



Manatee-Sarasota Group Boca Sierra



Not blind opposition to progress, but opposition to blind progress

March 2014

Join the Celebration! The Water and Land Conservation Amendment: Campaign Update

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

Florida's Water and Land Legacy is the coalition of citizens and organizations working to pass the Water and Land Conservation Amendment. If approved by voters in the November 4 election, the amendment will dedicate a stable source of funding to protect clean water and natural areas for future generations.

Come learn about the amendment and how you can get involved at the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Sierra Club's Meeting. Aliki Moncrief, Field Director for Florida's Water and Land Legacy, will be speaking about the amendment and how you can be a part of this important vote for water and land conservation! The presentation will be followed by questions, answers, and discussion.

Other local groups that worked on gathering the petitions are invited to the celebration and meeting.

Drinks will be provided. Please bring a snack or dessert to share during social time

—Linda Jones, group chair



Petition results report —Florida Water & Land Legacy



This November, voters will have the power to protect Florida's water and land for future generations.

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Come learn about the amendment and how you can get involved at the Manatee-Sarasota Group of the Sierra Club's Meeting on **Thursday, March 13, 2014**. Aliki Moncrief, Field Director for Florida's Water and Land Legacy, will be speaking about the amendment and how you can be a part of this important vote for water and land conservation!

Vote YES on AMENDMENT 1!
For more information and to get involved, visit www.VoteYesOn1FL.org

Greer Island to Remain Natural

Concerned about the potential for negative environmental impact of the proposed 300' terminal groin at the north end of Longboat Key, your Manatee-Sarasota Sierra group filed a motion to intervene, joining petitioner Joe McClash in requesting an administrative hearing concerning the Florida Department of Protection's intent to issue a permit. A hearing was scheduled for late January.

Sierra's motion was based on concerns that the hard groin would interfere with the nesting of sea turtles and the migrations of manatees. The structure would have permanently altered Greer (Beer Can) Island, a natural beach environment used by the public for recreation.

Sierra maintained that rising sea levels should be considered. Sierra and McClash reached a settlement with the town of Longboat Key, removing the terminal groin from the present project for at least five years. The two permeable groins farther south will continue in the plans.

The settlement was featured in a front-page article in the *Bradenton Herald*. The article can be found at:

<http://www.bradenton.com/2014/01/22/4948602/settlement-specifies-beer-can.html>

—Submitted by Sandra Ripberger
Manatee conservation chair



Sarasota Conservation Committee

Tuesday, Mar. 4, 4 p.m. (Please note new time) 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 Gerlinde Kohl, fgkohl@verizon.net, 941-474-4712.

Friends of Warm Mineral Springs Event

Saturday, Mar. 8, 10-3 p.m. At Ramada Inn Venice, 425 U.S. 41, Venice. Featuring John Moran and Lesley Gamble, Ph.D., Robert L. Knight, Ph.D., Mike Ange and Arrowhawk.

Manatee Conservation Committee

Monday, Mar. 17, 1-3 p.m. PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS THE THIRD MONDAY. Meeting Room, Bradenton Central Library, 1301 Barcarota Blvd. Help us contribute to sound environmental policy in Manatee County. Join us and/or contact Sandra Ripberger, 794-3878 or sandrari@yahoo.com. Everyone is welcome! WEAR YOUR GREEN!

Newsletter mailout

Thursday, Mar. 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.

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

PROTECT THE SARASOTA 2050 PLAN MARCH 18

The traffic situation around the University Parkway/I-75 intersection is the “Poster Child” for why we need to keep the protections promised in the Sarasota 2050 Comprehensive Plan. Recently, the *Sarasota Herald Tribune* highlighted the increasing gridlock in that area, soon to be compounded by the opening of the new mall, as well as many new homes being added to Lakewood Ranch and villages on the planning tables.

This is exactly the bleak future that Sierra Club, and many other organizations, warned about in the numerous hearings when the 2050 plan was being forged. We are facing gross failure in planning and decision making by our elected officials. And, in the face of this awful example of overcrowding the roads, and lack of money to fix it, they are now working feverishly to destroy the very protections we worked so hard to build into the 2050 Plan, under the guise of making it “workable for the developers”. One of the key components of the plan is the Fiscal Neutrality, which requires the developers to pay for the increased infrastructure necessitated by their developments outside the Urban Service area. Removing the Fiscal Neutrality shifts the burden of these huge costs to the current taxpayers: you and me!

The proposed changes to the SRQ 2050 plan will come before the County Board of Commissioners on March 18 at 1:30 in the afternoon at the Commission Chambers on Ringling. We need to show up, and speak up! It does make a difference when the Commissioners hear what the public is thinking.

—Gerry Swormstedt, M/S Sierra Political Chair

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, sandrari@yahoo.com

Fundraising: Open

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

Membership: Mary Sheppard, 941-752-3200, mecomary@aol.com

Newsletter Editor: Jessica Benoit, 941-376-0763, benwasp@hotmail.com

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:

2815 Proctor Road, Sarasota FL 34231, 941-922-2900; mailing address: P.O. Box 3485, Sarasota FL 34236-3485

Web Admin: Joe Rufo, web.msgsc@gmail.com, 617-302-7836

Boca Design and Production: Barry Zack, barryzed@gmail.com

Mailout: Lynn Nilssen, 941-284-2158, 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 3

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.

Suggested outings contribution \$5



Campout at Alafia State Park

Friday, March 7-9. Campsite and donation to the club for each adult \$10. Children free. To reserve call Chris Walsh, 941-747-9427 or Mary, 941-752-3200.

Little Manatee River State Park Hike

Saturday, March 15th, 8:30 a.m. Enjoy spring flowers in a variety of ecosystems along the Little Manatee River. Hike either a 3-mile or a 6-mile loop. Wear wettable shoes, bring a snack for the trail, and bring sunscreen. Meet at the canoe launch/restroom inside the park at 8:30. Reserve with Cathy Page, 941-795-8973 or Mary Sheppard, 941-752-3200 by March 13.

Carlton Reserve

Saturday, March 15th, 8 a.m. We will be taking a 4-5 mile walk. Wear wettable shoes, carry water, sunscreen, and bring lunch if your time allows. Reserve with Sally-941-484-4113.

Bishop Harbor Paddle

Sunday, March 16, 9:30 a.m. We'll paddle through some of the hidden areas of Bishop Harbor, including the mangrove islands of Hell's Half Acre. We will continue through the mangrove tunnels leading to Mose's Hole and Peanut Lake. We'll move on to the newer restoration area for a glimpse of the old, underdeveloped Florida that's rarely seen these days. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen, and a Sierra Club donation. Reserve with Mike Lehner, 941-365-1073 or mklehn@hotmail.com.

Oscar Scherer Walk

Saturday, March 29, 8 a.m. Wear wettable shoes, carry



A jay from Oscar Scherer
—discovernaturalsarasota.org

water, sunscreen and bring lunch if your time allows. Reserve with Sally 941-484-4113.

Cayo Costa Weekend Kayak and Camping

Friday to Sunday, April 25-27. Join us for a great week-

end 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.



A scene from Little Manatee River State Park
—floridastateparks.org

Chapter outings and e-mail updates

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

For 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.

Come Volunteer!

John Myers, Tabling Chair, is looking for volunteers for the Sarasota Folk Music Festival at Oscar Scherer State Park March 22 & 23 and for Earth Day at Oscar Scherer on April 27. If interested please contact him at 941-961-7095 or sagejohnm49@gmail.com.

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.

Manatee-Sarasota Group
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 3485
Sarasota FL 34236-3485



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Devil in the Details

Citizens who waded through the massive changes proposed for Manatee County's Land Development Code found more than the "reorganization" unveiled in October. Currently proposed revisions are a massive rewrite of the present Code spearheaded by the significant change from review of General Development Plans to Concept Development Plans.

The process will give initial approval to projects based on minimal details that are not even specified in the new code. These plans will come before the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners for approval. Final Site Plans will not be required to be approved by either the Planning Commission or the Board of County Commissioners. Large developments of 100 homes or more will require concept development plans in the proposed code, while the current language requires a preliminary site plan for 10 or more dwellings.

Many other revisions of the Code are objectionable. Significant sections relating to standards are removed, particularly environmental standards. The chart of proposed changes on the County website does not indicate that they remain. Some, but not all, appear to be transferred to manuals including the Public Works Manual. They will be out of sight of the public.

The proposed code removes maximum densities from residential zoning categories and removes requirements for compatibility. The public should be alarmed by the potential for vast changes in their neighborhoods.

For several years the County has engaged in a "How Will We Grow" exercise that was intended to give citizens input through advertised sessions and active speaking engagements by staff. The public understands that the implementation process will involve changes to the

Comprehensive Plan. Sierra members believe that any Land Development Code revision should be done with the intent to implement Comprehensive Plan changes that may be needed for the County's future planning, with sufficient public review.

Until the concepts incorporated in "How Will We Grow" are made part of the Comprehensive Plan, including low impact development and form based codes, and more overall planning done about the goals for change, it does not benefit the County and the public to implement changes to the LDC that will remove specific elements of developments from public review.

Contact Manatee Commissioners to ask that these revisions not be approved. Emails sent to Larry Bustle, Chairman, larry.bustle@mymanatee.org will be copied for the others.

—Sandra Ripberger,
Manatee County Conservation Chair

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/>