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# Calusa Digest



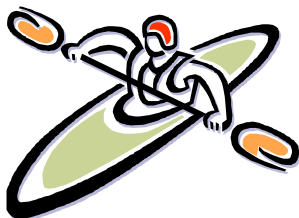
Vol. XXIV, No. 4

Serving Southwest Florida

July, 2002

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Interested in receiving notification of **Emergency Action Alerts**? Send your email address to: **bobbieleehasty@aol.com**. You will be notified of events that require prompt action such as letters, phone calls, and emails. See our web page: **www.florida.sierraclub.org/calusa/**



## Fisheating Creek

Byron Stout

Ellen Peterson has a vision for Fisheating Creek. It's the same vision she has had for the past decade, the one that compelled her to help found Save Our Creeks Inc., which joined forces with the state to wrest the waterway from Lykes Brothers. By 1989, Peterson, a 78-year-old retired guidance counselor, already had discovered what she still calls the Creek's "magic". When Lykes felled cypress trees to block access to its waters, she and other environmentalists joined a small band of anti-Lykes radicals in Glades County to return the Creek's beauty to the citizens of Florida.

They won after years of litigation, and in the settlement Florida purchased ~19,000 acres of land for public use along the 50-mile creek corridor.

Most of the land around the Creek still is owned by Lykes, but the main access point at Fisheating Creek Campground is now run by Peterson, under contract with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC).

Peterson is not there to make money from the creek, but to enable others to cherish it as she does. She loves the aura of its resurrection fern glowing green over gnarled live oak limbs. She loves the cool, black water of the Creek as it snakes between sugar-sand banks. And she loves the sandy scrub of its uplands, from which a doe and two fawns emerge daily from tarflower blossoms that beam pink in the morning light.

You get the picture.

*Continued on page 7*

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Sierra Club, Calusa Group**  
**Post Office Box #3276**  
**Bonita Springs, FL 34133**  
[http://www.sierraclub.org/  
chapters/fl/calusa/index.htm](http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/fl/calusa/index.htm)

Bobbie Lee Hasty, Chair  
992-9061  
[bobbieleeahasty@aol.com](mailto:bobbieleeahasty@aol.com)

Ellen Peterson, Vice Chair,  
Conservation  
992-5455  
[yepeterson@juno.com](mailto:yepeterson@juno.com)

Meg Hutchins, Treasurer, ABM Rep.  
992-0641  
[Flmeghutchins@aol.com](mailto:Flmeghutchins@aol.com)

Kathleen M. (Sulli) Sullivan, Secretary,  
Newsletter Editor  
352-2725  
[kathleen.sullivan@syngenta.com](mailto:kathleen.sullivan@syngenta.com)

John Swingle, FLEXCOM Rep.  
693-3854  
[merlyn@cyberstreet.com](mailto:merlyn@cyberstreet.com)

Shirley Sheehan, Membership Chair  
947-1823  
[shirley.sheehan@worldnet.att.net](mailto:shirley.sheehan@worldnet.att.net)

Ryan Combs, Outings Chair  
495-7962  
[ryan@teamwork-in-action.com](mailto:ryan@teamwork-in-action.com)

Karen Cartwright, Environmental Justice  
693-3854  
[buff@cyberstreet.com](mailto:buff@cyberstreet.com)

Connie Langmann, Publicity Director  
694-5513  
[GAEAKayaks@aol.com](mailto:GAEAKayaks@aol.com)

Patrick Nitch, Student Representative  
267-6799  
[gnitch@comcast.net](mailto:gnitch@comcast.net)

*Calusa Digest is a publication of the Calusa Group of the Sierra Club and is published four times yearly. Subscription is included with Sierra Club dues or can be obtained by non-members from the Calusa Group for \$5/year.*

## Fisheating Creek is Open!

Fisheating Creek, Florida's premier canoeing-camping site is open! Your pristine, 53-mile long winding waterway reaching from above the Highland County line to Lake Okechobee moves slowly as it flows through ancient cypress swamps festooned with floating gray moss and adorned with starkly white ibis and herons. The Creek retains its primordial atmosphere. Deer and turkey are often seen along grassy banks or among cypress knees studding shady vistas as the patrolling vultures float overhead. Seemingly snoozing in the sun, alligators watch for unwary prey. Turtles slide from protruding logs, and swallowtail kites soar above, arriving long distances from their downstream rookery, often displacing the hawks that scream their displeasure at the quiet intrusion of an occasional canoe. Tent camping sites are easily found at low water times, and there are two designated wilderness sites with primitive facilities available along the twenty-five mile stretch from the headwaters at Venus to the Palmdale Campground. Rental canoes and campsites are available at the campground and there is a camp store featuring bait, ice, and firewood. There is a livery service available up creek for a one-, two-, and (later) three-day float and paddle trip to the campground.

Campsite and canoe or kayak reservations can be made by calling Fisheating Creek Outfitters at **863-675-7855**. A special event, **The First Annual Fisheating High Water Fair will be held 13-14 July**. We expect two of Florida's foremost nature and wild life artists to join us as we reclaim our Creek.

*Continued on page 8*

## Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness

Dear Florida Friend of Utah Wilderness:

We are writing to invite you to join Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness, a statewide, grassroots, not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving wilderness in Utah and educating the public regarding those issues. We work directly with the Sierra Club, the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance, and the Utah Wilderness Coalition to keep the citizens of Florida up to date on good and bad legislation as it makes its way through the legislative process. Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness is one of twenty-one independent state activist groups across the country dedicated to passing America's Redrock Wilderness Act (HR1613/S786) and preserving Utah's wild lands. The Redrock Wilderness Act is designed to protect nine million acres of Federal wild lands in the awesome red rock canyon country of southern Utah that were identified in a major grassroots effort known as the Citizens' Inventory.

Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness has no paid staff and no dues. We ask members for action, not contributions. In addition to member action, we generate interest by writing articles or letters to local newspaper editors or hosting slide or video shows on Utah wilderness to local organizations or groups of friends.

As of 18 March 2002, HR1613/S786 had 159 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives and 15 co-sponsors in the Senate. Because HR1613 has been blocked in committee by Utah politicians, the Act can only come up for a floor vote if a sufficient number of Representatives cosponsor. Co-sponsorship of the Act has increased

dramatically every year since its original introduction in 1989. Every new Congressional co-sponsor brings the Act closer to a floor vote. Also, this is an election year, and there will be new Representatives in some districts who will need to be educated on Utah wilderness issues.

Working together as a network need not be a lot of work for any individual, and can be fun and rewarding. If you would like to be counted as a member of Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness, email us at the address below. There are no dues. But there is strength in numbers, so the more people that help to protect our land, the louder our voices will be. We ask only that our members be active and willing to occasionally contact their Representatives regarding Utah wilderness issues. Florida Friends of Utah Wilderness will provide you with information and support to make contacting your Representatives an easy and valuable experience. Your Representatives want to hear from their constituency, and they want to know what is important to you! Tell us via email how you would like us to communicate with you and what you think you might be willing to do. Any additional thoughts and ideas would also be welcome. Thank you, and we hope to hear from you soon.

Tom Walker  
**Tom@watsonwalker.com**  
**239-387-8227**

***Please recycle this newsletter!***

## **STOP FAST TRACK: MAKE TRADE CLEAN, GREEN AND FAIR**

Dan Seligman  
Sierra Club Responsible Trade Program

Across the country, citizens are mobilizing to take trade off the "fast track" and move it onto a "right track" that protects our environment and working families. We need your help. Over the next few weeks, President Bush will try to push through Congress a harmful "fast track" trade bill. Fast track denies Congress its constitutional power to amend future trade agreements, even if they contain dangerous, anti-environmental provisions.


The Sierra Club is concerned because these future trade deals could contain "corporate lawsuit" provisions like those in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Under NAFTA, foreign corporations gained sweeping power to sue U.S. taxpayers for billions of dollars if our environmental laws interfere with corporate profits. Originally intended to protect the foreign investments of U.S. companies in countries with weak legal systems, NAFTA's investor rules actually allow foreign companies in the United States to challenge our own environmental laws as "barriers to trade."

For example, the Methanex Corporation in Canada is using NAFTA to attack an important clean water law in California. In 1999, California's governor decided to phase out the toxic gas additive MTBE because the chemical was leaking from gas stations into the drinking water supply. Methanex, which makes a key ingredient in MTBE, sued the US government for \$1 billion under NAFTA, citing lost profits and harm to the company's stock price.

The MTBE case is just the latest in a growing string of trade challenges to environmental, health, and safety protections. With only two exceptions, trade tribunals have ruled against every environmental and public health law to come before them so far.

If President Bush succeeds in expanding NAFTA-style investor rules, a host of environmental protections in Florida from smart growth rules to forest safeguards could soon be challenged by foreign companies as "barriers to trade."

But we can stop Bush's Fast Track. Environmentally harmful versions of fast track have passed both the House and the Senate. But differences between the two bills must be ironed out in a House-Senate conference. Then the House, which passed fast track by a 215-214 vote last December, must vote again. If we pick up just one vote and hold onto the votes we have in the House, we can beat fast track this summer!

 Unfortunately, Rep. Porter J. Goss (FL 14<sup>th</sup> District-R) voted to support fast track. Call him and urge him to correct his mistake by opposing the bill this time around. Dial toll free **877-611-0063** (courtesy of the AFL-CIO) to urge Congressman Goss to oppose fast track.

If you'd like a free action kit on fast track with a terrific video by Bill Moyers, please send an email to **dan.seligman@sierraclub.org**. The video will be sent to anyone who promises to show it to at least 20 people. For further information, visit **www.sierraclub.org/trade**.

## Out There

Hi again. As owner of GAEA Guides and a Kayak Nature Tour guide I get “out there” frequently, taking my clients to some wonderfully mysterious, beautiful, magical locations on the waters of Lee and Collier Counties, seeing many of the critters that we environmentalists cherish.

A few weeks ago, after we passed through a mangrove tunnel, my clients and I came upon an otter frolicking off of Matlacha Pass. It is always a thrill to see one of these elusive animals. As soon as he saw us, he was gone, but it's good to know that he is out there living well on the fringes of the salt water and mangroves. The fishing must be good 'cause he looked very healthy.

Recently I have noticed that the Roseate Spoonbills and the Swallowtailed Kites have returned from their summer in South America. I have been noticing the kites in locations that I had not seen them in prior years. Hopefully, that means that they are doing well. I even saw a Roseate Spoonbill at Southwest Regional Airport. What a great thing for someone to see as soon as they land! Welcome to paradise!

Another trip to Matlacha Pass showed us an awesomely huge bird that flew out of a mangrove island as we were paddling past. My clients, who were quite knowledgeable about birds, and I were not sure what it was, but on checking out the Audubon Bird book when back at the van, we all agreed that it was, most likely, a *golden eagle*. It was significantly larger than a bald eagle, colored brown with white mottling. We were lucky enough to get

two glimpses of it as it swooped around the mangroves and then disappeared.

Another day I spotted a red and green buoy moving around in the water and knew that it was a tagged manatee. We watched him come up for a breath and do a lot of swimming around. I later reported the sighting to the manatee people with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and they were so happy to hear that “Spike” was doing okay. Spike had been in the paper just a week before because he had gotten trapped behind some oyster bars in a creek off the Myakka River when the tide went out, and after a couple of days the manatee people had to lift him to deeper water. Spike has an interesting history: He has been to California where he lived at Sea World for some time and he has also been to Florida's Sea World. His traveling started after he was orphaned eight years ago in the Caloosahatchee River way up stream in Glades County, near Lake Okeechobee. It is a fascinating story. I hope that he thrives and from the sighting that I had, I would say he was doing fine.

That's all for this issue, but please, if you see anything that you think would be of interest on our Kayak Nature Tours, or if you would like to go on one of our tours, give me a call.

Keep up the good work!

**Connie Langmann, GAEA Guides**  
**239-694-5513**



## UPCOMING OUTINGS

**20 July 2002:** Visit the beautiful and hard fought and won Fisheating Creek (See related stories pages 1 & 2). Join us to take a leisurely canoe/kayak trip down Fisheating Creek, the only remaining pristine stream feeding Lake Okeechobee. It is judged by many to be the most beautiful paddling area in Florida, and at this time of year there's plenty of water! Meet at the Campground for paddling at 8:30 AM. Canoe or kayak rental is available for \$22.00 or bring your own boat! The shuttle to the put-in costs \$15.00/boat. Save some money and paddle with a friend. Take (old) exit 25 to highway 80 to Labell. Get on highway 29 North and then go left on highway 27. Turn at the sign for Fisheating Creek. Ellen Peterson's number at Fisheating Creek is **863-675-7855**.

**3 August 2002:** Picnic, Paddle, and Perspire. Unfortunately the Sierra Club Annual Picnic was cancelled due to rain, so we have re-scheduled and turned it into a combination picnic and paddle. Meet us at Koreshan State Park with a dish of food to share, some stories to tell, a comfortable chair, some bug spray, and a few dollars for a canoe ride on the lazy Estero River. We will meet at 4:00 PM and cool off in the canoes then start the picnic at 6:00 PM.

**September:** Mix up some frosty lemonade, go to your local public library and borrow your favorite National Geographic video or nature book. They have a great selection by the way. If you do not have a library card, slap yourself on the wrist and go get one today. Take a dip in the pool, and relax! No adventure trip this month; it's too darn HOT!

For more information on any of these trips contact Outings Chair Ryan Combs at **239-495-7962**. Remember, if you don't come out for the trips, who will?

### OUTINGS

1. Arrive 10 minutes before outing to get signed in. Every effort will be made to start outings on time. Please be prompt!
2. A small fee will be charged for every outing. All outings are rated *EASY* unless otherwise specified.
3. **IMPORTANT!** Call Leader first to be sure outing is still scheduled. You don't have to be a Sierra Club Member to come to an outing.  
*Everyone is welcome!*



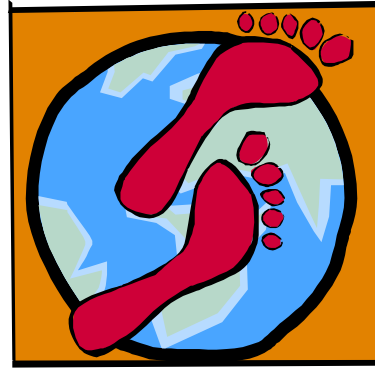
*See you at the Picnic!*

## Fisheating Creek

*Continued from page 1*

The picture Peterson can't stand is the doe's green meadow being turned into a parking lot for motor homes. That is the game commission's vision. Since the state will allow her to have only 40 RV's in the 80-acre campground at any given time, Peterson would rather park the coaches as was done in the campground's previous life, under a spreading oak here or in a small clearing in the scrub there. She thinks the natural woody setting of the campground should be compromised as little as possible. "The people who want a KOA should go down the road," Peterson said.

The FWCC wants to install a full-hookup RV park as efficiently as possible. And clearly, running PVC willy-nilly through the scrub would cost more than neat rows of metered concrete slabs. "They said, 'Don't fight us on this, Ellen, because you can't win,'" she said. The irony is that there need be no losers in this deal — least of all Fisheating Creek. Peterson is convinced that the RVers would gladly trade an occasional trip to the pump-out station to gain the seclusion of private, wooded campsites. And word of such a unique campground would spread like wildfire through close knit RV-land. Moreover, the state would save hundreds of thousands of dollars if it didn't pour the slabs and everything worked out. If things didn't, no lasting harm done. The shame would be for the state to push its own plan through, without letting Peterson's vision ever see the light of day.



## New Population Issue Chair

Kathleen (Sulli) Sullivan

At the FLEXCOM meeting in May I was appointed Issue Chair for Population, and I am looking for volunteers to form a Committee. I was on the Population Committee of the Pioneer Valley Sierra Club in Massachusetts before relocating to Florida. Most of my work involved showing videos and leading discussion groups in area high schools and colleges. This issue is important to me, and I am excited to have the opportunity to continue my work here.

Although controversial both and in and out of Sierra Club, a growing human population and the associated consumption are the roots of the environmental issues that concern us greatly here in Florida and around the world. There is much work to be done to ensure women's reproductive rights and educate the public, especially adolescents and young adults, on this issue.

The United Nations has established 11 July 2002 as World Population Day! This is an opportune time to get involved. If you feel you would like to help or would like more information on this topic, please feel free to contact me at **239-352-2725** or **kathleen.sullivan@syngenta.com**.

## Treated Sewage Has Little League Boss Crying foul

Kara Chalmers  
kara.chalmers@heraldtribune.com

The president of the Englewood Area Little League is upset that Sarasota County has put a pond of treated sewage water next to the ball fields at the Englewood Sports Complex off South River Road. Mimi Drew of the Division of Water Resource Management of Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) says, "All reclaimed water is extensively treated, with an emphasis on disinfection, to protect public health." What she means is that the law says it is to be highly treated to remove some "listed" contaminants while ignoring others. A fine example of FDEP enforcement is illustrated by the "kinder, gentler" regulation of the Miami-Dade injection scandal, below.

Florida is the only state in the U.S. that permits underground injection of "secondarily treated" municipal sewage into Class I UIC wells. This Class requires that effluents get discharged below an underground source of drinking water (USDW) and that there shall be "no migration" into an USDW. Under the watchful eye of the FDEP, growing plumes of effluent have been allowed since 1994 to continue rising into the lower Floridian Aquifer at Miami-Dade's huge SW WWTF, permitted (by FDEP & EPA) to inject 208 MGD. The operation of these 13 + 4 injection wells is backed up by 21 large, unlined surface lagoons, all of which intersect the Biscayne Aquifer, a "Sole Source Aquifer" for getting rid of treated" sewage during emergencies (e.g. hurricanes) or other

overflows/shutdowns. The + 4 are the new wells permitted 13 March 1999, almost 5 years after migration was detected.

So, it's plain to see what FDEP managers mean when they say, "to protect water quality and public health". The question that inevitably arises is: If that effluent is so highly treated as to be safe, why is it not safe to return to the potable water system for closing the 'loop of waste'?

For more information regarding this issue, contact:

**John S. Glenn**  
**Safe Drinking Water Issue Chair**  
**Florida Chapter Sierra Club**  
**214 North 17th Street**  
**Fernandina Beach, FL 32034-2608**  
**904-261-9468**  
<http://florida.sierraclub.org/issues/safewater.html>



## Fisheating Creek is Open!

*Continued from page 2*

We expect Clyde Butcher, our renowned photographer who once said that a visit to Fisheating Creek was the major factor in his decision to locate in Florida to pursue photography, and Diane Pierce, whose oil paintings of Florida's birds are hanging all over the country. There will be canoe and kayak races, Native American presentations, country and blue grass music as well as folk singers and many vendors vying for your attention.

*Come celebrate with us!*

## **EARTH DAY 2002**

Earth Day 2002 was celebrated with the First Annual Sierra Club Calusa Group Earth Day Festival at Koreshan State Park. This was a very successful event.

Participants included Save the Manatees, Estero Bay Buddies, Save What's Left, The Nature Conservancy, and Sierra Club.

Kayaks and canoes were available for free trips to enjoy the Estero River. Weeks Fish Camp provided eco-tours on the River. In addition, many visitors enjoyed environmental presentations.

Nathan Dyke of Rhythm Culture played world music, using many different instruments. The Lions Club was on hand with hot dogs and other standard American picnic fare.

This will be an annual event, so mark your calendars for next year: The Second Annual Earth Day Festival will be held **Saturday, 19 April 2003** at Koreshan State Park.



# MEMBERSHIP FORM

- Yes, I want to be a member of the Sierra Club*
- Yes, I want to give a gift certificate.*

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that a gift announcement card will be sent for my use. I've entered my name and address above and the recipient's name and address below.

Gift Recipient's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Categories

(Check One)	Individual	Joint
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	<input type="checkbox"/> \$43
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$60	<input type="checkbox"/> \$68
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$120	<input type="checkbox"/> \$128
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$19	<input type="checkbox"/> \$27
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250

PAYMENT METHOD:

CHECK     MASTERCARD     VISA

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

EXPIRATION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts, and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support 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.

Enclose payment information and mail to:

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Residents of Canada may remit in Canadian funds

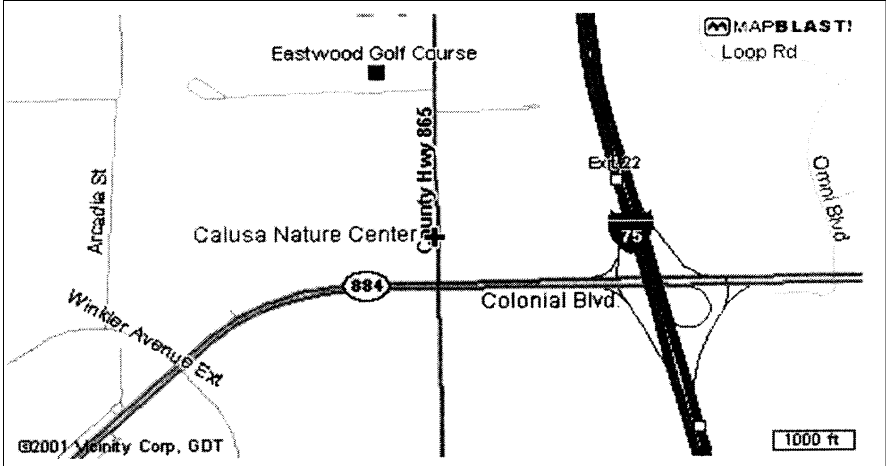
## The Sierra Club's Statement of Purpose:

**To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild spaces of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives**

### General Meeting

Second Thursday of Every Month  
 Calusa Nature Center Classroom  
**Next Meeting: 11 July 2002**  
 6:00 – 6:30 PM Socialize and Snack

6:30 – 7:30 PM Presentation  
7:45 – 9:00 PM Executive Committee Meeting for discussion of local issues  
*Everyone Welcome!*



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Bonita Springs, FL 34133