

## THE OAS UNDERMINES THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEMOCRACY THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF UNFAIR TRADE. *By Pedro Monteiro, Conservation Chair*

Attend public events in Broward on June 4 and 5 to oppose OAS's trade scheme

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has been in effect for over eleven years now, and its legacy is one of deterioration of environmental quality, undermining of sovereignty and democracy, elimination of jobs, and the worsening of working conditions. In recent months Congress has been discussing whether to expand this unfair trade scheme to other countries in Latin America through DR-CAFTA. Hopefully by the time you read this article, Congress will not have found enough votes to pass this bad deal. But whether it has passed or not, we must remain vigilant of unfair trade deals such as CAFTA and the FTAA, which are being promoted by the *Organization of American States (OAS)* and the *Office of the U.S. Trade Representative*.

The OAS claims to promote democracy, human rights, and environmental protection. Ironically, its own *Office for Trade* is undermining these very objectives through the promotion of unfair trade treaties. The fact that NAFTA was proven bad for people and the environment comes as no surprise to public interest

groups: these treaties were developed in secret by trade representatives and appointees such as corporate attorneys and CEOs from large transnational corporations who designed these treaties to hand corporations the power to sue governments over regulations that impede their profits. While the treaties have provisions purportedly designed to protect people and the environment, these provisions are toothless and not enforced.



### Broward Sierra Programs

#### JUNE 7th: Florida Citizen Initiatives Under Attack.

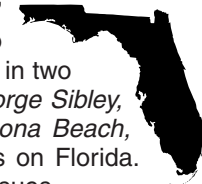
Attorney *Lesley Blackner*, co-author of the *Florida Hometown Democracy* petition effort, will review the daunting task of collecting hundreds of thousands of signatures of registered Florida voters to bring issues to the voters that the Florida legislature has continually failed to address. In this case, excessive sprawl all over the state that jeopardizes water supply, air quality and housing costs plus many other essentials for a quality environment. (The recently ended Florida legislature made it even more difficult to achieve citizen referenda.)



**JULY 5th: "Hope Takes Wing"**, the saga of the *ultralight flights to bring Whooping Cranes back to Florida's Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge* after a hundred-year absence in eastern North America.



**August 2nd: "A Tale of Two Counties"** documents the 10-year results of two different approaches to managing growth in two Washington, D.C. bedroom counties. *George Sibley*, a videographer and producer from *Daytona Beach*, has produced a series of documentaries on Florida. Join the discussion with your own city's issues.



Anne Kolb Nature Center is located on the North side of Sheridan Street, East of U.S. 1. Doors open at 7:00 PM. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

#### Mexico is suffering under NAFTA

Since the implementation of NAFTA, the annual rate of deforestation in Mexico rose to 1.1 million hectares - almost doubling the previous rate of 600 thousand per year. This places Mexico second in the world in the loss of forests - behind only Brazil. <sup>[SC]</sup> The price paid for corn to Mexican farmers has dropped by 70% after U.S. subsidized corn exports to Mexico more than quadrupled since 1993. More than 1.5 million

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We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Why not join us right now? Come along on an outing. Get involved, learn about local issues and how they affect you and your community. Just use the membership form on the back cover.



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**Membership Corrections** - To expedite any membership change (new addresses, etc.) or problems with your membership records please send your name, member number, old and new address or problem to:  
**Member Services**, 85 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441. 415-977-5653 or e-mail <address.changes@sierraclub.org> or <membership.services@sierraclub.org>  
If further assistance is needed, please contact your local Membership Chair, Andrea Hagen 954-475-9399.

## Committee Meetings

### Executive Committee:

Meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm, in room 430a of the Broward County Governmental Center. For details call Loren Colburn at 954-761-1355 (or e-mail lorenac1101@hotmail.com).

### Broward Sierra Club Social:

We'll be taking the summer off for socials. The socials will start again in the fall on the 4th Wednesday of the month. If you would like to help out in organizing the socials or you have a great idea for a place to hold a social somewhere in Broward please contact Max Goldstein at 954-296-3411.

### Carrying Capacity Committee:

Contact Linda Brown, Carrying Capacity Chair at (954) 764-1470 or e-mail lbrown@communityusa.com.

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Mexican farmers have been driven off their land since NAFTA was enacted, as NAFTA has accelerated the shift to large-scale farming. Subsidies have accelerated this shift and contributed to the increased use of poisons and water. To survive, many farmers turned to factories that set up shop along the Mexico-U.S. border to evade U.S. environmental, safety, and labor laws, even though factory wages there were 25% higher before NAFTA. Other farmers have been turning to slash and burn techniques to grow more corn, or migrating to the U.S. to seek jobs as low-paid migrant farm workers.

Because of NAFTA, Mexico was forced to pay \$16 million to a U.S. corporation after a community in Guadalucazar blocked the building of a toxic waste facility that would have threatened local drinking water supplies. According to the Mexican government, in 1999 alone the cost of NAFTA related environmental damage was estimated at \$47 billion. [SC]

### Canada loses forests and family farms

Canada also has not done well under NAFTA: NAFTA has greatly contributed to the destruction of forests in Canada, and laws limiting deforestation can be overturned as barriers to trade. Moreover, Canada's farm debt



## Broward Sierra Club General Meetings

Held on the first Tuesday of every month at Ann Kolb Nature Center (954-926-2480). Outings sign-up start at 7:00 p.m. and the general meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. All members welcome!

To get to Anne Kolb Nature Center: Take I-95 to the Sheridan St. exit. Go East past Federal Hwy. The entrance to Anne Kolb Nature Center will be on your left (After the sign for West Lake Park). The center is before the Intracoastal Bridge.

has doubled from 1988 to 2001, and 11% of family farms were lost from 1996 to 2001. [PC]

### U.S. loses family farms, environmental protection, and more

But NAFTA damage is also great in the U.S.. Total farm business debt rose for the 11th straight year in 2003, for a total increase of almost 50% since before NAFTA. Between 1995 and 2002, the U.S. lost 38,310 small farms. [PC] Additionally, NAFTA has enabled foreign corporations to challenge laws that protect our drinking water by seeking almost \$1 billion in compensation for a law that bans a carcinogenic fuel additive that is contaminating groundwater. In another example, Glamis Gold, headquartered in Reno, Nevada but registered as a Canadian gold-mining company, is using the investment provisions of NAFTA to challenge a California law which protects the environment of sacred Native American land by requiring mining companies to return mining sites to their original condition when their operation is completed. Glamis is planning to use an open-pit mining technique which often has leaked toxic chemicals such as cyanide into surrounding surface water and killed wildlife. Glamis contends that under NAFTA, California cannot impose regulations which it believes may hinder Glamis' ability to profit from planned mining operations. [SC]

This same company has controversial gold mines in at least two other CAFTA countries: Honduras and Guatemala.

### Deforestation in CAFTA Countries

CAFTA countries lost approximately 11% of their forest cover between

## Act Now and Save the Environment!

**Make a commitment to the next generation by remembering the Sierra Club in your will. Your support will help others preserve the intricate balance of nature.**

For conservation priority questions in Broward County please call Pedro Monteiro at (954) 525-3324 or call George Cavros at (954) 835-1428.

For more information and confidential assistance, please complete the form and send to:  
**John Calaway, Director, Gift Planning**  
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105 (415) 977-5639 or call **John at (800) 932-4270**  
e-mail: [planned.giving@sierraclub.org](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)

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*Let John know you want to make a difference in Broward County!*



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

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1990 and 2000; including some of Central America's last remaining mahogany, as well as stands of rare, valuable tropical hardwoods. If CAFTA passes, these countries will lose all capacity to control deforestation rates as environmental legislation to protect forests is overridden by unfettered free trade. [RAN] Despite widespread public opposition, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Honduras recently ratified CAFTA.

**OAS Hypocritically Promotes Unfair Trade**

The OAS set up the Summit of the Americas in 1995, and since then it has been promoting the expansion of NAFTA to virtually the entire Western Hemisphere. Due largely to opposition to U.S. Agribusiness subsidies (supported by our tax dollars), the FTAA has stalled. Nonetheless, the OAS has also been promoting CAFTA (a mini-FTAA) to countries that do not have as much negotiating power to go up against the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (who is co-opted by corporations).

Although sustainability guidelines encourage locally grown foods and local businesses, these trade schemes specifically prohibit any preference to local sources, and result in the formation of large unsustainable monocultures and energy intensive shipment of goods over long distances. Therefore, although the OAS claims to support sustainable agriculture, it is in fact encouraging treaties that enable increasing depletion of natural resources. Although the OAS claims to support democracy, it is promoting treaties that under mine democratic laws and both national and local sovereignty of its member nations. Finally, although the OAS claims to support human rights, it is promoting the expansion of sweat shops and poor labor conditions.

**OAS General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale, June 3-7**

The OAS General Assembly is meeting in the U.S. for the first time in 34 years, at the Broward Convention Center in Fort Lauderdale. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will be hosting 1600 dignitaries from the member nations, and President Bush is expected to attend as well.

The **Sierra Club** invites you to participate in events to learn about and publicize the OAS's hypocritical promotion of unfair trade. We will publicize the fact that the *OAS Trade Unit* is critically flawed, and must be dissolved or re-staffed from the ground up with people who wish to promote sustainability, quality of life, and better environmental and labor conditions, rather than expanding profits for huge corporations.

References:

[PC] Public Citizen Global Trade Watch  
<http://www.citizen.org/trade/>

[SC] Sierra Club - Trade & the Environment  
<http://www.sierraclub.org/trade/>

[RAN] Rainforest Action Network  
<http://www.ran.org/>



**WEAR YOUR PASSION FOR THE ENVIRONMENT WITH PRIDE!**



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Sierra Club apparel is created with organic cotton, renewable resources, and technical synthetics produced to have the least impact on the environment!

**The Sierra Club black twill cap** is a classic. Unstructured with a fabric closure, easily adjustable brass buckle and hideaway closure. The Sierra Club logo is embroidered in white on the front. Price: \$7.

**Excursion/Tote Bag:** Designed in gray with black trim, this waterproof, zippered tote bag is ideal for shopping or camping/beach trips. With convenient top zipper, comfortable shoulder straps and tasteful Sierra Club logo on the side. Price: \$10.

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**Events surrounding the OAS General Assembly June 3 - June 5**

**Family friendly events planned by the Alliance for Justice in the Americas include:**

**Friday:** 7pm: Film Screening at St. Maurice Church, 2851 Stirling Rd. in Dania Beach.

**Saturday:** 9am- 11pm: Carnival of the Americas at St. Maurice Church (Educational workshops, live performances, art festivals, and more film screenings. There will be talks, food and activities for all ages and a chance to learn more about how the free trade agreements would change our lives).

**Sunday afternoon:** March to the OAS meeting at the Broward Convention Center. We will be leaving from IBEW Local 728 at 201 SE 24th (State Rd. 84), Ft. Lauderdale at 1:00 pm (wear green and bring signs).

So join us for the day or volunteer to help with some of the activities that are planned. Call Loren Colburn 954-761-1355 for more information.



## GO FARTHER ON A TANK OF GAS



With gas prices going through the roof, fuel economy has become not just environmentally sound but economically essential.

**1. Drive Smart!** When you drive aggressively, you waste gas and put others at risk. Observe the speed limit, avoid rapid acceleration and braking, and maintain a constant speed on the road.

**2. Keep Your Car In Shape.** A well-tuned car burns less gasoline. So make sure that you get your oil and air filters changed regularly, and that your tires are always properly inflated.

**3. Change Your Commute.** When you sit in rush hour traffic, you are burning gas and going nowhere. If possible, try to adjust your work schedule so that you can avoid rush hour traffic. Even better, and if your employer allows it, think about telecommuting.

**4. Write Your Congresspeople.** Urge them to raise fuel economy standards to 40 miles per gallon. Modern technology can make our cars and trucks go farther on a gallon of gas. Taking this step would save nearly 4 million barrels of oil a day -- more oil than we currently import from the Persian Gulf or could ever extract from the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge combined. And by saving on gas, you would save nearly \$2,000 at the pump over the life of your car.

### Did You Miss Earth Day?

Don't worry! Earth Day is not the only day to show you're committed to protecting the environment. Please consider becoming a Sierra Club member today. Your support is crucial to safeguarding our land, air, water and wildlife. It's never too late to make a difference!

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Placing an ad in the Broward Sierra News does more than reach thousands of local, environmentally sensitive readers. It also helps to offset the costs of printing and mailing the newsletter, making it possible to continue to alert you to issues of local importance and the actions you can take, as well as inform you of events, outings and meetings of the Broward Sierra Club group.

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