



Calusa Digest



No. 4

Serving Southwest Florida

Fall, 2004

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Make a difference in 2005:

1. Plant native species.
2. Look into buying a hybrid car.
3. Join Sierra's monthly meetings.
4. Recycle.
5. Try an outing.

"Gulf Still in Distress"

Sierra Club will be hosting its second annual Gulf Still in Distress Presentation with the City of Bonita Springs as a co-host. The presentation will be held March 16, 2005 at the Bonita Springs Community Center located on Old US 41, across from Riverside Park. The event will start at 9:00 am and end at 4:45 pm. in Bonita Springs. The event will present the anticipated results of the water quality work done by Dr. Larry Brand of University of Miami, Dr. Brian Lapointe of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, Dr. David Cielly of The Conservancy Nature Center.

Some of the animals that can be found at Babcock Ranch are the Florida panther, gopher tortoise, black bear, white tail deer, turkey, several bird species, alligators and even the Florida range cow. Naturally, the Ranch also is home to many other animals like the raccoon, squirrel, and the opossum. This property is one of the largest pieces of privately owned land being considered for public use.

It has been the hope of conservationist's and animal lovers to provide wildlife corridors with in the state of Florida. These corridors will allow many animals to roam and breed. The Babcock Ranch will

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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What are your environmental goals for 2005?

We would love to hear about them, so please join us for our monthly meetings located at Calusa Nature Center in Ft Myers. The meetings are held the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 pm.

In February, we hope to have a shorter than normal meeting followed by appetizers and beverages at RJ Gators on Colonial Blvd. What do you have to lose? Come on help us save the planet and have some fun.

For more information: call Lori Glenn 992-1565.

Do you like to travel, meet people and speak your mind? If you answered yes, then you may be interested in the position of Flex-Com representative for the Calusa Group. * Travel expenses are paid for.

Big Cypress Bend/Fakahatchee Strand Outing

Sunday December 5th 2004

Thirteen eager hikers met leaders Brigita Gahr and Gail Swanson at 9 a.m. on a clear, cool morning at the entrance to the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk, off the Tamiami Trail several miles west of Collier-Seminole Park, doused themselves liberally with mosquito repellents and set out along the 3/4 mile boardwalk. The water level was low, and we heard quite a few birds, though most were elusive to the eye. We did get a splendid look at a red-shouldered hawk, which posed for the photographs of those with zoom lenses.

At the end of the boardwalk there were no alligators or turtles—the usual denizens of the water hole there—but several herons: great blue, tri-color, immature little blue, and an immature yellow-crowned night heron whose stillness and camouflage challenged spotting. There were a few egrets and white ibis, including one great egret that perched high in a cypress tree.

On the way back we stopped to look at an eagle's nest in a topless cypress tree, and were surprised to see something moving about in it—what we couldn't determine. A pileated woodpecker called and pecked, but wasn't clearly seen except in flight. Other woodpeckers and some warblers teased and disappeared. A ruddy daggerwing butterfly brightened the path near the parking area, and a giant swallowtail swished across the path into the trees.

Piling back into our cars, we drove another eight or so miles east to SR29 and turned north for a couple of miles to the turn-off for Jane's Scenic Drive, leaving the cars at the ranger station and distributing ourselves into four heavy-duty vehicles for the trip into the strand. Along the way we saw many egrets and other herons, as well as black vultures.

Parking at Gate #12, we doused ourselves again with mosquito repellent, and now, as it was near noon, with sunscreen as well, and set off up the old logging tram road, recently trimmed for ease of walking. The path is lined on both sides with swamp, full of crinum lilies, pickerel weed in bloom, a lettuce lake, a few water lilies, cypress and some hardwoods for fall color, bedecked with tillandsia and large bromeliads (not in bloom but colorful still), and profuse with several kinds of ferns.

Forty-five minutes walk along the road through magnificent stands of native royal palms brought us to an old "cracker" cabin, built in 1957 and maintained by Ballard, a sign on the door said. There was a hand pump for washing hands—with soap--and a medicine cabinet with a mirror on the front porch, and an outhouse, complete with moon-shaped window, on down the path. On the dock behind the cabin was a six-foot alligator who ignored us for the entire time we were there (though we all tiptoed out to take photos), and another, smaller one, who posed handsomely on a log next to the dock, apparently waiting his turn to get onto the structure. Larger alligators patrolled the medium-sized lake beyond. A few yards past the outhouse, along a cleared path, two more young gators guarded a wooden footbridge, so that was the end of our walk in that direction. Continued on page 3

Continued from page 4

We neither saw nor heard many birds along the tram road, but again there was a butterfly mascot, this time a white peacock, that flitted about in the clearing in front of the cabin, where by now everyone was eating lunch and taking pictures of each other taking pictures, and of the alligators digesting. As usual with Sierra Club outings, people found common interests and chatted away happily. Brigita and Gail created a pleasant, cheerful ambience.

Back at the parking area by about 1:45, we returned to our own cars—some to continue to Smallwood’s Store in Chokoloskee, only about three miles south of the intersection to SR29 and the Tamiami Trail, others to continue east to Clyde Butcher’s studio, and others to return to Naples and Ft. Myers. The drive back along the Trail was pretty spectacular, with flocks of egrets hanging out near the highway in several places, and plentiful cormorants and kingfishers lining the wires, with hawks, wood storks and the ubiquitous vultures soaring above.

Suzanne Ferguson
Ft. Myers, Florida



Sierra Club Outings

All participants are required to sign a liability waiver on Sierra Club outings. You may preview the sign-in sheet and liability waiver form at <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapters/forms> .) Or call 415-977-5528

Saturday & Sunday, February 19-20, Camping at Myakka River State Park. Explore one of Florida's oldest state parks developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. Outing activities will include: a boat tour, night hike & campfire, choice of biking or canoeing (rentals available), 4 group meals, and a unique opportunity to explore the treetops on a canopy walkway! You can also climb the 70-foot tower for a spectacular view of wetlands, forest and prairie. \$45 members/\$50 non-members (children 12 & under- \$10 discount). For more information contact Brigita at (239) 337-1857 or bbgahr@msn.com . Limited to 15 participants, reserve by 2/13. Extra tent available.

More Outings

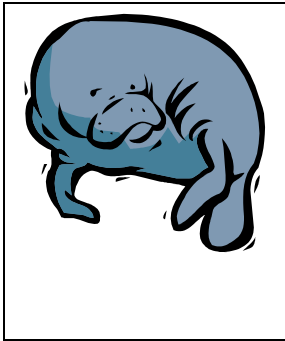
Outings are held every month on the Sunday following our general meeting (which is the 2nd Thursday of every month). We hike in various spectacular locations throughout the Southwest Florida area. The hikes are not terribly strenuous, so your average Sunday hiker can accompany us. The outings last from 9AM until Noon. Some of the places that we hike throughout the year:

Babcock/Webb Wildlife Management Area
Estero Bay Buffer Preserve
CREW (Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed)
Hickey Creek Mitigation Area

Outing Leader Training

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!



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:

SIERRA CLUB

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

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Residents of Canada may remit in Canadian funds

Extreme Weather from Extreme Warming

For years many scientists have been telling us we need to change our dependence on fossil fuels and find a cleaner energy source. The early warning signs of Global Warming are here and I recommend all decision makers take these signs quite seriously. In 2001, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated “An increasing body of observations gives a collective picture of a warmer world and other climate change.”

In a research report by _____, published in Science magazine on Feb 13, 1998. The report explains that hurricanes could be stronger, more frequent and produce more rain from the effects of global warming. When the ocean is a few degrees warmer

Some of the documented signs recorded to date are as follows, glaciers melting, ocean warming, Arctic and Antarctic warming, heat waves and other unusual weather patterns. The secondary events that have occurred are hurricanes (more frequent and intense), coral reef bleaching, droughts, floods and fires, extreme weather conditions, early spring arrival, spreading of disease, shift and change in plant and animal population.

Since 1945, the Antarctic Peninsula temperature has increased about 4.5 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature increase contributed to the Larsen A, 770 sq mile ice shelf to disintegrate. In 1998-99 the 1,150 sq mile Larsen B & Wilkins ice shelf collapsed. The collapse of these and other glaciers have caused the ocean to warm, rise and expand. When the ocean is warmer hurricanes, floods and coastal erosion are apparent. Worldwide heat waves have been increasing with the birth of the industrial revolution.

A record heat wave occurred in the US in 1998-99, causing drought and fire. In 1998, Florida had 485,000 acres of land and 300 homes burned due to drought and the mismanagement of its wetlands, including the Everglades. Deforestation around the world has contributed to the increased global temperature. There has been a trend in entire animal populations to shift and decline due to climate change. In Canada, the Caribou has declined from 24,000 in 1961 to 1100 in 1997; this is due to extreme snow storms covering the animal's food. In fact other areas are experiencing weather as never seen before.

By: Lori Glenn
Conservation Chair
Calusa Group

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 Meetings

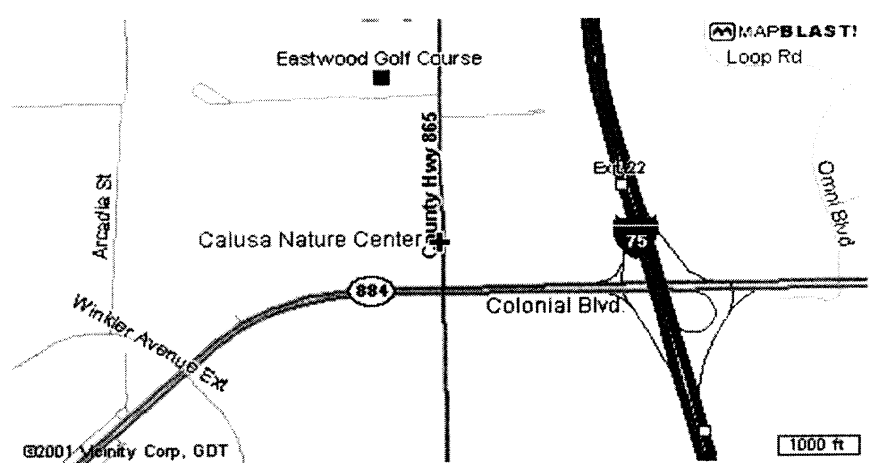
Second Thursday of Every Month

Calusa Nature Center Classroom

All General Meetings are followed by the Executive Committee Meeting at 7:30 PM

Everyone Welcome!

Please recycle this newsletter!



Sierra Club Calusa Group

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