



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

# Sierra Club

Newsletter

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## Lessons From an Old Toad

BY C. KENNETH DODD, JR.

Amphibian life histories are complex and often poorly understood. In addition, the public seems to have a misperception concerning amphibians, equating them most often with wetland habitats.

To ensure the survival of amphibians, the biological requirements of all life history stages must be understood on a landscape level, and the public should be presented with accurate knowledge to ensure commitment to their survival.

Habitat concepts need to be expanded not only to encompass a multi-dimensional space over sometimes-large landscapes, but also to include the biotic, chemical and physical factors, which affect habitats through time.

Amphibian populations have been adversely impacted to a great extent historically, with a tremendous amount of direct habitat loss, alteration, and fragmentation.

Although many factors, such as emerging infectious disease, toxic chemicals, climate change, and UVB light, adversely

affect amphibians, habitat loss and alteration are probably the most serious causes of current and (immediate) future amphibian population declines and species extinctions.

The biotic integrity of amphibian habitats needs to be ensured. Small, isolated wetlands do matter.

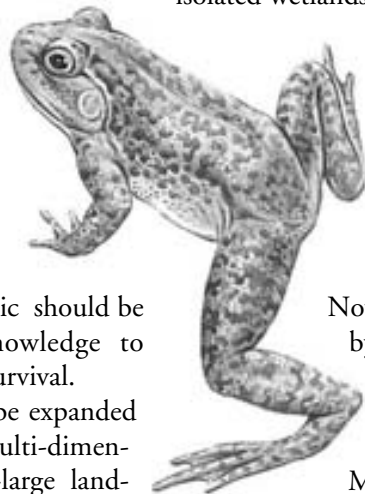
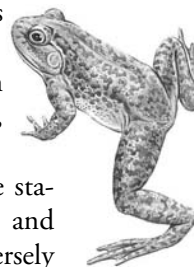
Here, I review the status of amphibians and the things that adversely affect them, and I offer a few observations concerning their long-term conservation.

The program for November 6 will be presented by Dr. C. Kenneth (Ken) Dodd, Jr. Dr. Dodd received his BS degree from U of Kentucky, MS from Arizona St. U., and Ph.D. from Clemson U

(1974). His professional experience includes: Visiting Assistant Professor, Mississippi State University (1975); Staff Herpetologist, Office of Endangered Species, US Fish and Wildlife Service (listed > 40 species, 1976-1984); Research Zoologist, Florida Integrated Science Center, US Geological Survey (1984-2007, officially retired); Courtesy Associate Professor, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida (chair, or have chaired, 7 MS and 3 PHD

committees) (1986-present). Research Associate, Smithsonian Institution. He has published over 190 research papers and is Past President of The Herpetologists' League (2002-2003) and International Society for the Study and Conservation of Amphibians (2003-2005).

Dr. Dodd testified brilliantly for the Sierra Club in the suit against Alachua County over the gutting of the 2000 comprehensive plan. He resides in Gainesville with his wife Marian Griffey and their 9 cats.



### GENERAL MEETING

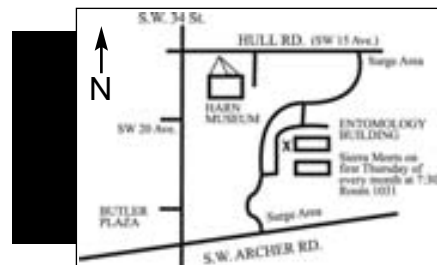
Thursday, Nov. 6, 7:30 PM

Entomology/Nematology Building on the UF campus  
Room 1031

(Just east of the Performing Arts Center. Turn south off Hull Road on to Natural Areas Road.)

### THE AMPHIBIAN CONSERVATION CRISIS

C. KENNETH DODD  
RESEARCH BIOLOGIST, RETIRED



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# Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

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Scott Camil Date: 29 Sept 08

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PS Form 3526, September 2007 (Page 2 of 3)

## Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

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

## Suwannee-St. Johns Group Chairs & Executive Committee

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Education Co-Chair	Jay Peacock	337-0646	peacobj@shands.ufl.edu
Education Co-Chair	Whitey Markle	595-3012	whmarkle@gmail.com
Program Chair	Dwight Adams	378-5129	adams@phys.ufl.edu
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Co-Legislative Liason	Steve Williams	386-397-2945	old-time-florida@earthlink.net
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## FOLDING PARTY

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

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## University of Florida Student Health Care Center



## SOLO WILDERNESS FIRST RESPONDER

This course is designed for outdoor trip leaders or frequent outdoorsmen. It is a comprehensive, hands-on course that lasts approximately 72-80 hours over 7-10 days. It teaches how to diagnose and treat outdoor emergencies. There are skills tests throughout the course and a written exam at the end. For more course information go to [soloschools.com](http://soloschools.com) and check out the UF website for course schedules. The date of this course is December 6th-14th. This course **can** be used for continuing education credits. <http://shcc.ufl.edu/cpr>

(352) 392-1161 ext 4283

## SOLO Wilderness First Aid

This is SOLO's most popular course. It focuses on treating various injuries, survival skills and outdoor medical emergencies. This class is 16 hours over the course of 2 days. Certification in this course lasts 2 years. The date of this years class is November 8th and 9th. Please check the SOLO site for course outline and give us a call to register.



# Vote Early

BY ROB BRINKMAN

Have you voted yet? There is no need to wait until Tuesday November 4th. There is still time to vote absentee and early voting has already begun.

Contact your County Supervisor of Elections for details and locations. A phenomenal turnout is expected so voting early is a great way to avoid long lines on Election Day.

While you are in the voting mood I urge all SSJ members to turn to the back page of this newsletter and vote for your choices for excom this year. Frankly an embarrassingly small number of members vote in excom elections; so go ahead and fill out the ballot, fold it, and mail it in; don't forget a postage stamp.

Look for our general election candidate and issue endorsements elsewhere in the newsletter. Voting is one of the most important, yet simple and free things we can all do to help protect the environment.

## ENERGY ISSUES

While the Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC) has allowed Progress Energy and Florida Power and Light to raise rates precipitously to fund new nuclear power plant projects, there is an unwillingness to fund renewable energy technologies to a similar level. Nuclear

power is the most expensive way to address climate change through CO2 reduction. It is dangerous and leaves toxic radioactive waste for future generations to deal with.

While Governor Crist and his Climate Action Team urged adoption of a renewable portfolio standard (RPS) of 20% by 2020, requiring utilities to generate 20% of electricity supply from renewable sources by that year, the FPSC wants to draw out the due date to 2041. The Sierra Club supports a 2% solution ( a 2% annual reduction on CO2 and other greenhouse gases {GHG}).

The PSC date of 2041 misses that mark and is far short of where we need to be going.

One way to help meet the 20% by 2020 goal are feed in tariffs (FIT). GRU recently proposed a FIT of 26 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) guaranteed for the next 20 years. Simply put, GRU proposes to buy all the solar energy a customer can generate for

profit selling the electricity to GRU. It is estimated that this would result in a million watts (MW) of solar being installed every year in the Gainesville area.

This will create jobs and draw investment to the area. Currently the proposed FIT would be the highest in the country and GRU is one of only a few utilities adopting this strategy.

Germany has a similar policy and as a result has installed over five times the amount of solar as the US installed in 2007. The amount of energy from the sun available in Germany is comparable to Juneau Alaska and the population is only about a quarter of that in the US.

I am hopeful that a FIT could produce as much as 4 MW of solar power per year once people realize what a safe secure investment this would be, a valuable commodity in these troubled financial times.

## TRANSPORTATION

Meanwhile Alachua County is providing its own leadership in the area of energy and transportation. Recently, the focus of how to plan to meet future transportation needs in Alachua County was shifted from a plan that relied mainly on new road segments and capacity improvements to exist-

## CHAIR'S



## CORNER

“ Voting is one of the most important, yet simple and free things we can all do to help protect the environment. ”

a price which is currently more than twice the retail rate for electricity locally.

This price was calculated to allow investors to install solar systems and make a

ing roads, to a plan focused on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).

The defining characteristic of BRT is dedicated travel lanes with limited stops at

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strategically located activity centers. A loading platform is used, much like in commuter rail systems, to speed passenger loading and unloading. There is frequent service as well, on the order of 10 minutes between buses.

The local Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization is the only one in Florida to require that future transportation plans consider the effects of peak oil on transportation needs. Future BRT systems are precisely the kind of thinking needed to address the challenges of peak oil. Recently Sierra Club Florida adopted as a conservation priority a shift of transportation funding from roads to transit systems.

## WATER ISSUES

I recently attended a hearing on a special use permit for a water bottling plant in Gilchrist County. At that meeting an historic offer was made by the applicant... to pay Gilchrist County one tenth of a cent per gallon pumped for bottling.

Though the amount is very low, it is significant in that in this part of the country no one pays for the right to use water. In the Western US, where water has always been a scarce commodity, water rights have long been bought and sold. One elderly gentleman gave compelling testimony that recently the Santa Fe River was so low Dog Fennel was growing in the middle of the River just below the US 441 bridge in High Springs, something that in his entire life he had never seen before.

The Gilchrist County Commission was not persuaded by the offer and denied the permit by a 4-1 vote; they should be commended for protecting their constituent's quality of life. Congratulations to the folks at Our Santa Fe, which did a superb job of organizing well over a hundred people to attend the permit hearing.

I am pleased to report that there is a new spirit of cooperation and collegiality in the Sierra Club Florida. At the recent retreat mentioned previously everyone's views on

the issues were welcomed and staff and volunteers sat together and amicably discussed our future conservation priorities.

This involved tough choices due to both limited resources and one of our most precious commodities, our limited time. When people show respect to others by really listening to their perspective and working to remain open to others ideas and opinion it is much easier to build broad support for the solutions we need.

When anyone is confronted by anger from others, our natural human reaction is to become defensive and more entrenched in our views. This does nothing to constructively confront the issues we face. In an atmosphere of mutual respect it has been my experience that most people want to work together, and folks we need all the help we can get to preserve a future for generations to come. So try and be nicer to people, especially those you disagree with it. I believe if nothing else you will feel better, you might even smile more.

## ENDORSEMENTS

The United States has several wars going, an economy in recession, and a stock market in collapse, and while it is a bit hackneyed to claim that "this election is much more important," this one has a very good claim.

We all need to vote this time. To do a good job voting we should all check out the ballot in our precinct before heading to our polling place.

Of course most of us are interested in the Presidential race, but there are a number of other races on our ballots and a number of proposed amendments to our Florida Constitution. We all need to study these carefully before voting.

If you haven't yet seen a copy of your specific ballot, your Supervisor of Elections Website is a good place to look. In Alachua County, for example, this is at <http://elections.alachua.fl.us>.

And for Marion County, see <http://www.votemarion.com>.

The Sierra Club has made some endorsements for candidates based on their environmental positions. Sierra has endorsed the following Federal House candidates whose districts overlap the Suwannee St Johns Group's area:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/politics/endorsements/index.asp>

Sierra Florida has also endorsed voting **yes on Constitutional Amendment 4** (property tax exemption for perpetually conserved lands).

Locally, Suwannee St. Johns has endorsed **Mike Byerly** for Alachua County Commission, District 1.

SSJ has also endorsed the "**Wild Spaces and Public Places**" initiative for a half cent sales tax, and the Alachua County Charter Amendment on "Protection of County Owned Lands."

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# VOTE • NOV. 4 • VOTE

# 2008 Sierra Club ExCom Nominees

## **Knox Bagwell**

knoxberries@msn.com

Being a berry farmer who sprays sunshine and rain only on everything grown, I'm well aware of the increasingly unsustainable actions of society. By bringing attention and supporting local environmental issues in all our thirteen counties and with my continued involvement in the Sierra Outings Program, I hope to engage a much larger number of members to actively participate. North Central Florida faces increasing development pressures, but with educated intervention, we can work together for wise, sustainable growth. Being a lifetime member of Sierra, I try to lead by example, open to new ideas and stay dedicated to our goals.

## **Brack Barker**

brack154@msn.com

Originally from Melbourne and now lives in Williston. His education includes: A.S. in Zookeeping (SFCC); and a B.A. degree Anthropology (U.F.). Also Florida Master Naturalist Program certificates. He worked 8.5 years for the DEP/Florida Park Service as a park ranger and law enforcement officer. Currently, Brack owns and operates Wild Florida Adventures and leads kayak trips and hikes through the wilds of North Central Florida. He is a Levy county board member on the Pure Water Wilderness tourism board. Other interests include the Tarmac Mine permit process for Levy County. Thank you for your consideration.

## **Rob Brinkman**

robbrinkman@cox.net

When I was first elected to excom one major issue confronting SSJ was multiple coal power plants; today progress is being made toward a renewable energy transition. Mass Transit is suddenly an idea whose time has come and water quality and supply issues are finally on many peoples mind these days. In this era of change the Sierra Club Florida is growing stronger. There is still the potential for a coal plant in Palatka

and nukes in Levy County, not to mention a huge aggregate mine. I need and appreciate your continued support to work on these and other issues.

## **Scott Camil**

s.camil@att.net

A Vietnam Veteran who has been an activist against war, the death penalty and injustice for over 30 years. Worked to protect a women's right to choose, Campaign Finance Reform, Citizens Police Review Board, The Clean Air Ordinance, Charter Amendment 1, and Alachua County Forever. As a strong advocate for the environment I've helped elect pro-environmental candidates. As a member of Excom for the last 6 years, I have served as folding party coordinator as well as on the nominating, newsletter, events, and political committees. Also a member of Veterans for Peace and a counselor for the G.I. Rights Hotline.

## **Kathy Cantwell**

Kacmd@aol.com

I have 12 years of volunteer experience in Sierra Club. I have been group chair, conservation chair, newsletter editor, program chair, public lands chair, Flexcomm representative and I served as administrative chair for the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club for 2 years. I am currently on the chapter conservation advisory team. My passion is for land conservation but I also am concerned about water and air pollution and in the plight of our springs. I believe global warming is the greatest challenge the human race faces and increasing our nations awareness of the problem our greatest task.

## **Louis Clark**

sierraclubweb@cox.net

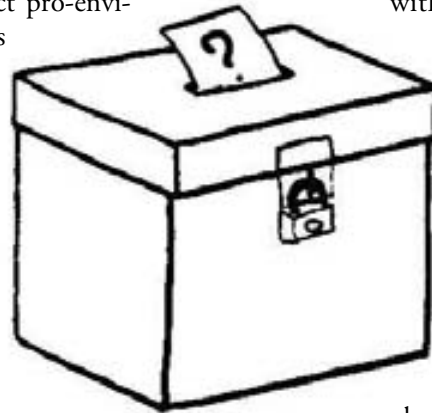
I have been a member of the Sierra

Club since 1989 and webmaster for the Suwannee St. Johns Group (see GatorSierra.org) for 8 years. I am a sole proprietor of a small business in Gainesville. My interests include hiking, camping, wildlife identification. I'd like to make the website a better resource of information on local and regional outdoor activities, hikes, ecology, as well as political issues.

## **Maryvonne Devensky**

marydeven@bellsouth.net

I recently moved to Gainesville from Palm Beach County where I was involved with the Loxahatchee Group. I joined the Sierra Club to go on outings in 1997, then I was asked to help with the group Hotline, and I became a member of their Excom. In the last 10 years, I became an outing leader, an Education chair, and was Group chair for a year. As someone who loves nature and wants to preserve natural areas, I would like to be part of your group Excom and continue the work of Sierra Club.



## **Coral McDonald**

globalsoul@yahoo.com

Having a family filled with independent farmers, I inherited a deep appreciation for the earth. I have worked in landscaping all over the world and have a particular passion for edible landscaping and creating inviting outdoor living spaces. During my years of working and travelling in 30 countries on five continents I have witnessed both the sustainable and the destructive practices that various cultures employ. As part of the Gainesville community for the last twenty years, I have tried to apply the best of what my travels have taught me to create a more balanced approach to agriculture at home.

# SUWANNEE ST. JOHNS GROUP SIERRA CLUB ELECTION FOR 2009 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Each year, the Suwannee-St. Johns Group Sierra Club holds elections for Executive Committee (ExCom) members. The ExCom makes decisions concerning the Group's policy and direction and it represents the Group on a local level. We have a total of 15 ExCom officers serving staggered 2-year terms. This year we will be electing 7 officers. We do not elect members for particular positions, only as members at-large. Then the new executive committee appoints its members to the various positions (eg Chair, Conservation Chair, Secretary, etc).

**Voting Instructions:** Indicate your choices by checking the line in front of the names of the candidates. Each member may cast one ballot, voting for no more than seven (7) persons. Joint memberships (as indicated by a "J" after the 3305 on the top line of your address label on the back of this page) are entitled to 2 votes. The second column on the ballot is provided for this. Do not vote twice if you do not have a joint membership.

**Mailing Instructions:** Remove this page from the newsletter and fold the ballot so that your membership number appears on the outside. Place the ballot in an envelope and mail to: Sierra Club Election Committee, C/O Roberta Gastmeyer, 4118 NW 69th St, Gainesville FL 32606.

**Ballots must be received** by December 4th, 2008. Please be sure to mail your ballot in time to allow delivery by that date. If you have any questions about this procedure, contact Roberta Gastmeyer at 352-336-2404 or [rgastmeyer@bellsouth.net](mailto:rgastmeyer@bellsouth.net).

*To protect your confidentiality, after confirming your membership, election committee members will remove the label portion before opening the rest of the ballot*

**Ballots will be counted** on December 7th at 6:00pm at Roberta Gastmeyer's house at 4118 NW 69th St, Gainesville. This meeting is open to all Sierra Club members. You may call Roberta at 336-2404 for directions.

Use this column for single memberships or the 1<sup>st</sup> voter in joint membership households.

**\*Vote for up to, but no more than, 7 candidates\***

<input type="checkbox"/> Knox Bagwell	<input type="checkbox"/> Brack Barker
<input type="checkbox"/> Rob Brinkman	<input type="checkbox"/> Louis Clark
<input type="checkbox"/> Scott Camil	<input type="checkbox"/> Kathy Cantwell
<input type="checkbox"/> Maryvonne Devensky	<input type="checkbox"/> Coral McDonald

Use this column for the 2<sup>nd</sup> voter in joint membership households.

**\*Vote for up to, but no more than, 7 candidates\***

<input type="checkbox"/> Knox Bagwell	<input type="checkbox"/> Brack Barker
<input type="checkbox"/> Rob Brinkman	<input type="checkbox"/> Louis Clark
<input type="checkbox"/> Scott Camil	<input type="checkbox"/> Kathy Cantwell
<input type="checkbox"/> Maryvonne Devensky	<input type="checkbox"/> Coral McDonald

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# NOVEMBER 2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**NOV. 4**—LAST DAY TO VOTE

**NOV. 6**—SSJ Sierra Club Group general meeting, in the Entomology/Nematology Building on the UF campus (see page 1 for details).

**NOV. 8-9**—Wilderness First Responder Course on UF campus

**NOV. 13**—SSJ Sierra Club Executive Committee meeting, 7 p.m., at the Santa Fe Community College Downtown Gainesville campus. Board meeting room.

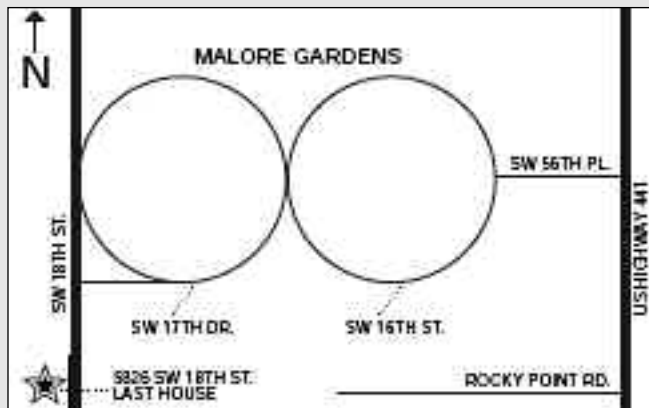
**NOV. 28**—Folding Party for the November newsletter, 7 p.m., at Gary and Paula Wheeler's house. Call 377-0684 for directions, and see map below.

**DEC. 4**—Ballots for excomm must be received.

# FOLDING PARTY MOVED

The folding party for the December newsletter has moved this month to the home of Gary and Paula Wheeler.

They live at 5826 SW 18th St. Their phone number is 377-0684.



## Membership

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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 email \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club  
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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.

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
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
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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