

## **THE LOXAHATCHEE GROUP'S 2015 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **POLITICAL REPORT**

Jack MacFadyen, Political Chair

As 2015 was an off year as far as elections were concerned, we were not very active. However, we did endorse 2 successful candidates for Lake Worth City Commission in the March's Municipal Election. Christopher McVoy was re-endorsed and new comer Ryan Maier was endorsed and in his first run for public office was elected. We also endorsed, unsuccessfully, the campaign of Andy O'Brien for district 4 Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners, as well as that of Bruno Moore for State Senate. I received 4 positive inquiries as a result of the Plea published in the October Turtle Tracks. An organization and General Information meeting was held on Wednesday, November 11. This expansion of the Committee should lighten the load and allow us to consider more Sierra Club friendly candidates. Since that meeting, I have had an additional volunteer step up,

### **ELAINE USHERSON SUMMER CAMP SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Mary Cassell, Program Chair

The scholarship program sponsored seven enthusiastic boys and girls to experience another marvelous summer—some for the first time! Children were selected based on their love and appreciation for nature as well as for their school performance. Each was an asset to their fellow summer campers and camp counselors. Four students—Makenna Mitchell, Chiara Buonanno, Ruth Manuel, and Michael Fox—attended the Pine Jog Environmental Day Camp where they explored hands-on lessons within the beauty of the forest located on Pine Jog's campus. Field trips to the roller rink and to the movies were also part of the fun. Aidan Champagne, a 9 year old Junior Ranger, told Director Cheryl Houghtelin of the MacArthur Beach State Park that this was his "favorite week on the planet!" He also had a great time at the camp's Estuary Exploration Day. We sponsored two returning campers this year. Thirteen year old, Shayne Brothers, who attended the Marine Champions Camp at MacArthur State Park and Brandon Rounds, who was an overnight camper at the Everglades Youth Conservation Camp. Thanks to all of our members who so generously make these camp scholarships possible through their purchases at our annual Thanks & Giving Silent Auction fundraiser!



## **CONSERVATION**

Drew Martin, Conservation Chair

- 1) Attended numerous meetings and press conferences to support Amendment 1 Land Purchase for Everglades Restoration
- 2) Attended numerous meetings and workshops to protect the Agricultural Reserve in Palm Beach County
- 3) Attended numerous meetings and workshops on Florida's Endangered Reefs
- 4) Attended Blue Vision Summit in Washington DC and met with members of Congress to advocate for improved ocean protections
- 5) Collected signatures for the Solar Choice Amendment
- 6) Represented group and state at Everglades Coalition Annual meeting and Quarterly Meetings
- 7) Attend Tallahassee Lobby Day to support Everglades funding and restoration
- 8) Represented National Sierra Club at Transpacific and Transatlantic Stakeholders meeting in Miami
- 9) Represented Loxahatchee Group and State Sierra Club at Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Meetings
- 10) Represented Sierra Club in legislative delegation presentations
- 11) Spoke at Palm Beach County Commission meeting to support ban on fracking (ban was adopted by Commission)
- 12) Represented group and participated in Climate Change March in Miami
- 13) Attended four county summit on Climate Change
- 14) Attended South Florida Water Management meetings to represent our group and state on water issues
- 15) Conducted general meeting on plastic pollution to advocate for less plastic pollution in the environment
- 16) Represented group in water quality discussions and permitting meetings at South Florida Water Management District
- 17) Attended workshops to discuss transportation and mass transit sponsored by Florida Department of Transportation
- 18) Attended meetings to advocate on not extending State Road 7 through Grassy Waters Preserve in West Palm Beach
- 19) Attended Palm Beach County Commission and County Waste Management to advocate for environment (more recycling less waste and more green space)
- 20) Joined law suit with other environmental groups to fight sea walls on Singer Island (suit is ongoing)
- 21) Attended Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council to advocate for the environment
- 22) Attended meetings of Palm Beach Coastal working group

## **PALM BEACH COUNTY INSPIRING CONNECTIONS OUTDOORS (PBC ICO)**

Sheila Calderon, ICO Chair

PBC ICO has had another successful year. We have continued working with five partners, The Lake Worth West Community Center, Caridad Center, J.A.Y. Ministries, Boys & Girls Club of West Palm Beach and the newest partner, the National Guard Families of Palm Beach County. We received certificates honoring our group from the Lake Worth West Community Center and

the National Guard Families. Eleven new volunteers have joined our ICO Family, several of whom are anxious to take the Outing Leader Training program which we will be hosting on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2016. We presently have 14 volunteers registered for the program from our ICO group (several of them Certified Leaders that are due for renewal training) and two other Sierra Club members that will be taking the program along with first aid certification. Thanks to our great group leaders and volunteer support, we have had seventeen outings in 2015 and have scheduled two more before the end of the year. Some of our programs included kayak training, snorkeling, an overnight to Riverwoods FAU Laboratory for review of the Kissimmee River restoration; we visited the Sandaway House to learn about sharks, the Hobe Sound Nature Center for Turtle walks, the Florida Oceanographic Center and did community service projects at the Arthur R. Marshall National Wildlife Refuge cypress seed harvesting and beach clean-up at Red Reef Park. We are looking forward to scheduling a 3 night program taking the Lake Worth Teen group to the Cumberland National Seashore where the group will back-pack and have the opportunity to see wild horses as well as undeveloped beaches, historic sites, cultural ruins, critical habitat and nesting areas, as well as crossing to and from the park on a ferry hopefully sighting dolphins and sea birds. We have had an exceptionally good year fund raising at Whole Foods (5% Day), Great Give Day sponsored by the Community Foundation and United Way of Palm Beach County and our recent Thanks & Giving Celebration & Silent Auction. We will of course have to pursue additional funding in the coming year.

## **EVENTS REPORT**

Kay Gates, Events Chair

The Loxahatchee Group of amazing volunteers attended 25 events in Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties during 2015. Most of the events are held at parks, colleges, nature and civic centers. We participated with two beach cleanups, and at the South Florida Water Management District headquarters and one environmentally conscious business. The majority of these happenings are from January to May, 3 were in the fall. Occasionally more than one happens on the same day. Twice we had enough volunteers to staff to events at the same time. Of course there are many celebrations for Earth Day at the end of April, we had invitations from, 5 parks in 2015. The good news is we were able to have a Sierra Club presence at two of them, the bad news, 3 went without a Sierra Club table. At these events we talked with attendees, shared green, environmental messages and literature. Numerous Solar Choice Constitutional Amendment Petitions were introduced, signed and submitted. And at some events we sold sustainable products such as bamboo socks and water bottles. A huge thank you to our over 50 volunteers who helped with events, it wouldn't happen without you. I hope to see you again this year and to meet new volunteers.

## **PUBLIC LANDS COMMITTEE**

Lisa Hanley, Public Lands Chair

Applied for and received permission from the City of Lantana and the Florida Department of Agriculture to rescue over 200 endangered plants, *Tillandsia utriculata* and *Tillandsia fasciculata*, from the future site of the new Lantana athletic sports complex. Joining Loxahatchee members were members of the Native Plant Society. The rescued plants were given to Palm Beach County Environmental Resources Management and the City of Boynton Beach for distribution in natural areas and parks. The permitting process and rescue took six months from start to finish.

## **PUBLICITY**

Elle Rappaport, Publicity Chair

As Publicity Chair, I have provided information to the media each month regarding our general meetings and activities. I have personally called the newspapers and individuals in different organizations to try and receive more coverage. For 2016, I will look for more possible outlets to publicize our activities.

## **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

Elle Rappaport, Fundraising Chair

As Fundraising Chair, I ran a fundraiser at APBC Art on Park Gallery. The proceeds and some additional monies given to our money jar during the event ran under \$500. A fundraising lunch event scheduled for October was cancelled by EXCOM. EXCOM members felt that there would not be enough participation. I contacted different organizations sponsoring grant opportunities. They requested that the Sierra Club have a specific goal program for any monies given and had a yearly deadline for these requests. I had extensive contact with the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties and attended their grant writing seminar. I discussed having our profile with them to describe additional programs and activities. To make these changes, our national organization representative indicated that National must approve them. I contacted the Sierra Club national and state representatives regarding what fundraising activities would be permissible. I spoke to possible donors who were not interested at this time in donating. For 2016, our goal would be to change our profile on file with the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties and to have our local chapter have specific conservation programs categorized as tax and non-tax deductible. I will contact different grant-sponsoring organizations for support. I will pursue calling individuals who might be possible donors. If there is an interest in a fund raising event and there is member participation, I will revisit that possibility. Sheila Calderon ran our yearly holiday party fundraiser which provided \$7011 to the club. Ricardo Zambrano, Alyssa Cadwalader, Lisa Hanley and Panagioti Tsolkas worked on the Briger Tract Forest fundraising letter campaign. Over \$1,500 was raised for the protection of this forest.