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Calusa Digest



Explore, Enjoy and Protect the Planet

Fall, 2007

JOIN US AT OUR MEETINGS

The first Thursday of each month, -6:30 PM at The Unitarian Universalist Church, (off Daniels Parkway)-13411 Shire Lane, Ft. Myers, FL 33912

For information call **Loren (239) 267-1566**

Brighter Future for Sunshine State?

Defenders of Wildlife eNews 8/3/07

Left unchecked, global warming could take its toll on



Florida panthers, sea turtles and other wildlife in the Sunshine State. With more than 1,200 miles of coastline and millions of acres of low-lying lands, wildlife in Florida - already facing shrinking habitat due to development -- may soon be left with fewer places to go as sea levels

rise and storms become more intense.

But last month, Governor Charlie Crist brought Florida to the forefront in the fight against global warming. The Governor hosted the Summit on Climate Change, bringing state, national and international leaders, scientists and business and environmental groups together to discuss one of the most important issues facing Florida. The Governor took immediate action, signing three executive orders requiring utilities to lower carbon dioxide emissions and mandating state agencies to conserve energy. He also signed two international agreements with Germany and Britain to tackle the global problem. These important first steps will help the state begin to address global climate change -- and help ensure a brighter future for Florida's wildlife.

CRIST SIGNED STRICT EMISSIONS ORDERS

BY MARY ELLEN KLAS,
Tue, Jul. 10, 2007, Miami Herald

Florida will adopt California's car-pollution standards . the toughest in the nation -- and become the first state in the Southeast to enact targets for reducing greenhouse gases, under executive orders signed by Gov. Charlie Crist in Miami.

Drafts of the orders released Tuesday would require the state secretary of environmental protection to immediately adopt rules to limit pollution-causing emissions for cars, diesel engines and electric companies. The orders also impose tough new energy conservation goals for state agencies, demand ."

better fuel efficiency from state-owned vehicles and require state cars to use ethanol and biodiesel fuels when locally available

CITY DENIES BONITA BAY'S REQUEST TO REDUCE EAGLE PROTECTIONEAGLE PROTECTION ZONE

By [Brad Kane \(Contact\)](#)

Originally published, June 25, 2007

Bald eagles are much more than a symbol in Bonita Springs. Not only are they a reality — the birds can be seen flying overhead — but they are a reality worth preserving, the Bonita Springs City Council decided Monday. Council members said they were ensuring the eagles' continued presence in the area by denying a request from Bonita Bay to reduce a nest protection zone by 67 percent to build 15 homes. As the federal government is about to take the national symbol off the threatened species list, the City Council on Monday showed local government's power in setting environmental policy. State and federal governments write the rules on the environment — rules that would have allowed Bonita Bay to build those 15 homes — but local government can decide how those rules apply on a case-by-case basis.

ORANGE PEELS

South Florida Sun -Sentennial, July 19, 2007

A tiny Boca Raton start-up got a big boost on Thursday from FPL Group, which will partner with Citrus Energy LLC to make ethanol from discarded orange peels.

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CLEAN WATER WIN, IF THE STATE AGREES

Sally Swartz, Palm Beach Post
Wednesday, May 30, 2007

Up in Florida's Panhandle, a test awaits Gov. Crist's Department of Environmental Protection. Will Secretary Michael Sole uphold a ruling that, finally, makes a paper mill stop polluting once-pristine Perdido Bay? This month, an administrative law judge denied the world's largest paper company, International Paper, a permit to build a discharge pipe to the bay and told the DEP to make the firm obey clean-water rules.

TORTOISE ENTOMBMENT LAID TO REST

Defenders of wild life 7/6/07

There's finally a light at the end of the burrow for Florida's gopher tortoises. Last month, the state decided to put an end to a policy that permitted developers to bury these long-lived reptiles. Since 1991, somewhere between 94,000 and 900,000 gopher tortoises have been buried alive to face a long, slow death by starvation.



Under the state's new policy, developers will now be required to move gopher tortoises to land where they will be protected. Further safeguards will take hold this Fall, including a "threatened" listing for the gopher tortoise under the state's list of protected species.

LETS SEE HOW CORRUPT IT REALLY IS

The Council of Civic Associations ATTACHMENT 1 to The House Committee on Natural Resources, May 9, 2007

The Council of Civic Associations (CCA) has requested a congressional investigation into permitting concerns in southwest Florida over what appears to be, "the disregard for the enforcement of existing laws that has become commonplace among governmental bodies at the federal, state and local levels."

The CCA, through the efforts of Ann Hauck, has been working closely with PEER (Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility) a Washington-based environmental watchdog organization that works to protect scientists and others employed by federal, state and local agencies from undue interference and political pressure. Phrases in quotation marks in this e-mail have been excerpted from numerous documents to give some idea of how egregious that pressure has been.

On May 9, 2007, Jeff Ruch, Executive Director, PEER addressed the U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Natural Resources and submitted CCA Attachment 1 into the congressional record. Following strict guidelines, Mr. Ruch gave oral testimony regarding input from scientists or other specialists who are "asked to shade or distort the truth in order to reach a pre-determined result, such as a favorable recommendation on a project."

(from *Testimony of Jeff Ruch, Executive Director, PEER, May 9, 2007, The House Natural Resources Committee. See list below*).

Quote from Jeff Ruch's presentation: " *In this morning's testimony, I will 1) describe how official manipulation and distortion of Endangered Species Act (ESA) science has become pervasive; 2) explain how scientists are often caught in the political crosshairs of their own agency management with little recourse; and 3) suggest how Congress can ameliorate this state of affairs.*"

NELSON WANTS OFFICIAL FIRED FOR GLADES MOVE

St. Petersburg Times, CRAIG PITTMAN, August 3, 2007

U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson plans to convene federal hearings into why Everglades National Park was taken off a United Nations environmental "danger" list at a time when restoration of the River of Grass has faltered.

He also wants the Bush administration official who pushed for the Everglades' removal from the list to be fired for going against the recommendations of scientists.

Nelson, D-Fla., sent a letter Thursday to U.S. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, blasting the Everglades move by Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior Todd Willens as "overreaching and inappropriate. ... This action is unacceptable and, I believe, warrants his removal."

NO BACK PUMPING FOR LAKE OKEECHOBEE

August 09, 2007

It seems that the agricultural industry, wanting to rid itself of an excess of polluted water, has decided to pump it back into Lake Okeechobee after they are done using it. But, hooray for the Southwest Florida Water Management District who voted to stop such action. The vote is as follows:

Dauray, Estinoz, Buermann and Meeker voted against back pumping S-3. Gutierrez moved to backpump it and he, Rooney and Thornton voted for it. Wade abstained and Collins was absent, or it probably would have been 4/4. We now know who our friends are on the district board.

The editor.

RED SNAPPER RECOVERY PLAN REACHES MILESTONE

Ocean Conservancy newsletter, August 2007

The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council has adopted a plan to end the chronic over fishing of red snapper and rebuild the Gulf's signature fish to sustainable levels. The plan will establish science-based catch levels and reduce unwanted "bycatch" significantly. In the long run, a healthy red snapper population will improve the ecological health of the Gulf and, ultimately, support catch levels over three times higher than present--a win-win for the Gulf's environment and its economy. "The Gulf Council ... is poised to reverse twenty years of fishery management failures. The new plan helps put red snapper on a course to true recovery," said Chris Dorsett of Ocean Conservancy.

Join Sierra Club Calusa Group Volunteers on Saturday, September

15th, to participate in the Annual Coastal Cleanup.

Time: 9 am – 12 noon

Location: Bonita Springs Beach (specific assigned site TBA)

Contact: Brigita Gahr to sign up at 239-337-1857 or bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Bring Along: Water, hat, sunscreen (gloves, plastic bags, pencils and item recording sheets will be provided by local sponsor- Keep Lee County Beautiful)

About the International Coastal Cleanup

On Saturday, September 15th, hundreds of thousands of people will descend on beaches, lakes, and streams all over the world to remove trash and debris — on land and under the water. Volunteers of all ages from every continent will form the largest one-day volunteer event on behalf of clean oceans and waterways — Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup.

Pollution prevention is the key

Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup isn't just about pollution cleanup — it's also about pollution prevention. The event focuses on educating and empowering people to become a part of the marine debris solution.

What makes the International Coastal Cleanup unique is its data collection component. Volunteers record specific types of marine debris being found, allowing Ocean Conservancy to compile, analyze and track this data year-by-year and make discoveries about the behaviors that cause the debris.

The final information is used to educate the public, business, industry, and government officials about the problem. We believe understanding the problem is the key to finding long-lasting solutions.

Crist Has Red-Lighted Toll Roads; Supporters Say Projects Aren't Stalled

By Gary Pinnell Hghlands Today

Published: June 7, 2007

SEBRING — Gov. Charlie Crist has called the Heartland Parkway "a road to nowhere" and won't endorse it, but central Florida supporters aren't giving up.

The toll road, a proposed 152-mile north-south highway from Orlando to Ft. Myers, is one of nine "Future Corridors," more than 1,000 miles of pay-per-ride roadways planned for rural Florida. As of today, they're all on hold, said a staffer with Florida's Turnpike Enterprise.

2007-08 Budget Ensures Continued Protection for Florida's Environment

Sarah Williams, (850) 245-2112 – office, 29 May 2007

TALLAHASSEE – Governor Charlie Crist signed the State's budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2007-08, increasing protection for Florida's natural resources and diversifying our energy resources. With a strong commitment to the environment, Governor Charlie Crist, Lt. Governor Jeff Kottkamp and the Florida Legislature have provided nearly \$2.5 billion to revitalize Lake Okeechobee and America's Everglades, conserve our oceans, restore water quality and secure the State's energy future. For more information, visit www.myflorida.com or www.dep.state.fl.us.

WHO WE ARE

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Sierra Club Calusa Group Autumn, 2007 Outings & Training

All participants are required to sign a liability waiver on Sierra Club outings (www.sierraclub.org/outings/national/participantforms/waiver.asp). Unless a fee is noted, suggested voluntary donations for outings are \$3 for Sierra Club members/ \$5 non-members.

Sept. 1, Sat. 8-10 a.m. Hike near Hickey's Creek (East of Fort Myers). Join us for a 2-mile leisurely walk through an oak and cabbage palm hammock that borders a cypress swamp. Long pants and closed-toe shoes are suggested, as we will not be following an established trail. Bring at least one quart of water, sunscreen, and a hat. Limited to 15 participants. Reserve with Joe at 239-265-8485, frogandbutterfly@earthlink.net or Brigita at 239-3371857, bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Sept. 15, Sat. 9 a.m. - 12 noon. Coastal Cleanup- Bonita Springs Beach. Volunteer to assist with this annual international effort sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy, to clean waterways and record specific types of marine debris. Tally sheets, pencils, gloves, and plastic bags will be provided. Bring water, a hat, and sunscreen. We would like to get as many people out there as possible (children and adults) to help with this event! To sign up, contact Brigita at 239-337-1857 or bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Oct. 7, Sun. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Fisheating Creek Paddle (Palmdale- north of LaBelle). This is one of the most pristine areas through which to paddle in SW Florida. Cypress trees that overhang this creek provide partial shade. You can jump in the shallow water along the way to cool down. We will use the shuttle service (\$20 per boat) so that we can paddle downstream with the current. The trip can take up to 4 hours; therefore you must have some paddling experience. Canoe rentals are available for an additional fee. Limited to 14 people. Reserve with Brigita at 239-337-1857, bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Oct 20, Sat. Outing Leader Training 101 Location in the Tampa Bay Area. For more details contact: Rudy Scheffer, 727.726.8375 or email:rudy@adventuresworldwide.com. Please note that Calusa Group members are eligible for a training stipend that will cover up to \$50 of training-related costs, such as first aid certification. We could use some additional outing leaders! For training stipend questions, contact outing chair (Brigita) at 239-337-1857 or bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Oct. 27, Sat. 6-8 p.m. Full Moon Calusa Ghost Tour on Pine Island Sound. Take a guided canoe trip through history in a 14-seat canoe, the Calusa King's Caalos 1, to hear tales about Spanish explorers, modern-day pirates, and the curses of the ancient Calusa mounds! In addition to a leisurely paddle through these ancient islands, we will also take a half-mile walk through an archeological site of the Calusa Indians. Tour fee is \$22.40 per person (this includes a 10% group discount). Wear wettable shoes to launch, and bring insect repellent and water. Limited to 16 participants so reserve early! Contact Brigita at 239-337-1857, bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Nov. 17, Sat. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Clam Bayou Paddle and Picnic (Sanibel Island). Bird lovers will especially enjoy this leisurely paddle through an area frequented by water birds and an occasional eagle. Bring a picnic lunch to eat on Bowman's Beach, as well as a swimsuit if you would like to cool off in the Gulf of Mexico after kayaking/canoeing. If you do not have your own boat, contact Me for rental options at 239-472-8973. Limited to 12 participants. Reserve early with Brigita at 239-337-1857, bbgahr@embarqmail.com

Dec. 2-10, Costa Rica Trip sponsored by the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Sierra Club. This outing is based in an Ecolodge located in a high elevation rain forest as well as a Jungle Lodge on the Pacific Coast. For more information

ORGANIC BYTES 7/12/02

SOLUTION OF THE WEEK:

The best looking organic lawn in the block

Relax: Don't be afraid to let your average lawn height be higher than the local putting green. Taller grass has deeper roots, which requires less watering.

Seed: You get what you pay for. If you need to seed bare spots in your lawn, be aware that cheaper grass seeds tend to have more weed contamination than higher end products.

Weed: Use a dandelion digging fork instead of purchasing dangerous pesticides.

Mulch: Grass clippings can provide the majority of nutrients needed by a lawn.

Fertilize: For yards that require fertilization, most garden centers now carry organic fertilizers that are better for your lawn and the environment.

Mow: Use electric, rechargeable or push mowers. Mow grass when it's dry and make sure the blade is sharp to reduce damage to grass.

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 6, 6:30 PM excom at Cullum,s house to see water heater

October 4, 6:30 PM Excom no program

Oct 6th, Sat. Marti Red Tide at 10AM We should be there if possible

Oct 25th environmental breakfast

Nov. 10 the picnic, from 11:00am - when ever. (it's a pot luck) anyone wanting to come brings a dish, we need folks who are coming to contact me to RSVP at 495-5891 or email me at bleegruning@comcast.net I will keep track of who is bringing what so we don't get 9 people bringing brownies. We are going to have an out door round table discussion, Don will be our facilitator. The discussion will be focusing on how we can better net work together to do environmental activism. We will eat at 12:00. The round table will be at 1:00. We are going to ask everyone to be sure to bring a folding chair. We will end the day with a drumming circle. It will be a great time to relax and just mingle with like minded people.

Dec..6th potluck excom no program at Ellen's

Jan 3, 6:30 the burrowing owl presentation. Carl

CONGRESS NEVER VOTED \$10M COCO RD--ALASKA'S YOUNG SWITCHED GAVE 1-75 \$ TO COCO AFTER BILL PASSED

August 08, 2007 Released by Metropolitan planning Organization Chair, Carla Brooks Johnston

Lee MPO chair Carla Brooks Johnston released an independent research report questions which she deemed critical to the MPO's making an informed decision on how to spend the \$10 million earmarked for a Coconut road I-75 interchange.

The findings were interesting. Congress didn't vote \$10 million for a Coconut Rd. interchange; Congress voted \$10 million for I-75 widening and improvement. It appears that a little mutual back scratching was going on all the way from Alaska. It also appears that these funds can be allocated for other priority usage.

Membership

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Enclose check and mail to **Sierra Club**

P.O. Box 52968 Boulder CO 80322-2968

Calusa Chapter 3303

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

to the board

Are you seeking a mission, want to become involved in a useful cause? Volunteer some time and energy.

Have leadership skills? Become our new **chairperson**.

Would you make a good **secretary**? We are looking for you.

Is conservation your thing? **Conservation** chair open.

Join our merry band of Earth savers.

SIERRA CLUB-CALUSA GROUP

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ESTERO, FL

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WE'RE ON THE WEB VISIT US

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