



# Ancient Islands

DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk Counties of Florida

Issue: 10-06, 07

JUNE—JULY 2010

## FROM THE CHAIR...Chuck Geanangel

Well, I told you so! The legislative session in Tallahassee this year was a complete bust environmentally. Governor Crist famously called that institution an asylum. They create more problems than they fix.

Yes, several good bills did pass but nothing significant. For example, you can no longer release Burmese Pythons and other non-native reptiles into the local environment. It's a little late with thousands of 20 foot constrictors slithering through the Everglades but it was a nice thought. From a \$70 billion budget we received \$15 million for Forever Florida and another \$10 million for Everglades's restoration. This is chicken feed, barely enough to keep the programs alive for another season. For many years Florida Forever operated with \$300 million per year. Now with land prices at very low levels we don't have the money to buy anything.

Traditionally, the victories we earned were bad bills that we defeated or changed significantly. We had a little help getting the off-shore oil drilling approval killed; lucky us we had a major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico which put an end to that nonsense. {DRILL, BABY, SPILL} Now all we have to do is hope the oil spill doesn't totally destroy our estuarine ecology, our fishery, our seafood industry and coastal tourism. The terrible fertilizer bill that would allow the State to preempt any law passed by a local jurisdiction was defeated. What part of local control don't they understand? The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is the state agency that oversees the burgeoning growth of the State of Florida. To continue to exist it must be reauthorized every few years. This year although the Senate voted unanimously to authorize DCA the House refused to go along. This means that next year DCA could be totally eliminated. Legislators who have developers as their main clients want this to happen. No more pesky rules to impede developers and builders from getting richer.

Next year, because of our crazy tax structure, we will probably see a repeat of this dismal year. Because Florida has always been known as a low tax, low service State, we may be in this fiscal rut for years.

### CIRCUIT RIDING

Summer is a time for more relaxed meetings, fellowship, and planning for the upcoming year. We try to meet at various homes around our territory to accommodate those members who find long drives to our winter meeting locations just too much. In June we meet in Dundee; In July, Lakeland; and in August, Winter Haven.

## NO MORE OFF-SHORE DRILLING **CLEAN ENERGY NOW!**

Hopefully by the time this newsletter arrives in your hands, the spill in our Gulf off Louisiana will be contained. The damage, however, to all our Gulf shores will last for an unknown number of years. We thought Santa Barbara and then the Exxon Valdez would be catastrophe enough. Now we have to add BP's Horizon to the list. We must use this man-made profit-driven disaster to arouse public support for clean energy legislation. Consider: off-shore drilling is horribly vulnerable to earthquakes and hurricanes in the first place - and then the oil drilling industry shortchanges us on safety switches and creates a safety-shoddy workplace! Can you trust the oil industry to do the right thing?

Ancient Islands Executive Committee member, Dr. Bo Jackson has had made bumper stickers that read DRILL, BABY, SPILL. Many were snatched up at our May meeting but some are still available. If you would like to express your displeasure by displaying a sticker, call 863 956-3771, and we'll tell you where they are available. (Remember: if you put the sticker on your back-window glass, the car's paint won't be hurt.) In response to the Gulf oil drilling disaster, Sierra Club has created an online Oil Spill Action Center with updated information, and volunteer sign-ups. <http://www.sierraclub.org/oilspill>.

....Frances Howell-Coleman

### Oil Spill Facts:

- The oil spill exceeds the worst-case scenario predicted by BP when it filed its exploration plan with the government. The spill is estimated at roughly 210,000 gallons a day. In BP's exploration plan, the company outlined a worst-case scenario of 162,000 gallons a day.
- The disaster may have been prevented by a special shut-off switch, but BP did not purchase the switch and after drilling companies questioned its cost and effectiveness, the Interior Department's Minerals Management Service, which oversees offshore drilling, decided the device wasn't needed. [Wall St. Journal 4/30/2010]
- At its current rate, the spill could soon surpass the size of the 1969 Santa Barbara spill that helped lead to the far-reaching moratorium on oil and gas drilling off the Pacific and Atlantic coasts
- Some estimates show it could take 3-4 months to contain the spill. By that time, the spill could exceed the size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska.
- 59 Fatalities, More Than 1,300 Injuries, 853 Fires. There have been nearly 60 casualties and more than 1,300 injuries on the rigs in the Gulf of Mexico alone since 2001. "Working in the oil industry is more dangerous than working in coal"

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1) Offshore Drilling mines." [CBS, 4/22/2010]

#### BP Facts:

- \$5.6 Billion In Profits. During the first quarter of 2010, "BP said its profit rose to \$6.08 billion from \$2.56 billion during the same period of 2009. Excluding the impact of energy prices on unsold inventories as well as \$49 million of one-time items, and BP would have earned \$5.65 billion, topping consensus estimates by about \$900 million." Profits increased 135% from 2009. [Bloomberg, 4/27/2010]
- 41% Raise For BP's CEO. "Chief Executive Tony Hayward's total remuneration and share awards rose 41% in 2009 on performance bonuses from improved operations which made the company one of the best performing oil majors in the fourth quarter, despite lower full-year profits due to the fall in the oil price." [Wall Street Journal, 3/5/2010]
- \$16 Million In Lobbying. BP spent \$16 million lobbying in 2009. [Opensecrets]
- \$3 Billion In The World's Dirtiest Oil. Meanwhile the company invested \$3 billion in 2007 in the dirtiest source of oil on earth: Canadian tar sands. "The result will be the development of a major new Canadian oil field and the modernization and expansion of the Toledo refinery to allow far greater use of Canadian heavy oil and to increase clean fuels production by as much as 600,000 gallons a day." [Climate Progress, 12/18/2007]
- \$900 Million In Alternative Energy Budget Cuts. In 2009, BP cut its alternative energy budget to between \$500 million and \$1 billion from \$1.4 billion in 2008. "BP has shut down its alternative energy headquarters in London, accepted the resignation of its clean energy boss and imposed budget cuts in moves likely to be seen by environmental critics as further signs of the oil group moving "back to petroleum." [The Guardian, 6/28/2009] ....Sierra, April 30, 2010

## SIERRANS GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT



Photo by Frances H. Coleman

Project Eagle in April saw Sierrans spreading the good word at Lake Shipp in Winter Haven. In May the kids attending the Tenoroc event in Lakeland enjoyed playing the nature guessing game while their parents checked out the educational materials.

## SUPPORT FOR FLORIDA HOMETOWN DEMOCRACY/AMENDMENT 4 NOW MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER

The Florida Legislature abandoned citizens who care about the future of their communities this year by refusing to re-authorize the state's land-planning agency, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Political watchers predict the Legislature will abolish or hobble the agency next year, giving free reign to expensive sprawl in countless communities.

"The Legislature makes the case for why we need to pass Amendment 4 on Election Day this fall," said Florida Hometown Democracy founder Lesley Blackner. "Politicians rubber stamped so many developments for Big Business that they crashed our economy with overbuilding. Now they want to eliminate the state agency that oversees growth."

The DCA's director of external affairs, James Miller, wrote in an email: "We feel that by not re-enacting DCA, it sends a strong message that growth management is not looked upon favorably by the legislature and that we should expect changes to be coming next year."

FHD states "What we're saying with Amendment 4 is: Since we -- the existing residents -- pay our tax dollars to extend fire, police, roads, water, sewer, and school services to these new, sprawling developments, we should get to weigh in. We should get a vote before we're forced to pay."

Here's how Amendment 4 will work: Your city or county commission will study, hold public hearings, and vote as usual on proposed changes to the local comprehensive land-use plan (the overall master plan.) There's one new step at the end: You will get the chance to veto or approve the commission's decision at the next regularly scheduled Election Day. No special elections are required. It's that simple.

It only applies to changes to the overall master plan, and not to routine rezoning, variances, or individual developments. If a builder builds where the plan already allows it, there's no vote. [www.floridahometowndemocracy.com](http://www.floridahometowndemocracy.com)

Regarding DCA and whether it really helps, look closely and you'll find that once DCA gets involved, plans change for the better. Developers agree to pay more for roads and schools, add protection for wildlife habitat and groundwater, and rewrite plans to make sure projects that are supposed to function like real cities are designed like real cities. That was true to some degree even under its weakest leadership. It's even more true under current DCA secretary Tom Pelham. Yes, it would be nice if the DCA flat turned down a few more requests for changes to local comprehensive plans; but anyone who knows much about development in this state knows that without the DCA, it would be even more of a chaotic free-for-all.

Next year, legislators will have been freshly re-elected and the Hometown Democracy amendment, the threat of which has supposedly forced lawmakers to at least pretend they care about controlling growth, will have been resolved one way or another.

Not knowing what will happen to DCA makes it imperative to pass Amendment 4.

....Excerpted from a FHD Release

## OUTINGS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES/MEETINGS

For more activities/events, please visit our web site at <http://florida.sierraclub.org/polk/>

### Circle B Bar Reserve

Each month Circle B Bar Reserve offers a variety of guided hikes, nature oriented presentations, and tram rides. Because space is limited (especially on the tram rides) and additional events are added, call Karen Hagood, Naturalist Environmental Operations Specialist at 863 668-4673 to find out what is available and to reserve a space.

**Jun. 21-25 Florida Master Naturalist Course - Circle B Bar Reserve.** The course, hosted by Polk County Parks and Natural Resources Division, provides an excellent overview of Florida's uplands; field trips are planned to Avon Park Air Force Bombing Range, the Lake Wales Ridge, and the Green Swamp. For information on costs, the agenda, and registration go to <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/uh10-14.htm> or call 863 899-8157.

### Trek Ten Trails

Scheduled hikes will resume in the fall.

### Summertime Kids' Nature Fun

Designed for kids: a short paddle (using Winter Haven's UPKEEP kayaks), swimming, and a nature talk. Parents and Sierrans welcome but space is limited so call Andy at 863 683-9600 soon. All dates are Mondays. Cost: \$20, which includes kayak, shuttle/day use fee, plus donation to Ancient Islands Sierra.

**Jun. 28** Hillsborough River/Hillsborough River State Park

**Jul. 12** Alafia River/Lithia Springs

**Aug. 16** Withlacoochee River/Silver Lake

### Kayaking for Adults

Both are advanced beginner/intermediate paddles. 8AM launches - cost for each trip will be \$20 for use of an UPKEEP kayak and any associated shuttle/day use fee. We'll eat at a cool local restaurant after the paddle (i.e. Crazy Fish in Lake Wales in Aug.) Consider a donation for Ancient Islands Sierra.

**Jun. 26 Upper Hillsborough River.** Paddle on the pristine Hillsborough River where the commercial outfitters dare not go!

**Aug. 14 Reedy Creek.** Paddle on remote Reedy Creek that flows into Lake Arbuckle.

### Make a SPLASH at the Winter Haven Library

**Jun. 12** The kick-off (dive-in?) will be from 10 until noon. The theme for this Summer Reading Program will be WATER; there will be story hour programs centered around the hydrologic cycle, water conservation, and wetlands. Call Cori Greear for teen and adult programs at 291-5880.

### Service at Circle B Bar Reserve

Volunteers are always needed to help at the reception desk, create signs for special events, check the trails, etc. For more information and to volunteer call Karen Hagood at 863 668-4673 or e-mail [karenhagood@polk-county.net](mailto:karenhagood@polk-county.net)

### Service - LE/AD

**July** Lakes Appreciation Month (LAM) is the entire month and volunteers may pick a lake, pond, river, ditch, etc., and any date/time in the month for their clean-up; volunteers should register with Johnna Martinez (Lakes Education Action Drive Executive Director) by calling (863)221-5323 or e-mailing [lakeseducation@hotmail.com](mailto:lakeseducation@hotmail.com) and after the clean-up(s) volunteers are invited to an appreciation dinner on July 30 with Jungle Jim's Wildlife Show catered by Sonney's. Pre-registration is required for the appreciation dinner.

### Service - These events are Ridge Ranger projects.

These stewardship projects start at 8:00 at their respective locations unless otherwise noted. For more details and to register call the Volunteer Coordinator, Bill Parken, at 863 699-3742 or e-mail [bill.parken@myFWC.com](mailto:bill.parken@myFWC.com). Check the web site for changes to the schedule <http://myfwc.com/GETINVOLVED>

**Jun. 5 Royce Ranch - Lake Placid.** Nesting box construction.

**Jun. 12 FWC Crooked Lake - just west of the US27/US98 intersection - 9AM.** Training on some of the endangered species (specifically nesting cavity birds) of the Lake Wales Ridge.

**Jun. 16 Bok Tower Gardens - Lake Wales.** Stewardship.

**Jun. 26 Lake Kissimmee State Park - Sebring.** Habitat enhancement.

Special activities such as native plant nursery, Lakewatch, GPS plant mapping, photography, etc. are available. Become a Citizen-Scientist! Call Bill for details.

In order to participate in one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver which will be furnished at the beginning of the outing. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5528. In the interests of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. Please note that most of the above listed activities are events that we think you will find interesting and fun, but they are not official outings. Florida Seller of Travel Ref. No. ST37115



# Sierra Club

Ancient Islands - FL Sierra  
P.O. Box 7544  
Winter Haven, FL 33883

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or [address.changes@sierraclub.org](mailto:address.changes@sierraclub.org)

## JUNE 10 and JULY 8 MEETINGS

### PROGRAMS:

**JUNE: Review of the Legislative Session  
and  
Discussion of Oil Spill Rescue Efforts**

**JULY: Let's Talk Outings!  
and "Naturally Central Florida" DVD**

*General Meeting and Executive Committee  
Meeting Run Concurrently*

Join us for our pot-luck suppers at 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month. Bring a dish to share, a drink and your utensils. Dress is casual. The meeting will start around 7:15 p.m.

**June 10 Meeting:** hosted by Jenny Jacobs, 208 Shepard Avenue, Dundee. From SR 17 or SR 542 (Dundee Rd.) at the traffic light in town turn south on Center St.; go one block to Shepard Ave. where you will turn left. Jenny's house is the fourth one on the right (blue-grey stucco). Park directly across the street in a large lot. 863 439-1926

**July 8 Meeting:** hosted by Andy and Susan Quinn, 1011 S. Tennessee Ave., Lakeland. From US 92 turn south on Florida Ave. and drive through downtown; at the McDonald/Cresap traffic light (look for Southside Cleaners on the SW corner) take a left on McDonald and then a right on Tennessee. Andy's is the 13th house on the right. From Winter Haven south: take the Polk Parkway west, get off on Florida Ave. and go right (north); after several lights turn right (east) on McDonald and follow directions above. 863 683-9600

Web Site: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/polk/>

## Sierra Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional): ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ F94Q W3311 1

Check One **Individual** **Joint**

**Introductory**  \$25

**Regular**  \$39  \$47

**Senior**  \$24  \$32

**Student**  \$24  \$32



Annual dues include subscription to Sierra (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1). Dues are not tax-deductible.

Please mail your check and this form to:

**Sierra Club, PO Box 52968, Boulder, Colorado, 80322-2968**

## 2010 ANCIENT ISLANDS SIERRA GROUP

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