



## Long Bar Pointe: Strong opposition prevents impacts to bay

If there was ever any doubt about the power of a passionate grass-roots movement to persuade the local government in Manatee County to do the right thing, the County Commission's Long Bar Pointe decision dispelled it.

After a marathon hearing that attracted 1,000 residents and ran more than 12 hours, the commissioners rejected the developer's text amendment to the county comprehensive plan that would have exempted the project from the conservation and coastal chapters of the comprehensive plan protecting the Sarasota Bay coastal ecosystem. The vote was 7-0.

The comp plan change was needed by developers of the Long Bar Pointe tract along north Sarasota Bay so they could remove mangroves and dredge a 1,200-foot channel

through shallow seagrass beds to the Intracoastal Waterway to build a marina.

More than 100 residents made convincing comments

at the meeting, with many more signed up to speak who had to leave when the meeting continued until late at night. All but a handful implored the County Commission not to allow the bay to be compromised by such a damaging proposal. Scientists volunteered their time to present expert testimony on important aspects of the Sarasota bay, seagrasses and mangroves, which left no doubt in anyone's mind about the value of these irreplaceable

resources that should not be disturbed.

The commissioners, on a 4-3 vote, did approve a map

Strong opposition continued on page 3



Skip Hannon, Sierra member, faces the camera at filled convention center for the Board meeting.

### The challenge of managing wildlife during rapid change

**What:** Manatee-Sarasota Group General Meeting

**When:** Thursday, Sept. 12, 7 p.m

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

David Sadkin, volunteer director of education services for Wildlife, Inc. Center for Education and Rehabilitation in Bradenton Beach, will present "Wildlife Management in an Era of Rapid Change" at our September meeting.

He will discuss Wildlife, Inc.'s twin missions of rehabilitation and education. He will talk about current issues impacting the Florida environment and rational trade-offs between the needs of the natural and human environments in an era of rapid change. Such issues may include the use and impact of rodenticides, forest and fire management, and the environmental impact of exotic plant and animal species.

Sadkin will bring several education birds – currently a screech owl, a barred owl and a great horned owl. (The



mix is subject to change.) He will discuss the unique adaptations of owls as perfectly evolved birds of prey. (For a humorous look at our feathered friend, go to <http://www.buzzfeed.com/mackenziekrivant/will-owls-ever-pull-it-together>.)

In his position at Wildlife Inc., Sadkin gives programs on wildlife education and habitat management for a wide variety of private and public schools and organizations. He helps staff the education booth that Wildlife, Inc. deploys at numerous arts and crafts shows in Manatee and Sarasota counties throughout the "season." He is principal writer for the center's website ([www.wildlifeinc.org](http://www.wildlifeinc.org)), and has written many articles for The Florida Wildlife Rehabilitators Association Newsletter. Sadkin also has had many years of consulting and training experience with Fortune 500 companies in addition to a long academic career as a university professor.

Join us and bring a snack or dessert to share during the social time.

– Linda Jones, group chair



### Manatee Conservation Committee

**Monday, Sept. 23, 1 p.m.** We'll discuss Manatee County conservation issues. Upstairs conference room, Bradenton Central Library, 1301 Barcarrota Blvd. Join us and/or contact Sandra Ripberger, 941-794-3878 or [sandrariip@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrariip@yahoo.com). Everyone is welcome! No previous experience required.

### Sarasota Conservation Committee

**Tuesday, Sept. 10, 6:30 p.m.** We will meet at the Sierra Club office at 2815 Proctor Road (Riverview Plaza) to discuss Sarasota environmental issues. For details, contact Gerlinde Kohl at 941-474-4712 or [fgkohl@verizon.net](mailto:fgkohl@verizon.net).

### Newsletter mailout — need help

**Thursday, Sept. 19, 6 p.m.** Help prepare the Boca for mailing. Meet at the Sierra Club office, 2815 Proctor Road, corner of Proctor and Swift roads. For details or directions, contact Freda Perrotta at 941-383-6261 or [fredalbk@comcast.net](mailto:fredalbk@comcast.net).

### We're looking for a newsletter editor

We need someone ideally with editing experience at a newspaper, magazine, in public relations or for a nonprofit, but if you're good at English and have an eye for detail, we may have a place for you. The newsletter keeps our readers up to date on local environmental issues and activities. Call Linda Jones, Group Chair, if you're interested: 941-358-3249 or [lindyleetheis@comcast.net](mailto:lindyleetheis@comcast.net)

### Nominations needed for Executive Committee

Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club invites people to nominate themselves or others to serve on the group's Executive Committee. The committee meets monthly to discuss responses to environmental issues in the region and plan events. Please send nominations to Peggy Dessaint ([Dessaintap@verizon.net](mailto:Dessaintap@verizon.net)), Chair of Nominating Committee.

### Help Sierra by getting your newsletter by email

Every month 10 to 15 hours of volunteer time and part of our local budget goes into printing and preparing our monthly newsletter for mailing. To reduce our costs and time, we are asking our members to receive the Boca Sierra newsletter by email. It saves trees, and you get it faster and in color! Just follow the simple steps below and you will automatically be switched from the paper copy mailing list and put onto the electronic mailing list.

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

### 2013 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.

Gerlinde Kohl and Jim Spencer are interim co-chairs, 941-474-4712 or 941-586-7463

*Manatee County:* Sandra Ripberger, 941-794-3878, [sandrariip@yahoo.com](mailto:sandrariip@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:** Judy Johnson, 941-755-6110, [jedit79@gmail.com](mailto:jedit79@gmail.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:

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](mailto:web.msgsc@gmail.com), 617-302-7836

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

**Mailout:** Freda Perrotta, 941-383-6261, [fredalbk@comcast.net](mailto:fredalbk@comcast.net)

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

### Boca Sierra Vol. XLI 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.



Suggested outings contribution \$5

### Coastal scrub walk

**Saturday, Sept. 7, morning.** It's September and the signs of fall are everywhere. Warblers and hawks are migrating through, early flowers are blooming and grasses are beginning to show their inflorescence. Join us for a half day walk of 5 to 7 miles in the coastal scrub as we watch for signs of the fall. Reserve with Bill Lewis, [941-355-2156](tel:941-355-2156).

### Venice bike and beach

**Saturday, Sept. 14, 9:30-11:30 a.m.** Venetian waterway bike hike and Caspersen beach swim. About 14 miles. Lunch will be at Caspersen Beach Pavilion. Beach time will be optional after lunch. Call Bob, [973-689-5556](tel:973-689-5556), for details.

### Lido moonrise beach walk

**Wednesday, Sept. 18, 6:30 p.m.** Potluck and moonrise beach walk at South Lido Park. Bring a dish to serve eight people, your eating utensils, water and repellent. After we

eat and watch the sunset, we will walk 1 mile to see the spectacular moon over Sarasota. Reserve by Sept. 16 by calling Mary at [941-752-3200](tel:941-752-3200).

### Outings leaders needed

Be an active club member and have fun at the same time by becoming an outings leader. Contact Outings Chair Jim Spencer at [941-586-7463](tel:941-586-7463) for details.

## Strong opposition (continued from page 1)

amendment that changes the area from residential to mixed use. This will allow a hotel and increased commercial development on the property, which lies south of El Conquistador Parkway west of Legends Bay. Commissioners Michael Gallen, Robin DiSabatino and John Chappie voted against the map amendment.

The hearing turned into a cliff-hanger when it appeared that commissioners were set to reject the map amendment. After a tense huddle with their attorneys, developers Carlos Beruff and Larry Lieberman decided to officially eliminate the marina from that amendment.

Commissioners were assured by county attorneys that because they had rejected the text amendment, the developers could not use the map amendment to resurrect the marina idea or any dredging. Commissioners indicated they would like to see a "good" mixed use project on the property, but without harm to the bay.

Opponents of the Long Bar proposal staged a "boat-in" in north Sarasota Bay and protests on land near Long Bar Pointe and at the county administration building, and collected 6,500 signatures opposing it. Kudos to Terri Wonder, Jane vonHahmann and Barbara Angelucci for pulling the opposition together into a mighty force.

Our local Sierra Club produced a DVD filmed from a boat in the bay featuring local fishermen, and chair Linda Jones wrote the counterpoint (con) to developer Carlos Beruff's point (pro) featured in the Sunday, Aug. 4, edition to the Bradenton Herald. A coalition of environmental groups — Waterkeeper, Manasota 88 and Sierra Club — submitted a 15-page documented analysis of the comprehensive plan changes, urging denial of the changes. Justin Bloom, an attorney with Waterkeeper, presented major points at the meeting. Manasota 88, League of Women Voters and many others also submitted strong written comments.

Read why the Manatee-Sarasota Sierra Club thought the idea was so bad: <http://www.bradenton.com/2013/08/04/4641141/linda-t-jones-manatee-county-shouldnt.html>

See a video about what the Sarasota Bay ecosystem means to local folks: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vJXXrBPmsPY>

## Join Sierra Today

**Yes! I want to be a member of the Sierra Club and help preserve the beauty of the earth.**

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## Why is seagrass so important?

The controversial Long Bar Pointe development on north Sarasota Bay included a dredged 60-foot-wide boat channel that would destroy invaluable seagrass, which fortunately was defeated. While we may not think about seagrass because it is under water, it is one the most productive ecosystems in the world.

The large seagrass meadows off Long Bar Pointe in shallow waters are some of the highest quality in Sarasota Bay. Seagrasses are submerged flowering plants found in estuaries, lagoons and bays. A vital part of the marine ecosystem because of their high productivity, seagrasses provide food, habitat and nursery areas to commercial and recreational fishery species and to countless invertebrates living in seagrass communities. The relative safety of seagrass provides the ideal environment for juvenile fish and invertebrates to conceal themselves from predators. The endangered manatee feeds on seagrass leaves.

The extensive root system of seagrass, which extends both vertically and horizontally, helps stabilize the sea bottom similarly to how grasses prevent soil erosion. Without seagrass to diminish the force of currents along the bottom, Florida's beaches, business and homes could be subject to greater damage from storms.

Seagrasses enhance water quality because they act as a water filter trapping sediments and particles that are suspended in the water column, which increases water clarity. They also filter nutrients that come from land-based industrial discharges and storm water runoff before these nutrients are washed out to the ocean.

Recent studies have indicated that seagrasses represent a solution to climate change by acting as a carbon stock. It is estimated that coastal seagrass beds store approximately three times more carbon than a typical terrestrial forest.

The multimillion-dollar recreational and commercial fishing industry depends on healthy seagrasses. A single acre of seagrass may support as many as 40,000 fish!

For all these reasons, we need to protect our seagrasses. Propeller scarring from boats also poses a serious threat to seagrass habitats. The seagrass beds are fragile and in shallow water. Permits for dredging that destroy the seagrass also allow for more boats in and near the beds and should not be approved.

For details go to the websites for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Seagrass Facts.

– Linda Jones, Chair