

MARIAN L. RYAN

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A graduate of Florida Southern College, Marian worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services for 44 years before retiring in 2016. Hired as a clerk-typist in 1972, Marian worked her way through college and was promoted through the ranks of the Dairy Division from the laboratory section to becoming Supervisor of the Bureau of Inspection, regulating dairy farms and dairy product manufacturers state-wide.

Growing up in Winter Haven, Marian always had an appreciation of the areas lakes, flora and fauna and learned a great deal more about environmental issues after joining the Sierra Club in 1988. Her conservation activism began in earnest as an empty nester after her son enrolled at the University of Florida in 1989. Inspired and encouraged by conservation leaders Ken and Helen Morrison, Richard and Frances Coleman and others, Marian gained the knowledge and confidence to tackle numerous conservation issues.

CONSERVATION WORK HIGHLIGHTS

- Successfully worked to have the Green Swamp added to the Preservation 2000 acquisition list
- Successfully lobbied agencies and presented information to the Acquisition and Restoration Council to prevent the surplus of Hilochee Wildlife Management Area property for incompatible use.
- With Richard Coleman, initiated the Lake Hancock restoration project in 1999
- With Richard Coleman and Smiley Hendry, cleared approximately 28 miles of Fisheating Creek of the water hyacinths in October/November 1994. The objective was for the creek to be fully navigable for the judge presiding over the sovereign lands lawsuit filed against Lykes Brothers. The case of Florida versus Lykes regarding Fisheating Creek was settled in May of 1999. Fisheating Creek was declared a public waterway and the case set a major precedent both legally and politically, which will serve to protect as many as 7,000 miles of other Florida rivers and lakes. Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund attorney, David Guest, stated that the people of Florida were "...awarded the entire river bed" from the Highlands county line to Lake Okeechobee for no monetary consideration having to be paid to Lykes Brothers (9,000 acres). The people of Florida bought 9,000 more acres of conservation and recreation lands along Fisheating Creek. The ruling also provided for a 42,000-acre conservation easement to provide a huge buffer around the creek and to protect its streams and swamps.
- With others, worked successfully for the passage of Polk County's Environmental Lands Referendum
- Worked to bring about the acquisition of a gopher tortoise mitigation park in Polk County
- Established the need for and co-chaired the Polk Land Stewardship Alliance whose goal to "Provide incentives that would strongly encourage the conservation of agricultural lands, wildlife habitat and corridors, and be self-initiating."
- Instrumental in the defeat of the ill-conceived Surplus Conservation Lands program by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in 2013. Program was terminated without surplussing any conservation lands.
- Active in petition and campaign efforts to pass the Florida Water and Land Legacy Amendment 2012-2014.
- As member of the Sierra Club Florida's Phosphate Mining Committee, worked to improve avoidance, preservation and mitigation related to phosphate mine permits in Southwest Florida – 2009 – present.

AFFILIATIONS

Sierra Club, Ancient Islands Group
Chair, 1993-95
Vice-Chair, 1991-92, 2007-present
Political Committee Chair, 1990-present
Regional Political Committee Representative for the Florida Chapter 1993 – present
Sierra Club Florida Steering Committee Appointed by National Board of Directors to 7 member committee in May 2008 for 3 years
Sierra Club Florida Executive Committee - December 2011 - December 2012
Sierra Club Florida – Chapter Conservation Chair – (2012 – 2014)
Sierra Club Florida Interim Political Committee - Appointed by National Board, May 2008 – July 1, 2009
Sierra Club Florida – Chapter Conservation Committee – January 2018 - present

Green Horizon Land Trust – Board Member – August 2007 – December 2011
Vice President – January 2012 – December 2017
President – January 2018 - Present

Friends of the Parks Foundation - President 2004 – present

Accomplishments:

- Successful \$10,000 Gulfstream Environmental & Recreation Grant for shade house for STAR program. STAR program funding was cut by legislature. The shade house has been moved to Circle B-Bar Reserve to grow plants for environmental restoration projects.
- Successful \$3000 matching Public Outreach Grant from the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) to create 12 educational panels for the Mosaic Peace River Park boardwalk extension in Homeland 2008
- Award winning Trek Ten Trails Program created in 2007 – continuing.
- Park Partners Dirt Days Program for Kids (K-5) created in 2011 – continuing.

League of Environmental Organizations (LEO) Founding member and Member of the Board of Directors, 1991-2000

Polk County Rails-To-Trails, Member of Board of Directors, 1990-91

Polk Citizens for Water, Wildlife, & Wilderness, Spokesperson, 1994

Withlacoochee River Ecosystem Management Committee - Member & Newsletter Editor 1998-2000

APPOINTMENTS

Green Swamp Task Force by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (1991-92)

Florida Institute of Phosphate Research Policy Advisory Committee by the Board of Directors, Florida Institute of Phosphate Research (1994 – 1996); Educational Advisory Committee (1996 – 2000)

CLASAC - Technical Advisory Group for Polk County's Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Advisory Committee, (1995 – 2016 dissolution)

CLASAC - Polk County Environmental Lands Program Conservation Land Acquisition Selection Advisory Committee by Polk County Board of County Commissioners (1996 – 2016 dissolution)

Polk County Water Policy Advisory Committee by Polk County Board of County Commissioners (2001-2013)
Chairwoman (2002 – 2013)

Green Swamp Land Authority – Appointed by Governor Lawton Chiles 1995, re-appointed by Governor Jeb

Bush and continued to serve until the Authority was dissolved in 1999.

Lake Hancock Advisory Group - She and Richard Coleman (now deceased) began the current Lake Hancock initiative in 1998 and served as members of the committee whose goal is to restore Lake Hancock and the Upper Peace River System.

Polk County Off-Highway Vehicle Park Advisory Committee – by Polk County Board of County Commissioners (2006 – 2011)

Winter Haven Lakes Advisory Committee - appointed by the Winter Haven City Commission (2004 – 2010)

Co-Chair of the Polk Land Stewardship Alliance - 2006 – 2009

Peace River Basin Management Advisory Committee – appointed by FDEP Secretary Michael Sole 2007 – 2012

AWARDS

Conservation Leader 1994, the Florida Chapter of the Nature Conservancy

Kaucher Conservation Award, 1994, Ridge Audubon Society

Pine Tree Award for Group Leadership, Florida Sierra Club 1994

Annual Individual Award, Outstanding Contribution to Improving Awareness and Encouraging Action for Lake Improvement, 1995, Lakes Education Action Drive (LEAD)

National Conservation Award, Daughters of the American Revolution National Conservation Committee

Palm Leaf Award for Conservation, Florida Sierra Club, 1999

Blazing Star Award, 2009, Green Horizon Land Trust – *“For her untiring efforts in the advancement of environmental causes that seek to protect Florida’s natural resources and for educating the public as to their value to present and future generations.”*

Susan E. Miller Award – *“In recognition of exceptional contributions to groups, chapters and regional entities of the Sierra Club”* – Sierra Club 2011

2013 FLORIDA ECOSYSTEM AWARD recognizes a team who has made a significant accomplishment on an environmental or organizational issue: The 2008-2011 Chapter Steering Committee