

POLK GROUP

Issue: 07-09



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

SEPTEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

serving DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands and Polk County

YOUR HOUSE - A SUPERFUND SITE? NOT FROM CFLs

Perhaps you have noticed these words "Lamp Contains Mercury" on the packaging of your compact fluorescents (CFL). Now we've had a lot of education on the danger of mercury 'fall-out' from coal-fired power plants. And we know there's a serious problem if an old mercury thermometer breaks in the house. So are we in trouble if we drop and break one of these new energy-saver bulbs? The answer is a resounding 'no.' The debris should be treated a little more carefully, but that's it.

Most fluorescent bulbs contain around 5 milligrams of mercury (some less); an old thermometer contains about 140 times that. Big difference. If a bulb breaks the EPA advises

- open a window and leave the room for 15 minutes - to let the mercury vaporize
- **don't** vacuum up the pieces
- use disposable rubber gloves and scoop up the pieces and power with stiff paper
- wipe the area clean with something like a damp paper towel
- place all materials in plastic bags and close tightly
- Polk County would like you to put the sealed bag in your container for hazardous collection but if the bag ends up in the landfill it is not a major problem.

Seldom do people break light bulbs and these CFLs will last five years or longer. If you intend to be on the conscientious side, make a note to yourself to put any dead CFLs in your hazardous collection box. By-the-way, the government already requires businesses to recycle fluorescents.



One last thought on mercury: in the United States coal-created electricity for residential lighting is responsible for roughly 1.4 tons of mercury emission every year. Eighty-eight percent of home lighting is still incandescent; fluorescents use only one-fourth the energy of incandescents. If all homes switched to fluorescents, the decrease in mercury emission would be considerable as would the decrease in carbon dioxide and other pollutants. Switching to CFLs is an easy and significant step we all can take.

....Frances H. Coleman

PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 13

Whether you sweat writing the check for lawn service or whether you sweat manipulating the lawn mower over green stuff you've fertilized and watered only to get rid of, you'll really enjoy **David Price's** humorous and educational presentation on why humans love lawns and why they shouldn't.

OKEECHOBEE VICTORY

Last month when agricultural interests - including the Big Sugar corporate farms surrounding Lake Okeechobee - asked the South Florida Water Management District Board for permission to start back-pumping polluted water into the lake to help raise the drought induced low levels, they expected quick approval. After all they had always prevailed in the past. But this year it was different. Board members, noting that 20 tons of phosphorus and 300 tons of nitrogen would further stress the largest lake in Florida, voted to **not** allow the back-pumping. Dr. Paul Gray, a leading expert on the Okeechobee watershed, hailed the decision as a victory for the people and wildlife that depend on the health of the lake. The board received some 450 letters and emails from advocates like you urging them to deny the back-pumping, and that helped to insure the vote. The solution to this nearly annual problem is not back-pumping dirty water but to increase water storage and to move forward on river and estuary restoration projects - such as the Kissimmee's which is so dear to our

QUICK TAKES

New ExCom Member

Many thanks to Dr. Bo Jackson for filling the vacancy on our Executive Committee. He was unanimously elected at our August meeting. Bo is a Life Member of Sierra, a sportsman, and a resident/veterinarian of Lakeland.

The Pelican

Kathy Criscola has been reinstated as Editor of our Chapter publication. This is welcome news to those of us who found the Summer Issue almost unreadable. Frances H. Coleman will be a member of the new Pelican committee; if you have comments on future issues, call her.

Wood Duck T-Shirts

Orders for the Polk Group's royal blue shirts with Paul Schulz's wood ducks on the front will be taken for the next two months. This is not a fund-raiser as such but donations in excess of costs will be gratefully accepted and forwarded to the scholarship fund. Costs should be between \$10 and \$12 depending on the size shirt and the total size of our order. Think Christmas. Call Frances at 956-3771.

October Meeting

The Group will meet in Highlands County on Oct. 11. Polk activists are looking forward to meeting with Highlands activists to see how Sierra can promote environmental progress in our region. The meeting place will be announced in our Oct. newsletter.

RECYCLING REVISITED CITIZEN ACTION TO FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING

We know we're doing the right thing by recycling but let's look at some numbers and some different approaches. Polk County first: Solid Waste estimates that the county recycles 35 percent of all recyclable materials. At this percentage, ten years of recycling extends the life of the landfill by one year; that in itself is a major plus. Glass is still being pulverized and used as road stabilizer; there is a market for the cans, plastic and paper/cardboard. It's a win-win proposition.

In Livermore, CA trash (of all types) is picked up only once a week; one compartmentalized truck picks up the recycling container and then the trash container. One truck trip versus two (here in Polk) equals less fuel used, less carbon emission, and less wear and tear on the road system. At least three municipalities here in Polk have gone to once a week trash pickup. In 2010 the county is scheduled to negotiate a new refuse contract; hopefully once a week will be on the table. The county says that a survey indicates that residents in more stable areas are amenable to this change and it is felt that fewer pickups will work in those areas. Incidentally, in Michendorf, Germany, trash and recyclables are picked up once every two weeks; it probably goes without saying that there is no litter or odor. Perhaps an education campaign is in order.

Observations from some western parks: picture to the right was taken at the Madison campground in Yellowstone. From left to right the receptacles are marked for



propane cylinders, plastic bags, paper, all glass, aluminum and steel cans, plastic bottles with necks, cardboard, and trash (bear-proofed). Vehicle after vehicle pulled up and people sorted through their bags to dispose of everything properly. In other campgrounds where recycling bins were located separately from the trash bins, campers tended to dump everything in the trash. There's a lesson in there

somewhere.

The label on this table in Craters of the Moon park as the treated-wood boardwalks rot and splinter they are being replaced with recycled-plastic-lumber walks. These are so durable that, as yet, there are no reliable longevity figures; it seems a given that the plastic will be worth the higher initial cost - especially when labor charges are included.



Photos by Frances H. Coleman

Don't let anyone tell you recycling isn't worth it. It is something significant the ordinary citizen can do to fight global warming. Those who don't participate are most likely lazy or listening to too much 'talk radio'!

....Frances H. Coleman

Reminder: Alkaline batteries may be disposed of in your regular trash. Button batteries (for hearing aids, cameras, etc.) and rechargeable (nickel cadmium, etc.) should be placed in your hazardous collection box.

SAVE OUR CYPRESS CAMPAIGN

In August a letter protesting the selling of cypress mulch was sent to Lowe's, Home Depot, and Wal-Mart by the Gulf Restoration Network. Polk Sierra, and many other environmental groups, signed on to this letter. There are several arguments against cutting down these slow-growing native trees for mulch. One of the strongest is cypress deforestation is compromising the sustainability of our coasts. Cypress forests are the Gulf coast's best natural storm and flooding defense. These forests also provide irreplaceable habitat for wildlife. Changes in hydrology indicate that these forests may not regenerate once cut. Clear cutting also allows faster growing invasive species to crowd out cypress saplings. Meanwhile, sustainable mulch alternatives exist: the innovative FloriMulch made from melaleuca, pine straw raked from pine plantations, farmed eucalyptus, pine bark, and even pecan shells. As consumers we can influence our stores by buying sustainable mulch and pressuring store management to quit stocking cypress. For more information visit www.saveourcypress.org ...Excerpted from Letter by Joe Murphy, Gulf Restoration Network

RUSTLE THE LEAF
BY PONCE & WRIGHT

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RAILS TO URBAN TRAILS

WH to LA

Winter Haven to Lake Alfred, that is. Three-quarters of the paving is done on Winter Haven's new 3.2 mile trail. Two bridges need to be constructed, however, before the trail is open for use. Completion is expected by mid-November at which time you will be able to hike or bike from downtown Winter Haven (City Hall) to Hwy 17-92. The trail is being constructed with grants from FL DOT and FL DEP.Frances H. Coleman



Looking toward WH at the site of the to-be-constructed bridge over the Hartridge-Conine Canal



Photos by Frances H. Coleman

Looking north toward LA

Obtain a Canoe and Benefit the Richard Coleman Scholarship Fund!



For a minimum donation of \$450 a 16' x 38" Grumman with paddles, cartop foam carrier, life jackets, cushions to kneel or sit upon, and painter can be yours.

OR

If a 17' x 36" yellow fiberglass Mo-hawk with keel (with similar extras) for a minimum donation of \$250, better fits your needs, call Foster at 863 293-7337 for an appointment to see one or both. Proceeds in excess of costs will be donated to the Richard Coleman Scholarship Fund at New College (that portion of the donation is tax deductible.)

EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

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

Sep. 19	Heartland 2060 Open Forum. All interested citizens are invited to participate in a dialogue on our future from 9AM - noon at South Florida Community College, University Center Auditorium, 600 West College Drive, Avon Park, FL 33825. For more information visit www.cfrpc.org or call 863 534-7130.
Oct. 6	Kickoff Celebration - Trek Ten Trails - Hiking. At 9AM join the fun at Fort Fraser Trailhead, Highland City. Exhibits and demonstrations range from geocaching to walking-stick making. Become a member of the Trek Ten Trails Walkers Club. More details are available on the Friends of the Parks Foundation website: http://www.friendsoftheparks.net/TrekTenTrails.html or contact Marian Ryan 863 293-6961 or mryan@pipevines.net
1st Saturdays of the Month Through Nov.	Colt Creek State Park is offering free tram rides into the backcountry areas at 9AM. The trips will be led by naturalists who will help you identify the flora and fauna along the route. This new state park is on County Road 471 in the Green Swamp. Each day's tram ride is limited to the first 30 people who call 863 815-6758; admission to the park is \$2 per vehicle.
2nd Wednesdays of the Month Through Dec.	South Lake Howard Nature Park - Winter Haven. Guided nature walk from 8:55 - 9:30AM. Call 863 291-5881 for additional details.
2nd Thursdays of the Month Through Dec.	Lake Hartridge Nature Park - Winter Haven. Guided walks with emphasis on the stormwater treatment system. Call 863 291-5881 for additional details.
Service - These Saturday events are Ridge Ranger projects. They all start at 8AM at their respective sites; if you want more details, call Lynne Flannery at 863-6699-3742 or email Lynne.Flannery@MyFWC.com	
Sept. 8	FWC Carter Creek - NE Sebring. Trash Removal.
Sept. 15	Polk County's SUMICA property on Lake Walk-in-the-Water. Seed Collecting (training provided).
Sept. 22	Historic Bok Sanctuary - Lake Wales. Stewardship.
Sept. 29	Polk County's SUMICA property on Lake Walk-in-the-Water. Seed Collecting (training provided).

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 some of the above listed activities are events that we think you will find interesting and fun, but they are not official outings.



Sierra Club
Polk Group - Florida Chapter
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Members should send **changes of address** to: Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968
 or address.changes@sierraclub.org

SEPTEMBER MEETING
 Thursday, September 13, 2007

PROGRAM:

**From Grasslands to Grass Lawns
 And Back!**
Why Do You Mow?
By
David Price
Director, Historic Bok Sanctuary

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.**

Meetings are held at the Audubon Nature Center, 115 Lameraux Rd., Winter Haven. From the traffic light at the intersection of Hwy. 540 (Cypress Gardens Blvd.) and Cypress Gardens Road (look for the Shell station and Blockbuster Video) - Turn east onto C.G. Road and follow around sharp right hand turn & then sharp left hand turn. After left hand turn, Lameraux is fourth road on left, two blocks west of Garden Grove Elementary School. Distance from the light to the Nature Center is about 2.3 miles. (Phone 324-7304)

General Meeting and Executive Committee Meeting Run Concurrently

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

Sierra Membership Application

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (optional): () _____ F94Q W3311 1

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|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Check One</i> | Individual | Joint |
| Introductory | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | |
| Regular | <input type="checkbox"/> \$39 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$47 |
| Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$24 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$32 |
| Student | <input type="checkbox"/> \$24 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$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

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