

POLK GROUP

Issue: 07-10

FROM THE CHAIR...Al Greulich

Green Awakening. It is enlightening that Oxford's newest dictionary now includes several terms that were "born" from the growing awareness of global warming and environmental responsibility. Among terms you might expect, you will find:

- carbon footprint - the amount of greenhouse gas emissions for which an individual is responsible
- green audit - an inspection of a company to define its impact on the environment

And there are many more terms. You've probably got some of your own!

I think this awareness and concern is an indicator that we will soon see unprecedented growth in the memberships of environmental groups like the Sierra Club. We are already the largest environmental organization in the country with over 700,000 members nationwide and over 32,000 in the Florida Chapter. Our club's ability to influence public policy, which Sierra defines as its primary mission, will only increase as our numbers rise.

There is a high probability that many other environmental advocacy groups and preservation organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, will see big growth as well. It is my fervent hope that this will happen. The importance of these various groups collaborating behind the causes that unite us cannot be overemphasized. There is indeed power in numbers and our successes are multiplied when we join forces with these other organizations.

The cause of the momentum in common to the future growth of all these clubs is the public awakening brought about by climate change. This is an "all-threatening monster" that has scared most of the world's educated people into demanding action. I predict that the general public will flock to the environmental organizations that we have already been supporting for many years. My two-year term as your Chair will soon be coming to an end, and it is my hope that the next Chair of the Polk Sierra Group will witness an unprecedented number of our fellow citizens joining our organization and supporting our causes. Many people will see membership in environmental groups as the single most effective action they, as individuals, can take to help stem the tide of global climate change.



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

OCTOBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

serving DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk County

CIRCUIT RIDING PROGRAM FOR OCTOBER 11, 2007

Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto Sierrans - we're coming to a neighborhood near you! At 6:30PM we will be convening our monthly meeting at Homer's Original Smorgasbord in Sebring (see 4th page for directions). Your issues and activism are urgently needed. If you need further information before the meeting, contact Al at 863-967-6783.

POLK COUNTY GROWTH MATTERS WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

The Polk County Comprehensive Plan serves as a blueprint or guide for future growth and development. It is intended to protect and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents. The Polk County Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed and updated in response to changing trends and conditions and population growth. These workshops are a follow-up to the public input received at the three public workshops held in January. Hosted by Polk County Planners along with Polk Vision the next three public workshops will present work accomplished by the Polk Land Stewardship Alliance and outline proposed changes to the county's Comprehensive Plan under the Evaluation and Appraisal Report process.

- Tuesday, October 30, 2007 6-8 pm
Lake Wales Art Center
- Thursday, November 6, 2007 6-8 pm
Polk Community College, Winter Haven
- Tuesday, November 8, 2007 6-8 pm
Polk Community College, Lakeland - Technology Building

....Marian Ryan

QUICK TAKES

Carpool to Sebring

If you live in Polk and want to ride-share to this month's meeting in Sebring, call Al at 863 967-6783. He will keep a list and try to make arrangements. Regarding calling: the earlier the better!

Nominating Committee

Gail B. Line at 863 298-8134 is the chair of this year's nominating committee. Give her a call to volunteer for a position.

Hazardous Waste and Tire Recycling

On Oct. 6 a free recycling opportunity will be offered from 9AM to 1PM in Bartow at the Citrus and Chemical Bank on Broadway in Bartow. Polk residents must show photo ID and proof of residency. Ten tires (standard size and off the rim) per resident, rechargeable batteries (one pound or less), ink cartridges and mobile phones will be accepted. Call Keep Polk County Beautiful at 863 533-8423 for more information.

EXOTIC APPLESNAILS, SNAIL KITES, AND LIMPKINS

There are four non-native species of applesnails present in Florida in addition to the native Florida applesnail (*Pomacea paludosa*). The Florida applesnail produces the larger white eggs with which most Floridians are probably familiar. All the exotic applesnails are native to South America. The most common non-native species is the island applesnail (*P. insularum*). These are widely distributed from Tallahassee to south Florida and many people and publications refer to them as channeled applesnail. The "true" channeled applesnail (*P. canaliculata*) has only been verified genetically in one location in Jacksonville; however, only about 25% of the populations have been tested. Both the island and channeled applesnails produce large clutches of pink eggs that are much smaller than the Florida applesnail's eggs. The spiketop applesnail (*P. diffusa*, recently elevated to species level from *P. bridgesii diffusa*) is locally abundant in south Florida and has been found in Alachua County (museum collections) and has one population in Jacksonville. The fourth non-native species, the titan applesnail (*P. haustum*), is rare and basically limited to areas in Palm Beach County. Both of the spiketop and titan applesnail distributions are probably limited by temperature tolerance although the Jacksonville spiketop population seems to be stable. The southern extent of the island applesnail's native range is the Islands of Parana in the Buenos Aires/La Plata region of South America. The equivalent northern latitude would be the Carolinas and they have been in south Georgia as far north as Blackshear and Sea Island.

All four species were probably introduced by way of the aquarium trade and as hitchhikers on aquatic plant shipments from South America. There are records of spiketop applesnails in Miami-Dade county from the middle 1960s and early 1970s. The island applesnail was first detected around Lake Okeechobee in the middle to late 1980s and was initially misidentified as the channeled applesnail. They have probably been released in many areas of the state by people dumping their aquariums, escaping from tropical fish farms, etc. You can still find the non-native applesnails (usually the spiketop) in aquarium stores, but since April 5, 2006 the USDA has required permits for importation or interstate transport of all marine and freshwater snails. They are not issuing permits for any *Pomacea* species except the spiketop applesnail (*P. diffusa*).

One of the main concerns about the island applesnail is destruction of aquatic vegetation. The primary diet of both island and channeled applesnails is rooted aquatic vegetation. There are anecdotal reports of the snails denuding small lakes of aquatic vegetation, but there are no documented cases of damage solely attributable to the snails. The channeled applesnail has become an agricultural pest in rice and taro fields in Hawaii and Southeast Asia. The island applesnail may become a pest here in Florida, but not enough is known about their food preferences to be sure. They are certainly more destructive than the Florida applesnail that feeds mostly on algae. Limpkins have no problem eating the non-native snails. You can find many shells with obvious limpkin predation.

There is anecdotal evidence that limpkin populations increase where the exotic snails are present. Snail kites may be another story. A number of biologists are concerned that kites may not be able to prey on the much larger non-native snails as on the Florida applesnail. This concern is particularly about juvenile kites. There does not appear to be any published study on this yet and it is still speculation.

For more information go to http://myfwc.com/nonnatives/Docs/FWC_applesnails_FLMS_handout.pdf and the Applesnail Net website <http://www.applesnail.net/>.

....Laurence L. Connor, Exotic Species Coordination Section
Division of Habitat and Species Conservation
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
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A familiar sight to Central Floridians visiting a lake front: clusters of large white eggs and, usually, even bigger clusters of smaller pink eggs. The white eggs are those of our native Florida Applesnail - the small shell of which is at the right on the board. Note the size difference between it and the large shell of the Island Applesnail next to it. The fresh water mussel shells and the feathers are there just for perspective.

Photo by Frances Coleman

BOK HAS A BOX—DO YOU?

At the conclusion of a fun - and enlightening - program on our genetic predilection for lawns, David Price, Director of Historic Bok Tower, is presented a Coleman Memorial nesting box for the Bok sanctuary by Bob Taylor.

Nesting season will be upon the ducks and owls in a couple of months - as will the gift giving season! Bob and helpers are crafting more of the beautiful cypress wood boxes now. There is a minimum donation of \$50 for the small boxes and \$60 for the large ones. All monies in excess of material costs are donated to the Coleman Scholarship at New College. Call Bob at 439-2251 to place your order.



Photo by Frances Coleman

COLT CREEK STATE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN MEETING



Photo by Frances Coleman

Scott Spaulding, Park Manager, smiles at the camera while Chuck Geanangel goes over issues with Jason DePue, Park Service planner. Scott had a lot to smile about because it's a comprehensive, well thought-out plan for a beautiful park. In the background Bob English, Polk Commission Chairman, talks with Janice S. Anderson of Florida Trail. Various user groups were pleased with the plans for their activities and volunteered to help in many ways. Conservationists urged the agencies to be proactive in acquiring the last parcels of land, to emphasize recycling and the use of recycled-plastic-wood lumber, to make hydrologic restoration the highest priority, and to relocate a primitive campsite to protect a sensitive resource.

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

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

Oct. 6	Kickoff Celebration - Trek Ten Trails - Hiking. At 9AM join the fun at Fort Fraser Trailhead, Highland City. Exhibits and demonstrations range from geocaching to walking-stick making. Become a member of the Trek Ten Trails Walkers Club. More details are available on the Friends of the Parks Foundation website: http://www.friendsoftheparks.net/TrekTenTrails.html or contact Marian Ryan 863 293-6961 or mryan@pipevines.net
1st Saturdays of the Month Through Nov.	Colt Creek State Park is offering free tram rides into the backcountry areas at 9AM. The trips will be led by naturalists who will help you identify the flora and fauna along the route. This new state park is on County Road 471 in the Green Swamp. Each day's tram ride is limited to the first 30 people who call 863 815-6758; admission to the park is \$2 per vehicle.
2nd Wednesdays of the Month Through Dec.	South Lake Howard Nature Park - Winter Haven. Guided nature walk from 8:55 - 9:30AM. Call 863 291-5881 for additional details.
2nd Thursdays of the Month Through Dec.	Lake Hartridge Nature Park - Winter Haven. Guided walks with emphasis on the stormwater treatment system. Call 863 291-5881 for additional details.
Nov. 2-4	Florida Sierra's Annual Conservation Conference. Join us at beautiful Pine Lake Retreat located on US Hwy 27 just south of Leesburg. Global Warming, Energy, Public Lands and Wildlife are just a few of the many programs which will be offered. Details and registration forms will be in the Fall Pelican.
Nov. 10	Trek Ten Trails Guided Hike - Lakeland Highlands Scrub. At 9AM join knowledgeable leaders for a hike through one of the largest undeveloped scrub communities on the Lakeland Ridge; this habitat is home to rare plant species, gopher tortoises, eastern indigo snakes, and Florida scrub-jays. From I-4 east or west, take the Polk Parkway (SR 570); take exit 9 at Lakeland Highlands Road South - continue south onto the unpaved portion. Call Marian at 863 293-6961 if you need more details.
Service - These Saturday events are Ridge Ranger projects.	
The October sessions start at 8AM and the November session starts at 9AM at their respective sites; if you want more details, call Lynne Flannery at 863 699-3742 or email Lynne.Flannery@MyFWC.com	
Oct. 13	Historic Bok Sanctuary - Lake Wales. Stewardship.
Oct. 20	Allen David Broussard Catfish Creek State Preserve - near Lake Hamilton. Trail marking and fence repair.
Oct. 27	TNC's Saddle Blanket Scrub Preserve - between Avon Park and Frostproof. Brush removal/fire line maintenance.
Nov. 17	Flamingo Villas - tract of the Lake Wales Ridge National Wildlife Refuge in Sebring. Trash/debris removal.

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
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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

OCTOBER MEETING
 Thursday, October 11, 2007

PROGRAM:

**Growth Issues for
 Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto:
 If the Heartland Parkway and Coast to Coast
 Come...
 And
 Where Did All the Open Land Go?**

**Bring Sierrans Together to Solve Problems
 (and Have a Fun Evening!)**

*General Meeting and Executive Committee
 Meeting Run Concurrently*

Join Sierrans from Polk, Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto Counties at Homer's Original Smorgasbord, 1000 Sebring Square, Sebring (863 386-1440) for an outreach and strategic planning session. We will start to eat at 6:30PM and by 7:15 intend to be in active discussion of the issues that are troubling you. 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 road; you have to drive into the shopping center that includes a Winn-Dixie. Dinner is approximately \$9 for the buffet and we have a room reserved.

In November we return to the Audubon Nature Center in Winter Haven.

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** \$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

2007 POLK SIERRA GROUP

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