

# LOGGERHEAD

Turtle Coast Sierra Club

www.turtlecoast.org

MAR 2009

## Contaminating Ground Water Forever City of Rockledge One Step Away from Aquifer Storage & Recovery Well

by Mark Jacobs, President, Save Our Aquifer Inc.

Underground, 135 feet below, the Floridan Aquifer flows beneath us, a pristine source of drinking water that gushes out of artesian wells with the turn of a tap. It is the water that quenched the thirst of the first pioneers of Brevard County, the water that still supplies most of Florida, and the water that feeds our springs and flows up into the Indian River Lagoon.

It is also the water that the City of Rockledge plans to inject with over a hundred million gallons of sewage water each year. It is the water that the City has forbidden us to drink within a one-mile radius of the injection site. Soon it may be the water that contaminates the lagoon and our wells with endocrine disrupters and a variety



Rockledge resident and Sierra Club member, Kathy Reinhold, describes the impact of losing her private, potable artesian well.

of toxins found in sewage water.

Why? The city wants to “store” the sewage water in the Floridan Aquifer to have a supply of reclaimed water for irrigating lawns during the two-month dry season, so that municipal drinking water won’t be used for irrigation.

The city, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), and Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (FDEP) are touting that the Aquifer Storage and Recovery well will conserve our municipal drinking water supply from Cocoa’s well field. In reality, the ASR well would contaminate the drinking water source in the same Floridan Aquifer beneath

*continued on page 3*

### Turtle Coast Sierra Club Meetings in March

#### Brevard County Meeting

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

DATE: Thursday, Mar 26, 2009

LOCATION: Hester Wagner Community Center, Melbourne Village (take US-192 to Dayton Blvd (by Target), north 1/2 mile to community center driveway on right).

SPEAKER: **Dr. Mark Bush, Professor of Biology, Florida Institute of Technology, Melbourne**

PROGRAM: **Climate Change**

Dr. Bush will review climate trends ranging from hurricane intensity and sea-level rise to where the majority of extinctions are expected, and will discuss his research, which suggests that most predictions underestimate the speed and severity of climate change. For over 25 years, Bush has studied fossil pollen analysis of neotropical settings and past climates. He now advises Conservation International on climate change issues.

#### Indian River County Meeting

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

DATE: Tuesday, Mar. 17, 2009

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

SPEAKER: **Kristen & Mike Beck, Kayaks Etc.**

PROGRAM: **Photographic Tour of the Indian River Lagoon: What You See by Kayak**

Pelicans glide inches above the water, osprey hover over head, and fish explode out from below as you glide along in a kayak. Paddling over the shallow sea grass beds is relaxing and rejuvenating. Certified Florida Master Naturalists, the Becks have been paddling since childhood and are living their dream, bringing the joy of kayaking to others.

CONTACTS: Lynn Walsh, lwalsh@irclibrary.org, 772-589-1355 & Sonja Fromang, ssj442@aol.com, 772-589-7001

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## **GO GREEN**

### **Brevard Zoo Event**

### **Saturday, Mar. 14**

Family fun and conservation education from 10am-4pm. Free with zoo admission and the first 200 families receive a free gift! Music, activities and local enviro groups.

**[www.brevardzoo.org](http://www.brevardzoo.org)**

## **ABOUT US**

### **Turtle Coast Sierra Club**

#### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

CHAIR: "Sachi" Sachidanandan 321-242-8311

VICE CHAIR: Bud Long

SECRETARY: Mary Sphar

TREASURER: Doug Sphar

Judy Orcutt

Dick Wainer

Maureen Rupe

Daniel Marien

Vince Lamb

#### **COMMITTEES & CHAIRS**

##### **CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:**

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

EMAIL WARRIORS: Amy Tidd

ENERGY: Daniel Marien

FACILITY COORDINATOR: Open

FORESTS: Jenny McVicker

HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR: Open

MEMBERSHIP: Dick Wainer & Doug Sphar

NOMINATIONS: BUD LONG

OUTINGS CHAIR & LEADERS:

Suzanne Valencia (Chair), John Ide, Jerry Leslie, and Terri Wright

POLITICAL: Bud Long

PROGRAMS: Suzanne Valencia

PUBLICITY (BREVARD): Terri Wright

PUBLICITY (INDIAN RIVER): Lynn Walsh

SPRAWL ISSUE: Doug Sphar

#### **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. Subscriptions are included with Sierra Club memberships.

# **The Solar Energy Solution: Tax & Profit Incentives Make it Work**

*by Judy Orcutt*

The Florida Public Service Commission has released a report by Navigant Consulting which says that solar photovoltaic (cells that produce electricity directly from sunlight) has great potential to make a huge impact by 2020 – if hundreds of thousands of residential and commercial rooftops are used. More than 200,000 gigawatts of power could be produced by 2020 using a de-centralized system, far more than the new Turkey Point nuclear reactors that are expected to be operating in a decade or so. This report will be a key document used by legislators in the upcoming session to decide how much renewable energy the utility companies will be required to provide.

Florida can learn from Germany, where an innovative rate structure called Feed-In-Tariffs (aka Renewable Energy Dividends) has made Germany the largest solar producer in the world. Since 2000, when the new law was adopted, 55,000 new jobs have been created in the German solar industry. The German government's goal is to supply 25% of all their energy from renewable sources by 2020.

Closer to home, Gainesville Regional Utilities has just implemented a new Feed-In-Tariff Program. Feed-In-Tariffs fund the utility company's purchase of renewable electric energy from customers at a fixed rate on a 20-year contract. These purchase contracts, along with rebates for initial investments in solar, greatly incentivize solar installations and foster innovative investment models. Homes, churches, schools, and farms can install renewable energy systems and sell power to the utility company for a profit.

So why aren't feed-in-tariffs already available statewide to quickly reduce our dependence on fossil fuel? Unfortunately, the Public Service Commission

and our legislators are heavily lobbied (and financially supported in their campaigns) by utility companies who have no incentive to adopt the Feed-In-Tariff system. Utility companies make a profit when building new projects, even if the project is not cost effective and does not work. Profit results because they are allowed to pass their costs on to their customers and also receive tax credits.

Isn't it time for Florida to take control of our primary, renewable natural resource – the sun? Vero Beach City Council has authority over Vero Beach Utilities. They have been pleading during the cold weather for customers to conserve energy to prevent the higher usage charge written into the contract with their supplier. What better way to conserve than to have many customers producing power on their roof tops? It is time for the council to consider the innovative solutions being implemented in Gainesville to reduce fossil fuel addiction, create local jobs for the community and stabilize energy costs.

**TAKE ACTION!** Please take a moment to contact our Public Service Commissioners and your legislators to demand policies mandating Feed-In-Tariffs/Renewable Energy Dividends and rebates for initial investments in photovoltaic systems. If you live in Vero Beach, contact the council and let them know you want Vero Beach Utilities to be part of a sustainable Vero Beach.

#### **CONTACTS:**

Public Service Commission:

[www.psc.state.fl.us](http://www.psc.state.fl.us)

State Legislators:

[www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov)

Vero Beach City Council:

<http://covb.org/>

MORE INFO on solar solution:

<http://floridaallianceforrenewableenergy.org>

## Contaminating Ground Water Forever ...

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*“I will no longer be able to irrigate my organic garden with well water. My well produces 12 gallons of water a minute, or 17,000 gallons a day – enough to provide 34,000 people with their recommended amount of drinking water every day. But this resource is being taken from me and future generations, so that the city can provide sewage water to irrigate lawns.*

*– Kathy Reinhold, private well owner*

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the city of Rockledge and beyond. Water cannot be “stored” in an underground river, in the permeable limestone full of cracks, fissures and sinkholes. Very little of the sewage water injected will be recovered and most of it will flow southeast to private wells, and under and into the Indian River Lagoon, half a mile away, where there are flowing springs.

The so-called “upper confining unit” called the Hawthorne Formation that ASR well supporters claim will prevent upward flow of the sewage is only 35 feet thick at the injection site. Geologists consider anything less than 108 feet is as only “semi-confining.” SJRWMD’s own maps show a high rate of leakance in this area of the upper confining unit and this is an area of discharge for the Floridan Aquifer.

The clock is ticking. The city plans to begin injection this summer. The well has been dug. They have a permit from SJRWMD, and now only need a permit from the FDEP to begin cycle testing the well with toxic-laden sewage water. There will be a public workshop held by the FDEP and a comment period to the FDEP when the city applies for the injection permit this summer.

### **TAKE ACTION** **Help Save Our Aquifer!**

Save Our Aquifer, Inc. needs your time, help and support! Please visit our website for more information. Under the “Take Action” portion of the website, we have made it simple to email a letter to the governing officials and permitting agencies.

**[www.SaveOurAquifer.org](http://www.SaveOurAquifer.org)**

## The Loggerhead Delivery Goes Digital

**Sign up Now for eMail Delivery:  
Save Trees & Turtle Coast Funds  
[www.turtlecoast.org](http://www.turtlecoast.org)**

*Update from Your Turtle Coast ExComm*

You can help keep trees in the forest soaking up CO<sub>2</sub> to keep our planet cool and healthy by subscribing to electronic distribution of The Loggerhead, the Turtle Coast Sierra Club newsletter. Doing so will help reduce newsletter printing and mailing costs, enabling the Turtle Coast Sierra Club to use our funds more effectively – such as sponsoring more events like the Space Coast Climate Change Forum.

The Loggerhead is currently available as an Adobe PDF document at [www.turtlecoast.org](http://www.turtlecoast.org). Members who request email distribution will receive a monthly message that contains the newsletter as an attachment.

Paper newsletters will be mailed to members who do not use email or personal computers. To reduce costs and volunteer work, the list of members receiving mailed paper copies needs to be very short – less than 50 members.

If you have an email account, PLEASE send a message to [vince@turtlecoast.org](mailto:vince@turtlecoast.org) with “The Loggerhead” in the subject line and include your name in the message body. Your membership number is helpful but optional; you can find it on the mailing label of any Sierra Club publication that you have received.

We are building a secure database of names and email accounts that will be matched with the membership list provided by the national organization. If you have questions or suggestions, please send a message to [vince@turtlecoast.org](mailto:vince@turtlecoast.org) or call 321-258-5168.

We greatly appreciate your support and patience during the implementation of this electronic delivery process. Turtle Coast Sierra Club has more than 1300 members. Our database presently contains email addresses for approximately 400 members. Collecting email addresses from members and updating changes will require a significant amount of work.

#### **EMAIL POLICY**

1. Turtle Coast Sierra Club will not provide subscriber email information to any other organization.
2. No more than three messages per month will be sent to any subscriber by Turtle Coast Sierra Club. This includes newsletter distribution, meeting reminders and alert messages.
3. Every message will include an “opt-out” feature that will allow a subscriber to request removal from this list.

QUESTIONS: [vince@turtlecoast.org](mailto:vince@turtlecoast.org) or call 321-258-5168.



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The Sierra Club's members and supporters are more than 1.3 million of your friends and neighbors. Inspired by nature, we work together to protect our communities and the planet. The Club is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.

## Turtle Coast OUTING

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL RESERVATIONS** must be made with the outings leader to obtain time and place of meeting and to notify participants in the event that the trip must be cancelled.

**LIABILITY WAIVER:** To participate in an outing, you must sign a liability waiver. You can read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing at [www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapters/forms](http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapters/forms) or by calling 415-977-5630.

**FLORIDA SELLER OF TRAVEL REF# ST 37115**

**Sat., April 18, 8am – Turkey Creek Sanctuary Canoe Clean-up.** Help Turtle Coast with our quarterly canoe clean-up. Meet at the Margaret Hames Nature Center near the park entrance. Nature center is off Port Malabar Road behind the Palm Bay Rec Center, and immediately north of the Palm Bay Library. Dress expecting to get dirty. Bring work gloves and a rake if you have one. Some canoes will be provided; you may bring your own if you like. Clean up should be finished by noon. Sign up with Suzanne at 321-984-0604.

### **Report from Viera Wetlands Outing: Feb. 22**

by outings leader Suzanne Valencia

Unusual sightings were the American bittern, limpkin, Loggerhead shrikes, the gorgeous hooded Merganser, ringed neck, mottled ducks and northern harrier, and Sandhill Cranes right on the side of the berm. Thanks to Deborah Longman-Marien for spotting and identifying the elusive little pine, palm and yellow-rumped warblers.

## **Join us at these Upcoming Community Eco-Events**

Turtle Coast Sierra Club will be hosting informational booths at the following events. If you can help staff these booths (a fun and uplifting way to help the planet), please contact Suzanne at 321-984-0604 or [Valencia\\_suzanne@yahoo.com](mailto:Valencia_suzanne@yahoo.com). Requirements: smiling face and green heart. On the job training provided.

**Sat., Mar. 21 – Gobyfest: a Celebration of Nature at the St. Sebastian River Buffer Preserve** 10am-4pm. FREE admission to this great family event sponsored by the Coastal Preserves Alliance of East Central Florida. Something for all ages – learn about our flora, fauna, aquatic life and Florida history. Hay rides, kayak and pontoon boat rours. Food and craft vendors. All proceeds benefit local state parks and aquatic preserves. Parking immediately on the north side of C-54 canal (access from Babcock St). [www.floridastateparks.org/stsebastian](http://www.floridastateparks.org/stsebastian)

**Sat., Mar. 14 – 17th Annual Pelican Island Wildlife Festival at Riverview Park, Sebastian** 9am-4pm FREE parking and admission plus free family activities. Celebration of our natural resources and history with over 80 environmental and arts & crafts exhibits, live birds of prey and reptile shows, education activities for children, pontoon boat and kayak tours to Pelican Island, historical presentations and live music, food. [www.PelicanIslandFriends.org](http://www.PelicanIslandFriends.org)