

LOGGERHEAD

Turtle Coast Sierra Club

www.turtlecoast.org

February 2008

Rockledge Plans Aquifer Storage

by Maureen Rupe

The City of Rockledge has been approved by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to construct an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) well, enabling Rockledge to pump 120 million gallons of reclaimed water (treated sewage) per year into the Floridan Aquifer beneath the city. Reclaimed water is stored and used for irrigation (of lawns, primarily). SJRWMD Representative Marguerita Engel confirmed at a recent Rockledge City Council meeting that the district has approved an agreement to disburse \$570,479 of Florida Forever Funds for installing the ASR well (this is the second funding award from SJRWMD, bringing the total reimbursement to nearly \$1 million).

Due to public health and environmental concerns, the State of Georgia has completely



FLORIDA'S FUTURE: LUSH LAWNS AND DIRTY DRINKING WATER?

50-70% of Florida's water is used to irrigate lawns. To accommodate future population growth (and the lawns that come with it), municipalities increasingly rely on "reclaimed water" (treated sewage). But they need a place to put it. Should we store treated sewage in our drinking water?

banned ASR wells in the very same Floridan Aquifer. Indian River County has also banned ASR wells. According to research by Dr. Sydney Bacchus,

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Sierra Club Meetings in January ...

Brevard County Turtle Coast Sierra Club Meeting

TIME: 7:00pm (6:30pm social time)

DATE: Thursday, Feb. 28, 2008

LOCATION: Friendship Fellowship Unitarian Universalist Center, Rockledge (U.S. 1, 1/2 mile north of Suntree Blvd)

SPEAKER: Truman Scarborough, Brevard County Commissioner District 1 (North Brevard)

PROGRAM: DYNAMICS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THAT COME BEFORE THE BREVARD COUNTY COMMISSION. Truman will be leaving the Commission this fall due to term limits. He has served for 20 years and is the current Chairman of the Commission.

IN BREVARD COUNTY, Sierra Club meets on the fourth Thursday of each month except June, July, Nov. & Dec. Locations alternate: Friendship Fellowship Unitarian Center in Rockledge and Hester Wagner Community Center, Melbourne Village.

Indian River County Turtle Coast Sierra Club Mtg

TIME: 7:00pm (6:30pm social time)

DATE: Tuesday, Feb. 19, 2008

LOCATION: Indian River County Library, 1001 Sebastian Blvd (C.R. 512) Sebastian.

SPEAKER & PROGRAM: LIFESTYLE OF DEEP ECOLOGY with Peggy Hume Behrendt and Timothy Hume Behrendt, who will discuss how they use solar electricity, passive solar heating and lighting, build with reclaimed lumber, garden organically, and attempt to live in a way that minimizes the impact on our environment. They founded and coordinate the Shawangunk Nature Preserve which offers a variety of educational and recreational opportunities.

CONTACTS IN INDIAN RIVER COUNTY:

— Lynn Walsh, lwalsh@irclibrary.org, 772-589-1355

— Sonja Fromang, ssj442@aol.com, 772-589-7001

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Pelican Island Wildlife Festival Riverview Park, Sebastian 9am-4pm • Sat., Mar. 8

16th Annual event celebrating Treasure Coast nature and the refuge's 105th birthday! Boat tours, exhibits, & more.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to staff our Turtle Coast booth. Lots of fun!

CONTACT: Dick Wainer at 321-952-0829 or Dickapaace@aol.com

ABOUT US

Turtle Coast Sierra Club

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

CHAIR: "Sachi" Sachidanandan 321-242-8311

VICE CHAIR: Bud Long

SECRETARY: Chelle Woods

TREASURER: Kathy Emerson

Judy Orcutt

Doug Sphar

Maureen Rupe

Evelyn Taylor

Dick Wainer 321-952-0829

COMMITTEES & CHAIRS

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:

Judy Orcutt, Maureen Rupe, Mary Sphar, Amy Tidd, Suzanne Valencia

PROGRAMS: Open

MEMBERSHIP: Dick Wainer & Doug Sphar

NOMINATIONS: BUD LONG

ENERGY: Frank Leslie

SPRAWL ISSUE: Doug Sphar

POLITICAL: Bud Long

FORESTS: Jenny McVicker

EMAIL WARRIORS: Amy Tidd

FACILITY COORDINATOR: Open

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR: Kathy Emerson

OUTINGS CHAIR & LEADERS:

Suzanne Valencia (Chair), John Ide, Jerry Leslie

Contact, Email Addresses:

firstname@turtlecoast.org or title@turtlecoast.org

Example: sachi@turtlecoast.

org, vicechair@turtlecoast.org,

conservation@turtlecoast.org

Newsletter

Published monthly except June, July and December by the Sierra Club Turtle Coast Group, PO Box 1107, Melbourne FL 32902. This newsletter is intended to educate and inform local members and interested nonmembers about activities and pending environmental issues critical to Brevard and Indian River Counties. We seek contributions from interested writers. Subscriptions are included with Sierra Club memberships. Non-member subscription rate is \$6 per year.

WEB/NEWSLETTER: loggerhead@turtlecoast.org

TURTLE COAST OUTING Paddle Sebastian River SUNDAY MAR 9

THE SEBASTIAN RIVER IS A TRIP THROUGH pristine wilderness that offers a view of mangroves, thousands of species of animals, fish, birds and over 36 rare or endangered animal species. Pelicans, egrets, cranes, bald eagles, turtles, manatees, gators and dolphin may be seen. Participants must have their own canoe or kayak, PFD and whistle. Bring water, sunscreen, hat and snack if desired. Difficulty level is moderate/easy. Conservation focus will address issues of urban sprawl and pollution runoff. Liability waiver & reservations required. Contact Terri: (321) 725-8377, twright@fit.edu

APPLICATION DEADLINE Service Scholarship MAR 10, 2008

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED our Sierra Club Calendar sale, we can once again provide a National Sierra Club Service Trip Scholarship to a deserving young person from Brevard or Indian River County! Application required, must be received by Monday, March 10. For more info, check the website: www.turtlecoast.org OR call Jerry Leslie, Scholarship Committee at 321-768-6629.

RESERVE WITH OUTING LEADER. TO READ WAIVER PRIOR to outing, call 415-977-5630 or visit:

www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms

Rockledge Plans Aquifer Storage

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ASR wells can create groundwater changes resulting in major physical, chemical, and biological impacts to marine ecosystems and species. Arsenic contamination is another concern. The process of pumping water into ASR wells can cause the leeching of unsafe levels of arsenic from the surrounding limestone, due to oxygen in the pumped-in water. FDEP requires ASR wells to limit arsenic to 10 parts per billion, but many wells have problems meeting this standard. Typically, only 50-70% of the water pumped into the aquifer gets pumped back out, increasing the concern for arsenic contamination and increasing the chance that some of the water will move into other wells, down the aquifer into natural ocean outfalls, or through overlying fractured and water-soluble limestone into other aquifers, lakes, canals, rivers and the Indian River Lagoon.

Saltwater intrusion and the leeching of surface water contaminants into aquifers are problematic enough without adding other pollutant dangers. And there are alternatives to ASR wells. Rockledge built an above-ground storage tank in 2006 and the City of Cocoa uses ponds to store reclaimed water. Brevard County and Orlando use

natural wetlands filtration systems that help slowly recharge the aquifer. Irrigation demands for reclaimed water could be reduced with better public education and conservation measures.

Prior to injection of reclaimed water, the city will have to go through a major permit modification with FDEP, necessitating a 14-day "Notice of Intent" period during which the community can provide written comments on the project and gain standing. The city must also pass an ordinance that homeowners within one mile of the site (Rockledge Sewage Treatment Facility) cease their use or construction of potable wells.

WHAT CAN YOU CAN DO: Contact city, FDEP and SJRWMD officials in writing or by phone and tell them to stop the proposed ASR project. Refer to FDEP permit # 05-0195980-002-UC

CITY OF ROCKLEDGE:

CityClerk@cityofrockledge.org or 321-690-3978

SJRWMD

4049 Reid St, Palatka FL 32177
clerk@sjrwd.com

FDEP

3900 Commonwealth Blvd, MS #35
Tallahassee FL 32399-3000
lea.crandall@dep.state.fl.us

TURTLE COAST OUTINGS

Reports from the Wild

by Susanne Valencia and Terri Wright, Outings Leaders

MARITIME HAMMOCK, NOV. 17: Eight people joined Susanne Valencia for a leisurely stroll and introduction to a property that Brevard taxpayers have preserved through the county's Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) program. It was a lovely, sunny day and we saw a multitude of native plants and lots of birds at the overlook near the Indian River Lagoon.

VIERA WETLANDS, DEC. 8: After a hearty breakfast at Perkins Restaurant, we caravanned to the water treatment wetlands west of I-95. The ponds were created to treat wastewater but have become a very popular birding spot. Most unusual sightings: pairs of hooded mergansers and a reddish egret. Hundreds of ducks would take off and then resettle in the water. We saw blue wing teal and mallards plus red-shouldered hawk, anhinga, tri-colored and great blue herons, American and snowy egrets, and white and glossy ibises. And the obligatory alligator, of course.

TURKEY CREEK, JAN. 13: 12 folks enjoyed a beautiful paddle on Turkey Creek. Although the day began with clouds, the foggy conditions added a new dimension to the trip and the outing ended under sunny skies. From Goode Park, we paddled to the Turkey Creek Sanctuary Canoe deck. Dozens of blue herons were sighted along with egrets, anhinga, turtles, fish, manatee and a small gator. Turkey



ABOVE: Turtle Coast paddlers on Turkey Creek, a tributary of the Indian River Lagoon. Turkey Creek Sanctuary is a Palm Bay park with an education center and variety of natural habitats.



RIGHT: Maritime Hammock on the South Beaches: Turtle Coast hikers enjoy seeing what their tax dollars have purchased under the Brevard County Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program.

Creek Sanctuary offers canoe, kayak and hiking opportunities. A shady boardwalk and the Margaret Hames Nature Center can be accessed off of Port Malabar Blvd.

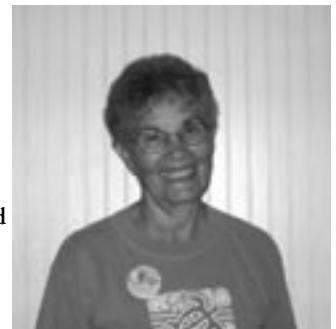
People Power Community Conservation

Recognizing Award-Winning Volunteers

BELOW: Turtle Coast Group Chair "Sachi" presents the Citizens Coalition South Mainland with a Certificate of Recognition for leadership in stopping unwise development of the Micco Road habitat corridor.



RIGHT: Susanne Valencia, recipient of the Sierra Club Florida Chapter's 2007 Manatee Award for outstanding individual service to our group.



RIGHT: Judy Orcutt receives her certificate for vision and leadership in environmental preservation in Indian River County.



LEFT: Kathy Emerson, Treasurer, stands with Sachi after receiving recognition for going the "extra mile" in planning the Florida Chapter's 2007 Flexcom meeting.



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GROUP ELECTION UPDATE:

On Jan. 13, 2008, the following were unanimously elected as officers of the Turtle Coast Sierra Club Group: Sachi Sachidanandan, Chair; Bud Long, Vice Chair; Chelle Woods, Secretary; and Kathy Emerson, Treasurer. Please see page 2 for a listing of current ExCom members.

VOTE FOR TONY SASSO, FEB. 26
(Dist. 32 Fla House Special Election!)

When the City Goes Around the County (or: Growth Happens)

by Judy Orcutt

Nature knows no political boundaries. To protect our natural communities, we must stay abreast of issues in both Indian River and Brevard counties. Right now, a growth issue is straddling our counties like a double-edged sword.

On November 7, 2006, 71.5% of the voters in Indian River County chose to confine high-density growth within the Urban Service Area, unless a county-wide referendum approved a change. The intent was to encourage growth where municipal services exist and discourage urban sprawl. But the City of Fellsmere, west of I-95 and within a stone's throw of Brevard County, has found a way around Indian River County's attempt to control population growth: annexation. When land is annexed into a city, the city has the ability to re-zone the property. Since 2007, Fellsmere has annexed 21,512 acres of land, primarily zoned 1 unit/10 acres. The annexation agreement between the City of Fellsmere and the property owner promised an increase in density to 2 units/acre, an increase in density from 2,200 homes to 43,026 homes.

If this were a relocation or "a transfer of density" away from other areas within the county, it could have positive results. Transferring density away from environmentally sensitive lands or important agricultural lands might preserve those lands in perpetuity while concentrating population for ease

of services and transportation. But to simply increase density is environmentally irresponsible based on the facts we know about our natural resources. Just to the north of us in Central Florida, the water battle has already begun. St. John's Water Management District calculates that they will not be able to issue consumptive use permits as soon as 2025.

The double-edged sword straddling our border is Fellsmere to the south and Palm Bay to the north. Both municipalities seem intent on increasing their densities, in spite of the environmental peril it can bring. Stay tuned for updates and be ready to act.

VOTE FOR TONY SASSO FEB. 26!

Congratulations to Tony Sasso, endorsed by Sierra Club, on winning the Democratic Primary for State House District 32! Tony Sasso is the most qualified candidate to work to preserve our precious natural resources and effectively manage growth in Florida. Sasso has a record of proven leadership at the local level and will work hard to represent District 32 citizens on conservation issues. Tony faces well-funded opponent Sean Campbell in the special Feb. 26 general election (replacing Bob Allen, who resigned). Help get out the vote on Feb. 26.