

Ancient Islands

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties of Florida

Issue: 09-10

OCTOBER 2009

FROM THE CHAIR...Paul Anderson

STOP THE EAGLE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

The Highlands County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is considering a proposal to build a 7,700 acre Eagle National Training Center near the Venus area of southwest Highlands County. This would be a non-governmental military training center including a 2,000 acre free fire zone which would probably include automatic weapons, grenades, rocket grenades, mortars, rockets, and possibly howitzers. It would also include a 6,000 foot airstrip, a helipad, a five-story building, 25 single family homes, a dormitory for 1,000 trainees, 100 multi family residences, two 250 foot training towers, and 950,000 square feet of buildings for lodging, recreation, a welcome center, and operational/administrative buildings up to three stories.

The area surrounding Venus is one of the most rural and wild places remaining in south Florida. It is in the watershed for Fisheating Creek, which is one of the most pristine places in south Florida and the last free flowing waterway into Lake Okeechobee. This land is part of the last open space in the State that serves as habitat for the endangered black bear and Florida panther, as well as Florida's signature Swallowtail Kites. It also has one of the darkest night skies in the region for astrological observation.

I attended the August 18, 2009, Highlands BOCC meeting and planned to speak in opposition to the Training Center. The Hearing on the Center was postponed until October 6, 2009. As an Army veteran I believe this non-governmental Training Center would be bad for the Venus area, bad for Sebring, bad for Highlands County, and bad for Florida. BOCC Commissioner Don Bates will Chair a meeting re the Eagle National Training Center on September 22nd at the Venus Clubhouse at 7 PM to hear concerns and will try to have someone there to answer questions. The BOCC Hearing will be on October 6th in Sebring. There will be an opportunity for the public to speak so I hope as many of you as can, will attend, and I ask you speak in opposition to this Center. Please contact me if you have questions or comments. Thank you.

OWLS FOR HALLOWEEN



Photo by Audubon Center for Birds of Prey

Great Horned Owl

Get an early start on your Halloween fun by joining us for an exciting discovery program at Circle B Bar Reserve on October 8th. Lynne Flannery, the education and volunteer coordinator with the Audubon Center for Birds of Prey, is bringing three owls (a barred, a screech and a great horned) as well as a crested caracara for you to meet; you'll learn about their unique adaptations and personal stories. Lynne will also tell us about the Center and the important contributions it makes locally in the areas of rehabilitation, conservation and education. Through this Radical Raptors presentation you'll gain knowledge of who's making those marvelous calls in the night.

Water, Wings & Wild Things
 POLK NATUREFEST 2009

Circle B Bar Reserve
 Oct 31 10AM to 2PM

Exhibits Hiking Food Fun
 (See page 3 for details)

TELL DEP HOW TO RECYCLE 75 PERCENT

- Over 100,000 recycling-based jobs in Florida with an annual payroll of up to \$6 billion.
- Recovered materials would be worth \$600 million if recycling of 75 percent is achieved.
- Recycling saves up to five times more energy than is generated using waste as fuel.
- Methane from food waste would produce 500 MW of power, enough for 400,000 homes.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) preliminary recommendations for achieving 75 percent recycling by 2020 have been posted at: (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/recyclinggoal75/default.htm>). The next public hearing will be in Tallahassee November 5th, 2009. Several of DEP's recommendations, including mandatory recycling in the commercial sector, a landfill disposal surcharge, beverage container deposit legislation, mandatory processing of C&D at a materials recovery facility prior to disposal, and creation of a Recycling Business Assistance Center will produce improvements. However, these are not adequate to reach the 75 percent goal even if the rate is artificially inflated by counting incinerated MSW (Municipal Solid Waste) as recycling.

Mandatory recycling in the commercial sector must be followed with a timetable for source separation of all recyclables by all waste generators. Within two years, recycling should become mandatory in multi-unit housing, and in single-family housing within four years (including small cities and counties). We already have bans on disposal of batteries, tires, motor oil, fluorescent bulbs, etc. It is the only way to keep these materials out of landfills and incinerators. Yes, enforcement of mandatory recycling with fines for violations will be necessary.

DEP recognizes the importance of organics recycling to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from methane generation in landfills that is 25 times more harmful than CO₂. Methane emissions from landfills constitute 3.8 percent of greenhouse gases. The DEP recommendation to require capture of landfill gas by 2020 is a backend solution that should be replaced by one that keeps organics out of landfills in the first place. The percentage of organic MSW suitable for biodegradation by anaerobic digestion (AD) or composting, consisting of food, food-soiled paper, and other items, is 15 to 25 percent of MSW. This material is too valuable as a source of methane for energy and compost for soil amendment to bury it in a landfill. AD of organic MSW would produce about 500 MW of power statewide, enough for 400,000 homes. The compost solid fraction is valuable for landscaping, mulching, and as a planting medium in environmental horticulture, Florida's number one agricultural industry. The recommendations should include a ban on disposal (landfill or incinerate) of organics beginning in 2015 to give jurisdictions time to establish biological treatment facilities for organics. Collection of organics is the essential feature of all recycling programs throughout the country that achieve high recycling rates—75 percent cannot be reached without it.

Three-stream, source-separation of waste into "dry-stream" recyclables, "wet-stream" biodegradables, and the small amount of residuals is well established in much of

the US, Canada and elsewhere. It is not a burdensome thing to do—just put the materials into the correct one of three containers rather than throw it all into one big can.

Collection of additional materials will require expanded materials recycling facilities (MRF) for sorting and preparing materials as marketable commodities. There are currently practically no anaerobic digestion or composting facilities for processing organics in Florida. DEP should provide grants for their construction to counties that have credible plans for achieving 75 percent recycling.

DEP's recommended funding of recycling through a landfill disposal surcharge and unredeemed deposits on beverage containers should be expanded. The proposed \$1/ton landfill-disposal surcharge will not produce sufficient funds and should be increased to \$2/ton or more if it becomes obvious that more funds are required to reach 75 percent by 2020. A total of 31 states have landfill disposal surcharges, the highest being \$8.75/ton in West Virginia. At \$2/ton, the cost for a family of four for a year would be less than a six-pack.

The second arrow in the recycling symbol represents the next step in recycling—manufacturing new products with recycled content—a crucial one that DEP recognizes has been given little attention in Florida. If it's collected and separated but not reused, it's not recycling. Based on EPA data, 75 percent recycling in Florida would generate 100,000 jobs with an average pay of over \$30,000 and an annual payroll of up to \$6 billion. Materials recovered would have a value of \$600 million.

The State should pursue recycling-based industries with the same zeal it would for distribution centers and auto assembly plants, using all available economic-development tools. Incentives should be provided to encourage industries to locate in Eco-parks near MRF's to save on transportation costs. A similar concept is being effectively used in California.

The final arrow in the recycling symbol represents purchasing recycled products—recycling has not happened without this last step. The State with its huge buying power must take the lead by requiring all state and local governmental agencies including colleges, schools and prisons to purchase materials with the maximum amount of post-consumer content that is consistent with other requirements for the performance of material. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 percent of the GDP in North America is consumed by various levels of government, according to Rod Muir, Sierra Club Canada. The State should provide incentives, e.g. no sales taxes, for purchasing products with specified post-consumer recycled content. Added taxes should be imposed on one-use, throw-away products and packaging. Consumers should be encouraged through advertising to demand more environmentally sound products. The State could develop its own "green label" for such products.

What you can do:

- Contact Mike Sole, Secretary Department of Environmental Protection, 3900 Commonwealth Blvd., M.S. 49, Tallahassee, FL 32399 and tell him that DEP's recommendations must be strengthened in order to achieve 75 percent recycling.
- Write a letter to your newspaper.

....Dwight Adams, Florida Sierra Waste Minimization Team

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

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

Meetings

Oct. 21 Recreational Use Plan/Lake Hancock. There will be a presentation to the Polk County Commission of the long-range recreational use plan for the publically owned land surrounding Lake Hancock. The plan envisions trails, camping, boat ramps, etc.

Oct. 23 Dialogue on Climate Change and Coastal Conservation - Audubon Assembly 2009. This event will be at the Hilton St. Petersburg Carillon Park from 9AM until noon. Panelists range from Florida DEP's Michael Sole to SWFWMD's David Moore. The Dialogue is free but seating is limited so register today at www.audubonofflorida.org

Circle B Bar

Each month Circle B Bar Reserve offers a variety of guided hikes, photography workshops, astronomy nights (in the cooler months), nature oriented presentations, and a tram ride. Because space is limited (especially on the tram ride) 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.

Oct. 17 Kayaking and Camping at Alexander Springs - Non-Sierra Event. Using Winter Haven's UPKEEP kayaks (\$5 suggested donation per kayak) paddle, explore and learn about one of Florida's unique spring habitats. Camping will be available on a first come basis. Call Andy Quinn at 863 687-6124 for more information and to reserve a space. Donations will be accepted.

Oct. 31 Trek Ten Trails Year 2 Finale. This will be held in conjunction with the Water, Wings & Wild Things Naturefest at Circle B Bar Reserve. Trekkers who submit validation cards by October 5th will be eligible for Certificates of Completion plus great prize drawings. 12-1:30 in workshop See www.friendsoftheparks.net.

Oct. 31 Water, Wings & Wild Things - Polk County's Naturefest. The event will be held from 10AM until 2PM at the Reserve, 4399 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland. There will be a hands-on Wildlife Safaris featuring a Florida panther, kite making, bird and butterfly basics, wildlife art exhibits, tree climbing for six-year-olds and up, environmental exhibits, landscaping for wildlife, and a butterfly tent. For more information call 863 534-2500.

Nov. 14 Grand Opening of the Mackay Gardens & Lakeside Preserve and Trek Ten Trails Year 3 Launch. The City of Lake Alfred's own 112+ acre nature preserve is on the north shores of Lake Rochelle. Home of the historic Mackay Estate residence and gardens, the site also provides nature trails, a playground, fishing pier and canoe launch area. 9AM - Noon. Free coffee and donuts. For more information call Marian at 863-207-5206 or e-mail: marianryan@gmail.com

Service at Circle B Bar

Volunteers are always needed to help at the reception desk, create signs for special events, etc.; but, because of the Water, Wings & Wild Things major event at the end of October, this month is especially volunteer-critical. For more information and to volunteer call Karen Hagood at 863 668-4673 (cell 863 899-6227) or e-mail karenhagood@polk-county.net

TBA Building Maintenance. Currently we are in the process of cleaning up the buildings as much as possible. This includes knocking down mud dauber nests and spider webs, sweeping or blowing off the boardwalks, cleaning the boardwalks with the pressure sprayer and more. With a fairly large group of volunteers, this could be done on a particular day in October or, if it better suits an individual's schedule, during several short days. If you can help out, please let Karen know what day or just stop by the Center.

Service - These events are Ridge Ranger projects.

These stewardship projects start at 9:00 at their respective locations unless otherwise noted. For more details call the Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Reed, at 863 699-3742 or e-mail james.reed@myFWC.com

Oct. 3 Mackay Gardens and Lakeside Preserve - Lake Alfred. Improve native plant areas followed by a cookout.

Oct. 17 Highlands Hammock State Park - Sebring. Remove invasives - stewardship.

Oct. 21 Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales. Environmental preservation - stewardship.

Oct. 24 FWC Royce Ranch - Lake Placid. Install survey posts for Jaywatch program.

Special activities such as greenhouse work, invertebrate study, fish species inventory, and surveying wildlife populations are available. Become a Citizen-Scientist! 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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OCTOBER 8 MEETING PROGRAM:



RADICAL RAPTORS

Three Owls and a Crested Caracara Visit Us at Halloween

Presented By

Lynne Flannery

**Education & Volunteer Coordinator
Audubon Center for Birds of Prey**

*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 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 _____

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Check One **Individual** **Joint**

Introductory \$25

Regular \$39 \$47

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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

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