



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Calusa Digest



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SERVING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MARCH, 2000

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Executive Board Meeting

MONDAY
MARCH 6, 2000
7:00 P.M.

EVERYONE WELCOME!
CALL ELLEN PETERSON
992-5455
FOR DIRECTIONS

PROPOSED LEGISLATION THREATENS OUR NAVIGABLE LAKES AND RIVERS

The Florida Farm Bureau and large timber interests are pressing for new legislation that would convert hundreds of navigable lakes and rivers into private property.

Under long-standing law, enshrined in the Florida Constitution, the navigable waters are held in trust for public use such as boating, fishing and hunting. If the proposed legislation passes, timber companies would be able to cut down the cypress forests that line many of the state's waterways, while agricultural interests and developers would be able to drain or fill shallow marshes that often line the shores of waterways.

The proposed bill would convert public lakes and rivers to the private property of the adjacent landowner. This would be accomplished by passing a law saying that if any state agency ever issued a deed that contained a navigable lake or river without mentioning that fact, the lake or river would become private property. The navigable waters would also have to be listed on the tax rolls as private property in order for the adjacent private owner to gain title. The Farm Bureau and timber interests will argue that they are unfairly paying property taxes on navigable lakes and rivers without enjoying the full privileges of ownership. This is simply not true. Most county property appraisers either do not charge property tax on navigable lands, or charge a nominal fee for record keeping purposes—normally about one dollar a year per acre.

Over two thirds of the deeds issued in Florida by state agencies which include navigable waters do not mention their existence. The reason for this is two-fold. First, most of Florida was originally swamp land during the wet season. Second, the

swamp lands were sold by bulk transfers in tracts as large as four million acres. One company once owned over 11 million acres of swamp land - approaching one third of the entire land area of the state. Soon after these bulk deeds were issued, the Florida Supreme Court was presented with the question of whether swamp deeds conveyed navigable waters. The Supreme Court said resoundingly "no" almost a hundred years ago. And in 1986 the Florida Supreme Court ruled that the recipients of these swamp deeds and their successors had "no moral or legal claim" to the navigable waters. This proposed legislation is an effort to reverse a century of cases and flies in the face of the Florida constitution, which protects navigable waters.

Call to Action:

Senator Walter "Skip" Campbell (D), Tamarac, is considering filing this bill. He needs to hear your input regarding this bad bill. Paula Dockery, the majority whip and chairwoman of the House Environmental Protection Committee, and Governor Jeb Bush also need to hear your voice on this issue. Call them immediately to express your concerns:

Sen. Walter "Skip" Campbell
District Office: 954-346-2813
Tallahassee Office: 850-487-5094
Email: campbell.walter.web@leg.state.fl.us

Rep. Paula Dockery
District Office: 941-284-4525
Tallahassee Office: 850-488-2270
Email: dockery.paula@leg.state.fl.us

Governor Jeb Bush
Office: 850-488-4441
Email: fl_governor@eog.state.fl.us
Web Page: www.flgov.com

OUTINGS NEWS



OUTINGS COMMITTEE'S OUTDOOR GEAR DAY A SUCCESS!

Held at Koreshan State Park, February 12 by outings leaders, Kris Decker, Julia Habel and Lynn Livingston. Earth Outfitters Expedition & Tropical Clothing Co. laid out quite a spread of equipment. Hiking boots, day packs, backpacks, outdoor clothing and mountain climbing gear are just some examples that were brought to examine. Then there was Captive Kayak Co & Wildside Adventures with a wide variety of kayaks. We all got a mini lesson and a chance to test drive any style they brought. Several members stopped by as did many other outdoor enthusiasts. If you missed this one, don't miss the next one. Keep a watch for our outdoor gear events posted under the Outings listings.

EVERGLADES CANOE/KAYAK CAMPOUT

With four canoes and two kayaks eleven of us made out way down Hells Bay to a chicki hut in Pearls Bay located in the Everglades National Park. Beautiful weather, a full moon and great companionship made this weekend one to remember. Outings leader Julia Haybel and Co-leader Kris Decker planned this one just right. Light wind days, still nights (one with a few too many mosquitos), a brief encounter with an eight foot alligator had all eleven of us enjoying our adventure to the Everglades.

OUTINGS

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 cfolmes@mindspring.com.

Mar 4 (Sat) Hickey's Creek Hike. 10:30 am. We'll hike 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.

Mar 18 (Sat) Sanibel Island hike. 10:30 am. There is a part of Sanibel that is almost completely unknown even to inhabitants of the island—the upper reaches of the Sanibel River. We will explore that area—full of wild fauna and flora—after taking a guided tour by the tour leader of the CROW wildlife clinic. Wear long pants and bring water and lunch, which we will eat on the CROW grounds after the hike. Meet at the CROW parking lot on the San-Cap highway just beyond the exit from Ding Darling and across from the school playgrounds. Leader Charles Holmes (941) 540-0599 or cfolmes@mindspring.com

Mar 22 (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.

Apr 1 (Sat) CREW Marsh Trail System Hike. 10:30 am. Hike is about 5 miles. Meet at parking lot at entrance to property. From I-75, take exit 19 and travel east for approximately 18 miles. Entrance is on right. From state road 82, travel east to C.R. 850 (Corkscrew Rd) and turn right. Entrance is about 1.5 miles on left. Bring a snack and water, and be prepared for mosquitoes. This is beautiful property on the headwaters of the Corkscrew Swamp. Call Lynn Livingston (941) 269-6645 for details.

Apr 7-10 Fisheating Creek Kayak/Canoe Camp. Details to be provided.

Monthly Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 23 at 7:00 p.m. for refreshments, 7:30 for an environmental program. This month, environmental consultant Gary Beardsley will discuss his trip to Washington, D.C.

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.

Call to Action: THE FLORIDA FARM WORKERS MARCH

This announcement is brought to you by, Sofia Metcalf, Florida Chapter Sierra Club Environmental Justice Issue Chair. You can call Sofia at 407-428-1655

Support the March for Dignity, Dialogue and Fair Wages for Florida's Farm Workers

Dwight Lawton wrote:

Pinellas Support Committee Supports the March for Dignity Dialogue and Fair Wages for Florida's Farm Workers **When:** Begins February 19, 2000 in Ft. Myers and ends March 4 in Orlando at the headquarters of Florida Fruit & Vegetable Association in Orlando. (See the itinerary on page 6.)

Why: To spread the word about injustices they continue to face in the fields and to take their requests for direct dialogue with their employers to the tomato growers at industry headquarters.(FFVA)

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT:

1) Join the March! The worker's biggest wish is to have you join them in their march for justice, for as long as you are able. They would especially appreciate your support on Saturday, February 19th and Saturday, March 4th, the

first and final days of the march.

2) Provide a place to sleep and showers for the marchers. The route of the march will be along Rt. 41 up to Tampa, then across Rt. 50 to FFVA. If you or your church/organization can host 60-100 people for a night, please contact Kathy Kirley (941/549-8721) or Bert Perry (904/235-7028)

3) Provide lunch for a day

4) Donate supplies—first aid, dry goods, clothing, hygiene products, laundry supplies, food and drinks, transportation. For needs list contact Damara Luce @ e-mail: gsscc@juno.com or see phone # below

5) MONEY CONTRIBUTIONS—money contributions will enable them to purchase many of the above items—and much more quickly. You can make a tax-deductible contribution through the Pinellas Support Group by making your check out to PSC/NFWM and noting it is for farm worker march. Mail to Arlene Wallace, 1131 Glenmoor Ct., Clearwater, FL 33764

You can make contributions to the Coalition of Immokolee Workers (CIW), PO Box 603, Immokolee, FL 34143 more info: tel & fax: (941) 657-8311; e-mail:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

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DOLPHINS: Defenders Sue To Protect Dolphins

This week, Defenders of Wildlife and ten other groups sued the U.S. Department of Commerce and other agencies for violating provisions of the Marine Mammal Protection Act protecting dolphins. The lawsuit challenges final regulations that clear the way for lifting the existing ban on dolphin-netted tuna from entering the United States. The regulations are intended to implement a 1997 law that set new standards for imported tuna caught by encircling schools of dolphins swimming above them. But, conservationists say the regulations ignore clear requirements of the law and contain numerous loopholes that weaken protections for dolphins.

The Commerce Department has yet to decide formally whether to lift the current ban on tuna from Mexico, Colombia and other countries that have failed to meet the "dolphin-safe" tuna standard. More than 50,000 DEN activists like yourself have sent e-mails to the President expressing outrage over the department's April 1999 decision to weaken the "dolphin-safe" tuna label and urging him not to lift the ban on dolphin-netted tuna. We will keep you updated on this important issue.

Last summer, Defenders and other groups filed a separate lawsuit challenging the Commerce Department's decision to allow the existing "dolphin-safe" label to apply to tuna caught by intentionally encircling, harassing and setting nets on dolphins. Conservationists argued that the decision ignores scientific information supplied by the agency's own researchers and places foreign trade interests above protecting dolphins.

Click here for more: <http://www.defenders.org/den/dl00008.html#dolphinjump>



CONGRESS: Conservationists Grade Lawmakers on Environment

Yesterday, the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) has released the 1999 National Environmental Scorecard, an annual rating of the environmental voting record for every member of Congress. Representatives and Senators were graded on how they voted on the most important environmental votes of last year, including opposing mountaintop removal mining, supporting funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, opposing commercial fishing in Glacier Bay National Park and fighting anti-environmental riders. For the fifth consecutive year the average score for both the House (46 percent) and Senate (41 percent) failed to top 50 percent. This year a record number --37-- Senators failed to cast a single positive vote on the environment and earned a score of zero.

Conservationists expressed concern that for the third year in a row, every member of the Senate majority leadership team failed to cast a single vote for conservation. Particularly disturbing is the fact that the recently elected chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, Senator Robert Smith (R-NH), earned an abysmal score of zero. In contrast, the man he replaced as chairman, the late Senator John L. Chafee (R-RI), had a lifetime average rating of 70.

The nonprofit League of Conservation Voters is the bipartisan political

voice for the environmental community and has published a National Environmental Scorecard for each Congress since 1970.

To find out your Representative's or Senators' environmental voting record, visit LCV's website at: <http://scorecard.lcv.org/index.cfm> <http://www.defenders.org/den>

TRADE GROUP WILL FIGHT MANATEE PROTECTIONS

Claiming that the number of manatees in Florida is growing, the state's largest marine business interests have quietly formed a group to try to get the sea cows removed from the federal endangered species list.

"Perhaps the time has come to delist the manatee, much as the alligator and the eagle have been delisted," reads a Sept. 3 memo penned by Wade Hopping, a top business lobbyist who represents the National Marine Manufacturers Association.

Scientists working to protect manatees say the idea of stripping away protections is ridiculous. Manatee populations may be stable or even growing a little in some locations, they say, but the number of boats is growing too.

This year, they predict, Florida will set a record for the number of manatees killed by boats.

The formation of Hopping's business group—called the "Manatee Task Force"—comes as 22 environmental groups are poised to sue the state and federal governments because, they say, manatee protection laws have not been properly enforced. State officials estimate there are about 2,500 manatees remaining in Florida's waters.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HONORS SIERRA CLUB

FEMA HONORS SIERRA CLUB STAFF FOR WORK TO PROTECT WETLANDS, REDUCE FLOOD DAMAGE
Sierra Club Among First Environmental Groups to Receive FEMA Award in Recent Years.

WASHINGTON — The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) tomorrow will honor two Sierra Club employees for their efforts to save the nation's wetlands and protect communities from floods. The award marks the first time in recent years FEMA has recognized the disaster prevention work of an environmental organization. FEMA will recognize the Sierra Club's Kathryn Hohmann and Brett Hulsey with the FEMA Award for Outstanding Public Service for their leadership in protecting wetlands in the wake of the 1993 Mississippi River floods and in the years since. David Conrad with the National Wildlife Federation is also being honored.

"The Sierra Club is delighted that FEMA and other government agencies are working with the environmental community to meet common goals," said Hohmann, Director of the Sierra Club's Environmental Quality Program in Washington, D.C. "Working together is just good common sense. By combining efforts, we can protect more wetlands and save

more families from flood disasters." "Environmentalists and FEMA are linking arms to fight sprawl and protect families from floods," stated Hulsey, Senior Regional Representative with the Club's Midwest office in Madison, WI. "With leadership from FEMA, we're making strides in stopping developers from building in our nation's wetlands."

The Sierra Club is currently working with FEMA to revise the national wetlands permit program. This rubber-stamp program, which has approved more than 85% of all development proposals, will now have safeguards to protect the nation's floodplains.

"By working together with FEMA to reform the permit rules, we can protect our precious wetlands and keep people out of harm's way," added Hohmann. "Plus, the reforms will mean taxpayers don't have to financially bail out homeowners who bought properties in places along the floodplains — dangerous places to call home."

Wetlands are the first line of defense against flooding. Wetlands soak up rain and store excess floodwater runoff, then slowly release the water back into streams, lakes, and groundwater. With more than 115,000 acres of wetlands disappearing each year,

the Sierra Club is working to protect these fragile ecosystems while saving families from floods, protecting water quality, and restoring wildlife habitats.

"The goal of the Sierra Club wetland protection program is three-fold," said Hulsey. "We want to protect families from flooding, protect habitats that store flood water, and educate citizens on the hazards of building in floodplains."

The efforts of the Sierra Club have proven to dramatically decrease flood damage. In the 1995 flooding of St. Charles County, Missouri, the Sierra Club helped reduce flood damage 95% by working with homeowners to relocate their homes away from the floodplain. The Sierra Club has also helped save over 100,000 acres of wetlands along the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers using the wetlands reserve program and fish and wildlife refuges.

The Outstanding Public Service Award is given to employees of Federal agencies, state and local governments, private citizens, and organizations in recognition of significant contributions to the field of emergency management or service. More information on the award can be found at <www.fema.gov>. More information on the Sierra Club campaign to protect wetlands can be found at <www.sierraclub.org/wetlands>.

Growth Management Forum We Need You on February 29

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. See February CALUSA DIGEST for details.

Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Introductory \$25 Phone (Optional) () _____

Individual \$40 Joint \$50

F94Q **W3303** -1



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.

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

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Farm Workers March Itinerary:

Sat Feb 19 Ft. Myers, Punta Gorda St. Francis Xavier Church, 41 N Sacred Heart Church
Sun Feb 20 Punta Gorda North Port (San Pedro?)
Mon Feb 21 North Port Venice (Chancery?)
Tue Feb 22 Venice southside of Sarasota (Incarnation Parish?)
Wed Feb 23 southside of Sarasota North of Sarasota (New College?)
Thu Feb 24 north of Sarasota Bradenton/Palmetto Holy Cross Parish
Fri Feb 25 Palmetto Ruskin
Sat Feb 26 Ruskin Tampa
Sun Feb 27 Tampa Dover or Plant City (pending support)
Mon Feb 28 Plant City Lakeland
Tue Feb 29 Lakeland Auburndale or Winter Haven
Wed Mar 1 Aub./Winter Haven Haines City

Thu Mar 2 Haines City Intercession City, Campbell or Kissimmee

Fri Mar 3 Kissimmee Orlando/ Quaker Meeting House

Sat Mar 4 Orlando/ Quaker Meeting House

As you can see, we still have a lot of places - especially coming east - that need to be covered. both for food and sleeping. We will update as confirmed.

Suggestions are welcomed Bert Perry, National Farm Worker Ministry.

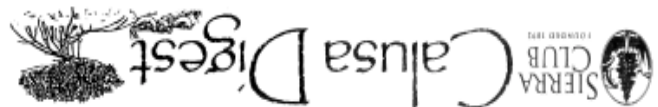
CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORTS REQUIRED FOR DRINKING WATER

A CCR (Consumer Confidence Report) is required annually. That means that your water system is required to provide you with this report. It can be delivered in any one of several ways. Newspaper, public posting, or inclusion in your

bill. There should be a report on 25+ contaminants and may look something like a nutrition report on some labels. It must contain 1) the source of your water, 2) susceptibility to contamination based on Source Water Assessments (SWA) likely sources of contamination. 3) How to obtain a copy of the SWA from your state gov. agency in 2003. 4) Likely source of potential health effects if contaminate(s) are detected. 5) Education statement for vulnerable populations about avoiding cryptosporidium. 6) Compliance information about other state and federal drinking water requirements. There is a safe drinking water Hotline 1-800-426-4791. EPA Region IV Water Program Outreach Education coordinator Jennifer Gardner can be reached at (404)562-9436

HAVE YOU SEEN YOURS????

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