



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

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Caring for Wildlife

BY KATHY CANTWELL

Florida Wildlife Care is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the care and conservation of native wildlife and habitat in Florida through education, rehabilitation and study.

As such, the members educate the general public regarding natural Florida and its wildlife and how to co-exist for our mutual benefit. They work to create greater community concern and appreciation for wildlife, encouraging the protection of wildlife and their habitat.

On a day-to-day basis FWC assists injured and orphaned wildlife through rehabilitation and release; promotes high standards of animal care and unites people and agencies with shared interests in wildlife conservation.

Leslie Straub, our speaker, was cofounder and director of Florida Wildlife Care in 1993, while working as a biologist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and U.S. Geological Survey, in Gainesville. She then earned her master's degree in aquatic biology from the University of Florida. She has been

trained in chemical capture, Disaster Animal Response (DART), and emergency management in Florida and has participated in disaster response in the state.

Leslie has sat been a board member of the Florida Wildlife Rehabilitators Association since 1996 and has spoken at FWRA conferences. She's also on the Animal Care & Use Committee for USGS

research and on the Board of Directors of the Alachua Audubon Society, Gainesville Nature Center Commission and Alachua County EcoHeritage Tourism Council.

As urbanization and development encroach upon our wild lands, human contact with wildlife increases. This contact frequently disrupts and damages wild creatures, and intervention is necessary to try and restore

a healthy natural balance. Working from its new permanent facility at Boulevard Springs Park, in southeast Gainesville, FWC will continue to care for orphaned and injured Florida animals and educate the public on how to live cooperatively with wildlife.

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

**FLORIDA
 WILDLIFE CARE**

LESLIE STRAUB
 DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



Founded in 1992, Florida Wildlife Care operates within federal, state, and local laws and statutes, maintaining permits issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These permits allow FWC to engage in all of its varied activities and projects. FWC meets or exceeds these agencies' requirements on housing, medical care, husbandry, and documentation in their care of wildlife.

FWC needs assistance in transporting animals, taking care of them and just keeping track of their records. They receive around 2000 phone calls per year.

Leslie plans on bringing a surprise visitor as well. You don't want to miss it.

**CONSERVATION AWARDS
 DINNER NOV. 20**

The annual Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club Conservation Conference and awards dinner is Nov. 20, at the beautiful new Luther Springs campground on Lake Vause in western Putnam County, between Hawthorne and Interlachen. All are welcome.

Guest speakers on various conservation issues related to water use will be featured, including Honey Rand, who wrote *Water Wars: A Story of People, Politics, and Power*.

Water Wars is the story of a dispute over public water supply development and use in West Central Florida. It is about politics and policy development,

see CONFERENCE, page 3

IMPACT FEES: DEVELOPMENT CAN PAY ITS WAY 2
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Impact of Impact Fees

Many Florida communities have impact fees. Alachua County is working on adopting them also. See the county's website for more information on our particular needs and impact fee options. Alachua County Commission Chair Mike Byerly wrote this summary of issues to clarify some misconceptions about impact fees.

BY MIKE BYERLY

Alachua County Commission Chair

Impact fees will only be levied on new construction, and can only be spent on new infrastructure that is needed to serve that new construction, and only in the fair, pro rata amount attributable to that new construction. This is critical. The general tax-paying public in Florida has always provided a big chunk of the up front investment capital for new private-sector construction, on the assumption that the general public would be repaid through the resulting property taxes. As Florida has transitioned from frontier state to "bursting at the seams," we've finally gotten around to asking if this is fair or beneficial. I think it's neither.

It's fraudulent to suggest that the proposed impact fees are a "new" tax on the public. To the contrary; the public is

already paying for new infrastructure and would otherwise pay for the infrastructure through their property and sales taxes that will instead be built by impact fees. Impact fees redistribute a small share of that cost back onto the growth that has necessitated the new infrastructure in the first place, thereby lightening the tax load on the general public.

A good analogy to the way we currently finance new growth would be if public taxes paid for the tires and engines of all new automobiles. Of course this would lower the sticker price of new cars, but how would this benefit the general public, since we're all paying our per capita share anyway, just through our taxes, rather than to the automobile dealer? Only the automobile industry would truly benefit from such a system. It would also be unfair to people who chose not to buy a new car, just as the current system is unfair to those who don't buy new homes or businesses in the unincorporated county.

For anyone who feels that the proposed impact fees are too high, wake up: that's the extent to which the general taxpaying

public is subsidizing the construction industry in Alachua County right now. The only rationale for reducing the proposed fees is if we wish to continue to subsidize the construction industry to that extent.

Comparing the proposed fees to the fees collected in other counties is like comparing apples to oranges. The only impact fee proposed by Alachua County that is significantly higher than the state "average" is the transportation impact fee. Every city and county utilizes its own particular mix of revenue options to finance its capital improvements and operating expenses. Many, if not most, Florida counties collect more gasoline taxes than we do in Alachua County (we're five cents per gallon below the maximum permitted by state law.) Many, if not most, Florida counties collect a higher sales tax than we do in Alachua County. If transportation impact fees are lower elsewhere, it's because those counties either pay for new road construction through other taxes, or choose to continue the subsidy of growth, or both.

For more information or to view the proposed impact fee rates for Alachua County, go to: www.publicinformation.alachua.fl.us/documents/index.html, or contact George Flint at 352-264-6903.

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

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

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E-MAIL TREE

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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Pain at the Pump

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT HIGH GAS PRICES.

BY DWIGHT ADAMS

We hear lots of objections to the high costs of gasoline, now near \$2 per gallon. However, the current price is less than the high of \$2.36 (in current dollars) during the 1981 “first oil crisis.”

Compared with \$5 per gallon in Europe, gas is a bargain in the U.S., so much so that there is little incentive to conserve it. Gas is, in fact, one of the cheapest liquids that we consume, significantly less than wine, milk, or even bottled water.

At \$2 per gallon, the cost of gas is not enough to encourage energy conservation—SUVs have been selling just fine (even the ridiculous Hummer). Total consumption of gasoline by “light trucks” (read SUVs) has risen sharply since 1970 and is now greater than that of passenger cars that get roughly twice the gas mileage.

Although ultra-high-mileage hybrids, e.g. the Toyota Prius and the Honda Civic, are receiving much attention, in 2003 there were only 35,000 sold out of 17 million light vehicles. There are so many SUVs sold (over 50 percent of light vehicles) that the average gas mileage is actually less than it was 20 years ago.

One of the main reasons for the “high price” is simply a matter of supply and demand. With the popularity of SUVs, lifestyles that lead to more and more miles of driving in the U.S., and the coming of the automobile age to third world countries, notably China, the increasing demand will continue to drive up prices. Thus, do not expect to find cheaper gasoline in the future. Still, there are things that you can and should do about the “high price.”

GET RID OF THE SUV

Some cite the feeling of safety as a reason for driving an SUV. However, with their tendency to roll over in crashes, SUVs are less safe than other light vehicles. Since they are almost never driven in situations like those depicted in the ads, their popularity must be an image thing (roomier minivans have declined in popularity). An even cooler image thing is to drive a hybrid

5-passenger Prius hatchback that gets twice the mileage of the SUV. You may have a few-months wait, as we did, so order it well beforehand.

DRIVE LESS

There are several ways that you can cut your driving dramatically. Planners consider that each household generates 10 trips per day and that the average household uses 4 gallons of gas daily. With some simple changes in lifestyle, it should be possible to reduce the number of trips significantly. The main way to do this is to plan your day (or week) before heading out so that trips are consolidated and stops are arranged in a way that reduces the driving distances. You might pretend that each trip that you take is 50 miles and will take an hour or more, in which case you would obviously figure out how to combine trips. When we lived 20 miles out of town with an hour’s round-trip driving time, we managed to make far fewer trips.

Make maximum use of car-pooling whether driving kids to various activities or driving to work. There are probably neighbors nearby who have kids going to the same activities as yours with whom you could arrange car-pooling. Car-pooling of drivers to work was down from 20 percent in 1980 to only 11 percent in 2000.

Use alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, or taking the bus whenever possible. Walking will have a double benefit in that you will be healthier and may not need that expensive membership in a health club. In other cultures, where people walk more, there are fewer overweight people and fewer heart attacks.

If you are planning on moving any time soon, consider a location that will reduce driving needs. Look for a mixed-use, higher-density development, not on a cul-de-sac, that is served by mass transit and is near activities in which you will take part. There are few of these new-urbanism develop-

ments; so, in the meantime, encourage this type of development.

SLOW DOWN

Gasoline consumption increases dramatically with speed. I have checked the highway miles per gallon of our Prius, rated at 55 mpg (based on 55 miles per hour), at different speeds and find that it gets 59 mpg at 55 mph, dropping to 50 mpg at 65 mph and to 45 mpg at 75 mph. All those drivers going 80+ mph on the interstates are consuming about 20 percent more than if they drove a safer 65 mph. The 50 percent of drivers in SUVs going more than 80 mph are using way over their share. Even in city driving where high speeds are not involved, aggressive driving with rapid acceleration and breaking uses more gas. So, slow down a little and save some petroleum for your grandkids.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

Politicians talk about the need to make the U.S. “energy independent.” However, it cannot happen as long as oil is the primary source of energy. ANWAR (Alaska’s oil supply) has about a six-month supply; coastal Florida maybe a couple of years’ worth. If we are willing to destroy Wyoming for the oil shale, we could get a few decades worth of very expensive oil. Action by Congress to raise gas mileage standards sharply over the next few years and to increase the gas tax to finance development of alternative energy sources would

THERE ARE SO MANY SUVs SOLD THAT THE AVERAGE GAS MILEAGE IS ACTUALLY LESS THAN IT WAS 20 YEARS AGO.

reduce consumption and encourage conservation of energy. This would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There is sufficient energy to meet our needs in wind and solar that can be used to produce hydrogen to power highly efficient fuel cells. Full government commitment to these energy sources, financed by a gas tax, is needed. However, politicians are not making such suggestions and to do so

Judy Hancock

Prominent Public Lands Advocate, 1939-2004

BY DAVID AUTH

Judy Hancock died the morning of June 28, in her Lake City home. She lost her long battle with cancer, but never lost her fighting spirit.

Judith Carole Petty was born in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 26, 1939. She is survived by one brother, Nicolas Petty, living in Atlanta, a son, two daughters, a step-son, and seven grandchildren.

This article is devoted to an abbreviated description of Judy's activities from 1976 to 2004, but her legacy will be much more than what she accomplished during those 28 years. It will also be transferred exponentially to the people who find strength from her example for their personal effort to conserve wild places everywhere.

Like so many beginning environmentalists in Florida, Judy's first effort ended in failure. She tried to save a large live oak tree on Duval Street in Lake City. She called it her "Yellow Ribbon Tree," because at the time President Carter was trying to free the Iranian hostages. Judy eventually became one of the most visible and highly regarded environmental spokespersons in Florida.

Judy quickly became a dedicated protector of the Osceola National Forest (ONF), just east of Lake City. In 1977, four companies had phosphate mining rights on Osceola, and they wanted to dig. In 1968 Occidental Phosphate Company, always called "Oxy" by Judy, owned by Armand Hammer, started mining in Hamilton County just 10 miles from of Lake City. Hammer was determined to sell millions of pounds of the irreplaceable strategic mineral to the Soviet Union. He proudly declares in his autobiography that he negotiated the "biggest business deal ever done between the Soviet Union and a foreign corporation, worth some twenty billion dollars". He does not say whether this was the phosphate sale. You could say Judy was at the right place at the right time. She and her Lake City Community College Professor friend Frank Sedmera started the

Columbia County Environmental Council (CCEC) to prevent ONF destruction. This group eventually was successful, getting the U.S. government to buy the four mining rights and transfer them to a non-mining owner. Someone in Washington, D.C. had seen the wisdom of CCEC's arguments.

This Cold War victory led Judy to focus her attention on Oxy (sold to "PCS Phosphate" after Hammer's death), still the largest employer in Hamilton County. Judy and Frank wanted better name recognition for their environmental efforts, so they joined

and helped strengthen the Lake City-based Four Rivers Audubon Society. From the start, she was a master at rooting out the technical, legal, and political information critical to winning any complex environmental fight.

In 1977 Judy helped form the Suwannee River Coalition (SRC), an assembly of conservation groups, with Helen Hood, Marjorie Carr, David Anthony, John Mahon, and Bob Simons. Among other projects, this group wanted federal wild and scenic river designation for the Suwannee River. This effort failed, due to local opposition manufactured by Oxy employees. The mining mud this giant "accidentally" and constantly spilled into the creeks of the Suwannee River greatly diminished almost all its life forms.

Judy and the SRC didn't give up. Around 1982 she, her daughter and mother collected 20,000 "Give Your Heart to the Suwannee" signatures, which tipped the balance at the public hearing in Tallahassee, resulting in the Suwannee being designated an Outstanding Florida Water under Florida law. Although it came too late, the now so-called Florida Department of Environmental Protection could never again issue permits resulting in

water quality degradation of the Suwannee.

In 1978 Judy began work on what would be the core of the rest of her life: increasing and managing Florida's public lands, today amounting to 26.6 percent of total uplands. Through letter writing, telephone calls and public testimony, she actively supported the state's effort to diminish the environmental damage done by phosphate mining, as well as to buy other private land. Part of that resolution, "Off-Site Mitigation Reclamation Standards," led to a severance tax charged by weight on all phosphate mined in Florida. The money generated, together with a similar tax on mined heavy mineral sands, kick-started the public land buying program, among the most aggressive and successful in the world.




Judy Hancock

The Land Management Advisory Committee (LMAC), cre-

ated by Florida law, started recommending buying thousands of acres of lands. In 2000 LMAC was replaced by the Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC), under the Florida Forever Act. Judy soon was driving constantly to and from Tallahassee, testifying in support of specific land purchases, usually for the Florida Chapter of Sierra Club. The 2004 Florida Forever Five Year Plan is dedicated to her, partly as a result. Between 1990 and 2009, six billion dollars will have been spent buying back Florida before the developers can cover it up with urban development.

In 1974 Florida legislated the formation of five water management districts, independent taxing authorities that oversee the permitting of water usage as well as the buying of flood plains and upland fringes along rivers and swamps to provide a measure of protection, commonly lacking under private ownership. Judy soon started going to most board meetings of the Suwannee River Water Management District. Again, she was basically the only volunteer of a non-governmental organization regularly testifying at these meetings, as Public Lands Issue Chair for the Florida Chapter of Sierra Club.

As if this were not enough work, 

☞ Judy next attempted the impossible. Florida requires each named parcel of public land to have a management plan, updated every five years (now every 10 years). Together with critical, meticulous written commentaries on these voluminous government documents, she participated in an on-site review and local discussion group for each parcel, driving all over Florida. From 1997–99, the Florida Chapter hired a full-time staff person, Mary-Slater Linn, to beat the bushes for volunteers to help Judy with this very interesting and vital activity. Judy did management plan reviews before, during and after this grant elapsed. Now no NGO representative in Florida systematically and critically reviews state management plans. Land managers are required to use their plan as the basis of sound decision-making for more than 5,000,000 acres of state lands. The people the state gets to volunteer for these meetings generally write no critical reviews and commonly have a vested interest in the parcel.

Judy won the Panther Award from the Florida Chapter in 1985, for “outstanding conservation action” at the Group level. She won the Palm Leaf Award for Conservation at the state level in 1989. She was one of eight people featured in the April, 1995 issue of National Geographic entitled “Earth Day 25 Years.” Judy received a National Sierra Club Special Service Award that year, “for strong and consistent commitment to conservation over an extended period of time.” She won the Sierra Club Florida Chapter Medal in 1997, bestowed on only 13 of maybe 100,000 past and present Florida members. In 2000 she received the Conservation Colleague Award from the Florida Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

Bob Simons of Florida Defenders of the Environment in Gainesville sums up Judy’s 28 year effort better than I: “Judy Hancock was steadfast, eloquent, calm, courageous, diplomatic, and reasonable. She did all this work on a volunteer basis with no thought for personal gain. She put in perhaps 100 hours a week and a lot of her family’s money in her advocacy role. She worked hard to educate herself on the issues and on the science behind the issues, to ensure what she advocated was indeed the best course to take. She was, as a result, very effective. Future generations of Floridians owe her a great debt, and she will be sorely missed.”

Ellie Schwab

Environmental Activist Dies

BY FRANCINE ROBINSON



Ellie Schwab

On July 27, Alachua County lost one of its most ardent supporters and advocates when Ellie Schwab died. I first met Ellie some twenty-three years ago or so, when we were working to preserve the natural resources of our county—an endeavor that we all will need to continue into the future.

Ellie’s specific concern at that time was the contamination of some of Alachua County’s drinking wells. Over all those years and many additional issues, Ellie’s voice was always heard on the side of preservation and restoration.

She educated herself in chemistry, environmental engineering, local, state and national law, agronomy, and other disciplines that enabled her to be an informed and reliable environmental advocate. Ellie was not only knowledgeable in these areas, she also understood practical politics. She spent her life, day by day, organizing support for issues, for candidates, for city, county and national hearings, and for cases at law. In her quiet way, she had a gift of persuasion for this work. And Ellie was a very quick study. If I approached her with the bare outline of a looming environmental problem, she caught on immediately and would begin to marshal facts and people, as needed, to be part of the effort—the effort always, always to protect and restore our natural resources.

Ellie leaves behind her a legacy of years of environmental accomplishments in which she invested her heart and her life.

I sometimes think of Ellie as a gentle persistent terrier, softly snapping at heels when people felt worn out and when the outcome may have looked bleak. It was hard not to respond to Ellie’s total dedication, whatever the issue, especially at the end of a long phone call. All of this was part of Ellie’s deep concern for this poor, plundered planet. And so she fought for the water we drink, the air we breathe, and all the natural resources that are part of this interdependent network of life.

We are grateful for Ellie Schwab and that part of her life that she gave to us all.

Thanks, Ellie. We won’t forget you.

Editor’s note: Ellie wrote a great investigative article on EPA regulation and local application of sewage sludge that was published in the February 2004 newsletter.

Virginia Seacrist's

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Surviving the Florida Summer

BY KAREN GARREN

Good to see all you Sierra Club members have survived the summer with grace, swimming, and siestas. Welcome to our new members, we hope to see you at our outings, which are educational and open to the public.

Come celebrate the onset of autumn at the **Sierra Club Family Reunion, at Poe Springs Park, on Saturday, Sept. 18.** Bring picnic supplies for you and your family, food to share if you care to, water craft and swimming equipment. No pets, please.

This is a good opportunity for Sierra Club members and anyone who is interested from counties outside of Alachua to come and socialize.

For attendance greater than 50 persons,

we qualify for the group admissions rate of \$3.75/person, down from the normal \$5 rate.

If you've not visited this beautiful park, you will be happy to find a reserved pavilion with accessible restrooms, a safe swimming beach, interesting nature trails, and easy canoe access to the Santa Fe River—all at a convenient location just west of High Springs.

Slack Packing the Cross-Florida Greenway in Marion County—Oct. 16-17. Using Ross Prairie Equestrian Park as a base camp, we will shuttle to the other side of Interstate 75 and hike across the unique Land Bridge. We'll cross through several types of ecosystems from dry to wet to planted, back to Ross Prairie where we have a special use permit to camp for the evening. Meals are on your own. We will be using "leave no trace" practices.

The second day we will shuttle to Pruitt Trailhead, hike back to Ross Prairie which may include a quarter-mile road hike, then reconvene for dinner at a nearby restaurant. You have the option of making it a 1- or 2-day trip. The hiking is moderately strenuous; you must be able to hike 10 miles with elevation change while carrying your water and lunch. This outing will be limited to participants older than 12 years. The num-

ber of participants will depend on the number of shuttle vehicles that can be arranged.

If you're new to Florida, you may not know that these Greenway lands resulted from a giant Army Corps of Engineers project, the Cross-Florida Barge Canal, defunct since 1971. The land is now managed by the state for conservation and recreation. Parts of the trail cross old canal excavations. Co-leaders Jack and Jeanne Foster will provide historical background during our hiking. I'll talk natural history until you beg me to stop.

Outings coming up: St. Marks River in November, and the Everglades and South Florida in December.

There will be a meeting of the **Suwannee/St. John's Group outings committee on Saturday, Sept. 25.** All interested persons are invited to attend. We will discuss Outings Leader Certification requirements.

For more information on these events, please contact Karen Garren at 352-371-0008 or email IluvFla@GRU.net for more information.



SIERRA CLUB FAMILY REUNION

at

Poe Springs Park

Santa Fe River

Saturday, Sept. 18

GAS, from page 3

might be a disaster for anyone running for public office. Getting such changes will take a sea change in how we do business in this country.

We need another Jimmy Carter.

A good case can be made that an aggressive program to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil would be the most effective way to fight the "war on terror." Bin Laden

brought on 9/11 because of our military presence in Saudi Arabia. We could save \$100 billion per year if we did not need to dominate the Middle-East to maintain the oil supply.

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Melaleuca Mulch

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FLORIDA-FRIENDLY MULCH

BY CINDY LIBERTON

Florida Native Plant Society

Melaleuca, also known as punktree, an Australian import, was introduced to Florida in the 1920s by federal foresters looking for a way to dry up the Everglades.

The melaleuca experiment backfired as the tree rapidly adapted, and overwhelmed, its new environment. With no natural pests or enemies, melaleuca quickly invaded and literally destroyed hundreds of thousands

of acres of once pristine natural areas.

In the early 1980s, local, state and federal government officials recognized the negative economic impact of the melaleuca tree. The destruction of wetlands, clogging of drainage ways, and invasion of grazing lands were well underway. It's been estimated that the combined cost of impact, control and eradication is easily into the tens of millions of dollars annually.

Commercial uses of the tree such as lumber, paper, and charcoal have been found unsuitable. Subsequently Forest Resources, Inc. of Fort Myers has developed melaleuca as landscape mulch. Melaleuca has significant environmental advantages as an alternative to cypress mulch, the mainstay of landscapers.

Throughout the state, cypress stands serve as the foundation of critical habitat

for many of our state's wildlife species, including the federally endangered woodstork. Use of cypress mulch, due to high-demand, has encouraged extensive and at times unethical harvesting of Florida's native bald cypress. Although there are local regulations against irresponsible commercial harvesting of cypress, the practice persists, and consumers are typically unaware of the impact of their purchase.

In the Gainesville and Ocala areas, Albertsons has a contract to carry Florimulch, if they do not have it in stock it can be ordered. Now that there is a supply we must create the demand.

Editors note: A non-plant mulch alternative is scrap and recycled rubber from old tires. This is carried state-wide by Home Depot. For more information see www.Americanrubber.com or call 1-800-741-5201.

Some Hot Issues in Marion County

BY MARGIE BIELLING

SSJ Sierra Club and Smart Growth Coalition (SGC)

Even on these sweltering dog days, the forces of sprawl are underway. Here is a summary of some of the key issues you need to know.

On Aug. 26, the Florida Supreme Court begins reviewing the Hometown Democracy petition, which, if approved by state voters, will give citizens the right to veto unwanted changes to land use elements of their county or city's growth management plans. So far, volunteers got over 53,000 valid signatures, more than the required number to qualify for judicial review, a legal requirement before any constitutional amendment petition can go any further.

Could developers be worried that the Hometown Democracy idea might become a reality? Who knows? But one thing is for sure: 60 large-scale amendment requests to the Marion County Land Use Map—a record number—now face the commissioners. That means developers and others want to make 60 changes to the plan we have in place to guide growth. A SGC review of amendment requests in

southwest Marion County reveals that 79 percent of the acreage to be changed (over 1,222 acres) would turn rural land into residential and commercial property.

There's some good news. One amendment creates "Rural Preservation Land Use Classifications." Another establishes a "Farmland Preservation Area" and a "Transfer Development Rights Program." If done right they may help save what we have left.

With a water crisis on the horizon, SGC is planning again to inform the community about threats to our local water supplies. We plan to host a comprehensive water forum in January 2005. We hope for big turnouts because we know that water is an issue that crosses all political and ideological borders. Many observers suspect that the Council of 100, a developer-friendly group that recently called for piping water south from North Central Florida, is still interested in our water supplies. Remain vigilant.

For more information, contact: Margie Bielling 352-685-2434, or John Dunn <Dunn4@mfi.net>

CONFERENCE, from page 1

but it is mostly about people. "This is a story about who has the water—and who gets it," says Rand, who was the water regulation agency's communication director during the water wars. "From local sources to regional transfers, from impacts in one place to benefits in another, this is the story of how common sense and leadership helped point the way to a workable, sustainable water supply. And how activists made sure they did."

There will also be a session on public lands issues in the state which will give you the information you need to know to become an advocate for state and federal conservation lands.

Our keynote speaker will be John Moran who will delight us with his pictures and narrative of the wild Florida he has come to know in his 25 years of capturing photos. Some of the magazines that have published his photos: National Geographic, Life, Time, Newsweek, Smithsonian, the New York Times Magazine and the cover of the National Audubon Society Field Guide to Florida.

His photograph of alligators at dusk at Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park was selected as the top 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*.

Come join your fellow Sierrans from all over the state on lovely Lake Vause. Terrific sessions on conservation issues important to all of us plus some inspiring words and photos of the Florida we love.

To get a registration form and for more information, go to our website at www.gatorsierra.org or call Kathy Cantwell at 352-395-7441.

Suwannee-St. Johns Group
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SEPTEMBER 2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 29, Sunday—Phone banking for SSJ Sierra endorsed candidates. Volunteers needed. Contact Rob Brinkman 337- 1715 or robbrinkman@cox.net

August 31—VOTE IN THE PRIMARY ELECTIONS! Some races will be decided by very few votes, so be one of those votes.

September 9—SSJ executive committee meeting at Santa Fe Comm. College, at 7 p.m., Downtown Campus meeting room.

September 18—Sierra Club Family Reunion at Poe Springs Park, High Springs, from 10 - 2 p.m. See page 3 for details. Please join us for this Sierra social event!

September 23—Deadline for candidates petitioning to be on the SSJ executive committee ballot. Contact Sherry Steiner for information 375-2563

September 24—Folding party for September newsletter at Scott Camil and Sherry Steiner's house, at 7:30 p.m. Call 352-375-2563 for directions.

September 25—Outing committee meeting, see page 3 for details. Contact Karen Garren, 371-0008, ILuvFla@gru.net

To advertise
in the newsletter,
contact
Kristina Jackson
at 372-2464.

Membership

Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
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