



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

Published monthly except June and August from Gainesville, Florida
 VOLUME 37 • NUMBER 5 • May 2007

National Treasures

PROTECTING NATIONAL FORESTS TOPIC OF MAY GENERAL MEETING

BY KATHY CANTWELL

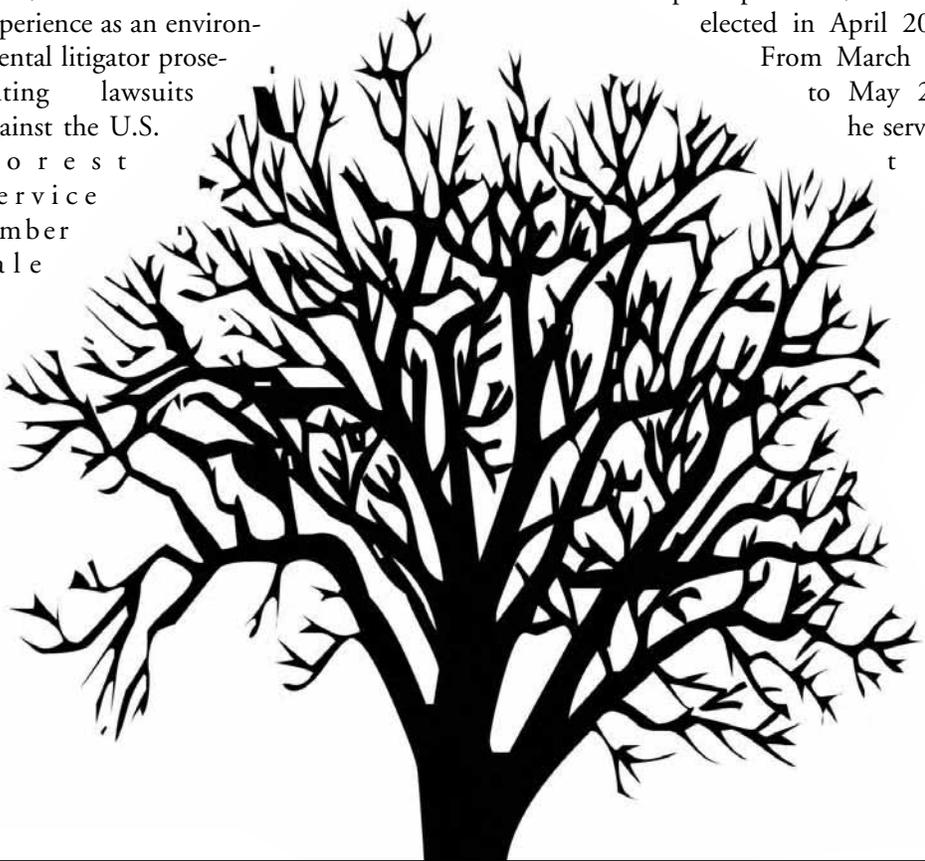
Bernie Zaleha, the immediate past National Vice President of the Sierra Club and a current member of the Sierra Club board, will discuss the Sierra Club and national forest protection at the SSJ Sierra Club's May 3 general meeting.

Zaleha will show the Sierra Club's award winning video, *This Land is Your Land*, and discuss both his experience as an environmental litigator prosecuting lawsuits against the U.S. Forest Service timber sale

program, and his experience from 1998 to 2002 as chair of the Club's National Forest Campaign. Time for question and answer will be included.

Bernard Daley Zaleha, J.D., is presently serving his second term on the national board of directors of the Sierra Club. He was first elected by the national membership in April 2003, and was re-elected in April 2006 .

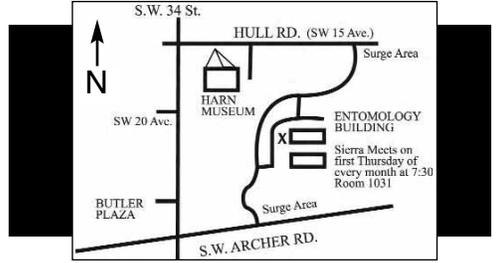
From March 2004 to May 2006, he served as the



GENERAL MEETING
 Thursday, May 3, 7:30 PM
 Entomology/Nematology Building on the UF campus
 (Just east of the Performing Arts Center. Turn south off Hull Road on to Natural Areas Road.)

SIERRA CLUB AND NATIONAL FOREST PROTECTION

BERNIE ZALEHA
 NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB BOARD MEMBER



62nd national Vice President of the club. He has been an environmental activist with the Sierra Club and other organizations since 1981. He currently also serves as Vice President of the Constitutional Law Foundation and of Citizens for Environmental Enforcement.

Zaleha is a graduate of California State University, San Bernardino in 1983, receiving his bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Physical Geography, graduating first in his class. He received his Juris Doctor in 1987, magna cum laude, from Lewis and Clark College's Northwestern School of Law, with a certificate in Environmental and Natural Resource Law. While at Lewis and Clark Law School, Zaleha served as the Executive Director of the Northwest Environmental Defense Center in Portland, Oregon.

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A Smart Growth Missile

BY ROB BRINKMAN

The Alachua County Commission scheduled to make a pivotal decision this month on how Alachua County will grow. I am hopeful that this will later be seen as a watershed moment in the history of not only Alachua County but of the whole state. It is time to stop sprawl development and apply sustainable criteria to the redevelopment of our communities.

In 1999 a different set of Alachua County Commissioners approved a development of regional impact for about 600 acres now known as SpringHills, at Northwest 39th Avenue and Interstate-75. Since then, the land has been sold to a Pennsylvania development company (PREIT), which is requesting a comprehensive plan amendment that constitutes a substantial deviation to the original approve DRI.

The Sierra Club opposed the original DRI, which has not been built out because of traffic concurrency requirements. Simply put, significant new transportation infrastructure is required to handle the traffic of the already approved development.

To increase the profitability of their real estate, PREIT wants to significantly deviate from the original plan by greatly intensifying the level of development, thus generat-

ing more revenue, which presumably would fund the needed transportation infrastructure improvements. However, most of the cost will still be paid for by Alachua County taxpayers due, partly because of the state's new proportionate share requirements.

The only reasonable—indeed sane—way to manage growth is to insist that it pay the full cost of the impacts it has on a community. This is the intent, if not the actual effect, of impact fees.

Failure to recoup the actual cost of new development amounts to public subsidy of private profit. If the taxpayers are to pay for half of the needed transportation enhancements, then they should also receive the same percentage of profits derived by the enterprise.

Most issues confronting Floridians with respect to growth management and environmental protection are at least in part the result of a failure to assess the real cost of their developments. Overcrowded schools, polluted water and air, and traffic congestion are the seeds we have sown by our failure to act rationally with respect to the true impacts of growth.

On May 1 and likely continuing on May 3, the Alachua County Commission

will hold public hearings on the SpringHills development. The developer not only wants taxpayers to continue subsidizing its profit, they want a likely illegal exception to the requirements of the current comp plan.

While the Sierra Club had serious concerns about the latest version of the comp plan, it is indisputable that it provides more stringent protection of our natural resources than did the previous version. PREIT wants to set aside these protections, something that no one else has done or should be allowed to do.

Florida cannot continue to use taxpayer's money to subsidize new growth. It was bad policy in the past, and it is suicidal to continue the practice in the future.

Insanity is defined as doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result.

We need only look around at the disappearance of what attracted most people to Florida to realize the disastrous results of past policies. If we do not stop repeating our mistakes, we are doomed to suffer the consequences.

More than adequate roads are at stake. SpringHills will consume about 1 million gallons of potable water a day. Millhopper road, one of five scenic roads in Alachua County will become an arterial collector

CHAIR'S



CORNER

see CORNER, page 7

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

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

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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 Gainesville, 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, Boulder, 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.

news¬es

COUNTYWIDE WATERWAYS MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Alachua County is developing a plan that will, according to the county, “ensure that its natural water resources continue to provide recreation in a safe and sustainable way well into the future.”

The county has contracted with a team from UF to help prepare the plan. The UF team—with expertise in natural resource planning and management, recreational boating and waterways management, law, mediation and communication—has been meeting with the many interest groups that use county waterways, and with local governments and regulatory agencies.

So far the UF research team has held two stakeholder meetings at UF’s Holland Law Center. The first meeting, March 24, focused on access to the waterways in Alachua County, and the second, April 7, focused on the environment (relative to the waterways) in Alachua County.

SSJ Sierra Club Executive Committee members Knox Bagwell and myself participated in both meetings.

The third meeting will also be at the Law Center, April 28, 1-5 p.m. Its focus will be waterway regulations in Alachua County. The last meeting will be May 12, same location, time to be determined, focusing on noise on the waterways.

The official accounting of these meetings should be available on the Water Use Master Plan website, which is linked on our website (www.gatorsierra.org). You can also email Larry Schnell at schnell@ufl.edu.

The March 24 meeting was a little more exciting than the second, with more verbal exchange between the stakeholders. The second meeting, focusing on the environmental issues at hand, saw more agreement among the stakeholders.

The UF research team’s objective is to reach consensus on as many issues as possible. Few issues reached consensus in the first meeting, but many did in the second meeting. There will probably be less consensus reached in the next two meetings, because these are the areas in which the stakeholders disagree the most.

After the team has finished the stakeholder meetings, there will be four public input meetings held in four quadrants of the county, at which the public can express their opinions. The times and places of these meetings have not been announced, but we will need as many people present as possible at these meetings.

This would be an opportunity for general members as well as EXCOM members to participate.

By Whitey Markle

NEW COUNTY COMMITTEE ON ENERGY CONSERVATION

As we work toward the election of state and national leadership with the wisdom to recognize and respond to the challenge presented by global climate change, what can local governments be doing now?

Alachua County has chartered a new citizen advisory committee to develop an exhaustive list of options and ideas that local government can implement to reduce per capita energy consumption in its own operations, in new construction, and in the existing community.

The Energy Conservation Strategies Commission will be comprised of citizens with professional knowledge or expertise in energy conservation, energy efficient construction, renewable energy, or a related field.

Participation is not intended to be limited to members of the advisory committee; the meetings will be open to the public, and all are invited to bring their ideas and suggestions to the table. The Suwannee-St. Johns Group of the Sierra Club has already established its own Global Climate Change committee, which will work closely with the ECSC in an advisory capacity.

The ECSC will sunset when its work is concluded. Application can be made online at <http://boards.alachua.fl.us/app/application.aspx>. Select the “Energy Conservation Strategies Commission.”

The deadline for applications is May 15. For more information, contact Mike Byerly at byerly@alltel.net.

*By Mike Byerly
Alachua County Commissioner*

TRANSFERRING DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS A TRICKY PROPOSITION

(Editors note: Alachua County is currently trying to develop an ordinance regarding a Transfer of Development Rights program. TDR is a way for a property owner to sell his development rights to a developer of a planned development in a more urban area, thereby increasing the densities in urban areas and protecting more rural areas from intense development.)

The Conservation Trust for Florida, Inc., urges the Alachua County Commission to create a true Transfer of Development Rights Program and to recommend denial of a proposed comprehensive plan amendment (Future Land Use Objective 6.2, Policy 6.2.6).

The proposal creates a dysfunctional policy of a planned development with transfer of development rights.

Our concern is that it compromises the goal to curb sprawl and preserve open space in the following ways:

- It permits transferring development rights to areas outside as well as inside the urban service boundary. This is a poor precedent.

- It does not define clear receiving areas. Although listing receiving area criteria, the amendment allows receiving areas to be decided on by a case-by-case basis by the County Commission, which could create loopholes for giving away density by current and future county commissioners. Another poor precedent.

- The amendment, in essence, only creates a sending area from “strategic ecosystems.” Strategic Ecosystems are lands defined by one study and afforded special protection in the Alachua County comprehensive plan. We believe it should include

Report: CO2 Emissions Must Drastically Reduce by 2015

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a summary of current climate science in February, confirming that global temperatures are increasing, and that the chief cause are human actions that release carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels.

beginning of a new phase: cooperation from the US in finding ways to stop the onrushing environmental disaster.

Of the utmost urgency is stabilizing the global temperature before it increases another two degrees. This means dramatically reducing the amount of carbon dioxide we in the US and the rest of the world inject into the atmosphere, and shifting away from carbon-containing fuels to sustainable energy sources.



The summary was officially accepted as a basis for policy decisions by more than 100 countries, including the US and China.

On April 6, the IPCC released a second summary report that outlined the disasters precipitated by the global temperature increase: floods, forest fires, droughts, crop failures, water shortages, health problems, animal extinctions, and the steady erosion of the ecological capital upon which humanity depends.

All these impacts will worsen as the temperature increases.

More than 100 UN-member countries, including China and the US, also adopted this report.

These reports put the finish on arguments over the reality of climate change and human causation, and make possible the

But how much must we reduce emissions, and how long do we have to do it?

Five years ago, NASA climate scientist James Hansen (who the White House repeatedly tried to silence) proposed a strategy based on the effectiveness of natural processes that recycle carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere to the oceans and other natural systems.

These natural systems now remove approximately 40 percent of the carbon dioxide contributed by human activities to the atmosphere each year. Therefore, to stabilize the CO2 levels in the atmosphere and stop temperature increases, we must reduce world emissions by 60 percent to match the quantity that natural systems can handle.

**By
Dian Deevey
and Paula Stahmer**

see CO2, next page

CO₂, from previous page

The more we reduce emissions, the lower both the resulting atmospheric concentration of CO₂ and the resulting global temperature will be.

The faster we act, the more tolerable the resulting temperature.

But if we wait too long, we will lose any chance of controlling the warming processes caused by our use of coal and fossil fuels.

According to Hansen, it is possible to keep the total temperature rise below the 2 degree total (where truly nasty consequences kick in), but this will require very rapid action.

Developed countries must stop increasing emissions, and start reducing them by 2015, and developing countries must do so by 2020.

Increasingly aggressive emission cuts must continue until 2050 for the world to meet the needed 60 percent reduction. If the US is to match per capita emissions to those of the rest of the world, total emission cuts here must reach 80 percent or greater by 2050, and continue downward until the end of the century.

Failure to achieve the necessary 2015 targets would likely scuttle the benefits of any subsequent reductions since the atmosphere would then be so overburdened by CO₂, that the earth's environment could no longer retard the rise in temperature.

Heretofore, action by the federal government has been paralyzed by the Bush Administration's tilt in favor of the coal and oil industries, but state governments are stepping up to the task and showing the way to success.

Twenty-nine states have produced or are developing climate action plans.

Those state plans feature strong goals and targets and emphasize greatly improved energy efficiency in electrical equipment, and household appliances, as well as improved building codes.

Eleven of the twelve state plans have explicit greenhouse gas emission reduction targets that are consistent with the Hansen crash program schedule.

Ten states have adopted California's vehicle tailpipe carbon dioxide reduction regulations, which were approved in a landmark Supreme Court decision that was announced April 2.

In California, emission standards will be introduced in model year 2009 and become increasingly stringent so that by 2016 new car vehicle emissions will drop 30 percent.

Existing state plans contain more than 300 energy and climate policies and mechanisms for reducing emissions. If implemented throughout the country, these would more than meet the targets of the Hansen crash program.

This is good news indeed, because Federal legislation—expected in one or two years—is likely to follow the blueprints already pioneered at the state level.

Of the five legislative proposals at the federal level, only one has any substance: the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act, also known as the Sanders-Boxer Bill.

The act calls for an 80 percent reduction in global warming pollutants by 2050—compared to 1990 levels—and offers the most progressive and comprehensive solution to reduce greenhouse gasses across the nation.

The bill sets out a roadmap of targets, requirements and incentives for the EPA to use to reduce US emissions and to help stabilize global atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases.

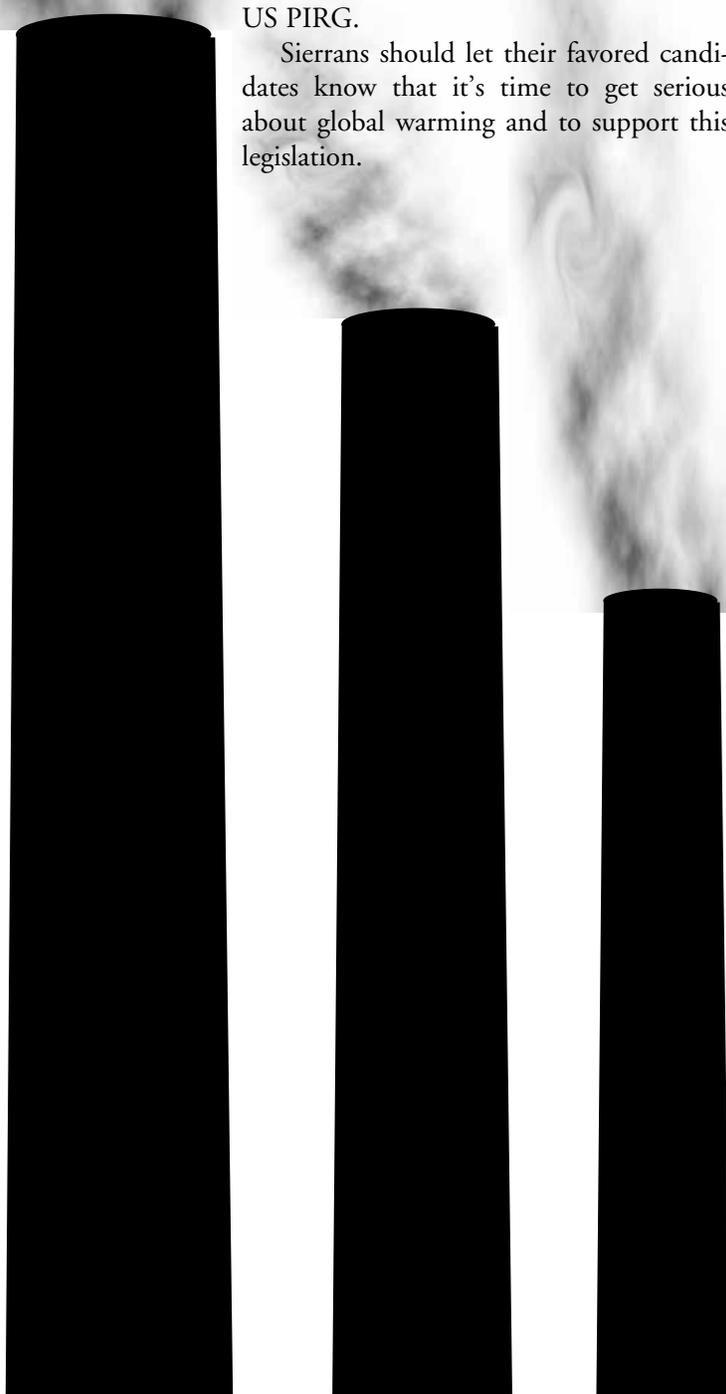
Specifically, the act sets a goal of achieving a reduction in US greenhouse gas emissions that will help stabilize global concentrations below 450 parts per million—a critical level recognized by climate scientists.

To achieve this goal, the United States must reduce its emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and make additional reductions

between 2020 and 2050. The bill includes a combination of economy wide reduction targets, mandatory measures, and incentives for the development and diffusion of cleaner technologies to achieve these goals.

The legislation is supported by such national groups as the Earth Day Network, Earthjustice, Environmental Defense, Environmental & Energy Study Institute, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, League of Conservation Voters, National Audubon Society, National Environmental Trust, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Public Citizen, Sierra Club, Union of Concerned Scientists, and US PIRG.

Sierrans should let their favored candidates know that it's time to get serious about global warming and to support this legislation.



Berry Pickin' And More

BY KAREN GARREN

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH—Ardisia pull at San Felasco Hammock, 9 a.m. Contact Coordinator Emily Basile at Emily.Basile@dep.state.fl.us. Sometimes the war against invasive exotics seems overwhelming but this is a coordinated effort. Persistence stems the tide, and it's a fun social event.

MAY 12—Hike the Long Leaf Flatwoods with leader Pete Colverson, from 9 to 1:30 p.m. Suitable for kids. Easy trails feature mixed flatwoods and sandhill uplands, with spring flowers, birds and wildlife. Creeks and wetlands drain to a large basin swamp that drains to the River Styx and to Orange Lake. The Long Leaf Flatwoods are an Alachua County Forever project and were bought with Alachua County Forever funds.

We will discuss the program and the need for a resolution to continue the program after it expires next year.

Wear sturdy shoes and a broad-brimmed hat, bring water and snacks, insect repellent and sun block. Contact Karen Garren for more (352-371-0008 or ILUVFLA@bellsouth.net).

MAY 19—Jerry Rogers and the Rainbow River Coalition in Dunellen will be sponsoring a cleanup of litter along the Rainbow River. All along the river is private property so the cleanup will be from boat, canoe or kayak using dip nets or snorkeling. Starts at 9 a.m., and finishes by noon. A hot dog lunch will be served at the Rio Vista Park, with prizes awarded. Contact Knox Bagwell (352-468-1790 or knoxberries@msn.com) for more information. The State Park manages the campground to the east, no disposable packaging is allowed on the river.

MAY 19—The First Annual Island Grove Blueberry Festival, 9 a.m., to 4 p.m. Sponsored by the Cross Creek/Island Grove/ Lochloosa Volunteer Fire Dept., chicken/rib dinners, a cow drop (!), arts and crafts, entertainment, prizes and activities for kids are featured. Your SSJ Sierra Club will have a table/booth there.

MAY 26—SSJ Sierra Club Family Reunion at Osceola National Forest. We will be car camping for several nights and host a pot-luck picnic on Saturday. All members, family and friends of the Suwannee/St. John's Sierra Club Group are welcome. Come for the day or the entire weekend. Show off your favorite picnic covered dish or dessert. Bring swim suits and water craft to enjoy this lovely setting in the pine woods along the shores

of Ocean Pond. Miles of hikeable roads. Well-mannered dogs welcome. Bring campfire stories. Contact Karen Garren (352-371-0008 or ILUVFLA@bellsouth.net) for more information and to coordinate the picnic contributions.

Because there will be no June newsletter, notice of June outings are below.

JUNE 9—9-1:30 p.m., we will be in hunter/gatherer mode, looking for fruit. Keep a lookout for old-fields with hip-high Sand Blackberries and for shady creeks and ditches for Swamp Blackberries. I've got several sites staked out, all we need are May rains. Blackberries fiercely defend their fruit but can be reasoned with! Bring

your own containers, wear old clothes, and a wide brimmed hat, bring plenty of water. Contact Karen Garren for more information. (352-371-0008 or ILUVFLA@bellsouth.net)

JUNE 16—Outings Leader Training workshop will be offered from 9 a.m., to about 3:30 p.m. Take this opportunity to learn how you can promote Sierra Club values of a healthy environment and nature-wise citizens. Whether you want to lead, co-lead, or provide committee assistance, your involvement will be greatly appreciated. Contact Karen Garren (352-371-0008 or ILUVFLA@bellsouth.net) for more information.



NEWS & NOTES, from page 3

other agriculture areas as well.

- It creates a situation where current agriculture land could be the receiving area instead of being preserved.

Why create a comprehensive plan agreement when the receiving area is yet to be defined? It is important to create a working program that can protect open space and encourage good urban development and good urban planning, instead of creating a program that enlists applicants before the program design is complete.

Alachua County planning staff needs to complete the hard task of creating a true TDR program with a defined receiving area and to cooperate with the municipalities to create these receiving areas. Cooperating

with the municipalities may be a challenge. There are, however, common visions for Alachua County and its municipalities to support in-fill and urban redevelopment.

Alachua County's population is projected to reach 423,057 by 2060, with a density of 1.73 people an acre. This doubles the current population, but we will still have one of the lower densities in the state. The county should focus on planning for growth by encouraging good urban development, where appropriate. Good planning will help preserve the rural character of our county.

Citizen participation in the Alachua County process is needed to shape a successful TDR program. The Alachua County Commission will hear the PD-TDR amendment on May 22. Please make

attend the meeting and speak to the need for an effective Transfer of Development Rights program. OR write your commissioners at boccc@alachua.fl.us, or P.O. Box 2877, Gainesville, FL, 32602-2877. You can also call them at (352) 264-6900.

Tell them that section C to the proposed amendment Policy 6.2.6 should not encompass more than the residual density described in section D. Also, ask that staff immediately develop a complete TDR program that includes a consistent receiving area that the PD and TDR programs will be subject to (not a case-by-case system). Finally, tell them that the PD-TDR receiving areas should not be approved outside the urban service boundary.

*By Ellen Huntley
Conservation Trust for Florida*

CORNER, from page 2

road serving as an escape valve for traffic on Northwest 39th Avenue.

Millhopper Road transects San Felasco State Preserve, so increased traffic will cause more wildlife road kill. On top of all that, the cross county fracture zone that transects the area provides ample opportunity for contamination of the Floridan aquifer by stormwater and accidental spills of contaminants.

It is time to stop the insanity and insist that new development pay for the impact it produces on the rest of the community. We must ensure that adequate steps are taken to preserve the

natural resources that make Florida a great place for humans and wildlife.

We must demand that the Alachua County Commission set a new precedent and deny the outrageous demands of PREIT. Things must not continue to be business as usual. It is time to recognize that there are more important things than economic wealth, like human welfare and natural wonders.

Our society regards land as a commodity we inherit from our parents, or otherwise acquire, which endows us with the right to benefit from its wealth; in fact we borrow this world from our children and we diminish their lives by our exploitation.

THE TRUTH ABOUT SPRINGHILLS

1. Who is against it and why?

Professionals on record OPPOSING the SpringHills Expansion:

- All Seven Gainesville City Commissioners
- Alachua County Environmental Protection Advisory Committee
- Alachua County Office of Planning and Development

For a balanced perspective read your county manager's blog at www.co.alachua.fl.us/government/blog/

2. How much will the project cost you?

Total Cost of Road improvements = \$120 million*

\$28 million The developer's final offer for road costs is about 23% of the total bill.

\$92 million Your bill for road costs.

*Per North Central Florida Regional Planning Council Report July 2006

3. What will SpringHills do to area traffic?

The developer claims they will improve our failing roads, but projections show that traffic on 39th Ave. will nearly double, climbing from 90% to 174% of capacity. SpringHills will cause traffic on 39th Ave. to exceed daily traffic at the Oaks Mall. Other roads down to and including Newberry Road will also be overloaded beyond capacity.

Don't buy the developer's hype

GET THE FACTS!

Final Public Hearing May 1st - 5 pm - SFCC Gym Bldg V

Ask your County Commissioners to vote NO on SpringHills, email them at: bocc@alachuacounty.us

The Coalition for Responsible Growth, Inc.



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MAY/JUNE 2007 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- MAY 1**— SpringHills public hearing, 5 p.m., SFCC gymnasium.
- MAY 3**—SSJ Sierra Club general meeting, 7:30 p.m. See page 1 for details.
- MAY 12**— Alachua County Waterways Master Plan meeting on “noise,” Holland Law Center. For more, visit www.gatorsierra.org or e-mail schnell@ufl.edu.
- MAY 12**—Long Leaf Flatwoods outing, 9:30 a.m., to 1 p.m. For more, contact Karen Garren, iluvfla@bellsouth.net or 371-0008.
- MAY 19**—Rainbow River outing. For more, contact Knox Bagwell at knoxberries@msn.com or 352-468-1790.
- MAY 19**—First Annual Island Grove Blueberry Festival.
- MAY 22**—Alachua County hearing on TDR program, County Commission room.
- MAY 26**—SSJ Sierra Club Family Reunion at Osceola National Forest. For more, contact Karen Garren at iluvfla@bellsouth.net or 371-0008.
- NO JUNE NEWSLETTER.**
- JUNE 16**—Outings Leader Training workshop, 9 to 3:30 p.m. For more, contact Karen Garren at iluvfla@bellsouth.net or 371-0008.
- JUNE 29**—Folding party for July newsletter. At Scott Camil and Sherry Steiner’s house. Call 375-2563, after 3 p.m., for more information.



Looking for a way to get involved? Don't have a lot of time? Like to write? Like the environment? Then the Sierra newsletter committee is for you. We have a need for enthusiastic writers for our newsletter committee.

Whatever your interest, we can find a place for you. Contact Russ Roy at rroy4@bellsouth.net, or Kathy Cantwell at kacmd@aol.com or 352-395-7441.

Membership

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

Name _____
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 State _____ ZIP _____
 email _____

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club

Mastercard Visa Exp Date ____/____/____

Cardholder Name _____

Card Number _____

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.

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LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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