

POLK GROUP

Issue: 06-07

SIERRA'S NEW INTERIM ENERGY POLICY

At last year's Sierra Summit, volunteer leadership overwhelmingly recommended Smart Energy Solutions as a top priority. To implement this directive an interim energy policy was developed during the fall and winter and was adopted by the Board of Directors at its May meeting. This policy will govern the energy related actions of all Sierra Club entities until it is modified by the Board. **You have an opportunity to shape this policy.** The



Photo by John Byrne Barry, Sierra Club Collection

sections on biofuels, wind turbine siting, and liquefied natural gas facilities are acknowledged as 'unfinished.' Those Polk Sierrans who toured the TECO coal gasification plant may feel that technology's potential was not properly evaluated. You are welcome to comment on any aspect of the policy until July 31st in this final shaping of the Sierra Club's plan to move our nation from its dependence on fossil fuels to a array of energy options that will help curb global warming. National intends to adopt a final policy in the early fall.

You can find the interim policy (as a pdf) at: clubhouse.sierraclub.org/comment/energy/policy.pdf The comment forum can be found at: clubhouse.sierraclub.org/comment/energy

The urgency for action on our use of energy couldn't be clearer. War and instability in many of the world's oil-producing regions, global warming, and the constant pressure to drill for oil and gas in our most sensitive national lands demand action. But action isn't just mindless opposition; a plant that's bad for one location might be acceptable for another. We will always start by advocating conservation and fuel efficiency but realistically that will not be enough. A new energy policy for the Club - and in time the nation - is a necessity 'for our families, for our future.'

....Frances H. Coleman



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JULY 2006 NEWSLETTER

serving DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk County

PROGRAM FOR JULY 13, 2006

Land for Kissimmee Restoration - Originally scheduled for May, SFWMD's **Sally Kennedy**, Kissimmee River Land Acquisition, will present an overview of what land had to be acquired and why in order to complete one of the world's largest ecosystem restoration projects. She will also deal with the lingering questions regarding the Shady Oaks and Rocks property transfers. Program will start at 6:30PM.

2006-2007 BUDGET

EMPHASIZES SOUND COMMITMENT TO FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT

Everglades, land conservation and clean water remain top priorities.

Florida's FY 2006-2007 budget provides the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with more than \$2.9 billion to increase protection for Florida's natural resources and restore vital ecosystems.

This new budget provides more than \$745 million to conserve environmentally-sensitive land, including \$310 million for the acquisition of the 74,000-acre Babcock Ranch. Other appropriations include more than \$160 million for continued restoration of the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee, and more than \$488.6 million to improve and maintain the health of rivers, lakes, estuaries and springs.

The 2006-2007 budget includes:

- Preserving Babcock Ranch, \$310 million – Setting the path for one of the largest and most unique purchases in Florida's history, the budget provides \$310 million for the purchase of Babcock Ranch. The 74,000-acre purchase will preserve the single largest tract of contiguous conservation lands in the state's history, while at the same time providing a vitally needed water-recharge area for Southwest Florida.
- Conserving Florida's Land, \$300 million – Established in 1999, the 10-year, \$3 billion Florida Forever program is the largest land buying initiative in the nation, conserving environmentally sensitive land, restoring water resources and preserving important cultural and historical places. More than 1.2 million acres have been placed in public ownership throughout the state under Florida Forever and its predecessor program, Preservation 2000 (P2000).
- Restoring America's Everglades, \$135 million -- The state continues to fund the \$8 billion restoration of the famed River of Grass, returning a natural flow of water across the 2.4 million-acre marsh. Including cash and bonds, Florida's total financial commitment toward the restoration now tops \$3 billion. This year's allocation includes \$25 million to restore coastal wetlands in Biscayne Bay and \$10 million for additional water storage around the Loxahatchee River to optimize the performance of existing storm-water treatment areas and divert harmful flows from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and the Everglades.

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(Continued from page 1) Budget

- Saving Lake Okeechobee, \$25 million -- In October 2005, Governor Bush unveiled a comprehensive plan to accelerate the restoration and recovery of Lake Okeechobee, the heart of America's Everglades. This year's \$25 million allocation will expand water storage areas, construct treatment marshes and expedite environmental management initiatives to enhance the ecological health of the lake and downstream coastal estuaries, the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Rivers.
- Protecting Florida's Water, \$386.1 million -- The 2006-2007 budget expands funding for water improvement projects throughout the state, strengthening protection for Florida's water. Florida has invested nearly \$2 billion to improve wastewater treatment, clean up storm-water pollution and upgrade drinking water facilities, funding more than 950 projects statewide since 1999.
- Managing Florida's Growth, \$100 million -- As part of Florida's landmark growth reform, the Water Protection and Sustainability Program was created last year to support water-related programs that preserve the quality of waterways, improve surface water management and help communities construct drinking water and wastewater facilities. This year's budget also includes \$60 million for alternative water supply development projects such as desalination, reuse and reservoirs. To date, the state has approved nearly 100 alternative water supply projects through the Water Protection and Sustainability Program.
- Protecting Florida's Springs, \$2.5 million -- For the sixth consecutive year, the budget provides \$2.5 million for the Florida Springs Initiative, a comprehensive and coordinated program that increases protection for Florida's 700 freshwater springs. Known as "bowls of liquid light," springs are early gauges of trends in Florida's drinking water quality and quantity.
- Enhancing Ecotourism and Recreation, \$107.8 million -- Florida's sandy beaches, state parks and aquatic preserves are home to thousands of species of plants and animals, draw millions of visitors to our state annually and provide an economic engine for many rural communities. This year's budget provides another \$50

million to protect the state's beaches, the first line of defense against storm surges from hurricanes and other catastrophic storms. The budget also includes \$57.8 million for Florida's nationally award winning state park system, including \$1 million to continue building the network of trails, cabins and campgrounds along the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, and \$3.1 million to complete an Environmental Education Center at the Apalachicola River National Estuarine Research Reserve.

...excerpted from FDEP News Release.
www.FloridaDEP.org.

Editor's Note: The above sounds like nothing but victories for the environment but we need to put it in perspective. The environmental budget is \$2.9 billion which is a bit under 4% of the total state budget of \$74 billion. And there were negatives by the end of the legislative session that should be mentioned; for example, the Farmland Sprawl bill which would grant agricultural parcels automatic development rights if they are adjacent to developed land on three sides and a provision in the energy bill that would make it easier to site power plants including nuclear. Conservationists need to carefully watch how these changes are implemented and observe where the appropriated money is actually spent.

SAW DUST SESSION

The Lakeland Woodworkers Club volunteered to work with Chief Carpenter Bob Taylor and help him fill the backlog of requests for nesting boxes which had been generated by The Ledger and Pelican articles earlier this spring. What a group of craftsmen! In approximately four and a half hours, using their excellent equipment, the group, numbering less than 15, turned out roughly forty boxes - and the quality was excellent! Many thanks to the group, Dan Clark their President and Jim Hamer, owner of Hardwood Lumber and Millwork in Lakeland.

Since March when the articles appeared, \$3,749 has been generated by the nesting box project for the Richard Coleman Scholarship Fund. The total donated thus far from all sources is over \$13,000 which is more than half way to our goal - we all owe a debt of gratitude to those who have remained committed to this worthy project.

...Frances H. Coleman

RUSTLE THE LEAF[™]

BY PONCE & WRIGHT

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STORMWATER POLLUTION

Did you know that wherever you live, your daily activities could end up polluting Florida's water? Pollution washed into water bodies by rain or irrigation water is known as Pointless Personal Pollution. Major contributors to the pollution of surface and ground waters are homes, businesses and farms. The good news is...WE cause this pollution and WE can stop it! Pointless Personal Pollutants include:

- Nutrients from fertilizers, septic tanks and animal wastes that enter our waters cause excessive growth of algae and aquatic weeds.
- Heavy metals and pesticides can kill aquatic organisms and contaminate ground water.
- Sewage, garbage and litter reduce oxygen in the water to levels that can kill aquatic life.
- Sediments from soil erosion can clog fish gills and shellfish filtering systems by cutting off their oxygen supply.
- Bacteria from septic tanks and animal wastes contaminate shellfish and lead to the closing of swimming areas.

The cause of water pollution is often blamed on "point sources," such as industrial or sewage treatment facilities. Discharges from these sources flow through pipes and into our water bodies. This pollution source can be readily identified and treated.

Pointless Personal Pollution is the result of common daily activities. Pollutants you encounter everyday can travel by many different routes and enter our ground and surface waters.

Some examples of pollutants include:

- Sand and dirt from erosion
- Oil and grease from automobiles
- Pesticides, fertilizers and weed killers
- Litter, yard clippings, pet and livestock wastes
- Bacteria & excessive nutrients leaking from septic tanks and animal wastes

What YOU can DO...Clean Water is Everybody's Business!

1. Use fertilizers sparingly and sweep up driveways, sidewalks, and roads instead of hosing them off
2. Never dump anything down the storm drains; dispose

of household hazardous waste, used auto fluids and batteries at designated collection or recycling locations, only

3. Vegetate bare spots in your yard
4. Compost your yard waste
5. Avoid pesticides; learn about Integrated Pest Management(IPM)
6. Direct downspouts away from paved surfaces
7. Take your car to the car wash instead of washing it in the driveway or wash it over the lawn or other unpaved surface
8. Check car for leaks, and recycle motor oil
9. Pick up after your pet and properly dispose of the waste matter
10. Have your septic tank pumped and system inspected regularly

Please call 291-5881 to report illegal dumping in our lakes, on our shorelines and into our storm drains.

LAKES APPRECIATION CELEBRATION

The 5th Annual Lakes Appreciation Celebration is this month. The North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) and Lakes Education Action Drive (LE/AD) are asking that people from all over Polk County help remove trash from area lakes. You may choose any lake, any day, any time – during July. Please register with one of the people listed below so we may track who intends to clean which lake(s). As a special "Thank You," a free appreciation dinner (for all registered volunteers) will be held on July 22 from 5-7p.m. at the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes Complex (entertainment by Safari Todd).

- Pat Gilder: Keep Winter Haven Clean & Beautiful – 291-5662
- Johnna Martinez: LE/AD – 221-5323
- Sharon Siegel: Lakeland Clean & Beautiful –834-3306
- Janis Davis: Keep Polk County Beautiful: 533-8423
- Rachelle Selser: City of Winter Haven – 291-5881

Celebration sponsors include: Lakes Education Action Drive, City of Winter Haven, City of Lakeland, Lakeland Clean & Beautiful, Keep Polk County Beautiful, Keep Winter Haven Clean & Beautiful, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program and the Peace River Basin Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

....Rachelle Selser, Winter Haven Lakes Program Coordinator

OUTINGS/ACTIVITIES

If you have suggestions for outings or if you wish to lead an outing, call our Outings Coordinator, Gail Bagley at 683-3334. For more activities/events, please visit our web site at <http://florida.sierraclub.org/polk/>

Jul. 8 Bat Kayak Tour. GAEA Guides - Guided Kayak Nature Tours will lead this Imperial River venture arranged by the Calusa Group. Participants will leave at 6:30PM from Riverside Park in Bonita Springs. Paddle the beautiful Imperial River and see some old Florida charm. Huge trees of many species, ferns and flowers are some of the nature we will encounter and then at dusk we will see the bats come out of their hiding places. You will learn about these very interesting and important creatures. 2 - 3hours - \$25 per person - all equipment provided, \$20 if you bring your own equipment. Reservations a must - call 239 694-5513 for yours.

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 some of the above listed activities are events that we think you will find interesting and fun, but they are not official outings.



Sierra Club
Polk Group - Florida Chapter
 P.O. Box 7544
 Winter Haven, FL 33883

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

JULY MEETING
Thursday, July 13, 2006

To minimize the distance our presenter must travel late at night, the program will start at 6:30PM. Join us for our pot-luck supper after the program. Bring a dish to share, a drink and your utensils. Dress is casual.

PROGRAM AT 6:30PM

**Land Acquisition for the
 Kissimmee River Restoration**
By
Sally Kennedy, Land Acquisition, SFWMD

Meetings are held at the Audubon Nature Center, 115 Lameraux Rd., Winter Haven. From the traffic light at the intersection of Hwy. 540 (Cypress Gardens Blvd.) and Cypress Gardens Road (look for the Shell station and Blockbuster Video) - Turn east onto C.G. Road and follow around sharp right hand turn & then sharp left hand turn. After left hand turn, Lameraux is fourth road on left, two blocks west of Garden Grove Elementary School. Distance from the light to the Nature Center is about 2.3 miles. (Phone 324-7304)

General Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting Run Concurrently

Sierra Membership Application

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional): () _____ **FRIP No 3311**

- 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:
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