



Ancient Islands

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties of Florida

Issue: 09-01

January 2009

FROM THE CHAIR...Paul Anderson

Focus on Global Warming I have long maintained the number one issue facing Florida, the United States, and the rest of the world is Global Warming, not the economy, the wars, etc. The top three issues are Global Warming, Global Warming, and Global Warming! I was delighted to see on page four of the Winter issue of the Pelican where Frank Jackalone states "...National has changed its focus to issues relating to Global Warming...". He then goes on to list seven issues "that will get attention and funding from National." I assert that these seven issues should guide the Sierra Club Florida and the Florida Groups in their decisions and their priorities. It is in our own best interest on the state and local levels and in the interest of every person, animal, and plant on Earth.

On the same page Mr. Jackalone and staff list the six existing campaigns in Florida. Most of these, while worthy efforts, are not related to global warming so should be reconsidered to see if our limited resources need to be redirected, or have we already achieved a good balance? For example, the 12/12/08 Ledger reports that the California Air Resources Board voted unanimously to adopt the nation's most comprehensive Global Warming plan, including implementation. I propose Sierra in Florida work toward a similar plan in this state.

Similarly, on the bottom of page four it lists the top four conservation issues for 2009, as voted on by the participants at the leadership retreat. Several of these are not related to Global Warming and I suggest a reconsideration might be in order. It states 28 issues were considered but it does not say what the other 24 are. Perhaps in those other 24 there are issues more related to Global Warming and saving our "Planet in Peril". Also, others might be more likely to receive "attention and funding" from National. This is food for thought. Please let me know what you think of these issues, and others.

Thank you.

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUPPLEMENTAL WATER SUPPLY PLAN FOR POLK COUNTY

Polk County's primary goal is to provide safe, reliable, and satisfactory water, wastewater, and reclaimed water service to existing and future customers at reasonable rates. Polk County currently provides water, wastewater, and reclaimed water services to approximately 54,000 households and commercial customers. Historically, Polk County has provided potable water for both domestic use and irrigation, drawing the supply from groundwater wells located throughout the six utility service areas. However, local Water Management Districts (WMDs), specifically the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMDC) have determined that public water demands in Polk County will increase significantly in the next 20 to 30 years, and that traditional groundwater sources alone will not be able to meet future needs.

The purpose of this project is to provide Polk County with an implementation plan to identify and develop new viable sources of water supply to meet future potable water demands, without interfering with constraints of WMD programs, environmental restoration goals and minimum flows/levels. The development of these options included researching options for conservation, reclaimed water, surface water, ground water, and other alternative supplies. The process of exploring alternative water supplies will recognize and seek to overcome the various technical, economic, environmental, jurisdictional and regulatory factors that may impact development of these new sources. The project was approached on a regional scale; focusing on each division of the county was necessary to ensure that all needs will be met.

...Gary ReVoir II, P.E., Reiss Engineering, Inc.
January presenter

MANAGING WATER FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE FIRST!

As the lack of water has become more apparent and water restrictions have become a way-of-life in Central Florida, the fear has surfaced that local governments on both sides of the Kissimmee Basin would apply for and be granted water allocations -- water which would fuel more development and deprive the Kissimmee River of a flow adequate enough to sustain the restoration. However, there is a substantial first-use which must be met before utilities can tap into Kissimmee water. Florida Statutes state "The Governing Board [water management districts] or the department, by regulation, may reserve from use by permit applicants, water in such locations and quantities, and for such seasons of the year, as in its



Photo by Jessica D. Yaranell

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judgment may be required for the protection of fish and wildlife or the public health and safety." The South Florida Water Management District held the first workshop in mid-December to develop the Rule establishing a Water Reservation for the Basin.

A Reservation should prevent *new* uses from accessing water reserved for the protection of fish and wildlife. Protection means ensuring a healthy and sustainable native fish and wildlife community -- a community that can remain healthy and viable through natural cycles of drought, flood, and population variation. The Basin extends from the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (the Orlando area) to S-65E (basically where the Kissimmee pours into Lake Okeechobee). It is now envisioned there will be seven lake management areas and the restored river and floodplain. The eight areas will be managed somewhat separately because certain areas may have different species which have different needs.

Science must drive this entire project or the Rule will not stand against legal challenges -- which will come because everybody wants cheap water. Intense study has been done using forty years of 'water' records to establish how much water there is. The biologists have identified the species and habitat with well defined linkages to hydrology (which species need water at what levels and when for nesting and foraging). Only the water that is not needed for wildlife at a given time will be available for utility allocation.

The establishment of the Reservation Rule is on a fast track. At the first public workshop it was obvious a lot of scientific work had already been done and that staff was not going to 'study it to death' because there is an intense sense of urgency to protect the resource. There will be a scientific peer review of data, analysis and assumptions in March and the Governing Board will be asked to approve publishing the final draft rule in June 2009.

Sierrans need to focus on at least these three points at this time:

1. This process will require close monitoring because a Reservation will be subject to periodic review and revision in the light of changed conditions -- and obviously there will be political pressure to provide more water for consumption.
2. No allocation for consumption should be made unless the permit applicant has established the most rigorous water conservation measures.
3. The Reservation Rule should insure sufficient water flow to maintain the restored Kissimmee.

Follow the progress by going to www.sfwm.d.gov - What we do - Water Supply - Rule Development - Water Reservations

SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA ANNOUNCEMENT

WILL WONDERS EVER CEASE!

With input from group representatives, the Sierra Club Florida Steering Committee has created four Conservation Campaign Committees for 2009 and five Task Forces aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Club in Florida. The Steering Committee is seeking volunteers and participation from any and all members for the following committees:

2009 CONSERVATION CAMPAIGNS

Waste Minimization (Establish Statewide Deposits and Ban Plastic Bags)

Linda Demler (linda.demler@sierraclub.org)

Establishing Wildlife Corridors

Frank Jackalone (frank.jackalone@sierraclub.org)

Protect Critical Coastal and Marine Environments

Phil Compton (phil.compton@sierraclub.org)

Comprehensive Transportation Alternatives

Jon Ullman (jonathan.ullman@sierraclub.org)

TASK FORCES

Expanding the Volunteer Base

Linda Bremer (linda@bremer.net)

Developing New Leaders

Linda Demler (linda.demler@sierraclub.org)

Increasing Local Donors

Rudy Scheffer (rudy@adventuresworldwide.com)

Expanding Community Partnerships

Craig Diamond (cjdiamond@comcast.net)

Education and Communication

Betsy Grass (betgrass@ix.netcom.com)

Please contact any of the above staff or Steering Committee members should you have an interest in working on one of the 2009 Conservation Campaigns or one of the organization-focused Task Forces. This is a wonderful opportunity for members to contribute to the Club.

In the fall I crafted an article about the bright future of Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) and how it could be utilized in Florida within the next ten years. Scarcely a month had passed when I read the startling news in the Lakeland Ledger that ten years had passed in the blink of an eye. Florida Power and Light announced the construction of a hybrid solar power project that linked an existing natural gas plant with a solar thermal plant (aka CSP). It will use the heat of the sun, supplemented by burning natural gas, to produce steam which spins the turbines that will produce electricity. The first plant is being built in Martin County in southeast Florida at a cost of \$476 million. 180,000 mirrors situated on 500 acres will produce 75 megawatts of solar capacity which is enough to power 11,000 homes. Two other plants are planned for next year and combined will produce 110 MW. Completion date is 2010. That will mean that Florida will be the second leading producer of electricity from the sun in the US, trailing only California. Combining solar technology with natural gas allows climates with less than perfect weather conditions to be a candidate for retrofitting. This partnership may provide the bridge we need to span the gap between fossil fuel plants of today and the carbon free, pollution free plants of the future.

Alternative energy sources will be a big component in President Obama's energy plan so we should see these numbers skyrocket. With economy of scale and technological advances, less and less natural gas will be used and the cost will drop accordingly. Who knows, I might even live to see the repowering of America.

....Chuck Geanangel

POST - HUNT BIRD COUNT

To determine what effect duck hunting would have on the bird population in the marshes at the Circle B Bar Reserve near Lakeland, five counters were selected to do pre and post-hunt bird counts. On both occasions I was one of the counters which included two duck hunters, a staff biologist and a photographer / birdwatcher. The final numbers we submitted were agreed upon by all five observers. On the post-count the total number of birds observed was down primarily because 90 percent of the ducks were gone. On the pre-hunt we counted 466 ducks of 10 species while the post-hunt turned up only 41 ducks of 7 species. I have not seen the total number of ducks killed during the two day hunt but it was considerable. We did find a flock of Blue-winged Teal on a site outside the hunting area later in the day but they left immediately upon our arriving. I estimated no more than 100 ducks but they were so skittish that an accurate count was impossible. The important number to remember is that only about one-half of the target marsh birds were visible on the day after the hunt. That would explain why the second count did not take as long as the first count to complete and further it demonstrated that the area is far too small to sustain such an intensive hunt. A 90 percent reduction is not acceptable especially when the park is shared by hundreds of other members of the public eager to see the wildlife. When a visitor takes a picture of a bird, it is there the next day for the other visitors to enjoy, but when you take six ducks home and put them on your grill only you can enjoy them. We have further counts planned and then we can see what the true recovery rate of the ducks will be. Another two day hunt is planned for January.

....Charles Geanangel

THE TAJ MAHAL OF NESTING BOXES A Chimney Swift Tower for Circle B Bar

Sierrans Bob Taylor, Chuck Geanangel and Andrew Pitts put the third section in place on what is the only known chimney swift tower in Florida. The naturalists at Circle B asked Bob to construct not just the usual duck boxes but several other types of nesting structures as well. The tower is the crown jewel of the set and will be roofed and sided with the same material as the educational buildings in the background.



Photo by Frances H. Coleman

Historically, swifts used large hollow trees as roosting and nesting sites. As the forests were cleared, swifts adapted to chimneys. But now, most people cap or screen their chimneys. Towers have been accepted by the swifts in other states and we have high hopes that our new tower will soon have a flourishing colony of swifts.Frances H. Coleman

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

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

2nd Thursdays of the month through March	South Lake Howard Nature Park - Winter Haven. Naturalist led Walk and Talk from 9 - 9:30AM. Call Rachelle 863 291-5600 ext 247 for more details.
3rd Thursdays of the month through March	Lake Hartridge Nature Park - Winter Haven. Naturalist led Walk and Talk from 9 - 9:30AM. Call Rachelle 863 291-5600 ext 247 for more details.
Jan. 17	Trek Ten Trails Guided Hike - Lake Kissimmee State Park. Participants will be guided through pine flatwoods, floodplain prairies and live oak hammocks. The alert observer might well see white-tailed deer, bald eagles, sandhill cranes and turkeys. Call Marian at 863 293-6961 for more details.
Feb. 21	Trek Ten Trails Guided Hike - Lake Wales Ridge State Forest. Habitat as varied as oak hammocks to old pine forests will be explored on this hike. Participants may see Florida scrub-jays as well as deer and turkeys. Call Marian at 863 293-6961 for more details.
Service - These Saturday events are Ridge Ranger projects.	
These stewardship projects start at 9:00 at their respective locations. For more details call the Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Reed, at 863 699-3742 or e-mail james.reed@myFWC.com or call Gunn at 863 326-5426	
Jan. 10	Saddle Blanket Lakes Preserve - near Avon Park.
Jan. 17	Archbold Biological Station - near Lake Placid.
Jan. 24	Walk-in-the-Water Tract Lake Wales Ridge State Forest - near Frostproof.
Jan. 31	FWC Lake Blue Scrub - Auburndale.

Special activities such as greenhouse work, invertebrate study, fish species inventory, and bat surveys are available. 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. 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 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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JANUARY 8 MEETING

**Joint Meeting with Lake Region Audubon
at Circle B Bar Reserve**

PROGRAM:

**The Development of a Supplemental
Water Supply Plan for Polk County**

Presented By

**Gary ReVoir II, P.E.
Reiss Engineering, Inc.**

*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 is the first of many meetings which 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

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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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