

Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

Published monthly except June and August from Gainesville, Florida VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 4 • April 2005

The Mighty Mississippi By Canoe

BY KRISTINA JACKSON

In the summer of 2003, Florida Sierra Club member Ron Haines set off at the beginnings of the Mississippi River at Lake Itasca in Northern Minnesota. In his 30-year-old, 17-foot aluminum canoe Ron paddled over 3 months, 2,200 miles on his own to New Orleans. He camped out nearly every night and reveled in a river that went from a narrow, twisting swamp path to a full-blown shipping channel for oceangoing ships.

At our April 7 meeting, Ron will share photos and talk of his fascinating trip.

The Mississippi River begins in the wild rice fields some 300 miles north of Minneapolis-St. Paul and winds its way through grassy swamps not unlike the Everglades. Its character varies from river channels with small rapids and placid stream-like currents to lakes created by dams built in the early part of the last century, as it passes pleasantly small river towns.

After Minneapolis the river is one of commerce, controlled into navigable pools by locks and dams all the way to St. Louis. The stretch from Minneapolis to St. Louis is also a tour through terrific Midwestern river towns.

Below St. Louis the river is again free flowing all the way to New Orleans, with vastly increasing commercial traffic, more structures to keep it in its banks and fewer towns along the banks.

Ron said of his trip, "Folks I met varied from the incredu-

lous: 'Where are you going?' to the absolutely helpful. A couple of guys fished me out of an unnavigable rice swamp in Minnesota and drove me and all my stuff to a hotel in Bemidji.

Another fellow in Minnesota stood on the bank and warned me of some rapids that I was intending to just go into without scouting. I took him up on his offer of a portage around them."

Ron enjoyed seeing bald eagles and other wildlife along the way. When asked what his best experiences were on the trip he said, "My best night on the river is divided into two: In the woods way south of Memphis, Tennessee, hearing pissed off deer walk past my tent in the night because I had set it up right in their normal path. And the night camping on the east bank of the river in St. Louis with a terrific view of the arch there all night long."

Ron also used his Sierra Club contacts to help him along the way. Ron has been active in the Sierra Club since he moved to Florida in 1976 and has filled nearly every volunteer post in the Loxahatchee Group,



Ron Haines on the Mississippi River

based in West Palm Beach. He is currently chair of the Florida Chapter Awards Committee.

A former Peace Corp volunteer in the 1960's, he was photo editor at Globe, Star and the National Enquirer for some 25 years before leaving the company in 2003.

Come out April 7 and hear about Ron's trek on the big river in his little canoe.

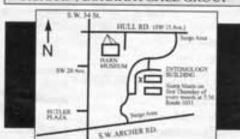
GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, April 7, 7:30 PM

Entomology/Nemarology Building on the UF campus (Just east of the Performing Arts Center. Turn south off Hull Road on to Nanaral Areas Road.)

QUITE A TRIP!

SPEAKER: RON HAINES SIERRAN, LOXAHATCHEE GROUP



WE NEED SCHOOL CONCURRENCY!	2
COURT SAYS DEP MUST REGULATE DAIRIES	4
EVERGLADES SUMMARY & UPDATE	-7

SSJ Sierra Strongly Supports School Concurrency

BY SCOTT CAMIL

The growth industry, not another sales tax, should pay for school concurrency.

At our March executive committee meeting, we voted to oppose the half-cent sales tax being considered by the School Board of Alachua County.

At first, it might seem that this is not an environmental issue but, because of its impact on growth management, it is. The Sierra Club has wisely taken the position that growth should pay for itself.

Proper growth management requires that there be infrastructure to support growth. Infrastructure refers to things like roads, police, fire protection, water and schools. Poor growth management allows sprawl and puts the burden of paying for it on the taxpayers.

Impact fees are a way to allow those who create the impact to help pay for it instead of putting the total burden on the local taxpayer; it's called balance. We believe that those who create the need for more infrastructure and benefit from the growth should pay their fair share as opposed to being subsidized by taxpayers.

It is no surprise that the majority of our school board members oppose impact fees; they won their seats with very strong support of the growth industry, which is currently subsidized by the taxpayer.

The School Board claims that there is no capacity problem, that instead we have a distribution problem. That means we have enough classrooms but they are not in the right neighborhoods. This problem is solvable by rezoning who goes to which school, not by raising taxes.

Our message to the SBAC is that your current proposal lacks credibility and does a disservice to our children and the taxpay-

ers while protecting the special interests that benefit f r o m u n c o n - trolled tax-payer-subsidized growth.

As citizens, we want good public schools that are not overcrowded and we would be willing to pay our fair share, but only after the SBAC shows some integrity, honesty and good faith by instituting impact fees to fairly share the burden.

If those impact fees don't solve the problem, then the School Board can come back to the taxpayers with some credibility and ask us to help.

We encourage our members to write letters to the editor of the Gainesville Sun and to contact school board members and the Superintendent of Schools Dr. Dan Boyd to express your opinions on this issue.

Email Dr. Boyd at supt@sbac.edu or email all School Board members at boardmembers@sbac.edu.

WE WANT GOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS THAT ARE NOT OVERCROWDED AND WE WOULD BE WILLING TO PAY OUR FAIR SHARE, BUT ONLY AFTER THE SBAC SHOWS SOME INTEGRITY, HONESTY AND GOOD FAITH BY INSTITUTING IMPACT FEES TO FAIRLY SHARE THE BURDEN.

Mail board members: Virginia Childs, Wes Eubank, Tina Pinkoson, Eileen Roy, and Janie Williams or Dr. Boyd at 620 E. University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601.

April 22 - Celebrate Earth Day: resolve to consume less.

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

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

Suwannee-St.Johns Group Executive Committee

- Plants	cijomis Group		
Chair	Linda Pollini	481-2048	thirdeyegrafix@earthlink.net
Program Chair	Kristina Jackson	372-2464	kristinajackson@cox.net
Conservation Chair	Josh Dickinson	373-2377	josh@foresttrust.com
Secretary	Annette Long	352-490-8930	MLongAKorn@aol.com
Treasurer/Membership Chair	Roberta Gastmeyer	336-2404	rgastmeyer@earthlink.net
Administrative Chair	Dwight Adams	378-5129	adams@phys.ufl.edu
Outings Chair	Karen Garren	371-0008	ILUVFLA@gru.net
Events Coordinator	Sherry Steiner	375-2563	s.camil@att.net
Political Chair	David Auth	371-1991	davidauth@hotmail.com
Public Relations	Russell Donda	335-8618	rsdonda@viewray
Newsletter Editor/Listserve	Kristina Jackson	372-2464	kristinajackson@cox.net
Government Liaison	Rob Brinkman	337-1757	robbrinkman@cox.net
Environmental Education Chair	Russell Roy	372-7305	raroy4@bellsouth.net
Alternate FLEX Com Delegate	Tom Begley	352-237-8198	none
Newsletter Folding	Scott Camil	375-2563	s.camil@att.net
Webmaster	Louis Clark	373-5377	klouisc@bellsouth.net

Newsletter Layout * Colin Whitworth * 372-2464 * colinwhitworth@cox.net

E-MAIL TREE

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

FOLDING PARTY

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

Suwannee-St. Johns Group Sierra Club Newsletter (UPS 317-370) is published 10 months a year, except June and August, by the Suwannee-St. Johns Group Sierra Club, 1024 NW 13th Ave, Gainesville, 32601. Non-member subscription rate is \$5.00. Periodicals Postage Paid is paid at the Gainevville, FL 32608 post office. Postmaster: Send change of addresses to Suwannee- St. Johns Group Sierra Club Newsletter, c/o The Sierra Club, Member Services, P.O. Box 52968, Boolder, CO 80328-2968. Send both your old and new addresses and a Sierra address label, which contains your membership number. PLEASE ADDRESS ALL GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE SUWANNEE-ST. JOHNS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB TO: P.O. BOX 13951. GAINESVILLE, FL 32604.

Don't just sit there. Get up. Get out.

BY KAREN GARREN

Outings Chair, SSJ Sierra Club Group

Calling all Adventurers! Be a Sierra Club Outings Leader!

Participate in a fun-filled weekend training workshop and learn group dynamics, safety precautions, leave-notrace methods, and Florida ecology.

Meet dozens of environmentally minded folks from your region and from around the state. Feel inspired to explore new outings opportunities. Eat healthily. Buy a terrific handbook. Get a beautiful certificate suitable for framing. Superlatives fail me! When? The weekend of April 8-10. Where? The Pine Jog Environmental Education Center in West Palm Beach.

How much? \$45 covers meals and snacks, lodging (bring your own bedding), handout materials, a raffle ticket and a nifty Outings T-shirt!

R e g i s t e r online at http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/ or mail check or money order to Sierra Club Outings, 85 Second Street, 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, or call with credit card info 4154-977-5588 (Monday-Friday, 8:30-5, PST).

> For more information contact Karen Garren, at 352-371-0008 or email ILuvFla@GRU.net,

If you've ever wanted to share some of the joy and beauty of outdoor experiences, even if

only with your closest friends, this is a chance to hone those skills. Each outing provides opportunities to make new friends.

Sierra Club Awards

BY RON HAINES

Awards Committee Chair, Florida Chapter Sierra Club

It's time to thank all the wonderful Sierra Club volunteers and the community members who help protect natural Florida. We need your help to recognize these great people!

The deadline for nominating someone for a Florida Chapter award is July 15. For complete information about the program including a nomination form go to; http://florida.sierraclub.org/insideChapter, asp and click on the award link,

There are lots of awards to fit that special volunteer. For example, the Pelican Award honors a member for exceptional work, above and beyond the call of duty, on a conservation project of statewide importance. This award is for the "layman" volunteer activist.

There is also the Gopher Tortoise Award for a person (spouse, significant other, good friend, etc.) whose continued extraordinary behind-the-scenes efforts encourages and supports a more visible, recognized activist. This award is named for the gopher tortoise, whose burrows can support up to 360 other species, including those endangered and threatened.

There are even awards to Sierra members or members of the community for outstanding conservation achievement.

The Indigo Award is for a writer/journalist who provides balanced reports on Florida's environmental issues. The recipient may have developed a series of articles, a book, or a script around a specific issue impacting the environment or environmental policy or have consistently provided a voice for the environment of Florida. So, go on line and let the awards committee know about all the people who deserve to be recognized for their involvement in protecting Florida environment.

If there are any questions, email awards chair: ronaldhaines@bellsouth.net.

April 22 - Celebrate Earth Day: resolve to breathe more fresh air.





Need a Vacation??

2-story, 2-bedroom, 2-bath, 2-fireplace Mountain Home with spectacular tri-state view from wraparound deck. Hayesville, NC area, near Nantahala Nat'l Forest and white water rafting. \$500/wk Nonsmokers only, please. Call (352) 472-2169.

DEP Forced to Regulate Dairies

AN UPDATE FROM SAVE OUR SUWANNEE

BY SVENN LINDSKOLD

Save Our Suwannee has followed dairy wastewater regulation in the Suwannee Basin since the mid-1990's when SOS challenged a Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection permit and sat on a Technical Advisory Committee established to develop detailed waste management rules. The TAC effort flopped owing to vigorous opposition by operators and reluctance to press the issue by the DEP Administration.

Beginning in 1998 a Suwannee River Basin Nutrient Management Working Group was formed, led by the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the Suwannee River Water Management District, but including participation from county, state and federal agencies, state universities and producer associations.

The goals were to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would contribute to nitrate containment and limitation and to encourage adoption of those practices to volunteering operators by awarding grants that would fund 2/3 or more of the costs. This Working Group subsequently became known as the Suwannee Partnership.

Meanwhile, around the state, DEP had failed to carry out its responsibility (delegated to it by the Federal Clean Water Act, EPA, and Florida law) to make rules and to issue National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for large dairies that threatened to discharge pollutants to waters of the State.

After many months of investigation and coordination a lawsuit was filed in April 2001 to compel DEP to carry out its inspection and permit responsibilities. Save Our Suwannee, Manasota 88, and The Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County were the plaintiffs in the complaint. The legal action was led and coordinated by

Linda Young of the Clean Water Network and the Natural Resources Defense Council together with the Legal Environmen-

tal Assistance Foundation. The Sunshine State Milk Producers joined as Intervenor, siding with DEP.

After lengthy testimony and the usual back and forth of motions filed by both sides over three years, Judge L. Ralph Smith, Jr. of the Leon County Circuit Court issued his Final Judgment on March 5, 2004. He ordered that:

- All dairies with more than 700 mature cattle apply for NPDES permits or demonstrate exemption;
- The Suwannee Partnership cannot be relied on in lieu of permits;
- The DEP enforce dairy reporting;
- An enforcement program be developed for unpermitted dairies,
- Florida Statute 403.0611 cannot be used as authority for alternatives to traditional regulatory permitting;
- DEP must submit to the legislature any future project proposed as an alternative to traditional permitting;
- A second trial phase regarding compliance at individual dairies is unnecessary; and 8) Plaintiffs are entitled to recover costs and attorney fees pursuant to Florida Statute 403.412(f).

DEP forthwith filed an appeal with the 1st District Court of Appeals. Earthjustice lawyers joined the plaintiffs' efforts for the appeals phase. To show the great significance of the ruling to the potential regulated community, an Amici Curiae brief was then filed in support of DEP and the Sunshine State Milk Producers by numerous organizations: SRWMD, Florida Chamber of Commerce, Florida Fruit & Vegetable Assoc., Florida Farm Bureau



Assoc., Florida Poultry Federation, Florida Forestry Assoc., and Florida Nurseryman and Growers Assoc.

In general, their objections to the Judge's order were that:

- DEP was already working with the dairy operators through Administrative Agreements to arrive eventually at permits;
- the Suwannee Partnership is far more valuable than the case represents in that dairies of all sizes are eligible for partnership participation as well as poultry farms and row crop operations;
- the lower court stepped beyond its jurisdiction in its orders; and
- proof of DEP's shortcomings and noncompliance at the dairies was inadequate or faulty.

On March 2, 2005 the First District Court of Appeals affirmed, without comment, the ruling of the circuit court.

As this summary is being written, the DEP still has a few days to decide whether to appeal this DCA ruling by a three-justice panel to the entire Appeals court.

Last year, after the Circuit Court ruling was announced, legislation was quickly drawn up to authorize DEP to cooperate with DACS in the implementation of BMPs and, what's more, to ratify Agreement in Principle on the Suwannee Partnership and "any subsequent dairy administrative agreements entered into prior to January 1, 2004" (language drawn from HB1087 introduced in the current, 2005, session of the legislature).

The purpose was to render mute the court. Last year newspapers around the

see DEP, page 4

An Open Letter to President Bush on Energy Policy

BY DWIGHT ADAMS

Dear President Bush:

You are understandably concerned about leaving a legacy. With changes in energy policy that would, indeed, make us independent of foreign oil you could establish a legacy that would assure your place in history.

Drilling in the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge and off the coast of Florida will provide only a few years supply of oil. Energy independence will require aggressive conservation policies to cut dramatically our energy consumption. Also, development of alternative energy sources coupled with hydrogen fuel cell technology to provide high mileage for automobiles while reducing emissions dramatically.

By choosing this approach rather than an energy policy promoting increased consumption, you would enjoy a very high approval rate with the American people.

There would be several benefits of this approach including much greater respect for the U.S. in the world, since our overconsumption would be greatly reduced. We could effectively fight the war on terror since much of the funding of terrorists is provided by oil revenue. (Currently, we are funding both sides in the war on terror.) We could meet the terms of the Kyoto accords without any adverse effects on the economy. Development of the technology and infrastructure for fuel cell vehicles and manufacture of the vehicles could provide an enormous number of new jobs and markets for American products.

Per capita consumption of energy in the U.S. is about twice that in industrialized European countries that enjoy the same standard of living.

Clearly, there are a number of ways to conserve energy without adversely affecting the economy. For example, one-sixth of all electricity generated is used to air condition buildings that are frequently run at such a low temperature that many occupants wear sweaters.

At the same time, low-efficiency equipment is used because of the lower initial costs and energy efficient building standards are not employed.

More use of Energy Star appliances would lower energy consumption. Replacing all existing refrigerators with Energy Star models would result in energy savings of about 25% over models currently on the market. The payback period for replacing an existing refrigerator with an Energy Star model is only 16 months.

Incredibly, the use of solar energy, which for heating water is very simple, is low even in states with lots of sunshine. Incentives and subsidies for this and other energy conservation measures, many of which were in place during the Carter administration, would entice Americans to conserve.

The greatest potential savings in energy consumption is in transportation, now over 50% of the total U.S. consumption of about 20 million barrels per day. Carbon emissions from the transportation sector now exceed industrial emissions and are almost as much as residential and commercial combined. Thus, there is the potential for dramatic reductions in oil consumption while reducing carbon emissions sufficient to meet the terms of the Kyoto accord.

The most effective way to reduce trans-

portation oil consumption would be to increase the mileage standards of automobiles that have changed little since the 1970's oil crisis. Because of the increasing popularity of SUV's, the combined mileage of autos and light trucks has actually declined steadily since 1987.

The industry already has the capability to produce vehicles with higher gas mileage—all that is needed is for Congress and the President to make this a priority and standup to the oil and automobile lobbies.

In order to encourage less driving and a shift to higher MPG automobiles, a gradual increase in gasoline tax is needed (forget "no new taxes" —you can not build a legacy by running up the highest deficit in the nation's history). Despite all the complaining about "high gas prices," when adjusted for inflation, prices in real dollar are significantly less than the high in 1981s.

Greater enforcement of speed laws is needed to reduce gas consumption that comes with high speeds. You could issue an executive order that states must enforce speed laws or lose highway funding. Ohio has shown that speed laws can be enforced.

The additional revenue from the added gasoline tax could fund research and development of alternative energy sources and fuel cell technology. Assign the task of developing hydrogen fuel cell technology and infrastructure to NASA. This would be a natural assignment since NASA already had experience in both fuel cells developed for spacecrafts and the use of hydrogen. Just as John Kennedy was able to rally the nation in the quest to land a man on the moon, you could rally the nation behind this "Manhattan Project" effort for U.S. energy independence.

In doing so, your legacy and place in history would be assured.

Sincerely, Dwight Adams

DEP, from page 4

state editorialized against this attempt to change the rules after the game had been played. Now, the bill has been re-introduced this session; but so far the bill has not progressed.

We conclude that should DACS and the SRWMD wish to assist operators in designing pollution control facilities and helping them to find funds to install the facilities, they should go ahead. It is their job. They do not have to negate a permit program to do so. Several local dairies do operate currently under wastewater permits; and the permits and associated monitoring of the wastewater processes have been shown to be necessary since violations of pollution standards have occurred.

We are pleased that DEP is taking steps, as they claimed in the lawsuit, to get all dairies permitted. If our bringing legal action was a necessary stimulus, then our persistence has paid off.

The Fundamentals of Everglades Restoration

BY KAREN GARREN

Outings Chair, SSJ Sierra Club Group

On a recent Sierra Club outing to South Florida, it was apparent that residents new to Florida are unfamiliar with the values and benefits of the Everglades watershed, a one-of-a-kind ecosystem.

Wetlands have many values, such as acting as sponges for storm water storage, filters for water purification, and conduits for aquifer recharge whence comes our drinking water. They also provide habitat for wildlife and provide humans with recreational opportunities.

Everglades National Park contributes to Florida's economy by drawing millions of visitors each year to experience wildlife, soak in the sun and absorb the peaceful surroundings. But the Everglades are dying. Florida Bay, nursery for one of the most productive fish-industries in the world, is sick. Sea grass-killing algal blooms probably result from too much nutrients. Nutrients and algae are also smothering the Florida Key's magnificent coral reefs, northernmost in the Western Hemisphere. It's not a question of "should the system be repaired?" but more of "can we save it in time?" This ambitious restoration project is the largest ever undertaken.

A BIT O'ECOLOGY

For those of you who are unfamiliar with South Florida, here's a news flash: there is so much more to it than the National Park. The watershed is enormous, originating in the wetlands of the Kissimmee River, encompassing Lake Okeechobee, the second largest freshwater body within US borders, through sloughs and into the marshes of Everglades' savannahs. From there water flows down Florida Bay and across the coral reefs of the Keys.

Rain, storms, wind and fire drive the dynamics of the ecosystem, making for great biodiversity. The seemingly monotonous vista of sawgrass dotted with tree islands and the generally mild climate belie a complex interaction of plants and animals with the thin carbonate soils. Tree islands contain endemic orchids and bejeweled tree snails. Alligators maintain holes and trails that provide refuge for birds and fish during times of drought. Mangrove thickets guard the margins and shelter baby fish and invertebrates. Through it all stalks the Florida Panther.

The ecosystem's delicate balance has been upset. Starved for water or flooded during nesting seasons, the bird populations have plummeted since the 1950s. High nutrient levels convert sawgrass sloughs to cattail marshes. Pine rocklands "get no respect", following Hurricane Frances, as demolition debris was piled on endangered plants and the delicate soils ground under heavy equipment treads. Urban development laps at the edges and sucks up the water. Invasive exotic plants and animals change ecosystem interactions.

Florida Bay suffers from sedimentation. Algae blankets reefs. Without hydrologic restoration, the system will disappear.

A BIT O'HISTORY

The indigenous Calusa people called it "Payhayokee" or "grassy waters". The next wave of Native Americans, the Miccosukee and the Seminole, retreated to its depths to avoid persecution and relocation. After the Civil War, in the name of mosquito control, humans got serious about wetland removal by ditching and diking the mucklands south of The Big O. Invention of the steam shovel accelerated canal construction. The new railways brought in tens of thousands of workers.

To the north, the winding Kissimmee River was straightened and channelized, converting wetlands to agriculture and cattle ranching. Excess nutrients, previously absorbed by wetlands, run off directly to The Big O. During warm weather, the shallow waters are subjected to anoxic conditions resulting in enormous fish kills. To the east, the North and South Forks of the St. Lucie River were completely channelized, reducing quality of water entering the Indian River Lagoon.

In the 1920s, 30s and 40s, a series of hurricanes killed hundreds of people. The Water Management District was organized to deal with flood control. The lake waters were confined behind a 40-foot high berm, never to flow freely in response to the seasons again. A complex of canals, dikes, and water pumping stations make the South Florida watershed one of the most manipulated in the world.

An estimated 50% of the ecosystem has been lost. Bird populations are 10 % of

see RIVER, page 7

RENAISSANCE PRINTING

serving your printing needs since 1972



- DocuTech Digital Copies
 Express Fax
 Digital Color Copies
 - . Custom Finishing . Desktop Publishing . Offset Printing
 - Fast Professional Service Free Pick-up & Delivery

4130 N.W. 16th Bivd. Gainesville, FL 32605 (352)372-2233 • FAX 372-3435

HISTORIC LOG CABIN ON MOUNTAIN STREAM

IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

For rent May through October.
Four beds. One bathroom.
Fully equuipped kitchen. Washer and dryer.

Call Joan Griffin at 352-371-3383.

RIVER, from page 6

their former glorious millions. Over 1.6 billion gallons/day are removed from the Biscayne Aquifer that is being subjected to salt-water intrusion.

PLUMBING PROBLEMS & PLANS

Drainage of the muck soils results in oxidation of organic matter. Modern photos of 1930s structures built on stabilizing pilings show as much as 25 feet of soil lost. The water that used to flood those wetlands was deemed "excess" and shunted down the St. Lucie east to the Atlantic and down the Caloosahatchie west to the Gulf of Mexico, adversely affecting those estuaries.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas published her book "River of Grass" and created an image for readers of a wilderness in trouble. The public perspective changed, momentum built, the southern-most region was dedicated as a National Park.

Restoration of the Everglades watershed was federally authorized in 1992. A coalition of state and federal agencies, environmental organizations, and interested tribal stakeholders developed a restoration scenario—the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan—in which water of purer quality will flow in accordance with nature's timing.

Because the hydrology is so controlled, the restoration project must balance water distribution between agriculture, urban consumption, and the needs of nature. Then increase the volume. "Excess" water that was formerly discharged to the Gulf and the Ocean will be stored.

Excess water will be deep-well injected over a thousand feet into the "boulder zone" where a freshwater "bubble" will form. An estimated 70% can be retrieved from the Aquifer Storage and Recovery system, ASR, for release to the ecosystem as needed. Water will also be stored in huge, deep, lined pits. Runoff from agricultural fields will have excess nutrients removed by being filtered through thousands of acres of artificial marshes.

Water treatment facilities will be built to replace septic tanks and storm water retention basins. Underground "barrierwalls" will be emplaced to reduce seepage of high nutrient water from the filtration marshes to the Biscayne Aquifer. Locks and canals along Tamiami Trail will be replaced with hydrologic structures that allow for more natural sheet-flow into Shark Valley and Taylor Sloughs.

The first phase of CERP includes "putting the kinks" back into the Kissimmee River by filling canals, easing the river into the old channels. The returning wetlands will remove ranch and agriculture runoff, and improve water quality running off into The Big O.

Okeechobee Estates is getting a state-of the art water treatment plant. Enormous Stormwater Treatment Areas are being constructed along the St. Lucie Canal. Agricultural areas are capturing irrigation runoff for reuse.

Field-testing of ASR wells is to be initiated Spring 2005. The water management district is spending \$10 million/year on hydrilla removal from waterways.

Various aspects of the project's hightechnology have generated much controversy. The timing of fresh-water release to the ecosystem is critical. Too much, too early and wading birds have reduced nesting success. Too little, too late and coastal ecosystems, the Bay, and the coral reefs are adversely impacted. The seepage-barrier installation will have tremendous impact on the remnant natural ecosystem. Construction of the surface water-storage pits may intersect the Aquifer, and little provision is considered for wildlife habitat. Marshes have limited ability to remove phosphorous.

The agriculture community has argued that proposed water quality standards are technologically unobtainable.

During construction, environmental responses will be closely monitored. A grid of 400-500 rain gauges provides base-line water input to the ecosystem. Target phosphorus levels have been established. The parts are evaluated in terms of impacts to the whole system; the data is plugged into computers for predictive modeling.

The plumbing problems were over a hundred years in the making, success is estimated to be achieved within 50 years.

CONCLUSION

The South Florida Water Management District produces a bi-monthly publication, Water Matters, which is invaluable for informing the public of the Project's progress,

Its tone is light and optimistic, presenting few or none of the criticisms, but, covering 16 counties with 9 Service Centers, the well-qualified talented staff performs superbly.

The 2004 Everglades Consolidated Report is available online at the SFWMD website (sfwmd.gov/org/ema/ everglades) or printed copies from District Technical Publications Office at (561) 682-6745.

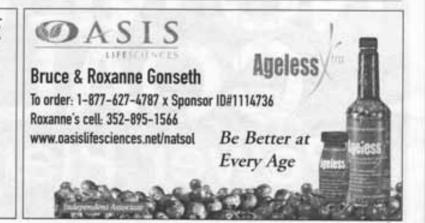
For more information on the CERP or for added reference materials, contact Karen Garren at (352) 371-0008 or email ILuvFla@GRU.net.



Eric J. Amundson DDS Restorative & Cosmetic Dentistry

- Comprehensive Dental Care
- Cleanings in a Spa-like Setting
- . The Art of Cosmetic Dentistry
- · Affordable Teeth Whitening
- Restorative Dentistry Including Implants
- Preventative Dentistry for Your Family

4040 W. Newberry Rd. Suite 1200 • Gainesville, Florida • 32607 352-376-3400 www.dentalarts.us



Suwannee-St. Johns Group Sierra Club NEWSLETTER P.O. Box 13951 Gänesville FL 32604

Periodicals U.S. POSTAGE PAID Gainesville FL 32608



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



APRIL 2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 7, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, SSJ general meeting at the Entomology & Nematology Bld. on UF campus (see page 1).

April 14, 7:00 p.m., Thursday, SSJ executive committee meeting at SFCC Downtown Gainesville campus.

April 22, 7:30 p.m. Newsletter folding party. At Scott Camil and Sherry Ssteiner's house. Call 352-375-2563 for directions., Saturday

April 23, Saturday, Earth Day celebration, Downtown Plaza Gainesville. Contact Shanti Vani 352-337-1112.

Paid electioneering communication, paid for by Citizens for Affordable and Renewable Energy, 4120 NW 21st Street 32605

r-- Membership

H	Yes, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed
:	Name
i	precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed Name Address

☐ Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa Exp Date ___

Cardholder Name

Card Number

email

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

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	□\$25	
REGULAR	□539	D147
SUPPORTING	C \$75	D\$100
CONTRIBUTING	CJ\$150	CJ\$175
LIFE	☐ \$1000	☐\$1250
SENOR	I3524	D\$32
STUDENT	C3524	□\$32
LIMITED INCOME	☐\$24	-□532

P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968