



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

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John Moran's Photography: The Universal Language

BY KATHY CANTWELL

With a deep well of gratitude for the gift of calling Florida home, photographer John Moran explores the state with his cameras in search of the best of vanishing natural Florida.

Following a 23-year career as a photographer, writer and editor for The Gainesville Sun, Moran left the world of daily journalism early in 2003 to concentrate full time on making photographs that inform, inspire and make a difference in the relationship Floridians have with our great state. This is a truly special Sierra Club program, as John will show us his famous photographs and tell us the stories that surround them.

In wonder and gratitude, John Moran photographs the nature of Florida. His portfolio of landscape and wildlife photography ranges from the Gulf to the Atlantic with an emphasis on

Florida's rivers, lakes and springs, and the creatures that inhabit them.

A University of Florida graduate, Moran's photography has appeared in numerous books and magazines, including National Geographic, Life, Time,

Newsweek, Smithsonian, The New York Times Magazine and on the cover of the *National Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida*.

The National Press Photographers Association has named Moran Photographer of the Year for the Southeastern U.S.. He was awarded first runner-up in the National Collegiate Photojournalism Championship, and won a photography internship at the National Geographic Society.

His photograph of alligators at dusk at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park was selected as the top-winning American photograph in the United Nations Earth Summit photo contest in 1992.

His first book, published in 1999 with writer Bill Maxwell, is titled *Finding Yourself: A Spiritual Journey Through a Florida Garden*.

In 1990, he received major grants from the Florida Humanities Council and The New York Times Company Foundation to create a photo exhibit on the Suwannee River, titled "Florida's Grand Old River: A Photographic Essay on the Suwannee,"



which continues to tour the state. Other Florida photo books are in the works, including *Journal of Light: The Visual Diary of a Florida Nature Photographer*, a collection of pictures and essays to be published in Fall 2004 by University Press of Florida.

On photographing the nature of Florida, Moran says, "Truly a universal language, photography can help us better understand and appreciate the many gifts of nature bestowed upon this great state we call home."

GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, Feb. 2, 7:30 PM
 Nematology/Entomology Building on the UF campus
 (Just east of the Performing Arts Center. Turn right off
 Hull Road on to Natural Areas Road.)

JOHN MORAN
 AWARD-WINNING
 WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER

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Extinction

BY DAVID AUTH

One of our Sierra Club Group expert witnesses during the ongoing Alachua County Comprehensive Plan administrative hearing was Dr. C. Kenneth Dodd. Ken is a nationally recognized herpetologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, based in Alachua County.

Dodd testified for Sierra on December 16th on the importance of wetlands as essential habitats for a large number of endangered and threatened species. He was asked what happened to wetland dependent vertebrates, such as the Flatwoods Salamander, when they don't have adequate upland buffers to complete their life cycles.

"They disappear," he said.

It's a shame so few people were in the courtroom when Dr. Dodd made this simple declarative statement. Trained zoologists have heard these words many times in many different ways; it's called extinction, either local extinction, regional extinction, or total extinction, depending on how many animals, which species, and how much land we are talking about.

Although our devotion to the environ-

ment is extremely broad, a significant proportion of us are active in environmental organizations for one primary reason: to try to save the "critters." I wish every one of Alachua County's "animal lovers" could have heard Ken's whole testimony, along with every other person.

I live two blocks from the Duckpond in Gainesville, the site of the original city laid out in 1854. My wife and I, renters turned mortgagees, chose our first home with care and deliberation. In the end it was the convenience of getting to work that won.

It is like the yin and yang of the Chinese, two polarities humans hopefully can incorporate in their lives. We also wanted to live on a larger piece of land, where we could experience wildlife, and escape every day from the disgraces of urbanization. But we could not afford both.

So it was with some amazement that we started seeing significant wildlife at Alachua County's ground zero, the Duckpond. I am not talking about the exotic Muscovy ducks which produced the tons of pond bottom recent-

ly excavated and hauled away in dump trucks. The first wild mammal we saw, other than the Gray Squirrels, was an adult female deer. She frantically ran along the back fence line on our half acre one morning in December, 1986, probably trying to get back to Paynes Prairie or Austin Cary Forest.

Much more recently a juvenile Black Bear climbed a tree beside the Duckpond and had to be sedated with a dart gun and carted away to some safer location.

Wildlife corridor is an interesting phrase. It took me a while to realize I lived in one, because wildlife continually moves, often much further than expected based on size, like Ken Dodd's tiny Striped Newts he studied at the Ordway Preserve. Vertebrates live in home ranges, commonly inconveniently including back yards

WE ARE WILDLIFE OURSELVES, NO MATTER HOW URBANIZED WE BECOME AND HOW MANY OF US INHABIT THE EARTH. AS THE WILD PLACES DISAPPEAR, A MAJOR PART OF OUR BEING GOES WITH THEM.

with dogs and cats free to hunt them down. When our wild partners roam into the wrong corridor, they often "disappear."

see EXTINCTION, page 7

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org> • Local: <http://www.gatorsierra.org>

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Please contact Kristina Jackson at 372-2464 by phone or by e-mailing kristinajackson@cox.net if you would like to assist with the Sierra Club e-mail tree.

FOLDING PARTY

Interested in hosting a newsletter folding party? Contact Scott Camil at 375-2563

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Upcoming Outings

BY KAREN GARREN

Hello and Happy New Year! (Better late than never!) By this time the tree's come down, the stores' Valentine decorations have gone up, the kids are back in school and into routine, and you've gotten accustomed to writing "2004" on your checks. But don't forget: this is the best time of year for outdoor excursions here in North Central Florida. The few ticks and mosquitoes are actually tolerable!

As the new Suwannee/St. John's Sierra Club group Outing Chair, I would like to invite one and all to contribute suggestions on favorite excursions. Do you hike? Bike? Camp? Backpack? Canoe? What would you like to do to explore this lovely land of ours?

Please consider becoming an Outings Committee member particularly if you've had Outings Leader training. No great demands will be made of your time, just to meet 4 times per year to discuss Outings possibilities and help plan a training workshop. Should be fun, especially if everyone can cook! Contact me about committee participation or for more information on any of the planned trips at ILuvFla@GRU.net or call me at 352-371-0008. Thanks.

With that in mind, please consider the following:

FEBRUARY 21: Canoe the Alexander Springs River Run.

This relaxing 4-6 hour downstream paddle through the heart of Ocala National Forest is best done when winter's cold has knocked back the emergent vegetation which makes this lovely spring run nearly impassable during the summer. Provide your own canoe or kayak or make arrangements to rent at the concessionaire's facility.

MARCH 13: Backpack to O'Leno State Park's Sweetwater Branch campsite in

the River Rise Preserve. Contact Rudy Scheffer for more information at rudy@adventuresworldwide.com.

MARCH 27 & MARCH 28: Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia. Yeah! This historic island was the home of the Carnegie family and the ruins are awesome. There are trails to hike, beaches to shell, great birdwatching (painted buntings) and wild horses. We have reservations for 8 people for a day trip on Saturday and for 4 people to camp over night on Sunday. First come, first served but, as reservations are paid for in advance, any untaken will be cancelled.

APRIL: Historic Shenandoah National Park, Virginia to hunt for morel mushrooms, camp, and hike part of the Appalachian Trail. Phenomenal caverns at Luray and Grand Caverns at either end of the park. Dates are tentative but probably the week of Easter and following, April 14-20.

COMING UP: in May, Leon Sinks in Wakulla County for Apalachicola spring wildflowers; in June, Rainbow River State Park, Marion County for camping, canoeing, and hiking. In late June, Rudy Sheffer will conduct an Outing Leader workshop.

OUTINGS REVIEW

AUTUMN MUSHROOM HUNT

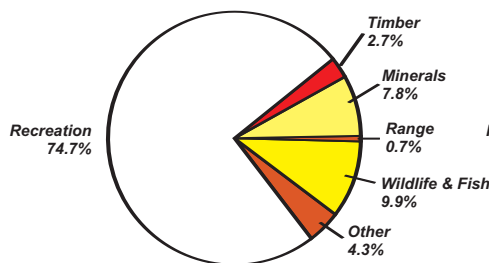
The weekend prior to Thanksgiving, half a dozen intrepid hunter/hikers rambled the woods of the Temple of the Universe north of Hague. Although it had rained the previous week, it was just about a month late for the really productive fungal fruiting. Co-Leader Tom Wood productively scoured the creek bottom land, finding several bright yellow *Armellaria tabescens* and a miniature Chanterelle! Other mushroom species found included *Amanita*, *Russula*, *Boletes*, and many woody, shelving bracket mushrooms.

The weather was crisp, the autumn foliage glowing, and a rest break was enjoyed on the platform overlooking the pond. Trail chatter discussions included the Wilderness First Aid course. A little botanizing and a bird watching rounded out a lovely autumn day. The next good season for mushroom hunting will be late spring. Be sure to watch for a trip in the SSJ's May newsletter. Winter is, of course, time to set up Shiitake mushroom spawn!

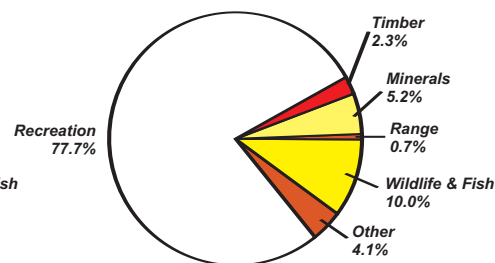


How recreation in the national forests contributes more to the economy than logging.

Contribution to Gross Domestic Product
Total Value \$145 billion (1999 dollars).
Excludes carbon sequestration, clean water and other services provided by National Forests.



Contribution to Jobs
3.3 million jobs derived from the National Forests.
Excludes carbon sequestration, clean water and other services provided by National Forests.



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture (1999).



Whatever Happened in the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Battle?

BY DWIGHT ADAMS

By the time you read this much of it will be outdated, and we may be awaiting the judge's decision. Our "day in court" has turned out to be seven already, with seven more scheduled for Feb. 2-6, and 18-19. The meeting is at the new County Courthouse and is open to the public.

This is it taking so long because it became a three way "dog fight," or "shot-gun wedding," as the judge called it, when a property owners Luis Diaz and Ken Brown in the Jonesville area, represented by Patricia Boyes, joined the battle. They are objecting that some of their property is designated as significant upland habitat in what is called the KBN/Golder study. Attorneys for each of the four parties, the County, Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Jonesville, and us, get their turns at questioning every witness.

We put on our case first with many exceptionally well-qualified witnesses, most of whom live here but are nationally known. The science on which many of the 2003 amendments were made was declared

to be flawed by our experts. When the County puts on its case, they will no doubt try to refute this.

However, this may be difficult since some county staff were called to testify in our case and had to admit on the stand that our experts were recognized authorities in the field.

The tables are turned in a hearing when you are trying to disprove DCA's finding of "in compliance." The "fairly debatable" standard applies; i.e. we have to prove the case "beyond a shadow of doubt." We have two other strong arguments in support of our case. The County's excellent data & analysis (D&A) that they so carefully crafted to support the 2002 amendments still applies and we have the argument that the 2003 amendments are not supported by the D&A.

Additionally, the 2003 amendments, slapped down on top of the remainder of the 2002 plan, make for many inconsistencies. Flawed D&A and internal inconsistencies are very strong arguments that have carried the day in other cases.

Judge Lawrence Stevenson will have a difficult decision in this case. Fortunately, our attorney, David Russ, had the good instinct and knowledge of the law to get the case taken out of the previous judge's hand since he had made many rulings on motions against us leading up to the hearing that were clearly not justified.

In addition to David Russ, we have hired Hank Morgenstern, who has considerable experience in environmental law, particularly involving endangered species. He has been involved in a case in the Keys in which citizens have won. The two of them work well together, improving our chances of winning considerably.

The bad news is that we have already spent all the money raised, are running on empty, and need your contributions. If you have already contributed, please help again. Make your tax-deductible contributions payable to The Sierra Club Foundation, with SSJG on the memo line. Send to SSJG, PO Box 13951, Gainesville, FL 32604.

Courtroom illustration by Linda Pollini

The 2004 Top 10 Most Endangered Parks List

BY KELLY BYRAM

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has released its 2004 "10 Most Endangered Parks" list, with Florida holding two spots on the list (Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park).

According to the NPCA, air pollution, years of inadequate funding, and damaging policies plague our national parks and have caused the parks and one program on the list to fall into imminent danger. While these are all ongoing problems, the Bush administration has exacerbated these problems by cutting back the Clean Air Act,

failing to fulfill campaign promises to increase funding to the park system, and approving regulations allowing new road building in the parks.

Contact President Bush, your senators, and your representative and let them know how you feel about the administration's actions and the imminent threat to these and other natural resources. Then write a letter to the editor of your local paper to remind people of the ongoing threat to our parks and wildlands and to let them know what they can do to support them.

For more information on the 10 Most Endangered Parks, visit www.npca.org, or

1. Big Thicket National Preserve
2. Biscayne National Park
3. Everglades National Park
4. Great Smoky Mountains National Park
5. Joshua Tree National Park
6. Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument
7. Shenandoah National Park
8. Underground Railroad Network to Freedom
9. Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve
10. Yellowstone National Park

visit www.sierraclub.org for more information on national forests, the wildlands campaign (which includes the Everglades), and clean air and water.

I Want My PATV, Hold The Coal Power Plant

BY ROB BRINKMAN

On January 6, 2004 the Gainesville City and Alachua County Commissions held a joint meeting to hear three presentations on proposed business plans for a cable public access television (PATV) channel. The last meeting on this subject was held on July 17, 2003.

The proposed business plans ranged from a part-time, very low budget proposal to a full-time one with a proposed budget of over \$900,000, to be raised from a number of funding sources.

Regrettably, when the time for public comment finally arrived, many members of the public had left as it was after 10 pm. Only Libertarian Party chair Ray Roberts spoke against PATV and, after extensive public comment and debate among commissioners, both commissions voted to direct staff to negotiate with Cox Cable for the return of our public access channel.

While no decisions were made on the details of how the channel will be run, it now appears that, for the first time in about ten years, we will once again have a PATV channel. Previously, Sierra Club general meeting programs were broadcast

on the local channel. It appears that this opportunity will return, although it may take a year or so for this to be realized.

One of the more interesting points raised by Robert Sepe, the presenter for Access Gainesville, was that some municipal utility companies have become cable TV providers. County Commissioner Rodney Long recalled that the contract with Cox Cable has always provided local government with the option to buy the local assets of Cox Cable.

Thus, GRU, owned by the citizens of Gainesville, could become the local cable provider and we would have complete local control of this service, including a PATV channel.

In December 2003, GRU made an Integrated Resource Proposal (IRP) presentation to the Gainesville City Commission which proposed three options for coal-fired power plants to be built at the Deerhaven site and one proposal for a large plant in South Florida. All but the smallest of these options would require GRU to form a partnership with other undisclosed utility companies and, consequently, lose much of the control the City Commission has over the operation

of our utility.

During this presentation, GRU spokesperson Ed Regan acknowledged that GRU "burns to earn." Many of the citizens who stayed late into the evening to comment were troubled by the idea of building excess local capacity to generate additional revenue for the City of Gainesville. The bottom line is GRU would generate revenue by selling electricity to others while the pollution remained in our community.

Great emphasis was placed on how clean these new plants would be. Most of the proposals promised upgrades to pollution controls at the existing coal power plant. GRU should definitely undertake upgrades to existing facilities, as has been done in downtown Gainesville at the Kelly power plant. It remains far less expensive to conserve electricity than to build additional capacity, and there are doubts about the need for additional capacity, as GRU currently has over 40% reserve capacity.

Perhaps our citizen-owned GRU would better serve the citizens of Gainesville by investing in the cable TV business and providing PATV, rather than burning coal for profit.

Sewage Sludge: How Safe is it?

BY ELLIE SCHWAB

If you believe that EPA has protected our water quality, read on.

In 1927, the City of Milwaukee wanted to stop dumping raw sewage into their own water supply, so they developed a method of making fertilizer, which they sold around the country as Milorganite. A warning on the label let users know that it was not safe to use on food crops and contact with the skin should be avoided because of the heavy metal content.

SLUDGE

In 1972, Richard Nixon formed the national EPA. Twenty-one years later, in 1993, EPA produced the rule that stopped the dumping of sewage in our waters—oceans, lakes, and rivers. Municipalities all over the country had to find a way to dispose of the tons of sewage produced every day. EPA gave exemptions to communities that said they were not able to meet the new standards. Many looked to the Milwaukee plan—turn a lemon to a “beneficial use” as fertilizer.

Milwaukee had spent millions of dollars on equipment that created pellets that were easier to handle, but most communities opted for a different, less expensive plan. They removed most of the liquid sewage and produced Class B Sludge—a wet, smelly, lumpy, goo. The sludge industry had a contest to find a more acceptable name for the product they were marketing, and “sludge” morphed into “biosolids.”

GRU AND SLUDGE

Every day, after GRU removes the liquids—which are funneled (Main Street plant) or deep injected (Kanapaha plant) into the aquifer—the treated solids are loaded into huge trucks that leave the Kanapaha Water Reclamation Facility and Main Street Wastewater Treatment plant. In 2001, the two plants produced a total of 2,666 dry metric tons of biosolids. (Taken from the 2001 Biosolids Summary Report - GRU to EPA, Region IV and FDEP)

Most of the fleet of trucks, loaded with sludge, proceed to a large farm near the old landfill on SR 24. The sludge is then applied to the land—free fertilizer for the farmer and a problem solved for GRU. 98% goes to the SR 24 farm. Corn is grown and used to produce cattle feed pellets. GRU has been spreading sludge on the same SR 24 farm for 20 years, and EPA approves it all.

GRU SLUDGE CONTENT

Whatever soluble materials produced by human activity are flushed, washed or flooded into GRU’s wastewater system and must be processed for disposal. Rain water washes contamination from cars and buses into storm drains; industries routinely send chemicals and heavy metals into the system; lawns are all too often treated with

AS NEW DEVELOPMENT IS CONNECTED TO THE GRU SEWAGE LINES, THE PROBLEM OF SLUDGE DISPOSAL IS EXACERBATED BECAUSE THERE IS MORE OF IT. HOW DOES NEW URBANISM PLAN FOR THE INCREASE AND SAFE DISPOSAL?

excessive fertilizer and pesticides; household cleaning products are poured down drains; and even pharmaceuticals—including hormones from birth control pills and the myriad of other medications humans flush—are found in sewage. In addition, various viruses, tapeworms, other worms and even Mad Cow disease can find a way into the system.

GRU follows and meets all standards established by EPA and does the required quarterly tests and reports. As required, GRU reports arsenic, cadmium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, selenium and zinc in the sludge spread on the SR 24 farm. They also allow a generous nitrogen load. GRU is not required to test for other substances such as dioxin.

Over the 20 years sewage sludge has been spread on the SR 24 farm, as much as 40- 50 dry metric tons have been dumped

there. The corn crop takes up some nutrients, but the sandy soil is porous and the aquifer is unconfined, giving almost immediate drainage into our drinking water. Out of sight, out of mind.

All of the above is done with the approval of EPA.

EPA AND SLUDGE SAFETY

On Oct. 29, 2003, CBS “Eye On America” had a report of healthy, 17-year-old Dan Pennock who died of a massive staph infection after he walked on farmland on which sludge had been spread. When the reporter asked Mr. Paul Gilman, EPA Assistant Administrator, about the safety of sludge, Mr. Gilman replied, “I can’t answer it’s perfectly safe. I can’t answer that it’s not safe.” He said EPA would be doing more study on sludge safety in early 2004. The

New York Times now reports that, finally - and for the first time! - EPA will address the question of sludge safety.

SLUDGE SUMMARY

As new development is connected to the GRU sewage lines, the problem of sludge disposal is exacerbated because there is more of it. How does New Urbanism plan for the increase and safe disposal? Worldwide evidence is mounting that Class B Sludge is not safe and should be replaced by treatment that requires expensive equipment.

We must find the will and money to stop the damage to the aquifer before it is too late.

Our drinking water quality is at risk. For more information visit the web site: <http://www.afn.org/~thescore/sludge.html>

State Sierra Outings Events

BY RUDY SCHEFFER

Florida Chapter Outing Chair

JAN 10-11: Leave No Trace Training at Blue Springs State Park, DeLand. Cost is \$28 includes educational materials, and membership to Leave No Trace. More info on Leave No Trace: www.lnt.org Contact: Dan Knippel, 772-219-3732

MARCH 27: Outing Leader Training at the Upper Tampa Bay Park. Learn how to become an outing leader or get updated on the latest rules and regulations. For information contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com

adventuresworldwide.com

APRIL 3-4: Wilderness First Aid (WFA) course in Gainesville. Cost is \$75 for the 16-hour course. No CPR just WFA. Includes book and three-year certification from the American Health and Safety Institute. Instructed by UF staff. Contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com

APRIL 30 TO MAY 2: Outing Chair and Outing Leader only camping retreat at Myakka State Park. Find out about the latest happenings in outings, mini training, brain storming to improve our chapter wide program, and swap "war stories"

around the campfire. Bring your hiking boots and/or canoes and kayaks. Contact: Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail at rudy@adventuresworldwide.com

JUNE 13-18: Outing to SIERRA'S CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE: Five days of hiking with a naturalist, along beautiful trails. We will learn about the creeks, mountain lakes, spectacular granite formations and breathtaking vistas. Easy, moderate and challenging hikes will allow us to enjoy the spring flowers. Optional: exploring the nearby gold rush towns, shopping and casinos plus an extra night in Reno, a change of pace ending to a great week. \$420 members/ \$450 nonmembers. Info and reserve mecomary@aol.com or 941-752-3200. (Manatee-Sarasota)

EXTINCTION, from page 2

So, are humans in danger of disappearing? Hardly. We number over six billion globally and are headed for at least twice that number. What worries me is that something more important than our numbers is disappearing. Part of our humanity is quickly becoming extinct, with the extinction of wildness that we alone are causing.

Call it our quality of life, rather than the quantity advertisers love us to buy. The wiring of our brains is to a great extent fixed by evolution. We are wildlife ourselves, no matter how urbanized we become and how many of us inhabit the earth. As the wild places disappear, a major part of our being goes with them.

What is left is a frustrated creature,

looking in vain for the lost sights, sounds, and smells of its evolutionary past. That is one reason it is so very important to save all the pieces, as Aldo Leopold put it.



Our Group has already spent over \$18,000 hoping to save some pieces, the 2002 Alachua County Comprehensive Plan, which gives wildlife a fighting chance at avoiding extinction, physical or mental.

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FEBRUARY 2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 5, Thursday, 7:30 p.m. General meeting at the entomology/nematology building on UF campus, room 1031-1033.

February 12, Thursday, 7 p.m. Executive Committee meeting at Santa Fe Comm. College, Downtown Campus, Board Room (401 NW 6th St., Gainesville)

February 19 - 21, Public Interest Environmental Conference, sponsored by UF Levin College of Law. Keynote speaker Carl Hiaasen. For info. go to <http://grove.ufl.edu/~els> or call 352-392-2237.

February 20, Friday, 7:30 p.m. Newsletter folding party, Scott Camil & Sherry Steiner's house, call 352-375-2563 for directions.

February 21, Saturday, early. Canoe the Alexander Springs River Run. Contact Karen Garren for details, ILuvFla@gru.net or 352-371-0008.

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