

PORT EVERGLADES DREDGING PLAN LEAVES MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

By George Cavros, Conservation Chair

Port Everglades is slated to undergo a \$326 million taxpayer-funded dredging project that will destroy up to 26 acres of corals in order to accommodate larger ships. The details and impacts of the dredging project are to be unveiled in a draft Environmental Impact Statement being prepared by the Army Corps of Engineers. Once the draft is released, the process of public hearings and written comments will begin.

The driving reason behind the dredging proposal is to accommodate a generation of cargo ships called post-Panamax which are too large to pass through the Panama Canal. To handle the new cargo ships the port would need to be dredged to a depth beyond 50 feet. Port Everglades is currently the 3rd busiest cruise ship port in the world and the 12th busiest containerized cargo port in the U.S., and handles petroleum deliveries for 12 Florida counties.

The coral reef slated for destruction is part of a larger of contiguous South Florida reef system that generates several billion dollars in direct scuba diving and recreational fishing economic activity right here in Broward County. While coral reefs only occupy .02% of the ocean floor, they are home to 25% of all marine life. Coral reefs provide critical habitat for juvenile fish and thus play an important role in our recreational fishing industry. Coral reefs also protect our shorelines against beach erosion and hurricane storm surges. Staghorn and Elkhorn coral are prevalent in Broward County and are in the process in being listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

The dredging project will require state and federal permits. The Army Corps of Engineers permit requires that the county first avoid damage to the reef. If damage is unavoidable, the county must minimize damage to the reef and must "mitigate" any damage to the reef. Mitigation is an attempt to remedy the destruction of natural reefs typically by creating artificial reefs – such as dropping limestone boulders underwater that may later become home to corals and fish.

The project is generating opposition from state and federal agencies. Jocelyn Karazsia, an ecologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service, said in a recent Sun Sentinel article, "Those reef impacts are substantial ... there is no way to offset the losses to the coral reef. Our position is that the impacts are unacceptable."

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Broward Sierra Programs

April 4th: "Barn Owl Prowl" Dr. Richard Raid

Dr. Richard Raid is a professor of plant pathology at the U.F. Everglades Research Education Center in Belle Glade. With a Ph.D. from Penn State (switched majors from Entomology to Pathology) he has had success with Florida agricultural producers in promoting nesting boxes for barn owls. These raptors have shown positive results in eliminating the need for chemical rodenticides.



An avid outdoorsman, Richard has hiked the entire 2,000-plus miles of the Appalachian Trail, 1200 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, and has crossed the U.S. and Canada on bicycle. In 2003, he and his then 10-year old son, Stephen, completed a 9,600 mile car-camping excursion covering 26 states and 7 National Parks. The trip included a 6-day canoe paddle in Montana.

Check out the Barn Owl web site at <http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/barnowl/owlindex.htm>

May 2nd: Laura Geselbracht, Marine Conservation Planner for the Nature Conservancy of Florida.

Laura Geselbracht has over twenty years of professional experience in environmental policy and planning, conservation, and resource management. She has been with The Nature Conservancy for ten years and has worked on Everglades and other South Florida issues as well as marine conservation. She recently headed development of a marine site prioritization framework for Florida and the marine component of Florida's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) for the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and is currently coordinating the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy's marine science efforts and Big Bend seagrass action plan.



We meet at Anne Kolb Nature Center in Hollywood. Take I-95 to the Sheridan Street exit, head East over U.S. 1, over the bridge, and on the left within 1/2 mile, look for the lighted Anne Kolb sign. If you go over the Intercoastal, you missed it. Doors open at 7:00 PM. Committee reports begin at 7:30 and the program begins at 8:00. The meeting is open to the public at no charge. For more information contact Joyce Tarnow at 954/942-7278.

Sierra Hotline  **954-567-2841**
for Hotline additions, call Harold @ 561-417-0216

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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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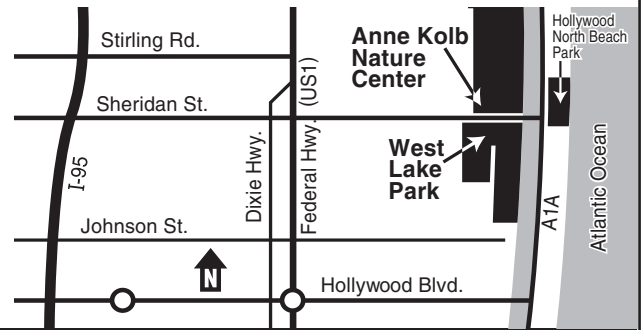
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Membership Corrections - To expedite any membership change (new addresses, etc.) or problems with your membership records please send your name, member number, old and new address or problem to:
Member Services, 85 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 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.

Broward Sierra Club General Meetings

Held on the first Tuesday of every month at Anne Kolb Nature Center (954-926-2480). Outings sign-up starts 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.



Executive Committee Meetings

Held on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm, in room 430a of the Broward County Governmental Center. For details call Harold Hancock at 561-417-0216 or e-mail hdhcpa@yahoo.com.

HELP SAVE GOPHER TORTOISES IN FLORIDA

By Leigh Buckner, Executive Committee Member

Tell Wal-Mart and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) that it is not OK to approve development on gopher tortoise habitat by purchasing permits from the FWC to "entomb" them, ensuring their deaths. Wal-Mart in Palm Beach obtained such a permit in August, 2005 and has begun development. The FWC is considering departing from their 1991 precedent-setting permit program (which has killed approximately 74,000 tortoises) and relocating tortoises in the future. **KEEP THE PRESSURE ON** by telling Wal-Mart they chose the cowardly option, and the FWC to stop this practice and explore relocation options!

Gopher tortoises have lost 80 percent of their habitat in Florida to development. They are an ecologically vital species, as their burrows provide shelter for hundreds of species.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32329
Tel (850) 488-4676
Fax (850) 488-1961

Wal-Mart
702 S.W. 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716
(800) 925-6278



BROWARD SIERRA CLUB TURNS 30!

It was 30 years ago that our Broward group had their first meeting. In our early days, we had a core of active members that spent a lot of weekends hiking, canoeing, and camping all over Florida.

If you were one of them, you will be interested in a reunion that is being planned for the weekend of May 20.

Lucy Turner was one of our first presidents, and she is the instigator of this bash. We're thinking about a picnic in a local park on May 20th. If you would like to be a part of the celebration, you can contact Lucy at: LTURNER744@aol.com or Sharon Beal at 954-467-8528

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Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

EARTH DAY 2006 SATURDAY APRIL 22, 2006

Let's face it: Earth is a cool place to live! Where else can you find banana slugs and elephants, Venus flytraps and sunny yellow daffodils, parched desert flats, and ice-encrusted mountain peaks?

The Sierra Club salutes Earth Day, with a nod toward the sun, the wind, the land, and solutions for taking better care of this planet we call home.

EAST RIVER CANOE FUNDRAISER

The Broward Sierra Group would like to thank John Judy of Florida Adventures and Bob Samson of Up-The-Creek for donating their time, expertise and canoes, making the outing a memorable experience for all.



Above: Canoeing the East River

Left: This little fellow hitched a ride on Pedro's shoulder after jumping into his canoe.

FERN FOREST RESTORATION DAY

Many thanks to the folks who volunteered to get out into the brush and clear paths to the lagoon, so children's groups could learn about all the aquatic plants and animals. Participating Sierrans were: Max Goldstein, Naomi Prather, Anita Lind, Paula Lane, and Joe Sciolino w/sons Michael and Jesse. Also participating were: Astrid Hoffmann, Seng Feng Kok, Ignacio Oyanedel and Fiorenza Sartori.



Broward Sierra Group Outings

*To preserve a place, you must believe in it.
To believe in it, you must see it.*



APRIL 22ND, SAT. 8AM. HIKE JONATHAN DICKINSON STATE PARK. 6 to 8 mile, 3 hour day hike exploring the Florida Trail, near Jupiter. (www.floridastateparks.org/jonathandickinson/default.cfm). *FREE*. Rated Moderate. (Loxahatchee Group)

For further information, registration and payment contact: Charles Hunt, 561-967-4770 or sierra@smartsolutions.com.



APRIL 29TH, SAT. 9AM. PADDLE THE LOXAHATCHEE. Canoe or kayak the mouth of the Loxahatchee River, near Jupiter. (www.jupiteroutdoorcenter.com). Rated Moderate. (Loxahatchee Group)

For further information, registration and payment contact: Ron Haines, 561-964-1995 or RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net



MAY 13TH, SAT. SUNSET CRUISE ON A TALL SHIP IN BISCAYNE BAY FUNDRAISER. Enjoy a sunset sail on a 3-masted schooner, out of Miami, exploring northern Biscayne Bay. The 2 hour sail includes snacks, but you are welcome to bring your own. Bring a friend or group of friends and enjoy conversation with 'like-minds' or just sit back and take in the fresh, salt air. Rated Easy. *Cost: Mem. \$25; Non-mem. \$30.* (Broward Group)

Leader: Jackie Fisher, 954-434-2855

or jfisher@bigfoot.com

Assistant Leader: Kip Fisher (same phone number)

HIKE THE BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE ADDITION LANDS.

Matt Schwartz will continue to lead groups out to new areas of the Big Cypress National Preserve Addition Lands. Due to scheduling difficulties, these trips are not listed in the current newsletter. However, check out the 'Outings and Events' section of the Broward Sierra Club Group's website for future hikes (<http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward>)



You can also contact Matt directly at matthew3222@yahoo.com for more information about outings or the current status of the General Management Plan for the Addition.

We would like to invite you to come on one of our fine educational outings! If you have any questions about an outing, you can check with the certified Broward Sierra Outing Leader in charge of the outing. Some of the outings need no experience; others require some level of proficiency. All participants in Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the Liability Waiver before you choose to participate in an outing, contact the leader of the outing.

For all Broward Group outings, make your check payable to: Broward Sierra Outings. Include the name and date of the trip on your check. Also include your name, phone number, email and street address. Mail checks to: Jackie Fisher, 4992 S.W. 105 Way, Cooper City, FL 33328.

**You may call the Sierra Hotline for updates at 954-567-2841.
LOOK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE:**

<<http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward>>

Moreover, a 2004 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency report investigating coral reef mitigation success stated that "total mitigation acreage in Florida, so far, was slightly more than half the amount of the impact acreage (complete and pending)." In other words, mitigation efforts to alleviate the destruction of natural coral reefs with artificial reefs in Florida since 1985 are way behind schedule. Beach widening projects and dredging schemes in south Florida have caused the most impact to coral reef habitat. The report went on to state that some of the artificial reefs have been in existence for twenty years, but monitoring is only required for five years, so it's hard to judge the success of mitigation.

Therefore, there has been a net loss of reef habitat due to dredging and beach widening projects in South Florida. Furthermore, artificial reefs can't replicate the geographic and ecological significance of natural reefs. Coupled with other cumulative impacts to our reefs, (such as sewage outfalls causing harmful algae blooms, coral bleaching caused by warmer sea temperatures linked to global warming and coastal development) the future health of our reefs and the ecological and economic benefit that we derive from them is in peril.

The economic argument offered by the port authority is that it must grow to compete. This argument is somewhat dubious as there's no economic evidence to suggest that Port Everglades would lose net jobs if the port wasn't expanded. Port Everglades already handles more cruise ships than any other port in the U.S. and is the only port in south Florida capable of handling petroleum imports. Those jobs won't be lost.

The Port of Miami is undergoing a similar dredging project and that EIS calls for blasting 3 times a day for 1,150 days in order to widen the channel. Given the dredging project in Miami, some wonder if the

Port Everglades dredging plan is even necessary.

"If they're already deepening the Miami port, is it really necessary to do this 30 miles north?" asked Walt Jaap, an environmental consultant who recently retired from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, in a recent Sun Sentinel article on the dredging scheme.

The Broward County Sierra group intends to be deeply involved in the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement process and will keep you apprised of the developments at Port Everglades.



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If you would like to place an ad, please contact Max Goldstein

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Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175	Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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