



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

Published monthly except June and August from Gainesville, Florida
VOLUME 43 • NUMBER 10 • DECEMBER 2013

Photography Panel and Holiday Social

BY SSJ SIERRA CLUB

Our general meeting for December will offer a social hour and photography panel entitled “Connecting People to Nature through Images.” In an effort to preserve Florida’s raw splendor and habitats, photographers Leigh Wax, Sean Dowie and Kim Davidson will feature Florida’s natural beauty and heritage through stories and landscapes.

Our members and guests will have an opportunity to support local wildlife photographers and purchase the perfect gift for the season. Refreshments will be served. Please bring cash or checks for purchasing items. Our 2014 Sierra Club wall calendars and desk calendars will be available for purchase.

Sean Dowie

For over 30 years, Dowie has photographed Florida’s well known and not so well known places. Originally from the Midwest, Dowie grew up in South Florida, mainly in the Keys, and from that time on he developed a need for nature and inherently saw the beauty & purpose within it. While attending the Art Institute of Ft. Lauderdale for graphic design, he became

intrigued with photography. The detailed textures, clarity and subtle changes of light from scene to scene and the wonderful palette of color that one can record with a camera enabled him to show Florida in all its true glory. His credits include Natures Best, Travel & Leisure, Audubon, Coastal Living, Travel Florida highways, Florida living and Outdoor Photographer to name but a few. Sean’s work is exhibited in galleries, museums and cooperate and private collections across the country. www.smdphotography.com

Leigh Wax

Leigh Wax is a nature and wildlife photographer residing in the small village of Windsor, Florida, near Gainesville. His interest in capturing the natural beauty and wonder of the area was inspired by the writings of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings whose original homestead in the near-by town of Cross Creek, remains much as she left it. When relocating to Florida, Marjorie was so captivated by the splendor of her new surroundings, that she studied the features, habits, and sounds of the wild creatures, the shapes, colors and hues of the seasonal wild flowers. With her gift of expression, she “painted” word pictures of them that were woven throughout her many tales of the area. As an interpretative volunteer for the Florida Park Service, Leigh makes fre-

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, December 5, 7:30p.m.

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville
4225 NW 34th Street, Gainesville

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE THROUGH IMAGES

SEAN DOWIE, LEIGH WAX, &
KIM DAVIDSON

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quent visits with camera in hand to surrounding area parks and captures images of places and things in time that reflect the spirit of Marjorie’s Cross Creek experience. www.leighwax.com

Dr. Kim Davidson

Always with a passion for the outdoors, Kim picked up her first camera in grade school and with that her fascination with photography began. Through her college years she continued to shoot and process film, but then took a long hiatus during her sojourn into medicine. It was nearly 30 years later when Dr. Davidson was able to once again return to photography. Though she never stopped exploring the natural world around us, she finally had time to delve into the very different realm of digital photography and the intricacies of post-processing and picked up a digital camera for the first time in 2011. Kim makes frequent visits to Florida’s gems such as Paynes Prairie, La Chua Trail, and San Felasco. <http://kimdavidsonphotography.blogspot.com>

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Chair's Corner: Water Issues Everywhere

BY DAVE WILSON

Following the pattern of recent years, the pace of environmental activities has accelerated during this Fall season. The past month has been a frantic hopscotch between outings, BMAP meetings, two water summits, county commission meetings, and cleanups. While it all sounds complicated, water issues form a fundamental theme.

In the SSJ field trip to the Lochloosa Watershed on Oct. 19, we learned first-hand about the impact of Plum Creek's Envision Alachua project on the quality and quantity of water which flows into Lake Lochloosa. The bottom line: While Lake Lochloosa was declared an Outstanding Florida Water in 1987, it was declared impaired by the EPA in 2005. Since Lochloosa Creek is the main tributary of the Lake and splits Envision's proposed high-tech corridor along Hawthorne Road (which includes 10,000 new homes, a biotech/agriculture research park, and a high-end manufacturing facility), it takes little imagination to see that a bad situation could deteriorate further. In fact, the data presented at the 5-year review meeting of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Orange Creek Basin BMAP (Ba-

sin Action Mapping Plan) on Nov. 21 indicated that the phosphorous and nitrate problem in Lake Lochloosa is not only bad, but getting worse. Since this lake is part of the Silver River Watershed, this project will also impact Silver Springs, the Ocklawaha, and the St. Johns River. With a projected 3 persons per home, we are talking about a small popup city of 30,000 people being plopped into an area of the county predominated by poorly drained pine flatwoods. Unlike areas with karst topography (i.e. sandy soil), they will have to ditch, drain, and divert these wetlands. To push this agenda, they have already announced workshops on Dec. 2 and Dec. 7 to galvanize public opinion to accept changes to the Alachua County Comprehensive plan.

In addition to adding nitrates to the water, their project will consume vast quantities of water. If each resident consumes only 50 gallons of water/day (their stated goal), simple math indicates that at best they will still require 1.5 million gallons/day for the residential portion of the project. A realistic guestimate for the entire project would be in the range of 3-7 million gallons per day. Note that these numbers are comparable to the Adena Springs Ranch consumptive use

request for 5.2 million gallons per day. The requests of this duopoly have the potential to seriously impact the Ocklawaha, Silver, and St. Johns rivers.

In an effort to forestall these events, Whitey Markle and I made these points at a recent Alachua County Commission meeting. In related developments, Bob Knight organized a roundtable discussion at Prairie Creek Lodge to bring 26 local environmental groups together so they can combine their efforts. Similarly, Cris Costello organized a Sierra water summit in Orlando, where over 100 environmental groups were represented. If you want to experience polluted water, join Fritz Olson on one of her local cleanups. Earlier this month, about 10 local activists got their hands dirty extracting trash out of Rosewater Creek. It was nasty.

On the bright side, Bob Knight gave an excellent talk on our springs at our regular SSJ meeting on Nov. 7, and Commissioner Hutcheson led a group of FROGS on a tour of the Hogtown Creek Headwaters to help educate us on possible restorations scenarios for Glen Springs.

Accounts of all these events can be found at the SSJ Sierra website. Check it out at ssjsierra.org. It's all about water.

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

National: www.sierraclub.org

Local: <http://ssjsierra.org>

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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, PO Box 141693, Gainesville, 32614-1693. 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 SSJ SC Newsletter, P.O. Box 13951, Gainesville, FL 32604, or to ssjsierra.membership@gmail.com. Send both your old and new addresses.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE SUWANNEE-ST. JOHNS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB TO: P.O. BOX 13951, GAINESVILLE, FL 32604.

Money for research and enforcement, or money for growth?

BY WHITEY MARKLE, CONSERVATION CHAIR

I've been pondering lately on the State government's management of environmental issues. It seems that many times we get to a point in discussions with State agency representatives that convince us the agencies are handcuffed to take the action we expect them to take. Many well-intended state (and local government) employees really do see our concerns and wish they could take action for us, but they are under orders to follow certain policies or they are on track to provide the service(s) we need and simply don't have enough personnel or apparatus to cover all the needs.

When looking at the statewide picture politically, one can readily conclude what the reasons are for the funding situations throughout the agencies. Although the good Governor inherited the agencies and their responsibility for our natural resources management, he has simply cut them to the bone while bragging nationally about our state's economy. There is no doubt that luring more and more people (and the subsequent industry and commerce that follows them) to Florida with corporate welfare

and low taxes appears to "stimulate" economic growth, but we know that in the long run, growth causes even more economic and environmental problems.

The National Sierra Club, in a paper entitled *Official Policy on Population, 2013*, said, "The Sierra Club envisions a world where every person has a good quality of life... We also envision a world where human beings live in harmony with nature and protect it.

"Since 1900 the human population has grown from 1.7 billion people to over 7 billion. That rapid growth not only threatens humanity's ability to achieve what we envision, but also threatens the natural environment upon which we all depend for survival. The larger the population, the greater the economic output must be to raise individual living standards to acceptable levels. *Industrialization and modernization have brought great economic strides, but also pollution of air, water and land, loss of wilderness, wildlife, and biodiversity, and changes in global climate.*"

This national Sierra Club policy says it in a nutshell: If we apply this national policy here on our local level, it is obvious that the last thing we need in North Central Florida is more people. We live in an area that is rich in natural resources; lots of woods and lots of water. Unfortunately, we not only are witnessing normal population growth from reproduction, but we are also witnessing a massive migration from North and South into Central Florida.

The Scott-supported decision by the Legislature in 2011 to dismantle the Department of Community Affairs and repeal other environmental protection laws is a fine example of the Governor's policy regarding our environment. Environmental protection simply ain't in his vocabulary. He's not workable environmentally.

But fortunately, there are 2 candidates already running for Governor on the Democrat side. One, **ex-Governor Charlie Crist**, holds a commanding lead in the polls over **Nan Rich**, a State Senator from Miami who is having trouble gaining traction, yet she has visited North Central Florida this week, seeking to establish herself as an environmentally oriented candidate.

Governor Crist often took populist positions that Democrats and independents favored while serving his 2 terms as Governor, so my guess would be he is ready to hear from us on the environmental issues.

The best thing you can do as member of the Sierra Club right now is write an email to both candidates (Nan Rich and Charlie Crist) and tell them you would like them to support the Sierra Club on Natural Resources and Growth Management issues here in North Central Florida, specifically, springs and rivers as well as overdevelopment (Plum Creek) and overpumping (Adena Springs Ranch). You can contact Charlie Crist at ccrist@forthpeople.com. You can contact Nan Rich at nanrich2014.com.



Members of SSJ Sierra Club and Silver Springs Alliance pose with Democratic candidate for Florida governor Nan Rich at Silver Springs in November. Photo by Dave Wilson.

Inner City Outings: Connecting Children with Nature

BY MARYVONNE DEVENSKY

This month the SSJ-ICO participated in the 4th Annual Green Generation Environmental Youth Summit, held on November 16, at the GRU new facility on Main Street in Gainesville. About eighty young people from various youth groups, Cultural Arts Coalition, Gainesville Job Corps and UF groups participated in the event. They came to become more informed on “Why they should get involved with the environment” and “How they can be involved.”

After an introduction given by Robert “Hutch” Hutchinson, Alachua County Commissioner, they heard Cara Keller, keynote speaker. Cara, a UF Civil Engineering Student who is doing her internship at the GRU Water/Wastewater facility, became involved with water issues in high school during a trip to Costa Rica where she viewed and smelled the raw sewage that was accumulating near the village where her group stayed, and contaminating the water of the villagers. That experience later influenced her to choose the job she is interning with.

Among the students who were in the panels of presenters, two students from the UF IDEAS (Intellectual Decisions on Environmental Awareness Solutions), Alex Shoelson and Kay Young, as

well as Jonathan DeJesus, from Gainesville Job Corps, shared why they think it is important to be aware of all the things that we do every day that have an impact on the environment: recycling plastic bottles, riding a bike, etc. For them, like for all of us, being and staying conscious of how we can minimize our carbon imprint is a daily process.

After listening to the panelists, the group had lunch, prepared by the Culinary Program of the Gainesville Job Corps. Then the students went around the room where they spoke to various Environmental groups: Florida Organic Growers, Gainesville Loves Mountains, Florida Trail Association, Sierra Club SSJ, etc.

The last part of the Summit was for the students to decide what project they could start and complete before the end of February 2014.

So, how does this tie up with the ICO? Well some of the students signed up to become volunteers with the ICO program, and some of the students signed up to go on a hike in Paynes Prairie in January. People are getting involved, and connections are being made.

If you'd like to get involved with ICO or would like more information, please contact me at maryvonne.deven@gmail.com.

Here are some upcoming outings:

- December 7, Dudley Farm Cane Day Festival
- January 11, Paynes Prairie Hike
- January 25, Air Potato Round-Up

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Springs Eternal Project

John Moran and Lesley Gamble will present a program on their Springs Eternal Project for SSJ Sierra Club on Jan. 9. The Springs Eternal Project is an evolving series of creative partnerships initiated by Gamble and Moran in collaboration with a diverse community of springs scientists, researchers, artists and advocates. It is a celebration of the springs we were given, a meditation on the springs we could lose, and an invitation to the people of Florida to fall in love with our springs all over again.

More info at springseternalproject.org.

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Modernize Florida's Solid Waste Legislation

BY DWIGHT ADAMS

If Florida could achieve the 75% recycling goal, about 200,000 new jobs would be created and enough energy saved to power 100,000 homes. The measures suggested are revenue neutral and in the long run will save Floridians money.

Florida's current recycling legislation was enacted in 1988 through efforts of Sen. George Kirkpatrick and Rep. Sidney Martin. That legislation mandated recycling a majority of four materials and marked Florida as progressive in recycling. The rate reached about 25-30% in a few years where it was stuck until recent changes some of which have actually been detrimental to recycling.

In 2010, Sen. Lee Constantine pushed adopting a goal of 75% recycling by 2020. Instead of any actions that would actually increase real recycling, counting burning of waste (so called waste-to-energy, WTE) as recycling was included. This has resulted in counties that are burning waste having a calculated recycling rate of over 100%, a mathematical impossibility. In one county,

instead of pursuing additional recycling, a large incinerator is being constructed.

In contrast, some states, notably California and Washington, have reached recycling rates of well over 50% with WTE specifically not counting toward recycling. For example, Los Angeles has 76% recycling and San Francisco is well on its way to achieving zero waste. Nantucket, MA recycles 90%.

Florida's waste law needs a number of changes to bring it into the 21st century:

1. Repeal the provision of counting WTE as recycling.

2. Single-use plastic bags.

Many areas have solved this problem by placing a tax or user fee on the bags. FL Department of Environmental Regulation suggested this prior to 2010 legislation. However, this recommendation was quickly withdrawn when industry representatives lobbied then Gov. Charlie Crist. The 2010 DEP proposal for handling single use plastic bags should be pursued in the 2014 session. A provision that forbids local governments from enacting their own regulations of bags should be repealed.

3. Styrofoam containers.

Styrofoam last essentially forever in landfills. Provisions to limit its use are needed.

4. Organic wastes.

Organics decay in the anaerobic conditions in landfills to produce methane, a greenhouse gas about 20 times a detrimental as CO₂. Capture of methane for fuel is preferable to letting it escape into the atmosphere. However, landfill methane capture systems do not remove 100% of the meth-

ane, allowing unacceptable amounts to escape into the atmosphere. Excluding organic materials from the landfill and processing them in anaerobic digesters or composting should be required.

5. Beverage container deposit law (BCDL).

Florida needs to join the group of 10 states that require a deposit on beverage containers to assure that they are kept out of the environment. Florida recycles less than 20% of aluminum cans that are worth 2 cents each! A major glass manufacturer such as Owen-Illinois would locate a glass manufacturing plant in Florida if BCDL were enacted.

6. Extended producer responsibility (EPR).

Through EPR, some states require producers to share the responsibility for collecting their waste products for return to manufacturer for reuse. Many items should be subject to EPR, including items such drugs, electronics, batteries and mercury containing devices.

7. Local Governments serving over 25,000 people should be required to provide curbside collection of recyclables.

Currently many large cities in Florida do not do so. Mandatory participation in recycling by individuals and businesses is needed with collection of all items recycled in that county.

What you should do to help: Contact your representatives and senator and ask them to consider these suggestions and to sponsor legislation to implement them.

2014 Sierra Club Calendars



Buy from us and support local conservation work!

To order, call Roberta Gastmeyer at 352-494-9662, or email rgastmeyer@bellsouth.net.

End-of-the-Year Holiday Folding Party

December 26, 7pm

Joanne and David Auth's house
425 NE 7th St (corner of NE 5th Ave and 7th St)

Contact Joanne or David at 352-371-1991

Rosewood Creek Cleanup, Nov. 2

Fritzi Olsen organized 10 volunteers to help clean up Rosewood Creek. This stream is near Spring Hill Pond behind the Kelly Power Station in South East Gainesville. The unusually nasty assortment of trash included not only the usual bottles, cans, tires, and plastic bags, but even a toilet. While the creek is a mucky mess, it is an important tributary to Sweet-water Branch which flows into Paynes Prairie. While the clean-up efforts have managed to keep the Suwannee and other major waterways quite clean, this river could have even used a second day of cleanup. All-in-all we gathered 687 pounds of trash. *by Dave Wilson*



Bike Outing, Jan. 11

Kate Lee is once again leading a terrific 22-mile ride on Micanopy's really back roads. The ride is 22 miles long and presents only a couple of hills. There's a surprise midway: a farm with zebra, oryx and who knows what else. It's a wonderful easy and scenic ride.

Helmets are required: no helmet, no ride. Maps will be provided. Park and meet at the Micanopy library/town hall. Bring water and a snack, and your camera for this one.

Date: Saturday January 11, 2014

Time: 9:00AM

Contact Person: Kate Lee at 1-352-378-2344

Difficulty level: Easy



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University of Florida and Duke Energy

An Unsustainable Relationship

BY GAINESVILLE LOVES MOUNTAINS

Do you know who meets the University of Florida's energy needs? Gainesville Regional Utilities? Progress Energy? Duke Energy?

It is not Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), and Progress Energy would have been the correct answer before a year ago. In July 2012, Progress Energy merged with competitor, Duke Energy, forming the largest energy company in the United States. Duke Energy now provides electricity to a large portion of north Florida as well as western North Carolina, South Carolina, and parts of Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

Duke Energy operates a natural gas-powered turbine power plant that generates 42 megawatts of electricity near the Health Sciences part of the University of Florida (UF) campus in Gainesville. Opening in 1994, the plant generates electricity and has a generator that produced steam for heating. UF pays Duke Energy about \$42 million for electricity and \$4 million for steam heating annually.

The contract between UF and Duke Energy expires in December 2014. GRU and several other energy companies are interested in becoming UF's energy provider if this deal expires and is not renewed with Duke Energy. UF faces a huge opportunity to re-

negotiate with Duke or other service providers for a clean energy future. The ramifications of this decision will be felt for many years to come. We hope that UF will choose wisely and are asking for an open, inclusive process that keeps UF's sustainability goals at the forefront as it selects its future energy provider.

There are significant opportunities for Duke or other service providers to meet UF's goal of clean energy in an economical manner. UF's current relationship with Duke not only harms the planet; it also hurts our economy and wastes taxpayer dollars. Under its current arrangement, much of the tens of millions of dollars that UF spends on energy annually is sucked out of our state's economy to pay for non-local fuel sources and to pad the pockets of Duke/Progress shareholders. Conversely, investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency would not only strengthen our local economy, but would reduce UF's carbon footprint and the harm that the University's energy choices inflict upon other communities."

Why is this relationship with Duke Energy unsustainable?

In comparison to other large utility companies, Duke Energy's strategies for the future reduce emissions and update their power stations at a much slower rate (e.g., AEP). Duke Energy's current 20 year plan calls for an increase in renewable energy generation from 0.2 (2013) to 3 percent in 2032 while maintaining 77 percent of its coal capacity, expanding nuclear capacity and doubling natural gas capacity. Greenpeace analyses demonstrate that if Duke Energy shows a strong commitment to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, it could save its Carolina customers up to 108 billion dollars. Instead, Duke Energy has requested increases in residential rates of over 10 percent after recently increasing energy rates by 7.2 percent.

A report by the NAACP ranking and grading the effects of coal-fired power plants on low-income and people of color communities gave Duke Energy a failing grade for environmental justice performance. This grade comes from a study of 378 plants based on their SO₂ and NO_x emissions and a failing grade indicates that Duke Energy operates plants that have a "considerable and disproportionate impact" on low-income households and people of color.

How are other Universities responding to Duke Energy?

On other campuses, students are demanding their institutions divest in big oil and coal companies. Without divesting in companies such as Duke Energy, they would not be able to reach their sustainability goals. In 2010, the University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill campus declared it will end its use of coal by 2020. A few months ago, the UNC system president sent a letter to Duke Energy requesting more clean energy in efforts to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

It is clear that Duke energy does not currently align well with UF's sustainability policies and carbon neutrality goals. Join Gainesville Loves Mountains in encouraging UF and its students to demand cleaner energy and higher social responsibility standards by signing our online petition found here: <http://www.change.org/petitions/university-of-florida-clean-energy-now>.

Darrell Adams Pottery Holiday Open House

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Saturday, December 14, 2013

Sunday, December 15, 2013

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Directions: From Archer Road take S.W. 75th Street (Tower Road). South 2 miles to Meadows of Kanapaha. Turn right on S.W. 75th Way and follow one mile to cul-de-sac. Follow "Pottery Open House" signs to studio.

8605 S.W. 115th Ave
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DECEMBER 2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DEC. 5—SSJ General Meeting and Holiday Social, Thursday, 7:30-9:30 p.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Gainesville. See Pg. 1 for details.

DEC. 7—Inner City Outing outing to Dudley Farms “Cane Day Festival.” See Pg. 4 for details.

DEC. 12—SSJ Sierra Club Executive Committee meeting, Thursday, 7 p.m., at the Alachua County Housing Authority Conference Room in Gainesville.

DEC. 26—End-of-the-year Holiday Folding Party for the January SSJ Newsletter, 7pm, at Joanne and David Auth’s house (425 NE 7th St. in Gainesville). See Pg. 5 for details.

JAN. 11—SSJ bike ride outing with Kate Lee. See Pg. 6 for details.

SSJ Sierra Club
 is on the web

<http://ssjsierra.org/>