



Ancient Islands

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

Issue: 11-02, 03

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2011

FROM THE CHAIR...Chuck Geanangel

Fight back

Our new Governor Scott and the most anti-environmental Florida House and Senate in memory have just been sworn in to office. To this gang, all environmental laws and regulations are "job killers". The fact that the Great Recession we in Florida are now experiencing, was caused mostly by a vast overbuilding of homes, does not faze them. The regulatory agencies that protect us from unhealthy growth and pollution, namely FDCA and FDEP (Department of Community Affairs and Department of Environmental Protection), operate on shoestring budgets and were able to deter only the worst offenders. Under the new regime it appears that even that small effort will be diluted or eliminated. But don't despair, there is already evidence that the legislature and the governor don't see eye to eye on many major areas. This friction may prove to be our only salvation.

So what's a good citizen to do? Some will do nothing and hope for a miracle. I suggest we fight back! Some 50% of the registered voters in Florida did not vote last election. A huge number did not even bother to register to vote. Our job is to convince people that elections do matter. The Sierra Club of Florida needs to expand our membership base and raise money for public awareness. You can start in your own home by convincing your family members, friends and coworkers to join our cause. If everyone gets just one new member we will double in size. There is an application in this newsletter. Please use it. It will take money to bring environmental cases before the courts but looking at the stiff opposition that may be our only recourse. It all depends on you; fight back or hope for a miracle.*Charles Geanangel*

SUMTER COUNTY MEMBERS

Welcome to the Ancient Islands Group!

We want to set up a meeting - probably at The Villages because so many of you live there - to learn of your issues and concerns. Please contact Chuck Geanangel, Chair, at 863 326-5748 or hoatzin@tampabay.rr.com with suggestions for a place (community room or restaurant) for the Apr. 14th meeting.

FEBRUARY 10th 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. Mark Deyrup will begin a presentation on Rare Plants of the Lake Wales Ridge; in addition to wonderful slides (powerpoint) his delivery is lively, funny and fascinating—it will be an evening to treasure.

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.

MARCH 10th MEETING AT CIRCLE B

High Speed Rail Station Location Choices is a must see-and-hear program for citizens of Polk. Jim Studiale, Lakeland Director of Community Development will present the pros and cons of each proposed site: some are in the middle of job centers and population and some are not -- some are well served by transit and roads and some are not. Increased development will occur in the site chosen. See page 4 for directions to Circle B.

WE DID GOOD!

Last year Ancient Islands Sierra completed the funding for the Richard Coleman Endowed Scholarship - in environmental studies - at New College. Leo Berman Ferretti, who is committed to becoming an environmental scientist, was the first recipient. Some of his Independent Study Projects have involved traveling to the Amazon rain forest to study medicinal plants and to our own Everglades. He writes "I have learned and grown so much since coming to NCF....I thank you so much for your tremendous impact on my life." Andrew Walker, President & CEO of the New College Foundation sums up well what your efforts will mean in perpetuity: "There are few things we can do that have greater benefit than providing promising, hard working young men and women with the chance for an outstanding education. It's a gift that will last a lifetime."

Thanks to all who contributed in the past and are still contributing - and especially to Bob Taylor who ran the nesting box project for the benefit of the scholarship.

....*Frances H. Coleman*

LOCAL SIERRANS RECOGNIZED

Andy Quinn from the Ancient Islands Group was given the Otter Award for his 10 years of volunteering with outings. Andy is concentrating on younger individuals, some even of school age. This is showing great promise in growing membership. The Ancient Islands Group hikes and kayaks the streams, rivers, and lakes of central Florida. Because of the Polk County Environmental Land Program, 25,000 acres of new nature reserves have been formed and a new State Park, Colt Creek, has been established. Andy is taking advantage of this expansion of public lands to assist members and the general public in exploring the newfound riches. He carefully plan the trips, arranges for kayaks for those who don't have them, maps out the travel route and coordinates the put in and take out sites. Although the joy of the outing would be enough for most, he educates all who will listen about the geology, flora and fauna of the region.



Photo by Marian Ryan

Frances Howell-Coleman from the Ancient Islands Group was honored with the Whooping Crane Award for her work with public relations. She was Chairperson of the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club in 1980 and was one of the first members of the Polk Group (now known as the Ancient Islands); she has also held many group offices. Frances now serves on the Pelican committee which oversees the chapter newsletter and has been editor of the group newsletter for decades. One important component in each of the newsletters is an extensive listing of service opportunities and outings, not only Sierra's but any outdoor activities being offered by our sister environmental organizations. Getting folks to enjoy the Florida outdoors is a passion with her.



COLEMAN LANDING AT SHADY OAKS

The dedication/opening of Coleman Landing, Polk's newest county park on the southwest shore of Lake Kissimmee, will probably be in mid-March. Originally the opening was to have been in January but one of the ramps was not constructed to specification; as soon as the remedy is completed and a firm date is set, a notice will be sent on Jenny's list serve and The Ledger will be notified. All are welcome to join in the celebration.

A kiosk has been erected to enlighten the users of the recreation area about the nature of the Kissimmee River Valley -- how the watershed was originally, how man altered it, and how the Corps and the South Florida Water Management District are attempting to restore a more natural system. There are conventional powerboat and airboat ramps and a canoe/kayak launch. The basic facility, ramps, drives, pavilions and restrooms, have been constructed by the SFWMD. When it's completed Polk County will accept the park from the District and have a resident caretaker on site. Camping setups may be added later. The Landing is located just off Highway 60 in southeast Polk.

The County Commission named the recreation area in honor of Richard L. Coleman, one of this Group's more outstanding activists. The conservation work for which Richard was best known was restoration of the Kissimmee River - a goal for which he fought for over 30 years; he boated and fished the valley's lakes, creeks and river, and died in an accident there. It is so appropriate that he be

honored in this location. But the Commissioners were also honoring Richard's work on other issues important to the county: the management of mined phosphate lands, the protection of the Green Swamp, and regional water quality. A memorial stone will be placed near the shore. We hope to see all of you there!

NEW TOTES AVAILABLE

Ancient Islands is having its signature art work - Paul Schulz's wood ducks - screened on natural colored canvas totes. On the reverse side, in green letters (which color will match the handles) the following message makes a strong statement:

REFUSE Plastic Bags

The United States Uses 100 Billion Plastic Bags Annually.
This Wastes 12 Million Barrels of Oil!

Every one is familiar with the original 3 Rs: Reduce - Reuse - Recycle. We're joining the push to add the fourth R: Refuse - as in 'refuse plastic and paper.' In many countries and cities around the world you no longer have even the option of having your purchases placed in plastic bags; we don't seem to have enough political power to pass a law against plastic, so let's go for a 'citizens revolution!'

While they last, the bags will be offered to our members for the actual cost of \$4.75. Great for our members and great for gifts.

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 Specialist at 863 668-4673 to find out what is available and to reserve a space.

Kayaking - Hiking

Feb. 26 Chassahowitzka River near Homosassa Springs. This round trip run on one of Florida's Outstanding Waters (spring fed in near pristine condition) will take place from 9AM until 3PM (approximately). Until they're spoken for, Winter Haven's UPKEEP kayaks will be available; costs: \$10 per person plus \$3 per car parking. Bring your own lunch. Drive time from Lakeland is approximately 1 1/2 hours. Register with Leader Gail Bagley - 863 683-3334 or gail_bagley@msn.com immediately as space is limited - carpooling may be available.

Mar. 5 Hiking - Gator Sink on the Peace River. Charlie Cook, DEP Environmental Specialist will guide us to the Sink, the main river channel, several karst features, and the site of Kissinger Springs. Reservations required: contact Leader Ann Marie Haywood at annmarie0325@hotmail.com or 813 817-3240.

Mar. 11-13 Rock Springs Run. This primitive camping trip is suggested for experience paddlers only because of the length of the run. Costs: \$20 members, \$30 nonmembers; this includes camping and launch fees and Sierra donation. Optional food costs: \$20: 2 breakfasts/dinners. Limit 8 participants. While they last, UPKEEP kayaks are available for \$10. Contact Leader Andy Quinn at abquinn2010@gmail.com

Apr. 1-3 Family Outing on the Weeki Watchee. Kayak from the crystal clear Springs to Rogers Park with Sat. night camping at WW Christian Camp. Tents and kayaks available for a fee. Contact Leader Ann Marie Haywood at annmarie0325@hotmail.com or 813 817-3240

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. 12 Lake Marion Creek/Stokes Preserve - Haines City area. From Hwy 17/92 just north of Haines City, turn right on CR 580 and continue for 3.9 miles; then turn right on Lake Marion Creek Road. After .8 miles, parking will be on the right. Hiking this white sugar sand scrub provides an opportunity to spot deer, turkey, and many other species of birds.

Mar. 12 Lake Parker Park, 910 Granada St. - Lakeland. Turn north off Hwy. 92 onto Lakeland Hills Blvd.; turn east onto Granada. Hike through wetland hardwood forest close to Lake Parker.

Apr. 2 Street Audubon Center, 115 Lameraux Rd. - Winter Haven. From SR 540 /Cypress Gardens Blvd. turn north on Cypress Gardens Rd. After approximately one mile turn onto Lameraux Rd. - continue for several blocks - the entrance is on the left. Trails that run along Lake Ned and along a high ridge provide an excellent opportunity to spot a variety of birds, butterflies, and possibly gopher tortoise.

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 9AM at their respective locations. 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>

Feb. 5 FWC Platt Branch - Lake Placid. Red cockaded wood pecker support - clear vegetation around nesting trees to prevent damage from fires.

Feb. 19 Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales. Stewardship.

Mar. 5 FWC Lake Blue Scrub - Auburndale. Invasives removal.

Mar. 12 Archbold Biological Station - Lake Placid. Invasives removal.

Mar. 16 Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales. Stewardship.

Mar. 19 Lake Wales Ridge State Forest - Frostproof. Rare plant search.

Mar. 26 Avon Park Air Force Range - Avon Park. Red cockaded wood pecker support.

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

Ancient Islands - FL Sierra
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Winter Haven, FL 33883

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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

PROGRAMS:

FEBRUARY 10:

Rare Plants of the Lake Wales Ridge
Presented by Dr. Mark Deyrup
Archbold Biological Station

MARCH 10:

High Speed Rail Location Choices in
Lakeland
Presented by Jim Studiale, Director
Community Development Lakeland

*General Meeting and Executive Committee
Meeting Run Concurrently*

February 10: Circuit riding in Sebring. See page 1 for directions.
March 10: 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

2011 ANCIENT ISLANDS SIERRA GROUP

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