



The Timucuan

January-February 2006

Newsletter of the

Volusia-Flagler Sierra Club

P. O. Box 929, Daytona Beach, Florida 32115

The next business meetings of the Volusia-Flagler Sierra Club's **Executive Committee** will be held on **January 4th** and **January 25th** at **5:30 p.m.**, at **Daytona Beach Regional Library (City Island Library Center)**, 105 E. Magnolia Avenue, Daytona Beach.

**PROGRAM FOR JANUARY MEETING IN
DAYTONA BEACH**

Daytona Beach Regional Library
(City Island Library Center),
105 E. Magnolia Avenue, Daytona Beach.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4th, at 7:00 p.m.

**“WAL-MART:
The High Cost of Low Price”**

**PROGRAM FOR FEBRUARY MEETING IN
FLAGLER BEACH**

City Commission Meeting Room of Flagler Beach City Hall, corner of 2nd
Street and South Central Avenue

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1st*, at 7:00 p.m.

Mike Evans,

Park Manager, Florida State Parks, will bring us an update on environmental issues affecting Gamble Rogers Memorial State Recreation Area and the North Peninsula State Recreation Area, introduce the new 2½-mile trail at North Peninsula, and report on osprey and jay populations

Car pools from outlying areas will leave at **6:00 p.m.**:

DeLand meets at Wendy's parking lot, corner of 17/92 and U.S. 92. For information, call **Dennis Elster** at **386-943-9415**

New Smyrna Beach arrangements on an individual basis. For information, call **Pam Powell** at **386-428-9312**.

Flagler/Palm Coast arrangements TBA. See related article on next page announcing need for coordinator.

***Volusia-Flagler Sierra
Welcomes New Members
and Transfers***

Lady Lake

*Randa Robinson
Anderson*

Daytona Beach

*Anne Caldwell
Patricia Carrico
Jerry Manning
Rodney Rizo*

Ormond Beach

*Robert Carden
Fred Costello
Kenneth Harding
Gina Russo
Arlene Sherman
Robin Weiss*

New Smyrna Beach

*Sally Gillespie
Leo Sherry, Jr.*

Orange City

*Eileen Immel
Irene Oharra*

Deltona

*Connie Conway
Karoline Knezevich*

Osteen

Devitt Harrison

Palm Coast

*Joyce Haynes
Leona Panet
Terri Reddington*

DeLand

*Colleen McFarland
Karen Roberts
Greg Taranowski*

Edgewater

Edward Payne

Clermont

Katherine Peres

DeBary

Margaret Petroski



Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

... to **Ric Kessler** for his stunning *closeup* photographs of Alaska bears and eagles at our December meeting ... to the Sierrans and friends who brought so many wonderful desserts to share at our holiday get-together ...

Some Good News . . .

Our Flagler/Palm Coast coordinator, **Jane Mealey (386) 439-4811**, was recently approached to run for Flagler Beach City Commission by a group of citizens anxious to improve the political atmosphere in Flagler Beach.

. . . and some Bad News

Because Jane will be busy with campaigning between now and March, she will need some assistance with her duties as Flagler/Palm Coast coordinator for the Sierra Club. If someone could help head up the carpool arrangements from Flagler, it would be greatly appreciated. This will not take a great amount of time, but will require that you be "on duty" each month that our meetings are held at a location other than Flagler Beach (8 times a year). If you would like to fill this slot, please contact Membership Chair **Marsha Lewis** at **386-258-1605**.

CALL FOR MARINE MONITORS

The next Marine Debris Surveys will be held **Saturday, January 14th** and **February 11th** at **9 a.m.** We meet at North Peninsula State Recreation Area, north of Ormond Beach on A1A, at the last beach parking lot in Volusia County (Highbridge Road). The survey takes about two hours* and volunteers are welcome! (*The more volunteers, the sooner we're done!) Call **Ann Arnold** at **(386) 409-3742** to volunteer, to verify *how much we need you*, or for information.

OUTINGS

Florida has 85 active certified leaders who led 230 outings with 2000 participants last year. Become an outings leader or refresh your skills by attending the training weekend in January.

Anyone joining Sierra Club during an outing benefits the local group with 50% of their membership fee, \$12, for a limited time. Bring a buddy to share the exercise and fellowship out of doors.

JANUARY 7 (Saturday): Bulow Plantation Trail Walk with Tomoka Geopark Biologist **Charles Dutoit**. **Sonya Guidry** is Sierra Club Contact; call **(386) 427-3399** or email Sonya at sonya940@cs.com Meet **9:00 a.m.** at Bulow Plantation, located off Old Kings Road, about 2 miles North of Old Dixie Highway and North end of "The Loop". Directions: Traveling I-95 North of Ormond (hwy 40) go about 10 miles. Exit #279 East on to Old Dixie Highway. Immediately turn left (North) on Old Kings Road (about 2 miles). Look for Bulow Plantation entrance on the right. Bring water, lunch, insect repellent, plant identification books, camera, binoculars, and weather-appropriate clothing.

JANUARY 14 (Saturday): Hike the Florida Trail in Ocala National Forest with **Marjorie Byron**, **386-736-0493** evenings. Eastsiders may carpool from Home Depot lot at ISB 8 a.m.; follow I-4 to Route 44 through Deland, after crossing the St. Johns River bridge, turn right on Route 42, continue about 5 miles, turning right before the admission gate and parking at the Trailhead.

JANUARY 21-22 (Saturday-Sunday): Outings Leader Training at the historic Crusader Club near the Manatee River waterfront in Palmetto. Call **Rudy Scheffer** at **727-726-8375** or email rudy@adventuresworldwide.com for details.

FEBRUARY 4-5 (Saturday-Sunday): Join Marjorie Byron and the Florida Trails Association for an **overnight backpacking trip** to the **ghost town of St. Francis**. A Mayor will be elected! Meet at 9 am at the Trailhead. Take 44 to Deland across the St Johns River bridge, go right onto 42 an eighth of a mile, see the sign for St. Francis and park at the trailhead. Camping will be off the marked trail. Phone Marjorie evenings at 386-736-0493 to sign up.

FEBRUARY 11, 12 (Saturday-Sunday), Wilderness Training will be offered at UF Tampa Bay. Call **Rudy Scheffer** at **727-726-8375** or email rudy@adventuresworldwide.com for details.

FEBRUARY 17-18-19: Friday Feb 17: **Smart Growth Summit** (9:00 am to 5:00PM)
Contact: **352 865-2434**. **Saturday & Sunday** 10-6 Palatka Riverfront Park, Putnam
County: **RALLY FOR THE RIVERS** (St. Johns & Ocklawaha) Arts and crafts, food
and drink, candidates and petitions, music and story-telling, and dozens of expert-led
field trips (charges for canoe/kayak/pontoon boat tours). Call **David Zeigler** at **352-546-
4715** or davidpzeigler@aol.com for field trip list. **Sonya Guidry** (see above) will lead
one Sierra Club outing over to Putnam County on **Saturday the 18th**. The selected trip to
be announced. Pre-trip phone numbers/emails for potential participants are welcomed.

SOME NOTES FROM FLORIDA SIERRA'S CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

Alex Ross, Conservation Chair and lone attendee from Volusia/Flagler Sierra

ENERGY ISSUES Legal dynamo Dan Hendricksen, partner of our Tallahassee lobbyist Susie Caplowe, brought this fall's San Francisco Summit initiatives back to life: Global Warming is the biggest issue facing us. Top conservation priorities are Smart Energy Solutions; Safe & Healthy Communities; and America's Wild Legacy. Our generation has half the sperm count of our grandparents from environmental toxins. Florida's asthma and ADHD rates have multiplied ten times since the 1990's.

Smart Energy Solutions must curb global warming at all levels. Stop nuclear and coal-fired plants from being built, end energy extraction from Alaskan wildlife refuges, mountaintop removal and offshore drilling. Reduce auto emissions and mandate mass transit spending. Stop the Coal Rush! Seven new power plants are planned in Florida. Read the stirring Sierra Summit speeches of Al Gore and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. on the web. (Follow the links at www.sierraclub.org.)

"Toxics" is not a word government uses. Most energy generation means mercury pollution. A half gram in a ten-acre lake will kill all the fish. Every state produces a ton of it a year, every year. A citizen referendum in Tallahassee to oppose new coal plants failed 60-40, after the industry invested \$400,000 in campaigning against the initiative. (Ten years ago Big Sugar spent \$35 million to defeat the penny a pound tax to clean up the Everglades.)

Mountaintop removal coal waste is destroying streams in West Virginia - see www.crnw.net - with mercury, arsenic and other heavy metals. The petrochemical byproduct benzene is the commonest pollutant in brownfields.

Fourteen more tire-and-coal burning cement plants are being permitted to supply growth in Florida, seven more are planned. Congress has exempted them from emissions controls and the EPA does not even regulate mercury!

Conservation Chair Betsy Roberts reminded us that recent victories like ANWR and off-shore drilling ban are most likely temporary. She quoted a Chevron Texaco ad which says the world uses 84 million barrels of oil a day, and that 2 barrels of oil are consumed for every barrel discovered. Increasing our fuel efficiency by 5 miles per gallon would save 22 billion gallons a year. Decreasing our home heating by 6 degrees would save 575,000 barrels a day! Yet conservation is seldom mentioned. Congressmen Peterson and Abercrombie have introduced a bill to bring natural gas drilling within 20 miles of shore. Write Congress opposing off shore drilling in the Gulf on security and defense grounds too.

This year's Conservation Conference at Luther Springs featured Gary Mormino, author of *Sunshine State, State of Dreams*. He said our state has fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy, making the crooked straight (channelizing the Kissimmee River) and the wet places dry (all around us).

Air conditioning and DDT (which Rachel Carson called 'the elixir of death') made Sanibel Island, Cape Canaveral and the rest of the state habitable. Florida has 17.5 million residents and 80 million tourists a year. And even more cars than people.

In 1887 Walt Disney's parents were the first couple to be married in Lake County, Florida. After freezes put his orange groves under, the elder Disney moved his family to Chicago, then a small town in Missouri, whose Main Street became the model for

Disneyland's, which is 5/8 actual size. Numerous road-side attractions used to dot the state. Waldo Sexton's McKee Gardens South of Vero Beach closed in the '60's when Nature was not enough. Disney considered Ocala, Port St. Joe, and finally bought 46,000 acres in sleepy Orlando at \$178 apiece.

In 1900 Florida had a half million residents, mostly near the Northern border. In 1940, it was still the smallest state in the Union with 1.9 million. World War II and its attendant military bases here exposed so many to the state that by 1950, it grew by another million and with 1000 new residents daily since then, we are now the fourth most populous state, and will soon overtake New York in population. But every day 250 "halfbacks" retreat to North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. A million snowbirds live here part-time. One in five seniors moves to Florida, and the state song, Mormino told us, is "Old Folks at Home!"

Back in 1949, the first sales tax, 3%, was instituted, and the frontier ended; too many cars were hitting free-range cattle. The fences went up and the Space Age began. In 1947 Everglades National Park was created and four hurricanes struck with massive flooding. In response, the Southwest Water Management District was formed and measures begun to benefit and protect big agriculture. We'll get back to the Everglades issue elsewhere in this *Timucuan*. As a national park, it attracts 1/12 of the visitors to the Great Smoky. It's a long drive to visit a river of grass 6 inches deep and 40 miles wide.

Mormino concluded with the results of the 2000 census. Cubans are no longer the most numerous Hispanics in Florida, Mexicans, Guatamalans and others combine to outnumber African Americans in the sunshine state. Minorities are becoming the majorities and as of January 2006, baby boomers are turning 60. The hurricanes are not stopping the flood of new residents. We Sierrans have a lot of work to do!

"There's Lots of Good Fish in the Sea!"

Gilbert and Sullivan's cheery phrase, referring to potential mates, was true in the nineteenth century, but no more. Overfishing is out of control and I'm adding tuna to the grouper and shrimp I no longer buy after hearing Julie Morris, past Florida Sierra Chapter chair, speak on "Conservation Choices for the Gulf of Mexico Through the Eyes of a Fish Manager."

A little background: In response to international fishing fleets harvesting the bounty of North American waters, the Magnussen-Stevens (Sustainable Fisheries) Act (yes, THAT Stevens, the Alaskan so eager to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) was passed into law in 1972 and has been amended many times since. It is coming up again and you need to call and write a letter of support. The oceans are turning into wet, sterile deserts.

The Act declared that the state has jurisdiction over the first three miles of the Atlantic from the coast, the first nine miles of the Gulf, and the nation the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), for 200 miles after that. The Fishery Management Council and National Oceanographic (NOAA) collaborate to identify and protect essential fish habitat, report and minimize bycatch (undesirables caught with the targeted species) and its mortality. (The huge bycatch for each shrimp has sworn me off that murderous delicacy).

Trouble is, by the time scientific data gets translated into action, it is up to four years old, and the affected parties, commercial and/or recreational fishermen, swear the

situation is improving, please wait before imposing restrictions, let's get some current data and the long process begins again.

The act has more drawbacks. In identifying the locations of life stages of a species for Essential Fish Habitat, some take place in state waters and the agencies have no regulatory power there. Liquified Natural Gas (friendlier than coal) transfer facilities suck up water to warm the gas, taking up millions of eggs and larvae as well - but this is not a fishing activity so there is no regulatory power. No one can be taken to court for violations. Every coastal state has representatives on the Council and it is up to the states to provide law enforcement, data, education and analysis. NOAA has only a small investigative team, and pays state wildlife officers to man its boats. The Coast Guard is a player, attending meetings and entering into enforcement agreements with the states. Many ships have secret holds where illegal catches of red snapper are hidden.

Red snapper could live to fifty years, but it's now caught at age 2-4, when it's just beginning to reproduce. How sustainable is that? It is hoped to rebuild the harvest to 40 million pounds by 2032; it is now at 9 million pounds in the EEZ, split by commercial and recreational. You don't need a federal license to fish in the EEZ. Current red snapper harvesting has a 2,000-pound trip limit. Fish 15 inches long may be caught only during the first ten days of the month by commercial fishers. Recreational fishers may harvest between April 14 and October 31 with size and bag limits. But shrimp trawlers are catching lots of red snapper bycatch. The species cannot recover without all fisheries cutting back their catch by 50%.

December 12's paper reports all the rules will change in 2007, when the harvest quota will be divided among fishermen according to their past catch records.

Shrimp trawlers have BRDs - Bycatch Reduction Devices, or holes in their nets, that reduce bycatch by 40% in NOAA's tests, but only 12% in the real world. Shrimpers are facing closed seasons, closed areas, damage by hurricanes, inroads by aquaculture and rising fuel costs. CCA and the shrimpers threaten to sue to protect their interests.

The Coastal Conservation Association (recreational fishermen) is against prohibiting trolling in the Tortugas, but a Keys coalition of Recreational and Commercial agreed to honor it, despite CCA's national policy of no closed areas. Stocks can only recover when off-limits to harvesting.

Reef Fish Amendment #18 will provide for a vessel monitoring system: Geo Positioning Systems on ships will inform computer watchers of the location, speed and direction of the boats; they will be warned when approaching closed areas. Magnussen-Stevens emphasizes precautionary and practicable actions. It protects underwater mineral rights from international harvestors too.

Gag grouper and red snapper are the most frequently caught fishes. For reds, the gopher tortoise of the deep (other species use the depression it forms) 80% of the six million pound annual catch is taken by commercial, 20% by recreational fishermen. The fish's sex changes: at 16 inches, and five years of age, all fish are female. By 31 inches and 13 years of age, they have become males.

Gag grouper juveniles live in estuarine seagrass. As they get older, they move deeper, and at 11 years and 41 inches undergo sex change. They have spawning aggregations, rocky places far out to sea, where commercial are more likely to venture than recreational fishers. For recreation, 22 inches is the size limit; for commercial, 24 inches. In 2007, fish traps will be illegal. Gag grouper is the opposite, 75% are harvested

recreationally. Long vertical lines snare them. Those who know the spawning grounds check it on GIS and keep the secret to themselves.

Activists have been pleading with NOAA to do observer studies of long line bycatch mortality. Sea turtles and sawfish safe-release mechanisms are required in longline gear, to dehook and release the non-targeted species.

Conserve Our Ocean Legacy www.oceanlegacy.org, the Ocean Conservancy and Environmental Defense Fund are active in the oceans campaign.

The EVERGLADES and WETLANDS Panel featured fellow Sierrans, Agriculture issues chair and farmer December McSherry from the Suwannee-St. Johns Group, Staffer Joe Murphy of St. Pete, Mark Oncavage from Miami-Dade and Nassau County stalwart John Glenn, “boy astronaut”- see <http://florida.sierraclub.org/safewater.asp>.

There are 80,000 chemicals in our world, and 2,000 of them are found in water, of which only 80 or 90 are tested. We need double piping in our homes: one for clean drinking water, another for flushing and irrigation.

One problem with the Everglades is that earlier water projects must be completed before CERP - Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan - can begin. C-SOP, or Combined Structural & Operational Projects will open up the Everglades North of the Tamiami Trail, which is flooded, to the Everglades South of the Tamiami which is starved for water. A 4-mile causeway bridge, the Skyway, would flood residents out of an 8 1/2 square mile neighborhood that is often flooded and should have been bought out long ago.

Then there's the C-111 canal project, built to ship rockets to the Cape, but the manufacturer lost that bid. Storms bring fresh water into Florida Bay which kills life in the normally salty bay. To correct the situation means trying to mimic the original sheetflow, but it's controversial. The Corps says the Skyway would cost too much money. The Mikkosukkee Indians say it is too long. The fishermen don't want to lose their bass when the Tamiami Trail canal is filled. Homes and agriculture will be drowned.

Everglades National Park gets only half the water it needs; the roseate spoonbills are disappearing with salt water intrusion. We are still in the comment period and our job is to make this a public issue. The 11-mile Skyway that Sierra supports is a compromise. The Department of Transportation wants a much shorter span. This is an ecotourism issue as well as an ecological one: you can't see the Everglades from the Tamiami Trail for all the exotics and levees. It is suggested we call our district DOT and tell them to scrap our local plans (widening 415 in the Southwest at the expense of all other road improvements in Volusia County) to make the Skyway our priority. Projects are still being permitted West of the Everglades boundary, further driving up the price for land acquisition! Please contact Jeb Bush (850-488-4441), Senators Nelson (202-224-5274), Martinez (202-224-3041), and U.S. Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (202-225-2778). More PLIGHT OF OUR OCEANS with Martha Collins, National Environmental Trust organizer (www.net.org) of the “Conserve our Ocean Legacy” campaign: two billion people live within 60 miles of an ocean. Oceans create more oxygen than all the earth's forests, through the actions of kelp, algae and evaporation.

Fish are disappearing, destroyed by overfishing, bycatch and habitat destruction. The average ocean-caught tuna used to weigh 1150 pounds; now they are 100 pounds. Tuna nets are a mile long and 2 football fields deep. The largest 1% of fishing boats catch half the world's fish. Bottom trawlers annually destroy an area twice the size of our lower

forty-eight states. We saw a clip of ocean floor before trawling - teeming with variety - and after - empty desert.

Fish are a public trust. We degrade and waste it in fertilizer and catfood. Too many boats are chasing too few fish. The number of boats needs to be half what it is. 60% of fish that are studied are overfished, meaning the harvest is unsustainable. 40,000 sea turtles are caught in long lines, 200,000 albatrosses... Large predatory fish - marlin, shark, tuna, swordfish - decreased 90% from 50 years ago. We are decimating our 4 and a half million square miles of seas.

Write to Senators Nelson and Martinez to reauthorize Magnessen Stevens and make it stronger, emphasizing ecosystems. Encourage the government to buy back fishing permits. Ask for smarter fishing gear and more reserves.

Florida's citizen initiative gill net ban brought the red fish back from the brink of extinction. The ban was painful in the short term but today Cedar Key is the aquaculture capital of Florida.

Protect Florida's Springs:

State Proposal Threatens Our 140 Manatees at Blue Spring

Betty O'Laughlin, Group Chair, **Mike Thompson**, Political Chair, and I, Conservation Chair, attended a public meeting in Deltona and spoke against this outrage.

The St. Johns River Water Management District is toying with adopting a minimum flow for Blue Spring, the winter home of our manatee friends. Sounds fine, but what they intend is reducing the flow of Blue Spring 15% to accommodate the water demands of future development in the area. Whiskers, Howie, Floyd, Nick, and Dana would lose a third of their refuge. Where else can they go?

The District plans to replace the water eventually, as 'new' supplies come on-line. Energy(oil/coal)-intensive desalination of the St. Johns river is their answer. What to do with the briny byproduct is another problem.

Help protect Blue Spring and all the manatees who winter there by sending a letter or e-mail to David Graham of the St. Johns River Water Management District (4049 Reid Street, Palatka, FL 32177) (FAX: 386-329-4125) (governingboardmembers@sjrwm.com), Sam Hamilton of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (1875 Century Blvd., Suite 400, Atlanta, Georgia 30345)(FAX: 404-679-4006) (manatee@fws.gov), and Ms. Colleen Castille of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) (3900 Commonwealth Boulevard, M.S. 49, Tallahassee, FL 32399) (FAX: 850-245-2128) (colleen.castille@dep.state.fl.us). Comments are being taken through **January 15, 2006**. Start the New Year right for manatees!

WALMART SPRAWLS ON

“The High Cost of Low Price,” the new anti-Wal-Mart documentary being shown at our January 4th General Meeting, ends with a slew of hopeful success stories. Many towns have mustered the unity and vision to turn away this enterprise so destructive of communities, economies, environments, and fair labor practices from China to Pakistan to Anytown, USA.

The Putnam County Environmental Council is leading the opposition to a million-square-foot Wal-Mart distribution center planned on the Volusia-Putnam border. At “press time,” a meeting was scheduled for December 20th the Putnam County Commission to decide whether to approve rezoning of 235 acres near Crescent City to facilitate 1100 daily truck trips on what is now a dead-end road currently populated by 50 residents and mostly wetlands abutting public conservation lands and nearby to the Haw Creek Preserve. Putnam Environmental Action will sponsor a Rally for the River on **February 17-19**, with an all-day Smart Growth conference on Friday 2/17 and 50 field trips throughout the weekend.

If the **FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY AMENDMENT** were in force, such projects as the Wal-Mart-in-the-wetlands would stumble. Putnam’s comprehensive plan allows it with a single zoning change. The repercussions on the social and environmental fabric of the community have not been considered. Karen Ahlers of the Putnam County Environmental Council writes, “Volusia will get the traffic, while Putnam gets the tax benefits from this massive development. Our Chamber of Commerce is pushing this through in a frightfully fast pace, giving us little time to organize.” **Lake Crescent Residents for Responsible Growth** has incorporated in response and hired attorney Michael Woodward. Call Karen at **386-698-4229** to learn more.

SPEAKING OF DEMOCRACY

Petition Burn-Out! Florida’s Supreme Court nullified all our efforts on the Hometown Amendment, which would have brought significant land use changes to the comprehensive plan before voters for approval, giving us a voice in our own futures. The Court objected to the ‘emotional language’ of a sentence lifted from the Florida Constitution about citizen welfare! The need continues to control our future, and we are half way, or 32,000 signatures away, from the 10% of eligible voters needed before the Supreme Court rules whether this new version, without the offending language, is valid for a Constitutional Amendment. Unfortunately, the deadline is February 6 if we want to get on the November 2006 ballot. Lesley Blackner is looking for \$22,000 needed for paid petition-gatherers’ past work. She is offering to write amendments for charter governments, city or county, to bring more control to the voters. If this were voted into the Constitution, many upcoming battles against inappropriate development would fall away. If you haven’t sent your and ten of your friends’ copies in yet, print them out from www.floridahometowndemocracy.com. Set up a table in front of the library. People are familiar with the issue from the last time. Get them to sign again!

Liberty...for all?



Giant Sequoias are the most massive trees on the planet--some stand as tall as the Statue of Liberty and date back over 3,000 years, making them among the largest and oldest organisms on Earth. Today, plans to open the Giant Sequoia National Monument to the chainsaws of the logging industry threaten its conservation. We need you now--only an active citizenry can stop this destructive action that will forever damage treasures such as the Giant Sequoia National Monument.

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The Timucuan is published by

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