



Ancient Islands

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

Issue: 10-08, 09

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER 2010

FROM THE CHAIR...Chuck Geanangel

And Now There Are Five. With the formation of the then Polk Group of the Sierra Club in 1970 there were four counties involved: Polk, Highlands, Desoto, and Hardee. A couple of years ago the group/club changed the name to better reflect the diversity of our membership. Thus our group became Ancient Islands. Last month due to a statewide reorganization, Sumter County was added to our membership area.

For those new to the state, Sumter County borders Polk County on the north and shares large areas of the Green Swamp with us. If you leave Lakeland and drive north on US 98 a dozen miles then turn right on SR 471 past Colt Creek State Park, you will be in Sumter County. We know little of the wishes and desires of the 60 members there but will try to meet with a few of them ASAP.

The BP oil spill continues to hold the attention of most of us in Florida and hopefully by the time you read this article the well will be plugged.

For many, this will be the end of the emergency and their concerns will shift to other things.



Unfortunately, much of the damage is hidden and we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg. The true number of the dead and poisoned birds, marine animals, shrimp, crabs, oysters and the like will never be known. The human cost will be enormous and will persist for many years.

Last week on a news program they showed pictures of an entire pod of porpoises, far out in the Gulf, all dead or dying. Nearby was a sperm whale, covered with oil and in great distress. Frankly, I had to turn away from the TV; it was too much for me to watch.

If any good at all can come from this terrible tragedy, it could be the needed "train wreck" necessary for Americans to realize that the environmental cost of using petroleum is so great that finding alternative sources of energy production is a necessity. If destroying marine life in 1/3 of the Gulf of Mexico and endangering the livelihood of tens of thousands of people does not get our attention, I don't know what will.

PROGRAMS

August

Serious stuff and fun stuff. DVD Swimming with **Whale Sharks** (one of the newer highlights in ecotourism) and then a plunge in Chuck's pool; after our delicious covered dish supper, we'll get serious with Sierra's DVD **Beyond Oil**.

September

Snags: dead tree standing or nature-based housing and natural food store for diverse species. Both definitions fit Jennifer Myers' program on the importance of not cutting down dead trees unless they threaten people or property. Her powerpoint presentation on the critters that need and use snags is fascinating and beautiful.

THE CENSUS IS OVER LET THE REDISTRICTING FIGHT BEGIN!

It's a common lament "There's no point in contacting my representative - he/she is politically invulnerable and sees no point in listening to me." A large factor in the creation of political invulnerability is the drawing of election district lines - a process which is mandated by the US Constitution. Historically the political party in control of the state legislature redraws Congressional (federal) and Legislative (state) districts in response to the decennial census. The dominant party typically gerrymanders the districts to help itself stay in power and help incumbents win re-election. This reprehensible practice has been going on in this country at least since 1812 in Massachusetts when Governor Gerry was condemned for helping create a district so distorted it looked like a salamander.

During a two-year drive 1.7 million Floridians signed petitions to put amendments 5 and 6 on the November 2010 ballot to affect redistricting reform. Legislative redistricting is covered in 5 and Congressional in 6; under the amendments common communities and minority representation are protected and districts are to be kept as compact as possible. The Florida Supreme Court reviewed and certified the amendments for the ballot. The legislature could not tolerate this people's rebellion and in reaction wrote amendment 7 which would supersede 5 and 6. In other words, if 5, 6 and 7 pass, 7 would allow a legislative majority free rein to do as it saw fit. It's hard enough to get sixty percent of the vote to pass an amendment but the arrogant politicians weren't taking any chances!

Lawsuits have been filed on both sides. The Florida League of Women Voters, Florida's NAACP, and Democracia Ahora have asked the court to remove 7 from the ballot on the grounds it is deceptive. With those organizations in favor of 5 and 6 and against 7, it's hard to give any credence to the opposition's assertion that 5 and 6 would hurt gains made in minority representation but that is the position two US Representatives and the Florida Legislation have made in their suit against 5 and

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1) Redistricting Begin

6. Whatever the decisions are in the lawsuits -- and a Leon County Circuit Judge ruled against 7 in mid-July -- appeals will almost certainly end up in the Florida Supreme Court. **Whether 7 appears on the ballot or not, the opponents of 5 and 6 undoubtedly will use the same deceptive arguments in the pre-election frenzy.**

It is worthy to note that this fight is not along rigid party lines; Governor Charlie Crist (I), former Senator Bob Graham (D), and former Assistant Interior Secretary Nathaniel Reed (R) are strongly supportive of 5 and 6 and against 7.

Sierra Club Florida and Ancient Islands support FairDistricts amendments 5 and 6 and condemn the Legislature's poison-pill amendment 7. Redistricting reform is a critical step toward a more representative democracy and a government which more truly represents the people should be more responsive to environmental issues.

....Frances Howell-Coleman

PLAN B 4.0

"Mobilizing to Save Civilization"

by Lester R. Brown

When approaching any book containing recommendations that would substantially change the way we live, it is critical that the author be qualified to make those recommendations. With twenty-four honorary degrees and many other awards, Brown is. An additional plus is the book is very readable and surprisingly upbeat for such an urgent challenge and it is an eye opener because it highlights the true environmental costs of many common practices (i.e. the production of gold.)

Plan B has four major goals: stabilizing population at eight billion or less, eradicating poverty, restoring the earth, and stabilizing climate by cutting CO2 emissions 80 percent by 2020. He proposes scientifically based solutions to reach these goals and stresses we must work at all of them because all of these challenges are interrelated. Restoring the Earth includes protecting and restoring forests, soils, aquifers, fisheries, and plant and animal diversity. Stabilizing climate requires both conservation and switching to renewable energy. The energy mix called for by Plan B includes solar (rooftop electric and heat as well as power plants), geothermal, biomass, hydropower, and wind - with close to half from wind (p. 136). Phasing out fossil fuels will require electrification of the transportation system. Brown contends that plug-in hybrid cars could be powered by wind-generated electricity for the equivalent of less than \$1 per gallon (p.92).

Brown convinces his readers that a wholesale economic restructuring is necessary (p. 261) and that the current effort will need to be greater than the mobilization for World War II. The final section of the book discusses what ordinary people can do. The key point is that lifestyle changes are not enough; we must become politically active and work for change because "Saving civilization is not a spectator sport" (p. 266).

He spends little time discussing potential downsides, but his breadth and depth of knowledge reassures the reader that saving our civilization is possible.

I highly recommend Plan B. A complete pdf of Plan B 4.0, as well as updates, is available free of charge at www.earthpolicy.org

....Robert Crabbs

SIERRA FAMILY OUTINGS

Family Outings began with a conversation between me and three friends. We wanted our families to camp together. I had recently volunteered to be Ancient Islands outings leader so it was a natural fit.

We old-timers in the conservation movement are painfully aware of the changing demographic of our membership; we are getting older and our youth are unaware of the power of nature. Multifamily outings are a way to have fun, be safe and encourage a new era in environmental stewardship. These outings are a way to pass on crucial information about how to be in the wild and not only survive the experience but enjoy it.

Even though I grew up in the South, my original outdoor passion was the mountains - Rockies, Sierras, Cascades and Appalachia. Perhaps my off-again/on-again work in the environmental movement in Florida corresponded to my failure to really appreciate and recreate in Florida's wild places. Recognizing this connection gives fuller meaning to "Explore, Enjoy and Protect." Now I want to be involved in local and regional issues and protect these wonderful places.

An Outings Leader reconnoiters the trails and streams to which he plans to take a group. Some of these exploratory trips have provided me with experiences that fill the spirit. Native Peoples often called water the Blood of the Mother; as I head downstream from the Green Swamp, I often feel as if I am leaving the heart of our life-giving water supply. And, oh, the wildlife moments, like the Anhinga dive-bombing the water just feet from the front of my boat on Fisheating Creek. Or the wild boar on the Hillsborough River whose snort at close range caught me totally unaware. You never know when one of these moments will occur - but if you're not 'out there' you'll never have one!

We have attempted to use the rivers of Florida to find Wilderness. In doing so we have come to understand each river or creek is unique; that has enabled us to understand different ecosystems. We've had people from different backgrounds on our trips which has led us to better appreciate America's cultural diversity. What a joy it has been to see the participants of all ages grow in confidence and competence. You know it's been worthwhile when, after a trip turns arduous - after it was purported to be easy - a participant exclaims, "It was the best adventure I've had in years!"

We're considering Atlantic coastal camping with surfing and surf fishing, family camping at the Audubon Center, an over night paddle on the Peace River, and camping in the Ocala Forest - come help us decide when and how. Also Ancient Islands is looking for more outing leaders. Training is being offered October 29-31. All are welcome - call me at 863 683-9600 for more information.

....Andy Quinn

FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Presented to

John and Marian Ryan

In June the Ryans were recognized for their work on many environmental issues over the past two decades.

Congratulations!

OUTINGS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

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 Karen Hagood, Naturalist Environmental Operations Specialist at 863 668-4673 to find out what is available and to reserve a space.

Water Wings & Wild Things

Oct. 30 Circle B Bar Reserve - Lakeland. Polk County's Naturefest. Details in next newsletter - reserve the date.

Trek Ten Trails

Hikes start at 9AM - contact Marian Ryan at 863 207-5206 or marianryan@gmail.com for more information.

Sept. 18 Van Fleet State Trail. Take SR33 north through Polk City; approximately 10 miles north of city, turn left on Green Pond Road and continue for two miles until you see trailhead parking on the right. Trail runs through the Green Swamp and has excellent wildlife viewing opportunities (Sherman fox squirrels, gopher tortoises, and various birds).

Oct. 2 Mosaic Peace River Park. From Bartow follow SR98/US17 south about 5.3 miles to Homeland Garfield Road where you turn left. Drive about 1.2 miles until you see the park entrance on the left. There is almost 5,000 feet of boardwalk through the floodplain of the Peace River; wild flowers, air plants and wildlife abound.

Summertime Kids' Nature Fun

Designed for kids: a short paddle (using Winter Haven's UPKEEP kayaks), swimming, and a nature talk. Parents and Sierrans welcome but space is limited so call Andy at 863 683-9600 soon. The date is a Monday. Cost: \$20, which includes kayak, shuttle/day use fee, plus donation to Ancient Islands Sierra.

Aug. 16 Withlacoochee River/Silver Lake

Kayaking for Adults

These are advanced beginner/intermediate paddles. 8AM launch - cost for each trip is \$20 for use of an UPKEEP kayak and any associated shuttle/day use fee. We'll eat at a cool local restaurant after the paddles. Consider a donation for Ancient Islands Sierra. Call Andy at 863 683-9600 to reserve a kayak.

Aug. 14 Reedy Creek. Paddle on remote Reedy Creek that flows into Lake Arbuckle.

Sept. 17-20 Kayaking on TBA. Come to our next meeting and help us decide where.

Oct. 22-24 Kayaking under a full moon on the **Oklawaha River/Fore Lake.** Hardwood forest, swamp and marsh.

Nov. 12-15 Kayaking on **Lake Marion Creek** and primitive camping. Awesome cypress swamp.

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 Karen Hagood at 863 668-4673 or e-mail karenhagood@polk-county.net

Service - These events are Ridge Ranger projects.

These stewardship projects start at 8:00 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. Check the web site for changes to the schedule <http://myfwc.com/GETINVOLVED>

Aug. 7 FWC Royce Ranch - Lake Placid. Everything you ever wanted to know about Prescribed Burns: how a burn is planned and executed, types of gear and vehicles used, benefits, and a tour of burned and unburned areas at the ranch. **9AM.** 1630 Royce Ranch Ave., Lake Placid - call Bill (above) to register.

Aug. 14 Tenoroc - Lakeland. Planting pine seedlings.

Aug. 21 Bok Tower - Lake Wales. Presentation of the Scrub Lupine Project.

Aug. 28 Lake Kissimmee State Park - Sebring. Removal of exotics.

Sept. 11 Highlands County location TBA. Training workday involving identification of exotics and GPS geo-tagging.

Sept. 18 Polk County location TBA. Training workday involving identification of exotics and GPS geo-tagging.

Sept. 25 Lake Blue Scrub - Auburndale. Trimming and weeding of Scrub Lupine plot.

Special activities such as native plant nursery, Lakewatch, GPS plant mapping, photography, 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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Members should send **changes of address** to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968
or address.changes@sierraclub.org

AUG 12 and SEPT 9 MEETINGS

PROGRAMS:

**AUGUST: Swimming in Chuck's Pool,
Eating and Viewing 15 Minute DVD
Beyond Oil**

SEPTEMBER: Snags and Cavity Nesters
By
Jennifer Myers
Conservation Biologist, FWC

*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.

August 12 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

September 9 Meeting: 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/>

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

2010 ANCIENT ISLANDS SIERRA GROUP

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