



Ancient Islands

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

Issue: 11-06, 07

JUNE—JULY 2011

FROM THE CHAIR...Chuck Geanangel

The Florida legislative session from Hell is over and the greatest bait and switch in recent history has been revealed. Local politicians who ran on the theme of improving the job market quickly switched to adopting a right wing agenda that created few jobs. It was an environmental train wreck from the start and home grown legislators were the worst of the worst. Republicans all, Rhonda Storm, J.D. Alexander, Kelli Stargel, John Wood, Ben Albritton, and Seth Mckeel reversed 30 years of environmental gains while siding with greedy developers and polluters on every vote. It's too soon to list every single disaster but here are some of the worst. This bunch eliminated the Department of Community Affairs, the state watchdog on managing growth and nearly defunded both the Everglades restoration program and the Forever Florida funding, and reduced the budget for the water management districts by 30 percent. The growth management loss is particularly egregious because all development decisions will now be in the hands of local governments and they are usually controlled by the home builder industry. The Legislature also approved a proposal that would make it more difficult for the public to challenge development and environmental permits. Developers would no longer have to prove a project is safe; it will be up to us to prove harm. The environmental community was not the only sector punished by our reps; the educators, state workers, women, and just about every member of our endangered middle class were impacted.

But what I resent the most is the treatment by the Florida legislature of environmental issues in general as job-killers. What brings visitors from around the world is our world-class beaches, lakes, forests, and the natural beauty of our beautiful State. If we diminish this bounty in any way, visitors will not come here and stay the winter season. Protecting the environment is not a job killer, it is just the opposite.

CIRCUIT RIDING

Summer is a time for more relaxed meetings, fellowship, and planning for the upcoming year. We try to meet at various homes around our territory to accommodate those members who find long drives to our winter meeting locations just too much. In June we meet in Dundee; in July, Winter Haven. August TBA.

DEADLY NEIGHBORS

So you thought the rust belt was the home of nasty old coal-fired electric generating plants - think again. Here in central Florida we have the following:

- C D McIntosh Jr. - Lakeland -- output of mercury per year 134 pounds
- Big Bend - Tampa area -- output of mercury per year 140 pounds
- Polk - southern part of county -- output of mercury per year 9 pounds
- Crystal River - to the northwest -- output of mercury per year 688 pounds!

Why should we care?

Less than one teaspoon of mercury can contaminate an entire lake. Mercury can cause serious health problems, including brain damage, particularly in young children.

The US is home to 491 coal-fired power plants that emit toxic mercury. They are one of the largest sources of man-made mercury pollution in the US. Every year 300,000 infants are born at risk for developmental defects because of their mothers' exposure to toxic mercury pollution. Nearly two-thirds of the existing coal-fired plants in the US lack the needed modern pollution controls to keep toxic air pollution, like mercury, acid gasses and arsenic, out of our air and water. This toxic pollution causes many serious health problems.



That old song "Blowing in the Wind" has never seemed more relevant. Fight for renewable energy requirements and conservation mandates.

...Sierra's Insider/FHColeman

HOW NOT TO CREATE ALGAE BLOOMS

Bone Valley is where phosphate is mined. Our soil is naturally rich in this nutrient. General purpose fertilizers are rich in nitrogen and phosphorous and the excess of these nutrients wash into our waterbodies creating nasty algae blooms, fish kills, eutrophic lakes - and upon reaching the Gulf - Red Tide. Our economy thrives on clean lakes and rivers and beaches that don't stink from the Tide and dead fish. In other words, a healthy environment is a job creator for Florida.

Communities along the Gulf Coast that were adversely affected by the 2005 Tide were the first in the state to adopt stringent urban nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer management ordinances; Florida has about forty of these ordinances. Natural Resources managers in our area expressed hope/belief that the legislature would pass a state-wide strong urban nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer management ordinance, which, of course, would be the best solution. Instead, lobbied by the big fertilizer powers, legislators filed bills to preempt even the existing local ordinances. These bills did not pass both houses and the Urban Turf Fertilizer Bill we have allows local governments to continue to adopt and enforce more stringent ordinances than those in the state-wide "Model Ordinance."

Politicians now in control are big on down-sizing state government declaring one-size doesn't fit all and localities know what's best for their own areas. We absolutely do know that source control is a lot cheaper than getting nutrients out of our lakes and rivers to meet our Federal Clean Water Act responsibilities. We absolutely do know that we can't afford to pump the muck out of our lakes. It's time for our local governments to act.

....F.H. Coleman

GREEN DRIVING

Higher gasoline prices at the onset of summer driving are such a fixture we don't even scream and yell much any more. Maybe that's a good thing; perhaps we can now concentrate on getting more miles for our buck and become more resolute in demanding greater fuel efficiency and better public transportation. But for the moment let's just talk about doing better with what we personally have at the moment.

Lighten the load: too many of us lug around stuff in the trunk or back seat that we don't need. The heavier your vehicle the more gasoline it takes to move it.

Tires and maintenance: low tire pressure, even by a few pounds, causes significant added rolling resistance which takes more power and fuel to overcome. And a poorly tuned engine can increase fuel consumption by as much as 10 to 20 percent.

Idling: If you're going to be sitting for more than thirty to forty-five seconds, turn off the car.

Ditch the aggressive driving: gentle, steady acceleration and deceleration is the key. Gunning the car at a light uses a lot of fuel because it takes more force. And don't forget: the difference in fuel consumption at 60 mph versus 70 is substantial.

Using less gasoline results in less pollution, means less money for nations that are really not our friends, and helps your wallet.

....F.H. Coleman

SIERRANS CELEBRATE GRAND OPENING OF PEACE RIVER CANOE LAUNCH



Photo by Marian Ryan

Outings Leaders Andy Quinn and Ann Marie Haywood at the April 30th celebration. Our July 9th outing will be grateful to utilize this new facility.

ENJOYMENT LEADS TO PROTECTING

The idea for Summertime Fun for Kids, see Outings page 3, came about for several reasons. On my second close examination of *Last Child in the Woods*; [Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder](#) by Richard Louv I was convinced that exposure to nature is essential for a child's best development. Another reason is that the current demographics of the environmental movement show that we are mostly older folks - we need a new generation of people who feel comfortable with nature and are committed to care for our natural world. And, not least, numerous studies state that exposure to the out-of-doors is a significant stress reducer.

The trips for kids are designed to be safe and fun! If we are able to get across a few nature concepts or conservation messages, that will be incredible!

Remember our mantra: if you enjoy the out-of-doors, chances are you will try to protect it.

....Andy Quinn

DEATH OF DCA

Most people have never heard of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) and the knowledge that the Republican radicals in the Florida legislature have eliminated it is a puzzle for most people. What DCA does (did) is act as a watchdog for all of the future developments in Florida which leads to growth. It was one of the "checks and balances" we had to stop some truly dangerous plans that would negatively impact the Florida environment. With DCA gone all such developments will be decided upon by the local governments. There will be no oversight by anyone else and almost no chance for local citizens to fight poorly designed developments. It is well known that developers and builders have an inside track with some county and cities through lavish campaign donations. Who do you think they will listen to, a concerned citizen or a big donor?

....Chuck Geanangel

OUTINGS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

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

Circle B Bar Reserve

Each month Circle B Bar Reserve offers a variety of guided hikes, nature oriented presentations 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 on the first or second working day of the month.

Summertime Nature Fun for Kids!

Jun. 20 These trips, all on Mondays, include a short kayak paddle (instruction provided), nature education and a swim in one of Florida's pristine spring runs. Typical costs will be \$25 which will include the use of a kayak, launch fees, and a donation to Sierra. Kids will bring a bag lunch, water bottles, sunscreen and snacks. Parents are welcome and needed. Contact Andy Quinn, Ancient Islands Outings Leader at 863 683-9600 or abquinn2010@gmail.com for more information and to reserve your spot - space is limited.

Jul. 11

Aug. 1

Kayaking for Adults

Kayaks are available for rent. Contact Andy (see above) as the number of kayaks is limited.

Jun. 18 **Walk in the Water**

Jul. 9 **Peace River** - Homeland to Ft. Meade

Jul. 30 **Reedy Creek**

Reserve the Dates!

TBA **Dedication of Coleman Landing at Shady Oaks - southwest shore of Lake Kissimmee.** The construction issue between the contractor and SFWMD has been resolved; modifications and repairs are being made. The dedication should occur in mid to late summer. Jenny's listserv and The Ledger will be notified when the grand opening/dedication is scheduled. See you there!

Oct. 1-2 **Fisheating Creek Fundraiser.** This paddling event will raise funds for conservation efforts around the headwaters of the creek which is a relatively undamaged creek abundant with wildlife that runs from Highlands County to Lake Okeechobee. The protection of this watershed is essential for the health of the Everglades and the drinking water of south Florida.

Oct. 8 **Water, Wings & Wild Things - Circle B Bar Reserve - Lakeland.** Polk County's Naturefest.

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 e-mail tabithabiehl@polk-county.net

Service - These events are Ridge Ranger projects.

These stewardship projects start at 8AM at their respective locations unless otherwise noted. For more details and to register call the Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Parken, at 863 699-3742 or e-mail bill.parken@myFWC.com. The schedule may change so be certain to register.

Jun. 4 **Jay Watch Training - Lake Placid.** Join Ridge Rangers in an amazing citizen science program which adds to the data base on this iconic Florida bird.

Jun. 11 **Jack Creek - Lake Placid.** Invasives removal.

Jun. 15 **Lake Wales Ridge State Forest - Frostproof.** Rare plant search. Starts at 9AM.

Jun. 18 **Archbold Biological Station - Venus.** Invasives removal - pulling torpedo grass from Lake Annie.

Jun. 25 **Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales.** Habitat enhancement.

Jul. 9 **Lake Louisa State Park - Clermont.** Plant pine seedlings. Starts at 9AM.

Jul. 30 **Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales.** Ridges to Rivers. Education for Ridge Rangers and others will provide a much broader view of our ecosystem and its importance. Starts at 9AM.

Special activities such as native plant nursery, Lakewatch, GPS plant mapping, woodworking, etc., are available. Become a Citizen-Scientist! Call Bill for details.

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

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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

JUNE 9 and JULY 14 MEETINGS

PROGRAMS:

JUNE: Review of the Legislative Session
or
Plan the Come Back!

JULY: Swimming in Chuck's Pool
Eating and Viewing " Ancient Islands"
DVD

*General Meeting and Executive Committee
Meeting Run Concurrently*

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.

June 9 Meeting: hosted by Jenny Jacobs, 208 Shepard Avenue, Dundee. From SR 17 or SR 542 (Dundee Rd.) at the traffic light in town turn south on Center St.; go one block to Shepard Ave. where you will turn left. Jenny's house is the fourth one on the right (blue-grey stucco). Park directly across the street in a large lot. 863 439-1926

July 14 Meeting: hosted by Chuck Geanangel, 92 Lake Otis Rd., Winter Haven. From Lake Elbert Dr., SE (SR542) turn south on 11th St., then left on Lake Otis Dr. Veer right on Lake Link Causeway; if the gate is not open, punch Geanangel on the entry post. Cross causeway and turn right at the "T" and right again on Lake Otis Rd. Chuck's is on the left corner at the end of the road. 326-5748

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

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