



Gator Gazette

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Spring Is Busting Out All Over

The first signs of spring are arriving in Central Florida with birds chirping, bees buzzing and red maples blooming. By the end of April we'll be seeing signs of the spring migration of birds from Central America and the Caribbean. Bees buzzing indicates the start of the flowering season and you might notice that other wildlife, such as butterflies, frogs, and other animals are becoming more active as the weather warms.



Activity with the SWA began in earnest last month with another fascinating presentation on the topic of Snakes in Florida provided by Jenna Noel Palmisano. That was followed by our Annual Bake Sale at the Solivita Mardi Gras Parade. On March 17th we will once again celebrate St. Patty's day with a delicious pot luck dinner featuring homemade hot corned beef provided and prepared by our two favorite SWA chefs - Gary Seiffer and Barbara McDonald. Next month we will once again host our friends from Gatorland for an instructive talk. Be sure to bring the grandkids to that one.



All in all, now more than 200 members strong, your SWA has become a vital force for the protection of wildlife in Solivita... and a great place to gather with friends who share a love for all things that live in the wild.

Don't miss the upcoming events and be sure to join us in the Palms for our chatty monthly membership meeting on April 21st.



ANNUAL MARDIS GRAS BAKED GOODS SALE — 2025

Our dynamic team of volunteers did a great job at the Annual Bake Sale during the Mardi Gras Parade Celebration. Our thanks to all who generated over \$800 in revenues (about \$500 in profits) to our treasury. Special thanks for baking chefs Barbara McDonald and Vivian Aber (photographer) who baked the scrumptious delicacies. Also thanks to all the members and other residents to come by to say hello and purchase some yummy cookies.



THE GREEN SWAMP OF FLORIDA — OUR STATE'S LIQUID HEART

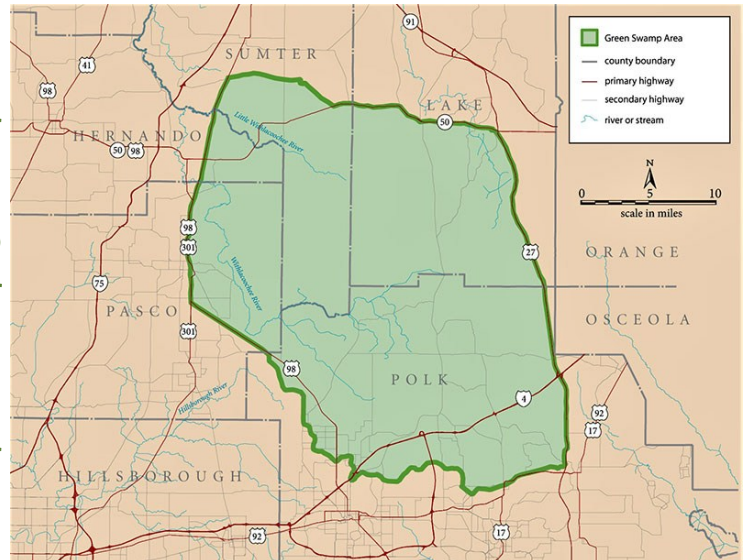
Located right here in Central Florida, the Green Swamp with its 560,000 acres of land is the second largest aquifer recharge in Florida. Sitting on a plateau above the surrounding land allows the rain water to drain across the surface forming the headwaters of four major rivers: the Withlacoochee, the Ocklawaha, the Peace and the Hillsborough.

The swamp is made of several ecosystems including cypress swamps, river swamp, pine flatwoods, oak hammocks and sandhills. These ecosystems attract a variety of wildlife with more than 330 species of animals described including some of the most endangered and threatened species like the Florida black bear and Florida panther.

Protecting the Green Swamp is essential to ensure the quality and quantity of water for Central Florida and maintain a functional wildlife corridor.

Visitors may hike in the 110,000 acres over the vast road network or hike the Florida National Scenic Trail, which bisects the trail and road system in the area. Observers will notice a land that has been preserved to keep its natural beauty. This is an excellent illustration of Central Florida's natural heritage.

The District began purchasing the area in the early 70's and is still carrying on acquisition to protect the area's natural uniqueness, which will benefit current and future residents of Southwest Florida for generations to come.



SPRING IN FLORIDA

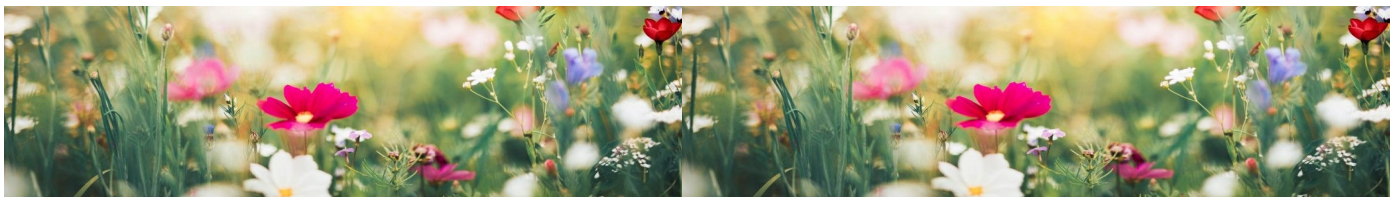


MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY CLUB MEETING

Club President, Bob Monica called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm at Palms Amenity Room. Board members present: Bob Monica, Leo Mills, Dorothy Schwartz and Barbara McDonald.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- Minutes of January Meeting were accepted by the group.
- We have 207 members.
- If you have forgotten—2025 Dues deadline was January 31, 2025. \$15.00 per person.
- Future meeting date is - March 17, 2025. A potluck dinner is planned. Future dates are always available on the SWA Solivita HOA website page and SWA website.
- The gator report for the end of December 2024 indicates no gators has been removed. The annual count totals of three.
- Leo Mills, Treasurer gave a complete review of finances for the year 2024. Cash on hand currently is \$4853.61.
- Program Director, Barbara McDonald, presented a report detailing the social and educational events the club has scheduled: 2/20—Presentation on Snakes with live specimens, 3/22 or 3/29—Central Florida Animal Reserve for big cats -\$25 per person for a tour, 4/3—Gatorland presentation with live specimen. Great for the grandkids (no charge).
- Bob has requested permission to placed five (5) new duck boxes on ponds throughout the community to the PCDD. Awaiting feedback.
- Leo still has some t-shirts for sale.
- Election of new officers was conducted and voted upon by members present. Outcome: Rick McKelvey, Vice President, Joanne Bodziony, Secretary, Vivian Aber, appointed Director at Large.
- Meeting adjourned at 6:09 pm



PROTECT THE MANATEE — REPRINTED FROM FWC WEBSITE**Manatees**

Due to their eating habits, manatees are nicknamed “sea cows” because they eat seagrasses and other aquatic plants. Manatees are capable of eating a tenth of their weight in a 24 hour period.

Manatees need access to water warmer than 68 degrees Fahrenheit to survive prolonged cold weather. As temperatures drop, Florida manatees make their way to springs, power plant discharge areas and other warm-water sites. When viewing manatees as they congregate at warm-water sites, it is important to give them space. Disturbing manatees at these sites can cause them to swim out of protected areas and into potentially life-threatening cold water. Manatees are a protected species, and it is illegal to harass, feed, disturb or harm them.



During colder months, seasonal manatee zones require boaters and personal watercraft users to reduce speed in or avoid certain areas to prevent collisions that can injure or kill manatees. Manatee protection zones are marked by waterway signs; maps of these zones are available online at MyFWC.com/MPZ.

Prolonged exposure to lower water temperatures causes manatees to lose body heat and inadequately digest their food, which can lead to a condition known as "cold stress" that eventually can be fatal. If you see an injured, distressed, sick or dead manatee, report it to the FWC's Wildlife Alert Hotline at 888-404-FWCC (3922) so that trained responders can assist.

More information about manatees and how people can help with their conservation is available at MyFWC.com/Manatee.



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Our Mission

Wildlife conservation through public educational outreach, propagation of rare and endangered species and habitat restoration projects.



COMING TO SOLIVITA

APRIL 23 ~ 10 AM

STARLITE BALLROOM

ADMISSION \$5.00



GATORLAND will have several "reptilian visitors" on hand. Bring your grandkids!

Open to ALL RESIDENTS. FREE for SWA Members, Non-Members only \$5.00.

SWA Membership fee \$15 per year. Tell your friends... Don't miss out. **KIDS FREE**