



# Ancient Islands

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties of Florida

Issue: 09-08

AUGUST 2009

## FROM THE CHAIR...Paul Anderson

**COAL-BAD ENERGY** - Coal continues to be much in the news. A 7/20/09, newspaper report and a previous TV report state that India continues to refuse to accept Western demands for binding limits on carbon emissions. Secretary Clinton stated India's level of carbon emissions is "going up and dramatically". The combined coal mine fires in India and China alone put more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than all the cars in the U.S. China also is not cooperating in emissions reduction. Coal fired energy plants are an even greater problem worldwide.

And now developers want to export strip-mined coal from Alaska to China to further fuel their economic expansion, with accompanying worldwide pollution. Please see the last issue of Sierra magazine. My title "Coal-Bad Energy" comes from this article. Alaska holds an estimated 5.5 trillion tons of coal, roughly one-half of the nation's, and one-eighth of the world's reserves. Eight sites are listed in various stages of planning and development. Coal-fired plants are a major contributor to global warming, most felt in the polar regions. For example, in the last 50 years Alaska has warmed an average of four degrees F., whereas the national average is one degree F.! Coal-fired plants also produce large amounts of mercury which affects fish. Alaska now produces 60% of all seafood harvested in the U. S. Therefore strip-mining coal would cause three major problems for Alaska, emissions will accelerate global warming, the mercury and destruction of salmon streams will damage the fishing industry, and the strip-mines will devastate the landscape harming wildlife and tourism. My wife and I drove from Auburndale to Fairbanks in 1997 and the scenery was beautiful.

Lastly, a recent internet article pointed out what we need more than more coal-fired plants is an improved energy grid. Coal now produces about 23% of the energy in the U.S. This is going to increase as the cost of petroleum (40%), and natural gas (23%) increase and supplies decrease. But the article points out more than 55% of the electricity produced is lost in transmission and distribution!

Please call or write your Congressmen and ask them to protect Alaska, and the rest of the U.S., from increased strip-mining and more coal-fired plants; and ask them to instead support alternate energy sources, and a more efficient energy grid. Thank you.

## THE FUTURE OF DUCK HUNTING AT LAKE HANCOCK

On Wednesday, June 17, 2009, the often heated battle over allowing duck hunting in the Banana Creek Marsh portion of Polk County's Circle B Bar Reserve ended when the Board of County Commissioners voted 5 to 0 to ban it at this facility.

### Banana Creek Marsh



Photo by Reinier Munguia

Sierra Club, Audubon and others joined forces to argue that duck hunting is not an appropriate activity at the marsh. It's relatively small size cannot accommodate duck hunting without seriously degrading the opportunity for other users including visiting school groups, hikers, photographers and bird watchers to view high concentrations of ducks in their natural environment. The primary basis for this argument was the result of bird counts made by a group consisting of two highly experienced members of Audubon, two members of United Waterfowlers of Florida (UWF), and one member of the Polk County Natural Resources Department (NRD). On the day following two consecutive half-day hunts, the number of ducks counted had dropped to less than 10 percent of the pre-hunt count, and slowly recovering to only 42 percent 26 days after the hunts. We argued successfully that the important issue in this debate was not the short 5 1/2 hour period per day that the hunters were actually hunting, but the devastating and long lasting reduction in duck sightings following the hunts.

Now that duck hunting has been banned from Circle B Bar Reserve we will continue the work we started in 2004 to promote and support the development of outstanding waterfowl habitat and duck hunting opportunities on the southern and eastern shores of Lake Hancock. To recap: we convened a meeting on February 26, 2004 at the NRD office in Bartow. Attending, at our invitation, were duck experts Craig LeShack from DU, Steve Rockwood from FWC, and Dr. Paul Gray from Audubon. Also present were representatives from the NRD, the United States Department of Agricul-

(Continued on page 2)

*(Continued from page 1) Duck Hunting*

ture/Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The group toured sites on Lake Hancock's southeastern shore, and after considerable discussion concluded that although there was significant potential for attracting waterfowl, any further action must await final decisions by SWFWMD on the lake level modification project. These tasks are now completed, and we are ready to resume our earlier effort.

Unfortunately, the high level of animosity expressed by some duck hunters following the BoCC vote may dash our hopes that environmentalists and hunters can work together effectively on this issue.

....*Bob Taylor, Marian Ryan and Chuck Geanangel*

## **BLUEWAYS IN POLK COUNTY**

The Polk County Growth Management Department is making arrangements to finalize the Polk Unified Greenways map, Comprehensive Plan, and Land Development Code policies. There will be a Blueways developed as part of this effort. The planners and members of the Lakes Access Committee will contact other government entities (including neighboring counties) to make certain connections with existing blueways are not missed. The development of Polk Blueways is in recognition of the large and growing number of people who are opting for non-motorized access to central Florida's awesome waterways. The Peace River system is already mapped but other kayak/canoe trails need to be added. If you have knowledge of such trails, or want to make suggestions, please contact Frances at 863 956-3771.

....*Frances Howell-Coleman*

## **FHD ON THE BALLOT IN 2010**

The years-long Florida Hometown Democracy (FHD) petition drive is now Amendment 4 and will be on the ballot in 2010. Passage of Amendment 4 would mean that all changes to local Comprehensive Land Use Plans would have to be approved by voters, not just local politicians. The opposition to FHD includes a coalition of business interests who have pledged millions of dollars to defeat the amendment. If you wish to donate or work toward the passage of this amendment, go to <http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com>

....*John Hedrick and Janet Stanko*

## **POLITICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT BE A VOLUNTEER**

The 2010 elections are fast approaching and Sierra Club needs to be involved! From City Commissions to Congressmen, the environment should play a significant part in the decision making processes of our elected officials. If you are interested in helping pro-environment candidates get elected, you should consider joining the Ancient Islands Political Committee. Training will be provided both on-line and in person; a training class is tentatively scheduled for November in St. Petersburg. Please contact Marian Ryan at 863-293-6961 or [marianryan@gmail.com](mailto:marianryan@gmail.com) for more information. ....*Marian Ryan*

## **BONE VALLEY SELECTED AREA STUDY**

The proposed Bone Valley Selected Area Study (SAS) area is very generally defined as the southwest portion of the county where phosphate mining has occurred. The exact study area will be defined as part of the planning process.

The SAS Focus Group held its second meeting on July 16th with presentations on past planning studies of the area as well as an overview of the Clear Springs Sector Plan. The Focus Group is made up of representatives of diverse interests including representatives from the affected and surrounding communities, residents, environmental interests, mining, government agencies and large land owners. The meetings are open to the public and decisions are made by consensus. The purpose of this SAS is to:

- Develop a vision for the area
- Create a Future Land Use plan for areas that previously supported the phosphate mining industry
- Establish a framework for quality growth and plan implementation
- Recognize and protect existing resources

Some of the preliminary goals hoped for through the study are:

- Protection of environmentally sensitive and high quality reclaimed areas
- Preservation of the rural, agricultural and historical characteristics of the area that contribute to its "sense of place"
- Development of a land use conversion process that is supported by quality mine status data
- Promotion of additional economic development opportunities within the area

Infrastructure will be the topic of the August 20th meeting. For more information visit the Polk County Growth Management Project webpage or contact Ameen Bailey at 863-534-7691 or [ameebailey@polk-county.net](mailto:ameebailey@polk-county.net)

## **WASTE REDUCTION COORDINATOR NEEDED**

Sierra Club Florida selected waste minimization last fall as one of its 2009-2010 campaigns. We have a great opportunity this year to dramatically influence the way waste is managed in Florida, but the Waste Minimization Committee needs the help of dedicated volunteers from each group.

If you are passionately interested in working on recycling issues and coordinating the efforts of group members in communicating with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), this is the position for you. The DEP is working to develop draft recommendations for implementing a 75 percent statewide recycling goal. Final recommendations to the Florida Legislature must be submitted by February 1, 2010. The DEP draft recommendations are available at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/recyclinggoal75/> To get involved or for more information please contact Linda Demler at [linda.demler@sierraclub.org](mailto:linda.demler@sierraclub.org) or Dwight Adams at [adams@phys.ufl.edu](mailto:adams@phys.ufl.edu).

## PROTECT COMMUNITIES AND WILDLIFE FROM THE WALL

Built by ignoring America's legal framework, the nearly 700-mile-long border wall between the U.S. and Mexico has fractured communities and threatened wildlife. The walls are shutting down wildlife corridors that are essential to dozens of species, particularly in the face of global warming threats. The Sierra Club Rincon Group, Grand Canyon Chapter, has produced a DVD entitled "Wild versus Wall" which details the unique and diverse natural areas along the southern borders of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Our Group has a copy, viewed at the July meeting, which we would be happy to share with any group or individual wanting to borrow it.

The Senate just voted to build over 300 more miles of border walls. To date, border-wall construction has cost at least \$2.4 billion, and the Senate mandate for additional construction could cost American taxpayers up to another billion dollars. Thankfully, there's still time to remove this harmful provision.

Contact your legislators to let them know this is the wrong approach and to ask that the Department of Homeland Security be allowed to plan and execute the most effective and efficient combination of measures to gain operational control of the border.

....Sierra Club Insider



*Photo by Sierra Club Insider*

### EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

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

#### Circle B Bar

Each month Circle B Bar Reserve offers a variety of guided hikes, photography workshops, astronomy nights (in the cooler months), nature oriented presentations, and a tram ride. Because space is limited (especially on the tram ride) and additional events are added, call Karen Hagood, Naturalist Environmental Operations Specialist at 863 668-4673 to find out what is available and to reserve a space.

**Sep. 19**      **UPKEEP Kayak Program.** Winter Haven, with the assistance of a grant from the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program, purchased 12 kayaks. Participants in this September event will learn to kayak as they clean up a section of the Peace River. For confirmation of details and to reserve a space call the Natural Resource Division at 863 291-5881.

#### Service - These Saturday events are Ridge Ranger projects.

These stewardship projects start at 8:00 at their respective locations unless otherwise noted. For more details call the Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Reed, at 863 699-3742 or e-mail [james.reed@myFWC.com](mailto:james.reed@myFWC.com) or check out the website [http://myfwc.com/GETINVOLVED/Volunteer\\_Ridge\\_Rangers\\_index.htm](http://myfwc.com/GETINVOLVED/Volunteer_Ridge_Rangers_index.htm).

**Aug. 8**      **Flamingo Villas tract of Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge.** Remove fencing debris from western perimeter of this property.

**Aug. 15**      **Lake Kissimmee State Park.** Trail maintenance, nonnative plant removal and/or fence line cleanup and maintenance.

**Aug. 22**      **Lake Louisa State Park.** Stewardship.

**Aug. 26**      **Riverwoods Field Lab.** This **Wednesday** event involves improving the butterfly garden and area grounds. There will be an afternoon boat excursion to visit the Kissimmee River restoration after lunch. Limit 20 people.

**Sep. 5**      **Highlands Hammock State Park.** Habitat enhancement.

**Sep. 12**      **Avon Park Air Force Range.** Continue improving the red-cockaded woodpecker habitat.

**Sep. 19**      **Tiger Creek Preserve.** Install fencing.

**Sep. 26**      **Bok Tower Gardens.** Stewardship - part of National Public Lands Day activities.

Special activities such as greenhouse work, invertebrate study, fish species inventory, and surveying wildlife populations are available. Become a Citizen-Scientist! Call Jim 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 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 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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or [address.changes@sierraclub.org](mailto:address.changes@sierraclub.org)

## AUGUST 13 MEETING

### PROGRAM:

**ARITHMETIC, POPULATION and ENERGY**  
**A Fascinating DVD Exploring the True Costs of**  
**Rising Population and Energy Demands**

By

**Dr. Albert A Bartlett**  
**University of Colorado Boulder**

*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.**

This last Circuit Riding meeting of 2009 will be held at the home of Bob and Billye Taylor, 500 W. Omaha St., Lake Hamilton. From US Hwy 27 at the Island Food Store (about halfway between Dundee and Haines City) turn east onto Main St. Go to 6th, turn left and follow until pavement ends and turn right onto W. Omaha. Go to mid-block and park in designated area on the right (look for Sierra signs at every decision point). Phone 439-2251

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**  \$25

**Regular**  \$39  \$47

**Senior**  \$24  \$32

**Student**  \$24  \$32



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 52968, Boulder, Colorado, 80322-2968**

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