



Suwannee-St. Johns Group

Sierra Club

Newsletter

Published monthly except June and August from Gainesville, Florida

VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 3 • March 2005

Questioning the Candidates

BY DAVID AUTH

Political Chair

As the largest city in Alachua County, Gainesville has a great influence on all that goes on around us. As voters, we can have a great influence on the future decision-makers who sit on our commission.

Nine candidates are vying for three seats on the Gainesville City Commission. The election is March 29, with runoffs possible in the at-large race and District 3 race. Rick Bryant, the incumbent, Rob Brinkman, Gabriel Kaimowitz, and Dyonne McGraw

are running for an at-large seat. Ed Braddy is running for re-election against Grant Thrall for the District 2 seat. Tony Domenech is running for re-election against Michael Belle and Jack Donovan for the District 3 seat.

Our Sierra Group's Executive Committee decided not to endorse candidates in this race rather to have a political forum at our March general meeting. The forum will last for approximately one and a half hours and be divided into three parts.

First, all nine candidates will be asked to answer, in three minutes, this general question: "What is your environmental vision for the future of Gainesville?"

Second, there will be rapid answer, thirty second responses from all candidates to the following six questions:

1) Given the negative consequences of urban sprawl, what do you think is the best single mechanism for a Gainesville City Commissioner to promote so-called "smart growth"?

2) What kind of government do you favor for Alachua County – complete or partial separation of city and county services, including the nine outlying municipalities, continual annexation of people into Gainesville until

county government collapses due to loss of its tax base, or consolidation of city and county services, immediately or eventually or never?

3) The leadership of Gainesville Regional Utilities is proposing building, by 2011, a new coal, pet-coke, and biomass burning facility to approximately double its electrical generating capacity. What is your personal proposal for meeting the projected future electrical needs for GRU customers?

4) The best way to keep a clean environment is to environmentally educate citizens. How do you think this should be done?

5) The citizens of Gainesville demand

and assume they are drinking clean city water, essentially free of contaminants which can harm their health. What threats do you see to the future safety of Gainesville's water supply?

6) Many Gainesville's citizens want to preserve open park land, designed for different uses, within walking or short driving distance of their homes. How would you ensure that this happen?

Finally, candidates will address questions submitted in writing from the audience during the forum, with one-minute responses. We hope this forum will help voters and the candidates become more aware of environmental issues important to the future quality of life in our area.

GAINESVILLE CITY COMMISSION ELECTION MARCH 29, 2005

AT-LARGE: RICK BRYANT, THE INCUMBENT, ROB BRINKMAN,
GABRIEL KAIMOWITZ AND DIYONNE MCGRAW

DISTRICT 2: ED BRADDY AND GRANT THRALL

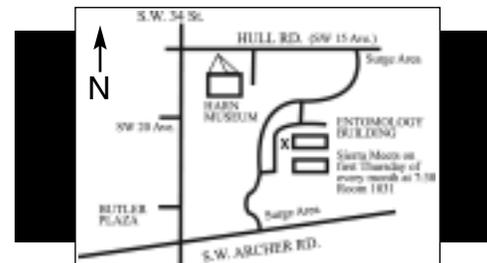
DISTRICT 3: TONY DOMENECH, MICHAEL BELLE
AND JACK DONOVAN

GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, Mar. 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.)

GAINESVILLE CITY COMMISSION CANDIDATES FORUM



<i>PROTECTING PUBLIC POLICY</i>	2
<i>BIOMASS ENERGY CAN BE RENEWABLE</i>	7
<i>NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB ELECTIONS</i>	7

Protecting Public Policy

LET'S KEEP THE BUTLER DEAL IN THE SUNSHINE

BY LINDA POLLINI

Chair SSJ Sierra Group

What is most troubling about Clark Butler's recent movement to get a four-lane road constructed on SW 24 Avenue is that a large amount of the negotiating has gone on out of the public eye. It seems that Mr. Butler is still negotiating with the county for his four-lane road. He has agreed to pay \$4.7 million for his share, but now the estimated costs have risen to \$20 million.

Butler will do a Development of Regional Impact statement. Still, he has NOT agreed to sign the anti-annexation clause, which would prohibit him from annexing into the city limits. The county wants to prevent their dollars from being spent on this project and then all the tax revenues going to the city.

The county will most certainly have to make a Comprehensive Plan change since this road had been planned and previously

approved as a two-lane roadway. Any Comp. Plan change should be done in the public view in a regular meeting - not in negotiations with a private individual. The board of county commissioners is not supposed to make covert changes to this important document. If they were to, it would be a direct violation of the public trust.

CHAIR'S



CORNER

Many politicians had their fingers in this pie including Sen. Rod Smith, who has retracted his last

minute request for an additional \$2 million from the state.

As chair of our Sierra Club group, I have been trying to get to the bottom of this fiasco and have contacted the offices of Senator Nelson, Congresswoman Brown and Congressman Stearns to inform them of the history behind this project and the continued objections of the public as

expressed in numerous published letters to the Gainesville Sun and also to the offices of the Alachua County Commissioners.

Initially, this project was sold as a way to relieve traffic in the area, when in fact it will do just the opposite if it takes the route that Clark Butler has planned. SSJ Sierra Club is not opposed to federal funding of a roadway to help with traffic congestion in this area, but it definitely should take a dif-

INITIALLY, THIS PROJECT WAS SOLD AS A WAY TO RELIEVE TRAFFIC IN THE AREA, WHEN IN FACT IT WILL DO JUST THE OPPOSITE IF IT TAKES THE ROUTE THAT CLARK BUTLER HAS PLANNED.

ferent route, one that follows the current roadways on the west of Butler Plaza and diverts traffic away from SW 34 Street and the Archer Road intersection. The Department of Transportation and the Mass Transit Planning Organization should take another look at this plan and do it with the complete involvement of the public first.

Next Sierra Club General Meeting—March 3, at 7:30 p.m. Come join the fun. See page 1 for details.

Visit the National and Local Sierra Club Websites!

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

Suwannee-St. Johns Group Executive Committee

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

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

E-MAIL TREE

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

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.**

Springing Forth

BY KAREN GARREN

Outings Chair

Happy March! Spring has sprung, birds are singing, frogs are croaking, and plums and redbuds are in flower. This is the best time of year for spending time out of doors in North Central Florida because the bugs are not as bothersome. A big "Thanks!" to all of you who responded to last month's questionnaire, here are the results:

1) Why is being a Sierra Club member important? Environmental education can inspire people to be conservation minded. Outings can pertain to general meeting programs or highlight local issues. Community involvement, outdoor activities, and social interactions are the basis of Sierra Club activism. An interesting Outings Program can generate more involvement from our members.

2) What types of Sierra Club Outings activities would interest you? Suggestions: a mix of day and half day trips suitable for families; guided trips to parks and nature areas; canoe and kayak trips on lakes and

springs; visits to Kanapaha Gardens, the Florida Museum of Natural History new butterfly exhibit or UF projects (the Solar House); etc. Some would like the basics of bird watching, plant identification, etc. Others would like informative outings: where our water and power come from, where our waste goes, and outings highlighting local and regional

conservation issues. There is interest in rescheduling last autumn's Cross-Florida "Slack-pack" outing which was cancelled due hurricane flooding.

3) How can the Suwannee St. John's Sierra Club Group reach out to members outside the Gainesville area? Get outings' information to people using the Sierra Club website, newsletter and media. Retain contact information of previous outings participants. Schedule and post outings months in advance. Get the 900+ members involved and we'll have more people to tackle the other jobs including



working with folks outside Gainesville.

As SSJ group Outings Chair, I very much appreciate the suggestions. A vibrant outings program can be cohesive to our Sierra Club family. There are many great organizations in our sierra zone, check out websites for Audubon of Florida, Florida Native Plant Society, City of Gainesville's Nature Operations, Florida Trail Association, and the Florida Museum of Natural History, all featuring outings and activities relevant to their special interests.

The Sierra Club is in a unique position to inform on local conservation issues. But we need your help. If you like people, if you enjoy being physically active, if you're inquisitive about Florida's unique ecological heritage, please contribute your special skills towards our community and learn how to be a leader.

With that in mind, here is the schedule for Spring, leaving room for spontaneity. Check the web site for details: www.gator-sierra.org

SATURDAY, MARCH 12: Tour of Gainesville Regional Utilities' Deerhaven Power Plant. This outing is to fully inform our membership on the issue of expansion of this municipal facility. How much do

see **OUTINGS**, page 4

Statewide Outings

BY RUDY SCHEFFER

Florida Sierra Club Outings Chair

The following outings organized by other sierra groups are open to the rest of the Florida Chapter. The name of the sponsoring group is in parenthesis at the end of the announcement. As usual, all sierra club outings are educational and open to the public.

MAR. 5-6 Exploratory Backpack trip to Kissimmee Prairie State Park. Easy 4-mile round trip backpack trip. Primitive camping and bring your own water. Limited to 10 participants. Leader: Rudy Scheffer, 727-726-8375 (Suncoast)

MAR. 6 Bicycle ride on the General

James A. Van Fleet State Trail in the Green Swamp. The ride will visit a portion of this rail-to-trails linear park. It will be a moderate 3 to 4 hour ride, depending on participants. Leader: Ben Berauer at 727.392.2821, bfberauer@aol.com (Suncoast).

MAR. 12 - 13 Overnight backpack trip to Buster Island - Lake Kissimmee State Park. An easy backpack. We will hike the Buster Island loop trail, about 6.5 miles, tour the cow camp, and visit the scrub jays. Limit 6. Co-leaders Mike Pici, 727-798-9227 or revmp777@earthlink.net, Ben Berauer, 727-392-2821 or bfberauer@aol.com (Suncoast)

MAR. 18-20 Archibold Biological Station and MacArthur Agro-Ecology Research Center Cabin camping and hiking. Two nights dormitory-style accommodations in comfortable cabins; Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner; Sunday break-

fast and lunch, Saturday program and hike, Sunday swamp buggy tour of MacArthur Agro-Ecology Research Center—a working full commercial cattle ranch. Fee \$80 Leader: Sheryl Chapman 321-729-0095 (Turtle Coast)

MAR. 19-24 Spirit of the Suwannee 2005. Paddle & Camp and beyond. This annual river run is an 88-mile, 4.5 day paddle /4 night camp on the beautiful Suwannee River designed to coincide with the Springfest at the Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park, March 24 - 27, 2005. We will be setting up base camp at the Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park and shuttling to the head waters of the Suwannee River in the Okefenokee Swamp begin our one-of-a-kind down river adventure. At the conclusion of the paddle all are welcome to stay and enjoy the Springfest. Interested paddlers please contact outings leader Chuck

see **STATEWIDE**, page 4

What's New in Newberry?

UPDATE ON SIERRA'S COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAWSUIT

BY LINDA POLLINI

Chair SSJ Sierra Group

The Sierra Club entered into a recent mediation with the city of Newberry and

there are still some major omissions in their Comprehensive Plan as it stands. The fact that they have no data and analysis attached to their Land Use Regulations is a problem.

There should be supporting data applied to all new developments in order to protect the air and water quality in the

county. Newberry could apply Alachua County standards, but they have not yet done so.

The most glaring problem is that the Florida Rock Cement Plant would be allowed to double its size using the previously permitted "floor area ratio" without triggering a Comprehensive Plan Amendment and stricter oversight. Sierra Club will be proceeding to an administrative hearing in the coming months.

OUTINGS, from page 3

they need? Where does it go? How are costs determined? And what role does UF play? Even you sierra folks in Clay, Gilchrist, Levy, Union, Citrus, and Marion Counties have a stake-holder's investment. Because of security precautions, you must be registered by March 9.

SATURDAY, MARCH 26: Cumberland Island National Seashore, Georgia. Meet there or call to arrange transportation. This barrier island is the land of wild horses, beautiful beaches,

mysterious mansion ruins, and miles of hiking trails through climax maritime hammock. A \$20 charge covers cost of the ferry from St. Mary's. Only six reservations are available.

SATURDAY, MAY 29: Sierra Club Family Pot-Luck Picnic at Poe Springs. Break out the cookbook and bring your plate, fork, and cup: we have a pavilion reserved. For groups greater than 50, the cost of admission drops from \$5 to \$3.75. There will be a \$2/person charge to cover Group expenses.

Following the end of the semester, probably the weekend of June 10-11 will be canoeing/camping/hiking at Rainbow River State Park and on the Withlacoochee River. Details coming.

By the time you receive this, the Rally for the Restoration of the Ocklawaha River will be over. Let's hope the state legislators hear the "Will of the People".

All SSJ Outings are planned for educational value and are open to the public. For more, contact Karen Garren at (352) 371-0008 or email ILuvFla@GRU.net.

STATEWIDE, from page 3

Utter via e-mail at dancesonwater@outgun.com or phone (904)703-1972 (Limited to 10 paddlers) (Northeast)

APRIL 2 Day hike in the Lake Arbuckle State Forest. A moderate 10 mile hike along beautiful Lake Arbuckle. Limit 15 participants. Leader: Rudy Scheffer, 727.726.8375 or e-mail rudy@adventuresworldwide.com

APRIL 23-24 Overnight backpack trip to Mossy Island Campsite - Myakka River State Park. An easy backpack of only about 5 miles total. Limit 6. Co-leaders Mike Pici, 727-798-9227 or revmp777@earthlink.net, Ben Berauer, 727-392-2821 or bfberauer@aol.com (Suncoast)

MAY 6-8 Outing Chair/Leader only camping, brain storming and refresher training retreat at Myakka State Park. Please contact Rudy Scheffer (Chapter).

Outing Leader Trainings

MAR 19-20 Wilderness First Aid course in Gainesville. Cost is \$75 for the 16-hour course. No CPR just WFA. Includes book and three-year certification from the American Health and Safety Institute. Instructed by UF staff. Contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com

Apr 8-10 Outing Leader Training Workshop for all outing programs. Conducted by National staff and volun-

teers. This course is the Core Workshop, OLT 201, as referenced in the Outing Leader Minimum Standard Policy. Location will be in the West Palm Beach area. For reservations please contact Sascha.Paris@sierraclub.org. For additional information contact or <http://mitchell.sierclub.org/outings/training/index.asp>.

APR 23 Outing Leader Training OLT 101 class in the Tampa Bay area. Exact location will depend upon group size. Learn how to become a Sierra Club Outing Leader or re-certify as required by the Minimum Leader Standard Outing Policy. Learn about the latest rules and regulations. For information contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com.



Need a Vacation??

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

RENAISSANCE PRINTING

serving your printing needs since 1972



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

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

Biomass Energy

IT CAN BE RENEWABLE IF DONE RIGHT

BY JOSHUA DICKINSON

Conservation Chair

Building an over-sized 220 megawatt coal and pet-coke fired power plant in Gainesville doesn't make sense, in terms of local health effects, water use, and global warming contribution.

Additionally there are economic risks related to future carbon taxes and being locked into technology which will become obsolete as we transition away from fossil fuel dependence. GRU's proposed massive increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is ironic given our membership in Cities for Climate Protection, a commitment by cities worldwide under which we as a community pledged a reduction in GHG emissions by 20% compared to 1990 levels by 2010.

Electricity demand could be reduced substantially by shifting to solar hotwater heaters, technology almost a century old. The cost of photovoltaic conversion of solar energy to electricity continues to decrease in cost.

Thoughtful analysis would lead us to

gists, foresters, economists and engineers with full regard for input from land owners, environmentalists and the general public.

An off-the-shelf biomass power plant has the potential of substantially reducing the size of the new fossil fuel power generation facility needed to meet the actual energy needs of our community for decades to come. From a technical and economic perspective, the practicality of biomass is convincingly demonstrated by GRU's own Black & Veatch report of March 2004 which was suppressed until obtained by citizen activists in November.

Can biomass be used without causing unacceptable forest ecosystem degradation and deforestation? Yes, if our elected officials establish firm limits on biomass utilization based on accurate and independent information. Just Google "chip mill deforestation" to find out what happens when controls are inadequate.

The Forest Stewardship Council (www.fscus.org) has developed a set of regional standards specifically for forests of

energy produced through photosynthesis by plants and is therefore renewable. However, there is biomass and then there is biomass. Should we be firing a powerplant with old-growth longleaf pine, clear-cut mesic forests, and/or liveoak hammocks? No way! There are a number of alternatives. These include:

1. Storm debris and wood from sites cleared for roads and housing (after we have minimized sprawl).

2. Hardwoods such as laurel oak removed in the process of reestablishing fire-maintained upland longleaf pine ecosystems. Using this source is advocated by Jack Putz of the University of Florida Botany Department. (I removed a tremendous volume of laurel oak from my land as the first step toward reestablishing longleaf pine).

3. Thinnings from existing pulpwood plantations being managed on a long-term rotation. Generally this is associated with reestablishing a stand with the characteristics of a natural forest, particularly groundcover.

4. Plantings of trees on abandoned farmland. Trees planted on land previously in pasture, corn or tobacco are just another crop, but one requiring far less cultivation, agricultural chemicals and labor. Therefore erosion and runoff of chemicals from plantations will be less than from cropland. (Note: Genetically modified "GM" tree plantations cannot be FSC certified, nor can plantations of exotic species.)

5. Thinnings as an integral element of long-term management of natural forests (see comments below).

The situation with natural forests is more complex. Management of a FSC-certified natural forest has the dual objectives of producing wood and other products while also maintaining the integrity of the forest ecosystem. This requires a variety of management decisions and actions such as cutting no more than the annual growth increment of the trees, care in use of machinery so as to not destroy ground cover, controlled burning, protection of endangered species, etc.

Biomass would comprise relatively small volumes of thinnings and hardwood culls as a byproduct of natural forest management.

ELECTRICITY DEMAND COULD BE REDUCED SUBSTANTIALLY BY SHIFTING TO SOLAR HOTWATER HEATERS, TECHNOLOGY ALMOST A CENTURY OLD. THE COST OF PHOTOVOLTAIC CONVERSION OF SOLAR ENERGY TO ELECTRICITY CONTINUES TO DECREASE IN COST.

conclude that the generation capacity Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) adds should be calculated after reductions in our energy needs due to demand side management and conservation are calculated. Once we have pared down our estimates of electrical energy demand for the next few decades we can debate the appropriate mix of energy sources - natural gas, coal/pet-coke, solar and..... biomass.

No one advocates meeting all future energy needs with biomass. Biomass availability should be determined by a transparent interdisciplinary assessment by ecolo-

gists, foresters, economists and engineers with full regard for input from land owners, environmentalists and the general public. The standards apply to both natural and planted forests. This is the reason that virtually all major environmental groups, including the Sierra Club, support FSC certification to encourage sustainable management of forests. A GRU requirement that forest biomass fuel be from FSC certified properties would assure the public that environmental concerns are effectively met.

Biomass is essentially a form of solar

NATIONAL SIERRA CLUB NEWS

Capitalism against contamination

There's one sure-fire way to inspire solutions for cleaning up the environment: offer a \$1 million prize. That's the intent behind the U.S. National Academy of Engineering's Grainger Challenge Prize for Sustainability. The academy is looking for a cheap and sustainable method of removing arsenic from contaminated water. The United States has access to expensive methods to accomplish this, but developing countries will need something that will be "technically robust, reliable, maintainable, socially acceptable and affordable, be manufactured and serviced in a developing country, and must not degrade other water

quality characteristics." It must also be a household- or community-based system. Expected to enter is Mark Elless and his colleagues who found that a species of fern could draw arsenic out of tainted water. The deadline for applications is June 2006; the prize will be in February 2007.

Grassroots Kyoto Agreements

Some eight years after its inception, the Kyoto Protocol will finally enter into force on February 16. So the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is inviting parties to the Protocol, as well as institutions and organizations,

who are marking the occasion with events and other activities to post them on the UNFCCC website. There are a cocktail reception and speeches in Sydney, Australia, a forum in Brussels, Belgium, and this: Berkeley's Valentine to the Planet. That would be Berkeley, California, where Mayor Tom Bates will announce his city's endorsement of the Kyoto Protocol and its pledge to reduce its production of greenhouse gases emissions to achieve a climate neutral impact. Read more at Kyoto USA's website.

These articles were taken from www.sierraclub.org.

BIOMASS, from page 5

Biomass fuel harvested from natural forests will not compete with saw timber in any foreseeable future market. Biomass and pulpwood have similar value in the market. Saw timber brings about \$42 per ton where pulpwood has been going for <\$10 per ton. Fortunately, low pulpwood

prices have already created an unusual convergence of interests between those who advocate maintenance and enhancement of quality natural ecosystems and those seek a good economic return from their forestland. Long-term management of natural forests for saw timber, carbon sequestration and recreation has become more economically attractive than the destruc-

tive practice of converting natural forests to plantations that prevailed in the past. This reality is beginning to influence the thinking of some forestry schools, forest organizations, private forest owners and some corporate forest owners. Under FSC certification, natural forests cannot be converted to plantations.

WOOD • GAS • ELECTRIC



THE WOOD STOVE
AND FIREPLACE CENTER

611 N. Main Street 377-9535
WEB SITE: woodstoveflorida.com

Dental Arts Eric J. Amundson DDS
Restorative & Cosmetic Dentistry

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

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

Unlock the beauty of your Plants naturally with



GreenEdge[®]

Environmentally Friendly • Adds Organic Matter to Your Soil • Grow Your Plants With Less Water
www.green-edge.com

Gainesville: North & Central Florida:
Garden Gate Nursery ACE Hardware Stores
Harmony Gardens

Slow Release Organic Fertilizer

HISTORIC LOG CABIN ON MOUNTAIN STREAM

IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

For rent May through October.

Four beds. One bathroom.

Fully equipped kitchen. Washer and dryer.

Call Joan Griffin at 352-371-3383.

National Sierra Club Elections

CLUB MEMBERS TO VOTE ON DIRECTORS AND IMMIGRATION LIMITS

BY NATIONAL SIERRA STAFF

Another potentially contentious Sierra Club election is upon us. This year, not only are 15 candidates running for five board seats, there are three ballot measures, two of which would alter rules for future elections, and a third about whether the Club should adopt a policy on limiting immigration into the United States.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization that depends on members to make important decisions about its governance. "Democracy works," says Club President Larry Fahn, "but only if everyone participates."

Voting in elections at all levels of the Club is both a privilege and a responsibility of membership, he says, and the Club requires a free flow of views on policy and priorities in order to function effectively.

Members will elect five representatives to serve three-year terms on the 15-member board, which oversees staff and volunteer activities, sets conservation priorities, and approves the annual budget. The candidates are listed below.

The Population Ballot Question asks members: "Shall the Sierra Club policy on immigration, adopted by the Board of Directors in 1999 and revised in 2003, be changed to recognize the need to adopt lower limits on migration to the United States?" The Club board of directors recommends a "no" vote on this question.

The two other ballot measures propose changes to the by-laws that affect the election. Bylaws Change #1 would remove the requirement to provide space for write-in candidates on the ballot. Bylaws Change #2 requires one year of continuous membership in the Sierra Club in order to run for the board. (Currently, members can file a petition to run for office on the same day they become a member.) The board recommends a "yes" vote on the

two bylaws changes.

Last year, shortly after the Club election cycle ended, Fahn created the Sierra Election Reform Task Force, chaired by longtime leader Susan Heitman, and including representatives from various groups within the Club. The task force recommendations led to the proposed bylaws changes.

In addition, the board adopted a new rule giving chapters the opportunity to endorse board candidates and publish their endorsements in their newsletters and Web sites. (This is a one-year experiment.)

Two-thirds of the executive committee must vote to endorse, and the statement of endorsement can only be one sentence:

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

- Jim Bensman (petition candidate)**

- Joni Bosh (nominating committee candidate)**

- Gregory Bungo (petition candidate)**

- Jim Catlin (nominating committee candidate)**

- Jim Dodson (nominating committee candidate)**

- Jim Dougherty (nominating committee candidate)**

- Jennifer Ferenstein (nominating committee candidate)**

- Richard Fiddler (petition candidate)**

- Barbara Frank (nominating committee candidate)**

- Christine Garcia (petition candidate)**

- Alan Kuper (petition candidate)**

- Jim McDonald (petition candidate)**

- Chuck McGrady (nominating committee candidate)**

- Robert Roy van de Hoek (petition candidate)**

- Tony Ruckel (petition candidate)**

"The [name of chapter] recommends a vote for [name(s) of candidates] in the upcoming election for the Sierra Club Board of Directors." Chapters and groups may take positions on ballot questions and publish their recommendations in newsletters and Web sites as editorials. Other published material, such as letters to the editor or offi-

cial statements by ballot question position coordinators, must be balanced for pro and con views when published. Newsletters and Web sites cannot accept advertising promoting positions or candidates.

Seven of the board candidates were selected by the nominating committee, an eight-member body that reviews aspiring candidates every year and puts forward a slate of candidates. Eight candidates are running as petition candidates, which means that they have collected signatures supporting their candidacy from one-twentieth of 1 percent of members. (That's 381 signatures for this election.)

Overseeing the election to ensure fairness and resolve disputes are three "inspectors of election" appointed by the board. Chief Inspector Marvin Baker, a retired University of Oklahoma geography professor and member since 1968, says that the board acted in response to calls from grassroots leaders to involve the chapters in a more meaningful way in the election. "Our goal is to make the elections as fair and participatory as possible," he says.

Last year's election controversy generated a spate of coverage in local and national newspapers, even a New York Times editorial. Due to the extensive publicity, more Club members voted than ever before – 171,616 voters, or 22.7 percent of Club members.

To find out more about the candidates and measures, visit www.sierra-club.org/bod/2005election. It will include a candidate forum where candidates answer questions posted by members.

Club members should receive their ballots in the mail by mid-March. Votes must be cast by noon eastern daylight time on April 25. To vote online, follow the instructions in your printed ballot.

An independent company with long experience in conducting elections for national organizations will count the ballots.

Next Sierra Club General Meeting—March 3, at 7:30 p.m. Come join the fun. See page 1 for details.

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

Periodicals
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Gainesville FL 32608



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet



Printed on Post-Consumer Waste
Recycled and Recyclable Paper

MARCH 2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 3, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, SSJ general meeting at the Entomology & Nematology Bld. on UF campus (see page 1)

March 10, 7 p.m., Thursday, SSJ executive committee meeting at SFCC Downtown Gainesville campus

March 19 & 20 Kanapaha Botanical Gardens 15th Annual Spring Garden Festival. Over 200 booths, 352-372-4981 or www.kanapaha.org for details.

March 25, 7:30 p.m., Friday, newsletter folding party. At Scott Camil and Sherry Steiner's house. Call 352-375-2563 for directions.

To advertise
in the newsletter,
contact
Kristina Jackson
at 372-2464.

Membership

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

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.

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

F94Q **W3305** .1



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

Sierra Club

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