



Manatee-Sarasota Group Boca Sierra



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress

February 2014

February program

What: Manatee-Sarasota Group Meeting
When: Thursday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Where: Garden Club, 1131 Blvd. of the Arts

The program will consist of two short presentations on different topics, with opportunities for discussion afterwards.

Proposed changes to land use plan Sarasota 2050

Lourdes Ramirez, president of the Sarasota Council of Neighborhood Associations (CONA), will present Sarasota County's proposed changes to the Sarasota 2050 plan. While one of the main goals of the Sarasota 2050 plan was to protect the environment, the proposed changes will reduce those protections. The County's proposed changes, impacting the rural areas of Sarasota County (east of I-75), include possibly reducing the size of greenbelts, proposing greenway 'alternatives' and redefining what constitutes 'open space'. Lourdes will also discuss the change in the fiscal neutrality policy which would, if approved, burden the county's taxpayers by shifting the cost of infrastructure from the development to the citizens.

Help save our bald eagles

The Sierra Club's national office and other wildlife organizations have recently filed a petition in federal court to ban lead from all ammunition used for hunting. Both shotgun pellets and rifle bullet fragments are being consumed by birds and other wild animals, caus-

ing agonizingly slow and painful deaths to many of those raptors and other species who ingest lead particles—often found in “gut piles” left in fields by hunters. Non-lead shotgun pellets and rifle bullets are readily available everywhere, so this is not an anti-hunting campaign. California has recently passed this type of legislation.

Larry Allan, our Ansel Adams award-winning member, has been working with Sierra National and other organizations to ban lead projectiles used for hunting. He'll share some of his photography with us, and explain what we can do here in Florida to prevent lead poisoning from inflicting agonizing deaths on our bald eagles and other raptors.

Join us and bring a friend. Drinks and light refreshments will be provided.

—Linda Jones, group chair



Bald Eagle
(*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Photo credit: Larry Allan

Will Florida legislature act to protect water?

Water, both in terms of scarcity and quality, is the biggest issue facing Florida, and continues to cause concern. Some legislators, however, seem willing to act, such as a group of senators who will introduce what is expected to be the first in a series of measures aimed at improving Florida's natural springs, and generally improving lake, river and aquifer conditions state wide.

Sen. David Simmons, R-Altamonte Springs, one of the authors of the pending legislation, said the measure would set goals for the reduction of nutrients that pour into springs.

Simmons clarified that the proposal will encourage the

use of recycled water and water storage for farmers and developers, limit how much water can be withdrawn from the spring sheds, and create protection zones intended to reduce pollutants from entering the water bodies.

Protecting Florida's water continued on page 4

Interested in conservation issues?

We are looking for a Conservation Chair for Sarasota County. For more information, contact Linda T. Jones, 941-358-3249, lindyletheis@comcast.net



Manatee Conservation Committee

Monday, Feb. 10, 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, 794-3878 or sandrariip@yahoo.com. Everyone is welcome!

LONG BAR POINTE UPDATE

It felt like a holiday gift — developers withdrew their request to change Long Bar Pointe from residential to mixed use. The mighty opposition to overdevelopment of this fragile area will be watching future plans! For more information phone Sandy Ripberger, 794-3878.

Help Sierra save money!

Want to help save local Sierra dollars, ease the burden on volunteers, conserve trees, and receive the newsletter faster and in color? Just follow the steps below to be switched from the paper copy mailing list to the electronic mailing list.

1. Type this address into your browser: <http://lists.sierraclub.org/archives/FLORIDA-M-S-GROUP-NEWS.html>.
2. Click on "Subscribe/Unsubscribe."
3. Add your name and email address where indicated.
4. A confirmation email will include a link you must click to activate your e-newsletter subscription.

Sarasota Conservation Committee

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 6:30 p.m. We will meet at the Sierra Club office at 2815 Proctor Road (Riverview Plaza) to discuss Sarasota environmental issues. Everyone is welcome! No previous experience required. For details contact Gerry Swormstedt at 941-366-9596, gswormstedt204@comcast.net.

Newsletter mailout

Thursday, Feb. 20, 6 p.m. Help needed to prepare the Boca for mailing. Meet at the new Sierra Club office, 2815 Proctor Road, corner of Proctor and Swift roads (Riverview Plaza). For details, contact Lynn Nilssen (lynnsierra@nilssen.us) or 941-284-2158.

Sierra's 2014 calendars, both wall and engagement, are now available for 25% off the \$12.95 and \$13.95 respective prices in February and March. We will have them at the general meetings. You can also buy them by contacting John Myers, 941-961-7095; jmyers1891@comcast.net.

High death rates for manatees and dolphins require urgent response

Two beloved sea mammals – manatees and bottlenose dolphins – suffered record numbers of deaths this year, baffling scientists and rightly raising concerns about the health of the waters surrounding Florida. So far, 803 manatees have died in 2013, well above the 392 deaths in 2012. The 800 deaths represent 16% of the state's total estimated population of 5,000. A massive bloom of red tide algae along the southwest coast killed 276 manatees early in 2013 – the worst red tide toll on sea cows ever recorded. Manatee deaths from encounters with boats are down, to 71 deaths, from last year's 81. However, an unidentified illness is killing manatees in the Indian River Lagoon on Florida's Gold Coast. So far, 117 have died there since July 2012.

Manatees and dolphins continued on page 3

2014 Executive Committee

Group Chair: Linda T. Jones, 941-358-3249, lindyleetheis@comcast.net

Vice Chair/Treasurer: Bob Fellman, 973-689-5556, rtf082446@hotmail.com

Secretary: Cathy Page, 941-795-8973, cnpage@tampabay.rr.com

Conservation Chairs

Sarasota County: Open.

Manatee County: Sandra Ripberger, 941-794-3878, sandrariip@yahoo.com

Fundraising: Open

Inner City Outings: Sarah Mitchell, 941-721-7132, mitchell8manatee@yahoo.com

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Outings: Jim Spencer, 941-586-7463, Saturnsky48@verizon.net.

Political: Gerry Swormstedt, 941-366-9596, gswormstedt204@comcast.net

Publications/Tabling: John Myers, 941-961-7095; sagejohnm49@gmail.com

Publicity: Gerlinde Kohl, 941-474-4712, fgkohl@verizon.net

Group Communications

Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Group Website
www.florida.sierraclub.org/sarasota

Sierra Club Office:

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

Boca Sierra Vol. XLII Issue 2

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.



Sleeping Turtles

Saturday, Feb. 8, 8:00 a.m. This hike will be near Border Road in Venice. We will walk about 3-4 miles. Wear sturdy shoes, bring water, and lunch if your time allows. Reserve with Sally: 941-484-4113.

Shell Creek Paddle

Thursday, Feb. 13, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This event is with Florida master naturalist Rick Fried. Participants must provide pfd, watercraft and be able to swim. Voluntary donations to Sierra Club are greatly appreciated. Call to reserve: 941-637-8805.

Flatwoods Hike

Saturday, Feb. 15, morning. Join us as we explore Flatwoods and prairie in the Myakka ecosystem, observing early signs of spring. We will cover 6-8 miles while the plants and natural systems are observed, discussed, and explained. Reserve with Bill Lewis: 941-355-2156.

Myrtle Creek Paddle

Wednesday, Feb. 19, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Florida master naturalist Jim Story will take you through a fresh water jungle to Tidal Shell Creek and waterfall over the Punta Gorda water supply dam. Participants must provide pfd, watercraft, and be able to swim. Voluntary donations to Sierra Club are gratefully accepted. To reserve, call: 941-505-8904

Tent Camping in Alafia River State Park (Hillsborough County)

Saturday, Feb. 15 to Monday, Feb. 17. Excursion from evening on Saturday until noon on Monday includes steep hills for mountain bikes and hilly walking trails for hikers. Pot luck supper is included for both evenings and planned activities for the next day. Limited sites are available so please reserve early. Children are welcome. Adults \$10 per night. For information, directions and to reserve, call Mary: 941-752-3200 or Chris 941-747-9427

Caspersen Beach Inland Walk

Saturday, Feb. 22, morning. Please bring sturdy shoes, water, sun screen and bring a lunch if time allows. Reserve with Sally: 941-484-4113.

Don Pedro Island State Park Paddle/Hike

Thursday, Feb. 27, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. With islanders and Florida naturalists Merrill and Bob Horswill, we will go from the park mainland launch to the island for a hike and lunch at the beach pavilion. Bring lunch, water, pfd, watercraft, and must be able to swim. Voluntary donations to Sierra Club are gratefully accepted. Reserve: 941-445.6181

Cayo Costa Weekend Kayak and Camping

Friday to Sunday, April 25-27. Join us for a great weekend at one of the state's premier island state parks. A gulf coast paradise located on Lacosta Island west of Fort Meyers, it has one of the top-rated beaches in the nation.

We will paddle out on Friday morning with a stop at legendary Cabbage Key restaurant for lunch, and paddle back on Sunday. Primitive cabins and tent sites are available. For those who wish to take it easy, there is a ferry boat – Tropic Star (239-283-0015). The kayak trip is rated moderate to strenuous because of open water and possible wind conditions. Be sure to reserve early. Contact Don Kirkley: 941-493-3085.

Chapter outings and e-mail updates

See all Florida Chapter outings online at <http://florida.sierraclub.org/outings/browse.asp>

To get weekly updates by e-mail on upcoming outings planned by the Manatee-Sarasota Group, Suncoast, Tampa Bay and other West Central Sierra Groups, subscribe at www.florida.sierraclub.org/sarasota.

Click to activate your e-newsletter subscription.

High death rate for manatees and dolphins

(continued from page 2)

The deaths of dolphins and pelicans have also hit unprecedented numbers in the estuary. Scientists are stumped, but there's little doubt that the summer's flood-prevention diversion of polluted water from Lake Okeechobee into the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon and the Caloosahatchee River on the West Coast must be taken into account. The nitrogen-laden outfall deadened the St. Lucie and created an enormous environmental crisis in the lagoon.

Nearly 80 dolphins whose permanent home was the Indian River Lagoon have died, while another 233 died in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

The dirty water from the U.S. Corps of Engineers' diversion of lake water during hurricane season, along with other urban pollutants, could be contributing to dolphins' deaths in the lagoon. In the Gulf, lingering effects of the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill could also be a determining factor.

The joint federal-state Everglades clean-up plan will eventually restore the rightful flow, but that's years away, giving little relief to the St. Lucie River and lagoon soon. Fortunately, the state has earmarked nearly \$3 million for some clean-up work along the St. Lucie. In addition, the Corps and South Florida Water Management District are expanding storage areas to hold and filter polluted lake spill water before moving it in any direction.

—Adapted from *Heralded@Miamiherald.com*

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Protecting Florida's water (continued from page 1)

The springs proposal will run alongside an ambitious \$220 million plan to redirect water and reduce pollutants out of Lake Okeechobee and through the Florida Everglades by Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee.

Simmons said the springs proposal shouldn't conflict with Negron's plan, which has already started to move through the Senate.

The springs proposal is being floated as the next Senate president, Orlando Republican Andy Gardiner, pitched a "workable" state wide policy for protecting Florida's natural resources on Dec. 10 during his speech accepting the leadership position for the 2015 and 2016 sessions.

"We all know that Florida's economy is tied to tourism, but there is no reason why it can't be tied to ecotourism," Gardiner said.

Legislators have said for many years they wanted to protect the springs, but haven't followed through. Any legislation is likely to draw opposition from businesses, local governments, and landowners. So let's hope they will

have the courage to take on Florida's water problems.

Citizens should contact their elected representatives and encourage them to protect our water and clean up pollution at its source.

-Adapted from the Ocala Star Banner:12/21/2013

Join Sierra 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:

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

Other Sierra Club resources

National: <http://www.sierraclub.org/>
Florida: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/>