



## National Wildlife Refuges of Southwest Florida

**What:** Manatee-Sarasota Group Meeting  
**When:** Thursday, September 11, 7 p.m.  
**Where:** Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd. of the Arts

Paul Tritaik, National Refuge Manager of the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex in Sanibel, will present “National Wildlife Refuges of Southwest Florida” at our September meeting. Tritaik will focus on the history and current status of NWR refuges on Sanibel Island, Pine Island, Matlacha Pass, Island Bay, and Caloosahatchee. He will also briefly discuss Florida Panther NWR and Ten Thousand Islands NWR, and mention the other refuges in Florida.

Tritaik has been the Wildlife Refuge Manager at J. N. “Ding” Darling NWR for five years. Previously, he was Wildlife Refuge Manager at Pelican Island and Archie Carr NWRs on the central east coast of

Florida for 15 years. His career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has spanned 30 years, starting at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Maryland and including Okefenokee, Bond Swamp, and Piedmont NWRs in Georgia.



Birds feeding at “Ding” Darling  
Photo by Chelle Koster Walton

“Ding” Darling refuge on Sanibel Island is one of the most popular refuges in the U.S. Not to be missed for those who haven’t visited. “Ding” Darling Days are coming up in October.

Join us and bring a snack to share at the social afterwards.

## Conservation of Pine Flatwoods

On September 10th, 2014, Sarasota County commissioners will determine whether there will be a public hearing later this year to update the countywide conservation requirements for pine flatwoods. Now is the time to be heard. Please contact Matt Osterhoudt, mosterho@scgov.net with your comments. Mine are below.

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for preserving large tracts of pine flatwoods “out East”. They represent a significant component of our conservation lands within Sarasota County. Now what is needed is more protection for single coastal slash and long leaf pines, pine clusters and pine flatwoods threatened by development of private and public coastal lands—not less or none at all.

Ecosystems of Florida describes pine flatwoods as the “matrix” which ties together our other ecosystems. I think of pines as arboreal oases on the green flyway from north to south in which migratory wildlife feed and rest. Songbirds who have migrated the Atlantic Flyway for many generations, move through coastal pine canopy resting and feeding after they cross the Gulf of Mexico on their arduous routes from South and Central American win-



Photo by Larry Allan

tering grounds to North American breeding areas. Many of these birds feed and rest exclusively in pine canopy on their migrations each year.

Polar bears need icebergs between land masses. Our eagles and ospreys need coastal pines to minimize the distance from Gulf fishing grounds to their nestlings. These pines are the only large trees that support the huge nests of eagles. Cell phone towers and high-tension wire platforms are not the preferred nesting sites for our greatest birds of prey. Their desperate efforts to use man-made structures should be our wake up call to preserve, protect and replant remaining native pine habitat.

Sadly, in one generation, we have cut down much of the coastal pine forests and eliminated individual pines from our yards, common areas and development sites. If this trend continues we will completely change the character of our coastline and eliminate habitat for many species of coastal wildlife living here with us including all our woodpecker species and owls.

Please keep in mind that we should replant new pines and protect young pines, pine clusters, and pine flatwoods in all urban and suburban areas along our coastline.

We owe this to future generations who will live on the coast. In the future when young people ask where all the migratory songbirds are we will be able to point proudly

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### Sarasota Conservation Committee

**Tuesday, September 9, 4–6 p.m.** Conference room, Selby Library, 1331 1st St. Please join us then to discuss Sarasota’s environmental issues. Contact Gerry Swormstedt 941-366-9596 or Gerlinde Kohl 941-474-4712.

### Manatee Conservation Committee

**Monday, September 8, 1–3 p.m.** Meeting room, Bradenton Central Library, 1301 Barcarrota Blvd. Help us contribute to sound environmental policy in Manatee County. Join us and/or contact Sandra Ripberger at 941-794-3878 or [sandrarip@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrarip@yahoo.com)

### Newsletter mailout

**Thursday, September 18, 6 p.m.** Help needed to prepare the Boca for mailing. For details contact Lynn Nilssen at [lynnsierra@nilssen.us](mailto:lynnsierra@nilssen.us)

### September 21 People’s Climate March

Preparations are moving forward for this defining American moment, and support is still vital for success. We’re coordinating a special “climate caravan” train and hundreds of buses to bring thousands of people to the streets of New York City and demonstrate to world leaders the overwhelming demand for immediate action on climate change. Go to [sierraclub.org/ClimateMarch](http://sierraclub.org/ClimateMarch)

Contact Michael Brune Sierra Club Executive Director (415) 977-5744.

#### Interested in conservation issues?

We are looking for a Conservation Chair for Sarasota County. For more information, contact Linda T. Jones, 941-358-3249, [lindyleetheis@comcast.net](mailto:lindyleetheis@comcast.net)

#### Not a member? Join Sierra Club Today

Act now and become a member of Sierra Club! By joining you’ll support vital environmental advocacy, receive three publications, and gain access to local outings, members-only adventures, and other rewards. Learn more and join at:

<http://tioga.sierraclub.org/joinorgive/member3.htm>

### Sarasota 2050 Plan: Action Alert

Sarasotans are reminded that the 2050 Plan, the plan for the future development of Sarasota County east of Interstate 75, is reaching the point where nullification of the original plan by amendments proposed by developers is imminent. The original 2050 plan, developed over the period 1995 to 2005 represented the capstone of a historical process to control development and guarantee for future Sarasotans high quality of life attributes in their community. This would be achieved through the protection of the environment, preservation of open space, use of greenways and avoidance of urban sprawl by implementation of sustainable growth principles such as building community commercial centers that are accessible easily by walking.

In addition, the principle of “fiscal neutrality”, the process by which new development pays its fair share of the costs that the new development imposes on the community, would be safe-guarded under the original 2050 plan. The amendments significantly weaken the provisions for fiscal neutrality. This raises the specter that the existing community will be forced to subsidize the new communities.

It is incumbent on us citizens of Sarasota County to make our voices heard by demanding continuation of sustainable growth principles and by

Sarasota 2050 Plan continued on page 3

### 2014 Executive Committee

**Group Chair:** Linda T. Jones, 941-358-3249, [lindyleetheis@comcast.net](mailto:lindyleetheis@comcast.net)

**Vice Chair/Treasurer:** Bob Fellman, 973-689-5556, [rtf082446@hotmail.com](mailto:rtf082446@hotmail.com)

**Secretary:** Cathy Page, 941-795-8973, [cnpage@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:cnpage@tampabay.rr.com)

#### Conservation Chairs

*Sarasota County:* Open.

*Manatee County:* Sandra Ripberger, 941-794-3878, [sandrarip@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrarip@yahoo.com)

**Fundraising:** Open

**Inner City Outings:** Sarah Mitchell, 941-721-7132, [mitchell8manatee@yahoo.com](mailto:mitchell8manatee@yahoo.com)

**Membership:** Mary Sheppard, 941-752-3200, [mecomary@aol.com](mailto:mecomary@aol.com)

**Newsletter Editor:** Jessica Benoit, [benwasp@hotmail.com](mailto:benwasp@hotmail.com)

**Outings:** Jim Spencer, 941-586-7463, [Saturnsky48@verizon.net](mailto:Saturnsky48@verizon.net)

**Political:** Gerry Swormstedt, 941-366-9596, [gswormstedt204@comcast.net](mailto:gswormstedt204@comcast.net)

**Publications/Tabling:** John Myers, 941-961-7095, [sagejohnm49@gmail.com](mailto:sagejohnm49@gmail.com)

**Publicity:** Gerlinde Kohl, 941-474-4712, [fgkohl@verizon.net](mailto:fgkohl@verizon.net)

### Group Communications

Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Group Website [www.florida.sierraclub.org/sarasota](http://www.florida.sierraclub.org/sarasota)

#### Sierra Club Office:

Mailing address: P.O. Box 3485, Sarasota FL 34236-3485

**Web Admin:** Joe Rufo, 617-302-7836, [web.msgsc@gmail.com](mailto:web.msgsc@gmail.com)

**Boca Design and Production:** Barry Zack, [barryzed@gmail.com](mailto:barryzed@gmail.com)

**Mailout:** Lynn Nilssen, [lynnsierra@nilssen.us](mailto:lynnsierra@nilssen.us)

Executive Committee meetings are held once a month. For details about date and time, contact Linda T. Jones, Chair.

### Boca Sierra Vol. XLII Issue 9

This newsletter is published monthly by the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club. The intent is to inform members and interested individuals of local activities and national environmental issues. Members of the Sierra Club subscribe to Boca Sierra through their annual dues. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$6 annually.



### **Pot luck and Beach/native plant walk**

**Sunday, Sept. 7, 5:30 p.m.** Come to South Lido Park. Bring a dish for eight, silverware, plate, drink, bug spray and closed shoes. Less than two-mile walk to enjoy the native plant restoration and beach views of Sarasota. Reserve by Wednesday, Sept. 3 with Mary at 941-752-3200.

### **Botanical Walk**

**Saturday, Sept. 13, morning.** Join us for a 3-5 mile walk exploring one of most biologically diverse county parks. We will hope to see all three species of pines native to Sarasota and some of the early fall wildflowers. Reserve with Bill Lewis at 941-355-2156.

## **Victory for Panther Habitat as Oil Driller Leaves Florida**

Environmentalists working with the Sierra Club's Florida Panther campaign won a year-long battle Friday to stop oil drilling in southwest Florida after a Texas-based oil drilling company announced it will terminate its lease holdings on 115,000 acres.

Numerous environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the Stone crab Alliance, Preserve our Paradise, and South Florida Wildlands Association, led the fight against drilling in the environmentally sensitive areas of the Everglades and Big Cypress Watersheds.

The fight began in April 2013 when the Dan Hughes oil company mailed a letter informing residents of a Naples suburb they were living in a "hydrogen sulfide evacuation zone" for an exploratory well. The well, which would be 1,000 feet from residences and less than one mile from the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, sparked public protests, meetings with elected officials, and hearings to assess the environmental impacts from the company's oil wells in the western Everglades. The county was so concerned about the impacts it challenged a consent order between the drilling company and the state. Earlier this year, the US Environmental Protection Agency held a public forum to address the public's concerns. Sierra Club generated over 167,000 comments calling for the exploratory permit to be revoked. Also, in March, the Big Cypress Swamp Advisory Committee, meeting for the first time in five years, reversed their initial decision to allow the permit after hearing public testimony. In a 4-1 vote, they recommended denial of the permit.

The concerns with drilling in the western Everglades are numerous – ranging from water quality and hydrology to habitat fragmentation and increased panther mortality. For Florida panthers, whose numbers range from 100 to 180, these wells would have destroyed primary habitat and

fragmented areas that are used for hunting, denning, and traveling. Increased traffic on the roads in Golden Gate Estates (large trucks on isolated, small roads) would have increased the chances of a panther being hit – the leading cause of panther deaths. Perhaps most importantly, there have been no studies conducted that show how oil drilling impacts panthers or other wildlife.

The tide turned several weeks ago when the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which had supported drilling, issued a press release that the driller had used illegal extraction techniques that mirrored fracking.

On Tuesday, the oil company announced it was stopping work on another well in the area minutes before the Florida DEP announced it would file suit.

This is a great victory for all the dedicated activists and citizens of southwest Florida. While we have won this battle, the war on oil drilling is far from over. Two other companies, Tocala and Burnett, are proposing to do seismic testing (a precursor to exploratory drilling) on over 200,000 acres in the Big Cypress area. With millions of dollars invested in the restoration of the Everglades, these companies pose a salient threat that could undermine the efforts of so many to protect one of the most unique ecosystems in the world.

The Collier Commissioners listened to concerned citizens and made the right decision. We thank them for staying the course and filing the petition against the consent order. Please send them an e-mail thanking them for representing the voice of Collier County:

[DonnaFiala@colliergov.net](mailto:DonnaFiala@colliergov.net), [GeorgiaHiller@colliergov.net](mailto:GeorgiaHiller@colliergov.net), [TomHenning@colliergov.net](mailto:TomHenning@colliergov.net), [FredCoyle@colliergov.net](mailto:FredCoyle@colliergov.net), and [TimNance@colliergov.net](mailto:TimNance@colliergov.net)

*Post by Alexis Meyer for Sierra Club Florida News*

### **Sarasota 2050 Plan: (continued from page 2)**

forcing elected County Commissioners to account for the negative impacts of these changes. You can voice your demand for sensible development and the preservation of the 2050 plan by writing to your Commissioner, calling them, emailing them and attending public meetings on the subject of the proposed changes to the 2050.

*Use this link to determine which of the Commissioners*

*represents you.*

<https://www.scgov.net/BCC/Pages/default.aspx#>.

*The next meeting of the Sarasota County Commissioners is scheduled for August 27, 2014. It will be held at the Sarasota County Administration Center, 1660 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota. Another meeting is anticipated in late October, 2014*

Manatee-Sarasota Group  
Sierra Club  
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2. On the next screen type your name and email in appropriate boxes.
3. Click on the Subscribe (Florida M-S Group News) button.

## Reflections on My First Summer in the Sierra, by John Muir

Readers of the BOCA are referred to Susan Rife's, 'Anerful of Words' review of the audio book, My First Summer, by John Muir. This review appeared in the August 3, 2014 edition of the Sarasota Herald Tribune, 'Arts' section.

Ms. Rife's review reminds us of the reasons that we Sierrans so admire Mr. Muir, Sierra Club's founder, and his philosophy of preservation. Ms. Rife states, (that in his book) "he writes with a child's sense of wonder, a scientist's sense of accuracy and Transcendentalist's sense of God's hand in the creation of the Earth."

Who among us has not stood either in the peaceful silence of a dense forest, or on the scenic apex of a great mountain, or walked along a sandy and shell covered beach and not reflected on the magnificent legacy that is our natural environment? And who among us has not seen plastic bags tangled in wind-blown trees,

or discarded water bottles washed ashore and scattered along the tide line, or industrial belch spewing forth in an insult to the clouds and not felt shame and anger?

The answer to both of these questions is that we all have and it is the duty of Sierrans to be the good stewards of nature. We do this not only as an act of altruism or as an exercise in aesthetic preference, but rather as a survival impulse for the destruction of nature ends in the destruction of our species.

John Muir had it right when he said, "**When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.**"

Like it or not we are part of that hitched-up universe.

*There's plenty to read (and hear) about Mr. Muir, including this latest audio book. Here's a reference where you find out more on line: [http://vault.sierraclub.org/john\\_muir\\_exhibit/writings](http://vault.sierraclub.org/john_muir_exhibit/writings)*



## Conservation (continued from page 1)

to an extensive and protected coastal pine canopy. Our children's children will be amazed by a 4000-pound eagle's nest built and reinforced over many years in the stout upper branches of a pine on our coast and feel proud that what we did now to conserve made that possible.

Thank you for considering this request.

*Laurel Schiller, Co-owner, Florida Native Plants Nursery and Landscaping. Co-author of Florida Natural Landscaping --Using native plants for a beautiful, life-supporting, and environmentally sensitive landscape.*