

**NO
GENERAL MEETINGS
June, July or August**

**Please join us for our Annual Picnic in a Park
July 18th, 11:00am to 2:00pm**

Poe Springs 28800 NW 182nd Avenue, High Springs, FL

Please bring a dish to share and your own cutlery.

LOOKING FORWARD - 2015 FALL GENERAL MEETINGS

September 3rd: Peggy McDonald, Author and historian will present her book on Marjorie Carr.

October 1st: Joan Flock, UF College of Law on the racial, ethnic, and economic aspects of environmental justice.

SSJ SIERRA ELECTIONS CALENDAR 2015

Interested in Getting More Involved in Your Sierra Club? Please consider a Position on the Suwannee St Johns Sierra Club Executive Committee (Excom). The process of selecting 6 new officers has begun with selection of a Nominating Committee. This year's Nominating Committee members are Scott Camil, Gary Green, and Roberta Gastmeyer. If you are interested in serving on this important committee or being selected as a candidate, please contact us at ssjsierra.membership@gmail.com or 352-494-9662. If you just can't do it this year, please offer suggestions of others who would make good Excom officers.

06/11.....Appoint NomCom, publish names in NL, call for nominations due by 9/1

08/27.....Publish in Sept NL that nominations by petitions are allowed, due by 9/22

09/03.....GenMtg: Receipt of Excom nominees, announce nominees at mtg. and announce voter eligibility requirements

09/10.....Official NomCom report to Excom; appointment of ElCom

09/21.....Receipt of petition candidates by NomCom

10/08.....Ballot prepared by ElCom for Excom approval

10/26.....Ballots in November NL

12/03..... Deadline for receipt of ballots by ElCom chair

12/04.....Count ballots (date and place to be announced), prepare report to ExCom

12/05.....Distribute preferences for Excom offices to prospective and continuing members

12/10.....Report results to Excom (incl. newly elected ones); Excom reorganization

12/09..... Report results to ExCom (including newly elected ones); ExCom reorganization

FROM THE CHAIR

June is here already and summer is starting with these last two weeks of days with 96 F. and higher temperatures...What to do? Go to a beach, float down a spring, kayak in a river, or swim in a lake. If you are looking for a group outing, go to www.sierraclub.org and scroll on the outings list for Florida. Last time I checked, there was a good outing selection for this part of our state...Do you want to meet other Sierrans, then come to the SSJ Annual Picnic at Poe Springs, on Saturday, July 18, from 11:00 to 2:00pm. Come earlier to kayak or swim, or stay the afternoon. Come to have some cool time and maybe brainstorm on activities we could organize with our members and other local environmental groups.

If it's too hot to go outside, then spend some time on the Sierra Club website. www.sierraclub.org and educate yourself on the many programs that our club is leading.

For your information, Sierra Club has a new President, Aaron Mair, the first African American to lead our club. Please read more here <http://www.sierraclub.org/change>.

It always makes me feel good to read the Sierra Club website, and it also energizes me to attend the Sierra Club Florida leaders meetings, held four times a year, generally in St Petersburg, where we have a Sierra Club office, with four staff members. By the way, these meetings are open to all members, and the next one will be on October 3rd at Eckerd College, in St Pete.

So I attended the first one in Miami in 1999, and thought then, this is a group of good people, committed to work for a better place to live...and I attended the last one on June 6, 2015.

I want to share with you some of the notes I took, they are succinct, but I will be happy to share more if you have questions or comments.

- 1) Margrete Strand, new Board Member of the Sierra Club, is now assigned to work with the Florida SC Staff. She is the President of Public Citizen, and lives in Washington DC. She will work on the Beyond Coal campaign.
- 2) We need to make sure that we have better representatives elected in 2016, so a Lobbying Committee will be formed and will meet by phone starting in September 2015 (Phone mtgs. will be on Sunday night 6:30-7:30pm).
- 3) Report from David Cullen, our Sierra Club Lobbyist in Tallahassee. Full report in an email I can forward. In brief, we need to plan better to get Amendment 1 money put in place for the next 19 years.
- 4) Report from Tim Heberlein, Beyond Coal campaign staff (in St Pete). "The Beyond Coal" campaign is the most expensive campaign run by the Sierra Club and also the most successful. See article in Politico may 2915, article by Michael Grunwald "Inside the War on Coal". In Florida, the goal is to shut down by the end of 2015 the McIntosh 3 coal plant in Lakeland. We need to push for clean energy using solar and wind.
- 5) Report by Dan Chu, National Sierra Club staff, on Our Wild America Campaign. See sierra club website for detailed information. A Committee was formed and met with Dan to create "Our Wild Florida" Campaign.
- 6) Report by Julia Hathaway, SC staff in Palm Beach Gardens, on "Big Sugar Summit" scheduled in West Palm Beach for 6-20-15. Learn how Big Sugar affects politics, our health and our lives. Watch the YouTube video on Big Sugar Summit in WPB.
- 7) Report by Alexis Horn, SC Staff in Ft Myers, on meetings with the FWC re: Bear Hunting that will be allowed in October 2015. Alexis is also working on the Protect the Panther campaign. She stated that the FWC leaders feel that the number of panthers is too high and they plan to take the panther off the Endangered List in the

future. {You read it right}. FYI: There is a 4.000 acres/10.000 homes project of Collier Enterprise and Minto Communities (Rural Lands West) located in SW Florida, right into the panther habitat...??? { Why do we want to build more homes in this part of Florida known to be panther habitat? Are we short of foreclosure and bank owned homes at this time?}{my own comments}.

- 8) Report by Phil Compton, SC staff in St Petersburg, on Clean Air campaign, "I Love Clean Air". In the media and the Energy Industry, we hear about the production of "Clean" Natural Gas...Don't be fooled. Natural Gas is not a Clean Energy, it is a dirty fuel.
Use of electric buses Proterra, produced in North Carolina and BYD in Orlando, is increasing. Several events to promote Electric Vehicles (EV) are planned during "Drive Electric" Week (September 12-20) in Jax, Melbourne, Miami, Tampa and St Pete. Go check EV Guide on www.sierraclub.org.
- 9) Conservation Conference is planned for the fall of 2016. The planning committee needs some help and some ideas. Contact Craig Diamond and Rudy Schaffer.
- 10) Running your Best Excom. Groups worked on defining skills needed on Excom, and the qualities needed in each member to work effectively (team player, be present, humor).
- 11) Political Committee. Priority is to have a new 7 people Political Committee at the SC state level. A political compliance officer needs to be trained (in each group)– someone good with politics and compliances. Treasury reports need to be done monthly.
- 12) Excom elections for the Florida groups are not done electronically yet. National SC is working on this.

I know it looks like a lot of information or too little, but any comments are welcome.

See you at the picnic, July 18, Poe Springs...Bring a friend!

Maryvonne Devensky

CONSERVATION REPORT by Whitey Markle

July 14 ADENA RANCH/ SLEEPY CREEK —SAVE THE DATE

Last summer, during the challenge to the Sleepy Creek cattle ranch water permits, a public hearing was held by the judge. At that meeting hundreds of people from around the state made excellent statements regarding the impact of this cattle ranch on the aquifer for Silver Springs and the Ocklawaha and Silver Rivers. In April, the hearing judge ruled against our challenge to the permits. Now, the board of the water management district must listen to exceptions to the judge's ruling made by Sierra Club and Riverkeeper at their regular meeting on **Wednesday, July 14 (specific time TBD) at 4049 Reid Street in Palatka**. We are asking you if all possible to attend to show by your presence that we are still opposed to these permits which will cumulatively affect our springs and rivers. Stay tuned.... We will let you know the specific time as soon as this gets on the agenda.

LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST FLORIDA LEGISLATURE OVER AMENDMENT 1.

State lawmakers misused almost half of the money available through Amendment 1, the constitutional amendment to conserve land and water on last November's Florida ballot, according to several environmental activists. The nonprofit organization, Earth Justice, filed a lawsuit on Monday, June 22. A legal challenge had been expected after the illustrious legislature passed a budget on Friday, June 19 that uses the largest chunk of the \$740 million available through Amendment 1 to pay for salaries and routine expenses of environmental agencies that were previously funded mostly by General Revenue fund (another superb example of the

thievery that occurs on a routine basis in our fine state capital). The suit was filed against the legislature, House Speaker Steve Cristafulli, and Senate President Andy Gardiner.

The suit seeks guidance from the courts on how lawmakers should allocate money from the amendment next legislative session starting in January, said Earthjustice attorney David Guest. "What we are saying simply to the court is to confirm boundaries and tell the Legislature what they can and cannot fund," Guest said.

Only \$88.7 million would go toward land acquisition, according to the lawsuit. When lawmakers ignore the public will, remedy must be sought in the courts. Unfortunately, as is the case with Adena Springs Ranch in Ft. McCoy, all appeals must go through the Florida Administrative Appeal process, which is nothing more than a bureaucratic roadblock to the public's ability to be engaged in state governmental matters. As I stated last month, we are being out-moneyed and out-politicked with our own money and representatives. Prepare for a long, convoluted legal battle over Amendment 1 funding.

ORANGE CREEK BASIN BMAP, TMDL FOR LAKE LOCHLOOSA TWISTED AND SPUN BY FDEP.

We have been attending the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) meetings in Gainesville for the last couple of years. These "Action Plans" are mandated by Florida Statute in compliance with the federal 1972 Clean Water Act, and the purpose is intended to be to protect our water from pollution among other factors. The procedures by which the Florida Department of Environmental Protection officials operate in dealing with this enormous responsibility require intense scrutiny.

From what we can decipher from talking with former Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) administrators, the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) for the Orange Creek Basin, which includes, Newnans Lake, Lake Wauberg, Lake Lochloosa, and Orange Lake, has been short-changed by FDEP Officials ...again. A year ago, after the BMAP had been in place its first 5 years, FDEP came to Gainesville to revisit and improve the BMAP as prescribed by Florida Law for all water bodies.

In the deliberations, we noticed and pointed out statutory mandates that weren't being followed in the deliberations. Specifically, funding, milestones, new and improved methods and projects were mandated in the statute and weren't being expedited. We also noticed the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), a statutory requirement that limits nutrient pollutants in "impaired" water bodies (which all of the water bodies in the Orange Creek Basin are), was missing for the 5 year duration of the original BMAP. At first, FDEP administrators blamed "poor modelling". After a lot of pressure, the FDEP officials finally promised us a TMDL for Lake Lochloosa by June of this year. They transferred the "Modelling" responsibility to the St. Johns River Water Management District some 6 months ago and then announced last week (June 22nd) that TMDLs for 5 lakes (Marshall, Robert, Denham, Weir, and Lochloosa) will be done together. Total-N and total-P values will be determined for all 5 lakes. Rule notice is to be published by August 15, 2015.

This is just another example of how the state government agencies use the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) to evade and avoid the intent of the law (The federal Clean Water Act of 1972). Required N and P reductions for Newnans, Orange, and Lochloosa range from 31% to 74%. Orange Lake has a TMDL for P but not for N. One administrator suggested that for Orange/Lochloosa/Newnans, they might focus on phosphorus reductions only, possibly ignoring nitrogen reductions. Her theory seemed to be that much of the nitrogen problem is due to recycling within the lakes, and that reducing P might serve to reduce N-fixation (and N-recycling) by organisms in the lake. This approach is not necessarily stupid. For instance, their charts (to be posted soon at: publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/OrangeCreek) show that 72 percent of the N in Newnans comes from internal recycling. When asked whether there are examples in FL of TMDLs that focus only on P as a strategy to reduce both P and N. She cited Lake Jessup, but that's a lake that doesn't have a TMDL for N. The DEP people present couldn't cite an example where this P-strategy has been used successfully in a lake that has both N and P values for TMDLs.

There was a brief discussion of how to deal with lakes where internal recycling is the major source of nutrients. Possible solutions mentioned were treatment wetlands and alum treatment. The former method is apparently used in Lake Apopka.

There was also discussion around the idea that cutting external inputs (e.g. agricultural inputs, which appear to be the sacred calves of the FDEP and Governor) could reduce internal recycling. It is difficult to remain calm under such circumstance, and refrain from criticizing the procedure. FDEP seems to be a long way from having any strategy for actually reducing nutrients in our lakes, and certainly a long way from assigning nutrient reductions to specific polluters..It is our belief that Agricultural operations cannot be assigned a specific reduction – if a farm is “complying” with what the Florida Department of Agriculture calls, “Best Management Practices” (BMPs), we believe it is deemed to be in compliance with any and all TMDLs. The administrators have promised to discuss the “projects” (or lack thereof) after being questioned on the subject which is supposed to be listed in the 2014 BMAP “update”. Unfortunately, the Office of Central Budget annual report is to be completed by August, including a list of ongoing and proposed “projects”. These meetings are normally 90% government employees of some sort, either from the municipalities in the area or from the state agencies in the area. Projects are supposed to be proposed by these entities in this process. It should be interesting to see the final outcome under the ultimate direction of this “environmental” Governor.

BEAR HUNTING PROTESTS IGNORED BY FWC LEADERS

The Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC) met Friday, June 22 in Sarasota to drop the hammer on Florida’s Black Bears. About 80 people spoke at the meeting during a comment period that stretched over six hours. FWC commissioners voted unanimously in April to tentatively support the bear-hunting proposal, even after they solicited public input and received 40,000 responses, about 75 percent of which opposed the plan. Tensions were especially high between opponents and commission chairman Richard Corbett, who in April told a reporter that “those people don't know what they're talking about.”

The seeming apathy for public sentiment was a common gripe for speakers Wednesday. “If you choose bear hunting over the will of the voters then this smarts of corruption and this smarts of the end of democracy as we know it,” said Larry Heiny, 57, of Sarasota. After the vote, one opponent of the hunt said the initial response “was not a vote, not a referendum; it wasn't even a valid poll.” Speakers on Wednesday chastised commissioners for prioritizing haste over reason. The hunt is meant to curb the population of black bears in the state, but the FWC will not have a full tally of the species' numbers until next year. Instead, critics said, the commission made a knee-jerk reaction to four maulings in 2013 and 2014.

The black bear was once a darling of Florida's conservation efforts, featured on a license plate in the late 1990s. In the middle of the 20th century, the population was just 500 statewide, but by 2002 it had grown to about 3,000. When Corbett fiddled with his phone during the meeting, a woman stood up and shouted: “Commissioners, can you turn off your cell phones, please!”

Before the vote, Corbett, a Tampa mall developer, said bear hunting was a particularly thorny issue. “We should all recognize that this has been a very difficult subject and it's been painful in many ways,” he said. Each permitted hunter will be able to take one bear per year under the new rules. The FWC hopes the hunt will kill more than 200 bears, according to the agency's “harvest objectives”. State officials already kill a number of nuisance bears, and opponents say hunting will target the wrong animals, which usually stay deep in the woods.

Laurie MacDonald, Florida director for the Defenders of Wildlife, balked at commissioners' assertions that they were just managing the environment. “It's not a balance,” she said.

"It's the dominance of one species over another." Just three years ago, the bear was removed from the threatened list.

So, like the Gopher Tortoise and Alligator, the Florida Black Bear will be slaughtered for the wrong reason and in the wrong place. The hunts will take place in the panhandle, many miles from the majority of the Bear population and "Human/Bear Conflicts".

SUNCOAST PARKWAY EXTENSION MOVES TOWARD CRYSTAL RIVER

On Thursday, June 25, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) held an open house and public hearing on the extension of the Florida Suncoast Parkway at Lecanto High School. Although around 400 people showed up, mostly to protest the extension, the turnout was considered to be about half as much as the 2 previous such meetings. Many of our members came away with the feeling that "It's a done deal", although the planning for the project is deeply flawed and hurried. (What else is new with this state government? Look what just happened to the Black Bears).

Nancy Kost, a Sierra Club member from Homosassa, sent notes after the meeting: 1. The attorney for the Homosassa Special Water District was very concerned about the retention pond(s) at the intersection of Grover Cleveland Blvd. and the parkway as they were over the District's wellfield. She said the retention pond liners won't work and the wellfield would be endangered if there were an oil/chemical spill that entered the ponds. She requested to move the ponds 5,000 ft away from the wellfields. 2. The 1998 Environmental Report was obsolete. The Federal study is dated 2006. The two studies don't agree. The Brooksville ridge would be endangered, there is no need for the road, except perhaps trucks. It ends at SR 44 east of Crystal River (nowhere). 3. There are no park and ride lots and the need for a larger parking lot for the trailhead and the need for bus parking and lighting. Additionally, costs for these should be in the parkway cost and not be up to the county. 4. The route is too short, tolls won't justify the highway. Instead fix US19. Suggested parkway go to Red Level as we need a by-pass for Crystal River. 5. With the FDOT schedule, there will be less than 90 days for condemnations of properties, giving those property owners only 90 days to question offers. 6. The parkway won't pay for itself. Major corporations won't pay tolls (based on Dade County case). Major environmental issue - we are the NATURE COAST. There is only one overpass for wildlife. No culverts for same are shown on maps. People here enjoy wildlife and animals have no place to go. 7. Citrus County Historical Society protested running highway thru historical marker - Etna Turpentine camp, asked why there is an exit at Cardinal when it's so close to the start at US98. They thought the exit should be at Grover Cleveland instead, closer to the college, and questioned exit at Crystal Oaks development, stated exits too far from Citrus County Welcome Center on US19. 8. Citrus County has no growth management plan, no development code, no impact fees and taxpayers pay for everything. This new highway is not wanted by the citizens here. 9. There is a state law that the road must pay for itself in a certain amount of time. The survival of Crystal River and Inverness is in jeopardy. History has proved that in small towns businesses move out to the highway when one is built. The highway will wipe out downtown areas of Crystal River and Inverness. 10. There is no date for the payoff from tolls nor a plan on how a projected 5,000 vehicles/day will pay for itself. 11. The highway is too close to Sugarmill Woods community. There will be a big noise impact. Suggested another route to relieve noise. Again, it is obvious that the craze to expand the population into the wild areas of North Central Florida, in this case, the Nature Coast, by the state government is out of control of the citizens who fund it.

Sierra Club Tri-County Working Group

The next campaign committee meeting for the **SSJ Sierra Club's Tri-County Working Group** is July 6 in Inverness at noon. Contact Gary garryegreen@lightningspeed.net for details.

The next whole working group meeting for the **Tri-County (which includes members from Levy, Marion and Citrus Counties)** folks is Tuesday, July 21, at the Crystal River Preserve State Park at noon. Join us!

NEED A SPEAKER for your church group, community organization, other?

The Tri-County Working Group, in conjunction with the Sierra Club Educational Committee, is embarking upon an educational tour, offering a slide show and accompanying discussion to acquaint interested groups in our area with the main environmental issues that Sierra Club is concerned with. The hope is that this education program motivates people to practice both good conservation habits as well as the will to press our government officials to seek more effective solutions. If anyone knows of any type of group, club or home owners association that might be interested, contact Education Chair Jon Brainard.....[\(407\) 491-8158](tel:(407)491-8158) or jonbrainard@gmail.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED for our FIRST ANNUAL
Sustainable House and Garden Tour Fundraiser
Gainesville, October 24th, 2015

We are looking for bright, energetic group of 5 to 7 members willing to put in some hours over the next few months to create a premier SSJ fundraising event (actually two events, but we will talk about that later.) Do you have some ideas on fundraising in general? Or maybe some experience in running a tour? Or maybe just some interest in being part of a bright, energetic group? Well, speak up now because this is not going to happen unless we get some help! Contact Jon jonbrainard@gmail.com or Roberta rgastmeyer@gmail.com.

WANTED: YOUR UNWANTED STUFF

Sierra Club is holding a garage sale September 19th to benefit our ICO program which takes local youth on awesome outdoor adventure and service trips. Please keep us in mind when spring cleaning and save your items. Since we have minimal storage space available, we thank you for hanging on to your donations until the beginning of September when we will begin collection. More details to come on when and where to deliver your goods. We will also need a few volunteers to help setup, sell, and cleanup after. Breakfast and great company provided free!



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HELP END HOMELESSNESS!

The Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry, Inc., a 501(c)(3), is starting a "Get a Ride to Work" Program to support the GRACE Marketplace.

PLEASE DONATE

**Bikes, scooters, cars, trucks and
motorcycles (running or not)**

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