P.O. Box 7544
Winter Haven, FL 33883

Members should send **changes of address** to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968
or address.changes@sierraclub.org

**FEBRUARY 9:
Ecological Research and Restoration on the
Archbold Reserve**

**Presented by Dr. Betsie Rothermel, Research
Biologist**

Archbold Biological Station

MARCH 8:

**The Evolving Circle B
New Exhibits - New Activities**

**Presented by
Gaye Sharpe
Polk's Natural Areas Manager**

*General Meeting and Executive Committee
Meeting Run Concurrently*

February 9: Circuit riding in Sebring. See page 1 for directions.
March 8: Join us for our pot-luck suppers at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month. Bring a dish to share, a drink and your utensils. Dress is casual. **The meeting will start around 7:15 p.m.**

This meeting will be held at Circle B Bar Reserve. The Reserve is located on State Road 540 (Winter Lake Road) at a mid-point between Lakeland, Bartow and Winter Haven. From Bartow, take US 98 north to SR 540 and turn right; from Lakeland, take US 98 south to SR 540 and turn left; the property entrance is approximately two miles east of US 98 on the south (right) side of SR 540. From Winter Haven, take SR 540 and after the exits to the Polk Parkway (where there is a traffic light) look for and follow the Reserve signs; it will be a left turn. **Bring flashlight for parking lot.**

Web Site: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/polk/>
(links to Ancient Islands)

Sierra Membership Application

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional): () _____ **F94Q W3311 1**

Check One **Individual** **Joint**

Introductory \$15

Regular \$39 \$49

Senior \$25 \$35

Student \$25 \$35



Annual dues include subscription to Sierra (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1). Dues are not tax-deductible.

Please mail your check and this form to:

Sierra Club, PO Box 421041, Palm Coast, Florida, 32142-6417

2012 ANCIENT ISLANDS SIERRA GROUP

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**Membership
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