



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Calusa Digest



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SERVING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

FEBRUARY, 2000

Index

Dolphins	1
Outings News	2
Outings	2
Tooth Fairy	2
Meeting	3
Global Warming	3
Endangered Criteria	4
Urban Growth Myths	5
Growth Management	5

DOLPHINS ARE BEING SACRIFICED FOR FREE TRADE WTO Politics Weakens U.S. Tuna Label

The issue of dolphins being drowned in nets set for tuna is a tragic example of how trade politics and the World Trade Organization (WTO) influence is prompting the Clinton Administration and Congress to override hard-won U.S. environmental laws. Earth Island Institute and the Dolphin Safe/Fair Trade Campaign (environmental and animal welfare organizations) are working to keep the "dolphin safe" label -- found on all canned tuna in the U.S. since 1990 -- honest.

Since 1990, the "dolphin safe" label can only be applied to any tuna caught without chasing and netting of dolphins by fishermen (e.g. non-encirclement of dolphins). Tuna fishermen in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (ETP) target dolphins because tuna and dolphins form mixed schools. Over the past 4 decades, the tuna fishery has killed more than 7 million dolphins, the largest killing of marine mammals in history. The advent of the "dolphin safe" tuna program and the closure of markets to dolphin-deadly tuna have been principal factors in a 97% reduction in dolphin deaths in the ETP. However, tuna industry millionaires in Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela teamed up with free-trade advocates in the Clinton Administration and Congress in 1997 to undercut U.S. dolphin

protection laws and open U.S. markets to dolphin-deadly tuna. President Clinton and Congress responded to a threat from the Mexican government to cause an embarrassing international fight at the WTO over the U.S. tuna embargo which prohibits imports of dolphin-deadly tuna.

On April 29th, 1999, U.S. Commerce Secretary William Daley agreed to weaken the federal definition of "dolphin safe" on canned tuna labels. The Secretary, ignoring his own scientists, ruled that chasing and netting dolphins does NOT cause significant adverse impacts, and, as a consequence, the standards by which tuna is judged to be "dolphin safe" are to be weakened to allow chase, harassment, netting, injuring, and even killing of dolphins when catching tuna, as long as an on-board observer reports no dolphins killed outright or "seriously injured." Even the federal government's own scientists have agreed that dolphin populations in the ETP are not recovering, despite the dramatically lower reported kills of recent years. David Phillips, Director of Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project, stated, "President Clinton and Vice President Gore have totally caved

continued on page 6



Executive Board Meeting

MONDAY
FEBRUARY 7, 2000
7:00 P.M.

EVERYONE WELCOME!
CALL ELLEN PETERSON
992-5455
FOR DIRECTIONS

OUTINGS NEWS

We had over 30 people turn out for the Fakahatchee Swamp Walk! Some Sierra Club members from as far away as Tampa made the trip down. We were led by the exuberant Mike Owens, the Strand biologist, who never misses a plant and always makes the hike interesting. We spotted 14 species of orchids, at least two of them endangered.

An upcoming event that promises to be very popular is the first Calusa Outdoor Gear Day on Saturday, Feb. 12th. This will be hosted by Koreshan State Park, and will feature outdoor gear of all types, from hiking to kayaking. Don't miss this exciting event for all ages! We need a few volunteers to help at the booth and with the gear. Please call Kristi at 275-7831, Julia at 432-0111 or Lynn at 269-6645 if you can help between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. It is always best to call the outings leader before attending an outing, to make sure it is still on.

OUTINGS

Feb 5 (Sat) Collier Seminole State Park Service Outing. 10 am –3 pm. We need Help! This is your chance to “give something back” to the environment! Meet at the hiking trail about 7/10 mile on the left past the main park entrance, on US 41. We will be doing light trail maintenance, such as lopping and weed whacking. We'll also survey sections of the trail for future placement of trail and distance markers. Long pants and a long sleeve shirt is recommended, as the mosquitoes can be numerous. Bring water and a snack. Rated moderate. Call Lynn Livingston at 941-269-6645 for details.

Feb 12 (Sat) Outdoor Gear Day at Koreshan State Historic Site. 10:00am - 2:00pm. Join us to learn how to select & purchase the proper equipment for your outdoor activities. Several local outfitters and vendors will be on hand to help with your needs. Everything from camping & hiking to Kayaking gear will be on display. Refreshments will be provided.

Koreshan is located on U.S. 41 in Estero, directly across from Corkscrew Road. Exit 19 on I 75, then west. Call Kristi Decker at 941-275-7831 or Julia Habel at 941-432-0111.

Feb 18-20 (Fri-Sun) Everglades Canoe/Kayak Campout. FULL. Call Kristi Decker at 941-275-7831 or Julia Habel at 941-432-0111 for details and reservation.

Feb 23 (Wed) Monthly Membership Meeting. 7 pm at FGCU. Refreshments will be served during our social hour. An environmental program will follow at 7:30 pm. Come meet your fellow members, officers and enjoy the program. The meeting is in bldg. 3, room 102. Please park in Lot#2. FGCU is just east of exit 19 off I-75.

Feb 26 (Sat) Biking and Hiking in South Golden Gate. 10:30 am. There is a fascinating story about the fortunately failed efforts to develop this area into another Lehigh Acres. Now it is slated to be returned to the wild as a part of the Everglades Restoration Project. There are many bikeable roads and hikeable lanes in this domain of the panther and the black bear. Sturdy, comfortable shoes are a necessity. Bring water and lunch. Meet at the entrance to the Picayune State Forest on Everglades Blvd just as

you cross over I 75 going south. Everglades Blvd intersects Immokalee Rd, Oil Well Road or Golden Gate Blvd. Details from Charles Holmes 941-540-0599 or cfholmes@mindspring.com.

Mar 4 (Sat) Hickey's Creek Hike. 10:30 am. We'll hike about 4-5 miles on this Lee County property from the trailhead to Hickey's creek. This is prime Scrub Jay habitat, as well as many other critters. We'll see some of the areas being prepared for regular hiking trails. Bring water and good hiking boots. Exit 25 on I 75 and go east on highway 80 to Bateman Rd, at least 12 miles. The trailhead is about a mile south of SR 80 on Bateman Rd, after the road turns to dirt. Watch for the Sierra Club sign and park along the shoulder of the road. Possible lunch stop afterwards at Wendy's restaurant on highway 80. Call Lynn Livingston at 941-269-6645 for details.

Mar 11-12 (Sat-Sun) Caloosahatchee Regional Park Campout for Women only. This is rustic camping with pit toilets. Outdoor showers are available. Call Kristi Decker at 941-275-7831 or Julia Habel at 941-432-0111 for details.



Tooth Fairy Project

The goal of the Baby Teeth Study is to measure the levels of radioactive strontium 90 in children's teeth. Your help is needed to obtain at least 5000 teeth from all over the country of children born after 1970. If you still have your children's teeth in your collection, please help with this important study. Call 1-800-582-3716 or visit their website at <http://www.radiation.org>.

Monthly Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 23 at 7:00 p.m.

By now, you should know that the Calusa Group is having a monthly meeting for everyone at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU). The meeting starts with a social hour for folks to mingle, ask questions and maybe make new friends.

A program with an environmental theme follows the social, and the February program features a presentation by Wayne Daltry, Director of SWF Regional Planning Council, and should be outstanding. If you missed the Everglades program in January, don't miss this one!

Our Calusa Group has over 900 members, and we'd like to see you at the meeting. There will also be information tables, where you can sign up for volunteer activities or just get information about our group. Remember, everyone is welcome, you don't have to be a member to come.

The meeting is in bldg. 3, room 102. Please park in Lot#2. FGCU is just east of exit 19 off I-75.

Conference on Global Warming

The Greatest Environmental Challenge of the 21st Century!

Help shape Florida's global warming policy at the "Blueprint for Cooling Down Florida Conference presented by the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Alliance for Florida's Future, a partnership of environmental, business, and civic organizations.

The one-day conference will focus on fast-tracking existing solutions to help put the brakes on global warming to protect Florida's environment, economy, and quality of life. The conference is scheduled for Thursday, February 17 at the Eckerd College of Continuing Education Conference Center in St. Petersburg. Registration is \$35 and includes breakfast and lunch.

A limited number of overnight accommodations are available at the Conference Center at \$70 a night, single or double.

To make reservations call 727-864-8020 or 727-864-8313. Room Reservation Deadline: February 7. Conference Registration Deadline February 14.

Niki Blair
Project Manager
Alliance For Florida's Future
Tampa Office
6 Belleview Blvd. #405
Belleair, FL 33756
727-445-9238 phone
727-445-1287 fax
ablair6626@aol.com



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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SIERRA CLUB, CALUSA GROUP
<http://www.sierraclub.org/chapters/fl/calusa/index.htm>

POST OFFICE BOX 345
Esteros, FL 33948

Ellen Peterson
Chair 992-5455
yepeterson@juno.com

Wes Wilkins
Vice Chair 352-5601

Fay Phillips
Secretary/Treasurer
Newsletter 283-5812
FayPhil@AOL.com

Gary Beardsley
Conservation 948-1600

Bobbie Lee Hasty
Agency for Bay Management
Committee 992-9061

Karen Cartwright
Publicity 992-1025
buff@peganet.com

Shirley Sheehan
Membership 947-1823

Lynn Livingston
Outings, Webmaster 269-6645
redwingnut@sprintmail.com

John Swingle
Legislative 693-3854

Cullum Hasty
Lands Management
Committee 992-9061

PROTECT JOBS AND ANIMALS, RULES SAY

Wildlife officials must take into account the economics of saving endangered species.

LAKE BUENA VISTA — From now on, when the state's wildlife agency considers adding another animal to its list of endangered species, it must consider the economy as well as the biology.

In the past, whenever state biologists became concerned that a species was in danger of disappearing, that was all it took to add that species to the list. But new rules approved Friday by the state Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission now call for a two-step process, one that has some environmental groups worried.

From now on, when state biologists become concerned about a species' survival, their work will be reviewed by other scientists. If their work passes the scientific review, then the animal becomes a candidate to be added to the state's list of species that are of "special concern," "threatened" or, if they are about to disappear completely, "endangered." The game commission's staff would then draw up a management plan that takes into account the social and economic impact of protecting the new species — in other words, how it might affect a business like logging or farming, whether jobs might be lost, or what effect it would have on developers' ability to put a subdivision on the animal's habitat.

The staff would also propose incentives to get private landowners to help save the species, since the majority of wildlife in Florida is found on privately owned property. Only then would commissioners vote on adding the new species to the list.

Laurie Macdonald of St. Petersburg, who coordinates the Habitat for

Bears Campaign for Defenders of Wildlife, warned commissioners Friday that she and other environmentalists are worried about that second step. Could the economic consequence of saving a species overrule the science-based decision? That would undermine the whole idea of listing a species as endangered, she said.

Game commission Executive Director Allen Egbert stopped short of guaranteeing that concerns about lost jobs or property rights would never overturn a science-based decision that a species was on the verge of oblivion.

But he said that once biologists propose saving a species, the new rules "do not contemplate a change in status" as a result of the second step.

Egbert was less receptive to Macdonald's two other concerns: that there is no time limit on how long the second step can take, and little restriction on anything but intentional killing of the animal while it awaits that second step. The new rules should set a limit of a year, she said, and forbid destroying the animal's habitat.

"Habitat protection is necessary or else the species is going to die," she said.

Egbert said setting a deadline for writing the management plan would put too big a burden on his already overworked staff, and that expanding protection to include habitat would go too far.

There are currently 118 birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals on the state game commission's list. The last time the game commission tried to add to the list was four years ago, when biologists became worried about a bird called the white ibis.

Ranchers objected to protecting the ibis. They feared regulations to save the bird would restrict their ability to

use their land. But they said they found it difficult to get the game commission to pay attention to their concerns.

They got the Legislature's attention, though. Lawmakers threatened to withhold millions from the agency's budget and Sen. Charles Bronson, R-Satellite Beach, warned that saving the ibis would "drastically . . . affect the economics of the state of Florida."

In the end, the Legislature relented, the ibis was protected and since then there has been no ibis-related economic disaster. But the ibis debacle spurred the game commission to re-examine its listing process. The new rules were endorsed Friday by a representative of the state Chamber of Commerce, and passed the commission on a 5-0 vote. The rules take effect June 30, the day before the game commission merges with another agency to become the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The new agency may see its first test of the new rules with one of three species, according to Frank Montalbano, chief of the commission's Division of Wildlife. Developers soon will ask the agency to take gopher tortoises off the list, Montalbano said, while conservationists will be seeking to raise it from "special concern" status to "threatened." There may also be petitions to add two new species to the list: the Eastern diamondback rattlesnake and blind dummy cave shrimp.

By CRAIG PITTMAN

[http://www.sptimes.com/News/51599/State/](http://www.sptimes.com/News/51599/State/Protect_jobs_and_anim.shtml)

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URBAN GROWTH MEANS LOWER TAXES AND OTHER MYTHS

By Donella H. Meadows

.We need to bring in business to bring down taxes. This development will give us lots of jobs. Environmental protection will hurt the economy. Growth is good for us. If we've heard those arguments once, we've heard them a thousand times, stated with the utmost certainty and without the slightest evidence. That's because there is no evidence. Or rather, there is plenty of evidence, most of which disproves these deeply held pro-growth beliefs. Here is a short summary of some of the evidence from Eben Fodor's book entitled, "Better, Not Bigger":

1. Growth provides needed tax revenues. Check out the tax rates of cities larger than ours. The general rule seems to be that the larger the city the higher the taxes. Growth doesn't pay its way.
 2. We have to grow to provide jobs. There's no guarantee that new jobs will go to locals.
 3. We must stimulate and subsidize business growth to have good jobs. A "good business climate" is one with little regulation, low business taxes, and various public subsidies to business. (A study by the Chamber of Commerce and the business press showed that states with the best business ratings actually have lower growth in per-capita incomes than others.
 4. Environmentalists are just another special interest group. A developer who will directly profit from a project is a special interest. A citizen with no financial stake is fighting for the public interest, the long term, the good of the whole community.
- There are 12 of these and we bet you can't wait to read more in next months newsletter. We're copying it from the St. Petes Sierra Club newsletter.

Call to Action


Growth Management Forum

We Need You on February 29

Southwest Florida Region, (February 29, 2000). The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is holding 11 "Growth Management Forums" around the state in January and February as part of the effort by DCA and Governor Bush to review and possibly revise the mechanisms by which land development decisions in Florida are made. These meetings will help shape the Bush Administration's approach to considering proposed changes to the Growth Management Act. You can bet that those who want to destroy the Growth Management Act will attend these meetings in force - so it is really important that environmental leaders and others who want to keep and strengthen the act turn out in significant numbers. We really need the input of every person in SW Florida who cares about the environment to come to the forum. Each meeting is being held in conjunction with a Regional Planning Council and includes an afternoon (2-5 PM) and an evening (6-9 PM) session. It will be at the Harborside Convention Complex, 1375 Monroe Street, Ft. Myers, FL. You can help by:

- **Speaking out for stronger growth management**
- **Speaking out for stronger anti-sprawl controls**
- **Speaking out for greater protection for natural resources of SWF concern** (Everglades; State Parks, preserves, C.A.R.L. lands; State Aquatic Preserves; Outstanding Florida Waters, Endangered & Threatened Species Habitats, etc.)
- **Speak out for incentives to direct growth to appropriate urban places** (And, away from rural lands prime farm lands, sensitive habitats).

Collier County was recently slapped with a moratorium on continued growth outside the urban boundary for failure to comply with state statutes. The Collier County commissioners are doing everything in their power to continue their non-compliance, and weaken the order. It is very important that you come to the forum, even if you don't speak. You can bet the developers and their paid lobbyists will be there in force!

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Please mail this to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, Colorado, 80322-2968	

continued from page 1

in to trade pressure, and the result is the weakening of dolphin protections and more dead dolphins." He continued, "U.S. consumers have made it clear -- they do not want to buy tuna caught by killing and injuring thousands of dolphins."

Earth Island Institute is expanding its efforts to ensure that consumer's voices are heard and that the world's largest tuna companies -- StarKist, Chicken of the Sea, and Bumblebee -- which comprise 90% of the U.S. tuna market, maintain their current strong standards for "dolphin safe" tuna (no encirclement of dolphins with nets), regardless of the weakened federal standards adopted by the Secretary of Commerce. Earth Island is following up with supermarket chains and restaurants, as

well as many foreign tuna canning companies, to adopt the same pledge from these retail and wholesale sources of tuna.

Earth Island is enlisting grassroots activists to support tuna companies that maintain the strong "dolphin safe" standards and press retail stores and restaurants to buy only truly "dolphin safe" tuna. Earth Island Institute is going to court to challenge to challenge the weakening of the federal "dolphin safe" standards and to keep falsely labeled dolphin-deadly tuna from U.S. supermarket shelves. Earth Island and nine other environmental and animal welfare organizations filed our first lawsuit on August 18, 1999, to overturn the Commerce Secretary's decision to weaken the "dolphin safe" label. A second lawsuit to block the lifting of the tuna embargoes against coun-

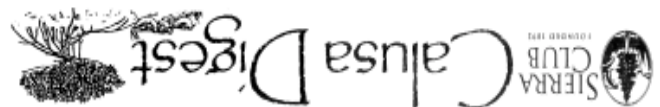
tries which continue to target and kill dolphins in tuna nets is in preparation.

For further information, contact Earth Island Institute's International Marine Mammal Project, (415) 788-3666 or <marinemammal@earthisland.org>.

VIDEO AVAILABLE: Broadcast quality video footage of the devastating effects of tuna nets on dolphins is available by calling Earth Island (415) 788-3666.

Ed Lytwak
Policy Coordinator
GrassRoots Environmental Effectiveness Network
A project of Defenders of Wildlife
1101 14th Street, NW, Ste. 1400
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 682-9400 x 289

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