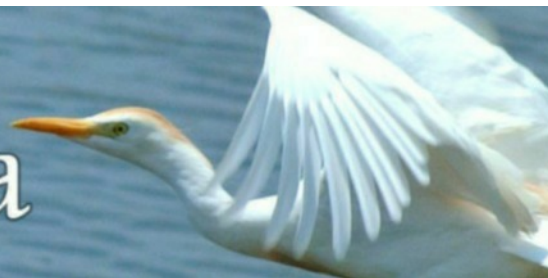




Manatee-Sarasota Group Boca Sierra



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress

January/February 2017

Mosaic Wants Your County! Draw the Line!

What: Fight Back Against Mosaic Strip Mining in Manatee County

Where: Manatee County Administration Building

When: Thursday, January 26, 9:00 a.m.

Wait! Strip mining in Manatee County? Isn't phosphate mining something that happens in the middle of the state, where no one sees it or cares?

Yes, you heard that right. Mosaic has been strip-mining in eastern Manatee County for years. Over 45,000 acres of productive and sustainable native habitat, including wetlands, and agricultural lands have been mined, or are slated to be mined in the county, including headwater regions for the Peace River, Myakka River, and Manatee River.

Mosaic is seeking a rezone and Master Mining Plan approval for an approximately 4,000-acre parcel called Wingate East. Over 1,000 of those acres are wetlands, slated for destruction. The hearing for the County Commission's approval is all day, January 26, and probably into the following day.

It is virtually certain that the Board of County Commissioners will give Mosaic its permits, unless a truly unprecedented public response persuades them otherwise.

Seventy square miles of Manatee County are dedicated to phosphate production. That is 8% of the total land area of the County. So far. Some counties, such as Polk and Hillsborough, have been one-third, or one-half mined-out. The extent of the devastation cannot be ignored, and neither can the deep structural problems with poverty and corruption that strip-mining leaves in its wake. Sierra Club, and many other groups, believe it is time to draw a line in the sand, and resist the pernicious spread of this outdated and unnecessary practice before Florida becomes a banana republic.

Those 70 square miles will never be ecologically or economically productive again, and in places, may be overtly toxic and harmful to people and animals. When pressed by a Commissioner at a recent hearing, asking about the economic viability of mined land, a Mosaic representative responded, "Well, we built you a firehouse."

Mosaic Wants Your County continued on page 3

"I Had No Idea!" The Shocking Truth About Phosphate Mining

What: Manatee-Sarasota Group Meeting

When: Thursday, January 12th, 7 p.m.

**Where: Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd.
Of the Arts**

January will be an important time for our Sierra Group and our ongoing battle against the expansion of phosphate mining by Mosaic. This meeting will feature a presentation by Vice Chair Andy Mele who will be giving a comprehensive picture of the impacts of mining on our region. On January 26, the Manatee County Commission will be considering the Mosaic petition to expand their Wingate mine and we intend to gather as many people as possible to attend the meeting at the County Administration Building and voice our opposition to this complete destruction of the land - the land they claim to restore. Instead of restoration, we have mountains of toxic gypsum, lakes of toxic wash and now, a major sinkhole. We must keep educating the public about this threat to our drinking water quality, as well as the threat to our river flows. Join us for this informative presentation and bring a snack to share afterwards.

Building Resistance and Fighting Back

What: Manatee-Sarasota Group Meeting

When: Thursday, February 9th, 7 p.m.

**Where: Sarasota Garden Club, 1131 Blvd.
Of the Arts**

Arlene Sweeting, formerly Chair of the Manatee Sarasota Group and Conservation Chair of the Florida Chapter of Sierra Club and Co-Founder of Community Radio Station WSLR, will be our speaker at the February General Meeting. Arlene has been involved in the Florida political scene at all levels, both local and state and will share with us her experience in lobbying, organizing and building coalitions. Trump's Cabinet looks like it will be full of billionaires and corporate lobbyists making this a crucial time for strategic thinking and planning as we gear up to fight back against threats to our environment. Join us for this crucial meeting and bring a snack to share afterwards.



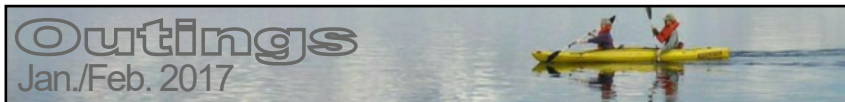
Manatee Conservation Committee

Mondays, Jan. 9th & Feb. 13th, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Please join us at the Bradenton Central Library, 1301 Barcarrota Blvd. Help us contribute to sound environmental policy in Manatee County by supporting endorsed candidates and opposing harmful developments. Contact Sandra Ripberger at 941-794-3878 or sandrarip@yahoo.com.

Manatee County Commission Meeting **Thursday, Jan. 26, 9 a.m.**

The Manatee County Commission will decide when the application for the Wingate East mine comes before them during this meeting. Everyone concerned about our water should be there. Read more here: <http://www.bradenton.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article120606043.html#storylink=cpy>



Suggested outings contribution \$5

Myakka State Park Walk

Sunday, January 1, 8:30 a.m. Meet us at Myakka River State Park for a 4-mile walk. We will start the New Year outside, walking on the most beautiful wilderness trails while listening to the quiet open land and sky in the company of like-minded souls. Wear sturdy shoes, carry water, sunscreen and BYO lunch (no potluck). Must reserve with Sally at 941-484-4113.

Deer Prairie North Walk

Saturday, January 21, 8:30 a.m. Join us at Deer Prairie North in Venice for a 3-mile walk. We will traverse across open land once used for cattle grazing in hopes of seeing evidence of the bowl doily spider with dew diamonds on top! Wear sturdy shoes, carry water, sunscreen and lunch if your time allows. Must Reserve with Sally at 941-484-4113.

Reflective Outing

Saturday, January 21. Join us for a morning of reflection in nature and introspection on who you are and what your life is speaking through you. After an initial walk of about one-mile our pattern will be repeated several times throughout the morning. We will gather for some opening thoughts, disperse for silent reflection, then regroup to share as we feel comfortable. Your will need paper, writing instrument, water and any needed snacks. For discussion purposes group size will be limited. Your donation of \$10 will be split between the Sierra Club and the Sarasota Peace Center. Reserve with Bill Lewis at billatpeace@gmail.com

Caspersen Beach Walk

Saturday, February 18, 8:30 a.m. We will journey 3+ miles on the land between the waters at Caspersen Beach. Wear sturdy shoes, carry water and wear sunscreen. Must reserve with Sally at 941-484-4113.

Morning Interpretive Hike

Saturday, February 25. We will spend the morning hiking 6 to 8-miles in our local wildlands. Current conditions will help determine the location. Group size limited. Reserve with Bill Lewis at 941-355-2156.

2017 Executive Committee

Group Chair: Gerry Swormstedt
941-366-9596, gswormstedt204@comcast.net
Vice-Chair/Sarasota Conservation/Political:
Andre Mele
941-204-0030, andymele@mac.com
Secretary: Cathy Page 941-795-8973,
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Manatee Conservation Chair: *Open*
Hospitality: Shar Nelson 805-320-6772,
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Past Chair: Linda T. Jones 941-554-4160,
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Programs: *Open*

Appointed Committees

ICO Chair: Sarah Mitchell 941-725-1568,
mitchell8manatee@yahoo.com
Co-Chair: Judy Johnson
Co-Chair: Stuart Smith
Manatee County Conservation: Sandra
Ripberger,
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Newsletter Design & Production:
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Executive Committee meetings are held
bimonthly. For dates and time contact
Gerry Swormstedt, Group Chair.

Boca Sierra Vol. XXI Issue 1

This newsletter is published bi-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. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$6 annually.

Outings Leaders Needed

Be an active club member and have fun at the same time – become an outings leader. Contact Outings Chair Don Kirkley @ 941-493-3085, donkirk@gte.net for details.

Mosaic Wants Your County, continued from page 1

One firehouse. In exchange for 70 square miles of total, permanent devastation, and the probability of contaminated drinking water in perpetuity.

The Peace and Manatee Rivers are major drinking water sources for Bradenton, Sarasota and Charlotte County.

The Myakka River becomes a federally-designated Wild & Scenic river once it crosses the line from Manatee County to Sarasota County. That designation appears to convey some upstream protections, and we are conducting research in hopes of finding something to work with.

Once the headwaters regions and other mined lands are ready for the compulsory farce known as reclamation, the first thing that happens is massive applications of Round-Up – tens of thousands of gallons of it. Round-Up is an herbicide made by Monsanto, to act in concert with its genetically-modified crops. The active ingredient is glyphosate, which the World Health Organization has classified a Probable Human Carcinogen, and it has become the new DDT, showing up in human bodies around the globe, and in everyday food products.

Is glyphosate something we want running into our rivers and our drinking water?

Will we allow our listed species – the bald eagle, Florida panther, crested caracara, gopher tortoise, wood stork, indigo snake and many others – to be displaced or possibly extirpated by habitat loss due to the destructive practices of phosphate mining?

Will we allow our drinking water reservoirs, wells and rivers to be contaminated with radioactivity, heavy metals, glyphosate and fluorides?

Will we send the staggering quantities of mine waste to other counties, that have permitted phosphogypsum “stacks,” to contaminate their air and groundwater?

Will we let Mosaic expropriate the County’s native ecological and economic potential, ship it out of state as profits and products, leaving nothing behind but poverty and pollution?

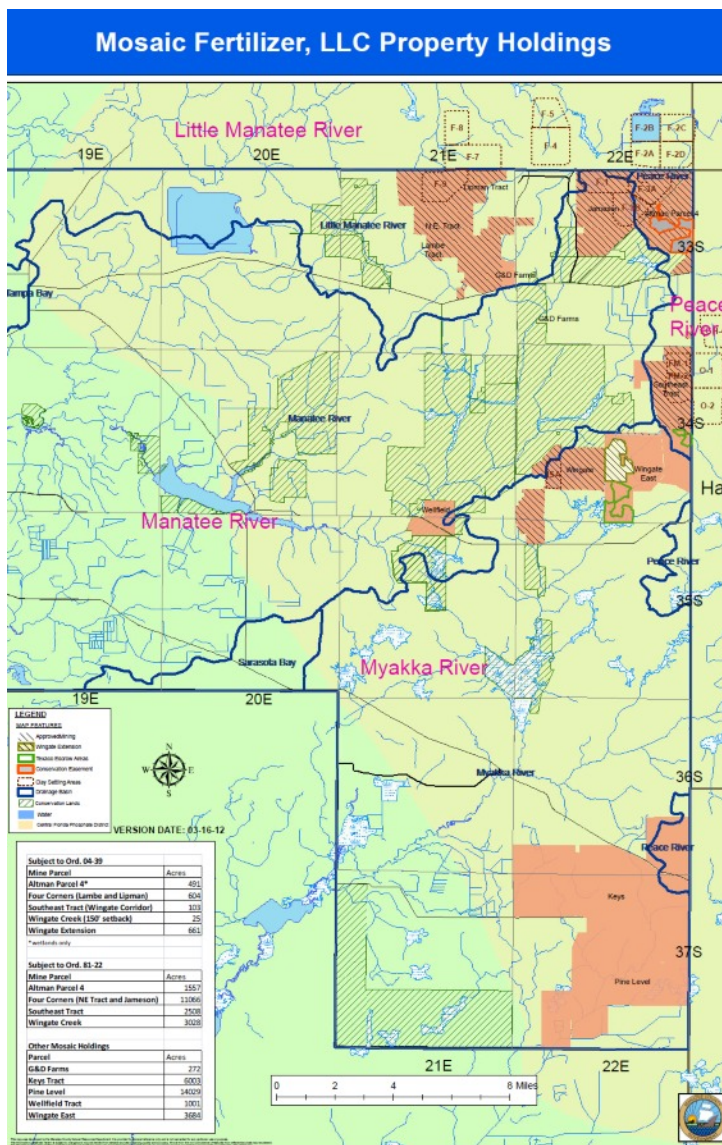
We will, if we don’t turn out on January 26. The Manatee County Board of County Commissioners is an absolutely reliable vote for development, no matter how destructive. Do not count on the Commissioners to look out for your interests, or the long-term interests of the County. As they have over and over again, they will buckle before Mosaic’s threats of legal action, and their own county attorneys’ admonitions to ignore the public, ignore the public’s “emotional” comments as irrelevant, and strictly follow “the code.”

The Coalition to Stop Phosphate Mining, which includes the Manatee/Sarasota Sierra Club Group, is studying the applicable codes and preparing a coordinated response to Mosaic’s omissions, misrepresentations, half-truths, and outright lies. There is also a major legal challenge in the works.

We can and we must win this fight. But we can only win if you are there to support us.

Watch your e-mail inbox, the Group’s web site and Facebook page for further developments.

Andre Mele Vice Chair



Help Sierra save money!

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