

GCHSC GROUP NEWS

www.gchgroup.org

December 2014



Ballot for 2015 GCHG Excom Election

Voting Instructions— It is time to vote for the new Executive Committee! Circle each of your choices. Each member may cast one ballot, **voting for no more than five persons**. A second column on the ballot is for joint memberships. Use the second column **only if you have a joint membership**. Write a 1 or a 2 in the box provided to record the number of persons voting. The ballots will be checked to see if the membership is entitled to two votes. If an individual member votes in both columns, only the votes in the first column will be counted. The Executive Committee staggers terms so that the whole Excom is not up for election simultaneously.

Use this column for single membership or the 1st voter in a joint membership household.	Use this column for the 2nd voter in a joint membership household.
Hugh Havlik	Hugh Havlik
Carol Peterson	Carol Peterson
Andrea Story	Andrea Story
Martha Hoover	Martha Hoover
Rick Fried	Rick Fried

Mailing Instructions— Fold the Ballot, place in an envelope and mail to GCHG Sierra Club Election Committee, PO Box 27221 El Jobean, FL 33927-7221. **Ballots must be received by January 1, 2015.**

Vote for Five (5)

Mail to: **GCHG Sierra Club Elections Committee**
PO Box 27221
El Jobean, FL 33927-7221

Hugh Havlik is our Group chairperson and a long-time Sierra Club member who has lent his thoughtful work to events around the country and world for many years. No service trip is too tough or too far for Hugh!

Carol Peterson is our knowledgeable Group Treasurer whose Sierra Club affiliation began over 30 years ago. Carol brings a bright, calming perspective to all the community organizations for whom she volunteers, including the GCH Group.

Andrea Story is our fearless newsletter editor and past chair. She holds a Bachelors of Science in Zoology, a Masters of Arts in Education and is good-heartedly willing to learn new skills to assist our Group in the capacity which is needed.

Martha Hoover is our Group Secretary and an ever-learning retired educator who brings to the group a broad base of knowledge from her world travels. Many of these involve environmental service trips via national Sierra Club.

Rick Fried is an accomplished Outings Leader for our local Group. A Master Naturalist, Rick brings a thorough knowledge of Shell and Prairie Creeks to his popular kayak trips. *Many Thanks to all these wonderful Volunteers!*

YOU SHOULD KNOW...

- ◆ Our booth at the recent Charlotte Harbor Nature Festival was a huge success. Thanks to Cabot Cheeses for once again supporting our efforts by donating delicious samples and a gift basket . Our new brochure was distributed at the Festival and will be available to all at General Meetings, on our Outings and by request : call **941-380-0740**
- ◆ Our web site address has been simplified to : **www.gchgroup.org** Please refer to it for updated information.
- ◆ GENERAL MEETINGS for 2015 will be held on the **Third Tuesday** of each month, January - April, 7:00pm, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1532 Forrest Nelson Blvd. , Port Charlotte.

THE NEXT GENERAL MEETINGS — Come Join Us !

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Jan 20, 2015	Master Naturalist, Rick Fried	“Shell Creek Through the Year”
Feb 17, 2015	Authors, Ed and Deb Higgins	“Paddles in Paradise”

COME ON OUT FOR A PADDLE OR A HIKE!

We have a schedule of wonderful outings for kayakers, canoers and hikers. Lead by experts, our popular outings will help you explore the beauty of many venues in Charlotte County and surrounding areas. All of our outings are free and open to the public. Participants on water outings must provide pfd (personal flotation device), watercraft and be able to swim. All outings require reservations which can be made by a phone call to the leader. Each outing, listed on **www.gchgroup.org**, has contact information for the leader at the end of its description. For a paper copy of the outings schedule, call 941-380-0740

“WHO YA GONNA CALL” ?

If you have even an hour per month to spare in the New Year.. **Call us !** 941-380-0740

You can definitely make a difference! Please help protect our environment by helping your local Sierra Club Group! Can you type? Complete forms? Like phone calling? Know someone who could help with PR, Membership or Programs? We need people with and without computer skills! Thanks.. We hope to hear from you soon.

Greater Charlotte Harbor Sierra Group Files Suit to Save SmartCharlotte 2050

On September 23, 2014 the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners voted to adopt a massive amendment to our comprehensive plan SmartCharlotte 2050. SmartCharlotte 2050 was adopted in June 2010 and finalized in 2011 after 30 public input sessions, workshops, presentations, hearings, over 800 online comments and a legal challenge. By contrast, Charlotte 2050 entertained just 2 roundtables and 3 hearings. SmartCharlotte 2050 sets the vision and policies for natural resource protection, land use and growth in Charlotte County for the next 30 years.

Your Greater Charlotte Harbor Sierra Group [GCHSG] strenuously objected to the massive gutting of natural resource protection regarding wetlands, floodplains, wildlife corridors and buffers. Other harmful land use policy amendments abound. Key words and principles like “sprawl”, “sustainable” and “Smart Growth” are completely stricken.

On October 23, our Conservation Chair and Greater Charlotte Harbor Sierra Group (as Sierra Club, Inc.) filed a petition against Charlotte County for a formal administrative hearing opposing the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. A week later, the judge consolidated our case with a 2nd filing from the Friends of Cape Haze, Inc. a homeowners group in West County. Most all of our issues of concern are parallel to FOCH.

Currently, both sides are taking depositions from expert and lay witnesses. Initial hearing dates are set for early January, 2015.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW: While Sierra, Inc. and The Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club approved the litigation; it is up to us to fund this action. Please help us protect your quality of life in beautiful Charlotte County. Your kind donation is deeply appreciated.

- Make checks out to “The Sierra Club Foundation.”
- On the information line please write “Account of GCHG-Florida Chapter.”
- Mail checks to Greater Charlotte Harbor Sierra Group, P.O. Box 38, Placida, FL.

Your gift is tax deductible.

Every dollar goes directly to this litigation to protect our natural resources and neighborhoods.

Deb Highsmith

Conservation Chair



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GCHSierra Club Group
PO Box 27221
ElJobean, FL
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PLACE
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HERE

