

SOLAR POWER PROVIDES FREE HOT WATER AND COLD DRINKS DURING POWER OUTAGES

By Pedro Monteiro, Conservation Chair

With the increasing occurrence of hurricanes, most Floridians have been spending a long time without electricity, taking cold showers and storing food in ice boxes. Floridians have been asking to bury the electric power lines underground to increase power reliability. Instead, we should eliminate our dependency on the power lines by generating our own power. Traditionally, electricity has been generated only at the power plants, then sold to consumers through the power grid. This concentration of power (pun intended) must end: we should employ distributed solar power generation if we are to reduce our dependency on the power grid, slow global warming, reduce pollution, and seek sustainable lifestyles. Floridians should be especially concerned about global climate distortion due to our increased vulnerability to hurricanes and rising sea levels.



Fortunately the average family home has enough roof space to power the entire house with solar energy. While you're in the office in the middle of the day, a thermal solar panel on the roof of your home can heat the water and store it in a hot water tank (\$2,500 - \$3,000 installed cost). What can you do with all the electricity generated by solar electric (photovoltaic or PV) panels on your roof when you're not home to consume it? One option is to store that electricity in batteries so that you will have your comforts when the power grid

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FEDERAL TAX CREDITS AVAILABLE IN 2006 FOR SOLAR SYSTEMS AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

by Becky Gillette, Sierra Club Mississippi Chapter Co-Chair

For the first time in two decades, significant tax credits are available for making homes more energy efficient and for installing alternative energy solar systems.

According to the EPA Energy Star program (<http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.pr_tax_credits#1>), the Energy Policy Act of 2005 gives different levels of credit depending on the type of improvement made, but the amount of homeowner credit for all improvements combined cannot exceed \$500 during the two year period of the tax credit. This tax credit applies to improvements made from January 1, 2006 through December 31, 2007.

Eligible measures are:

- Added insulation to walls, ceilings, or other part of the building envelope
- Replacement windows
- High-efficiency gas, oil, and propane furnaces and boilers
- High-efficiency central air conditioning units, including air-source and ground-source heat pumps
- High-efficiency fans for heating and cooling systems
- High-efficiency water heaters, including heat pump water heaters

Incentive amounts are:

- Added insulation: 10% of cost up to \$500
- Replacement windows: 10% of cost up to \$200
- Furnaces and boilers: \$150 for qualifying units
- Central air conditioning units: \$300 for qualifying units
- Fans for heating and cooling systems: \$50 for qualifying units
- Water heaters: \$300 for qualifying units

Other Tax Credits:

In addition, a separate tax credit for solar hot water systems is available. which is not limited to the \$500 cap. Consumers can earn

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Graphic design & layout by carolewalsh@mindspring.com
Printing by The Press Room
4111 SW 47 Ave. #309, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314
(954) 792-6729 • www.thepressroom.net



Recycled paper, soy ink

Broward Sierra Programs

February 7th: Dr. Jerry Saxon, "Walden Revisited"

Dr. Saxon is an award-winning photographer whose work has appeared in Science Magazine and Sierra's national publication. As a former professor of physics and astronomy at St. Xavier University in his native Chicago, he regularly visited the Izaak Walton Preserve in Homewood, Illinois. He narrates his slides of all seasons at the Preserve with quotations from Thoreau's essays written over a century ago at Walden Pond.



March 7th: "The Loxahatchee Refuge and the Everglades System" - Dr. Nick Aumen of the National Park Service.



April 4th: "Barn Owl Prowl" - Dr. Richard Raid of the University of Florida's Research Center in Belle Glade.



Anne Kolb Nature Center is located in Hollywood 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. For more information contact Joyce Tarnow at 954-942-7278

SIERRA CLUB / BROWARD COUNTY

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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.



The Broward Sierra Club Leaders

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- Vice-Chair**
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- Secretary**
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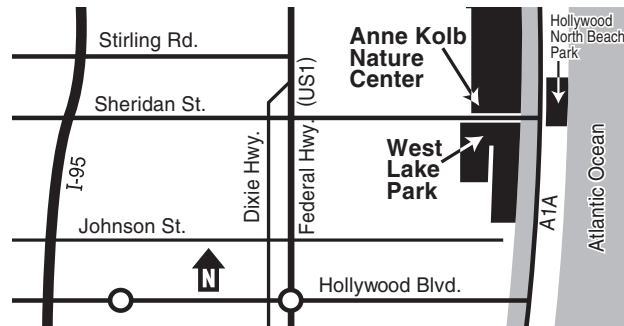
Broward Sierra News is published monthly for the members of the Broward County Group, Florida Chapter of the Sierra Club. Subscriptions are available for non-members. Send inquiries to: **Broward Sierra News**, P.O. Box 350432, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335

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

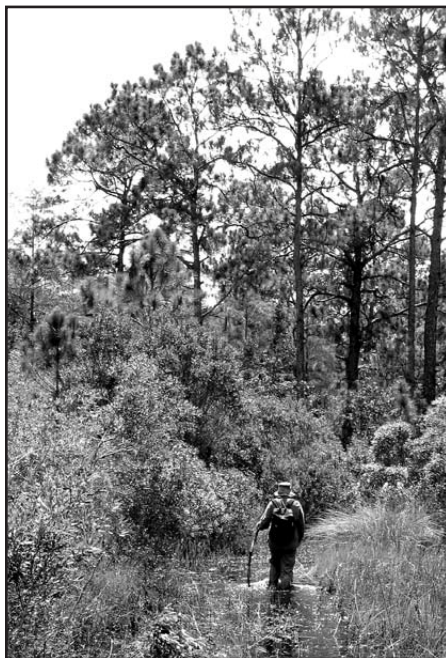
Held on the first Tuesday of every month at Anne Kolb Nature Center (954-926-2480). Outings sign-up starts at 7:00 p.m. and the general meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. All members welcome!

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 Loren Colburn at 954-761-1355 (or e-mail lorenac1101@hotmail.com).



Photos by Jackie Fisher



These photos were taken during hikes to the Addition Lands of Big Cypress National Preserve held in July and November, 2005. The trips were led by Outings Leader Matt Schwartz with assistance from Sierrans Jackie Fisher, David Denham and Leigh Buckner. Walking in the cool Cypress shaded waters of 'California Slough' only about an hour from downtown Ft. Lauderdale, hikers experienced a version of south Florida far removed from the condos, shopping malls, beaches and golf courses most folks associate with our area. More hikes to this beautiful piece of Broward County's backyard are scheduled for future dates. And join us to hike the Big Cypress Wilderness Trail on Feb. 11th and March 18th.

Solar Power, continued from page 1

fails. Another option is to sell that electricity to the power grid, and buy it back when you come home at night, saving the cost and space requirements of large batteries. Many states have a *net metering law* where you pay only for the net amount of electricity that goes from the power grid into your house, so if you generate as much power as you consume, you will not have to pay the power company for electricity. If you generate more than you consume, the power company must pay you for that energy. This is a needed incentive, as a PV installation can cost \$10,000-\$40,000, depending on how much power you want to generate. With net metering, the reduced monthly electricity bills recover that installation cost sooner. Some states also provide a rebate of \$5 per watt to offset PV equipment costs.

Florida's Energy Policy:

In "the Sunshine State" the only PV consumer incentive is that Florida waives sales tax on the equipment purchase. There is no law requiring net metering by the power utilities. Instead, once you install PV panels on your home, FPL will come to your house and install a separate meter so that they can buy electricity from you at a lower rate than what they charge you for it. So after you spend all that money on PV panels, FPL will sell the electricity you generated back to you (or to your neighbor) for 50% more than what they paid you for it. The Union of Concerned Scientists gave Florida a "D" because it lacks a comprehensive approach to promoting renewable-energy technologies. (Sun Sentinel, December 2005).

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ANNE KOLB 10TH ANNIVERSARY



The Friends of Anne Kolb Nature Center are very excited about their 10th anniversary celebration. Sierra Club has been asked to lend our expertise by conducting a few walks between 11am and 2 pm on Feb. 5. From the VERY first day, Sierra has been instrumental in seeing that AKNC becomes special. Anyone interested in assisting in this manner, please contact Jackie Fisher 954-434-2855 or jfisher@bigfoot.com

VICTORY ON OVERFISHING

We recently reported on a proposed rule change by NOAA Fisheries that would have seriously weakened federal overfishing regulations. These changes would have allowed overfishing to continue on already depleted fish populations while also eliminating a key 10-year rebuilding plan provision for fish populations currently suffering from overfishing. The public was given 90 days to comment on the roll-backs.

You responded in a big way!

The public generated more than 250,000 comments in response to the proposed rule - with the majority of those comments opposing the roll backs to key conservation measures. As a result, NOAA Fisheries announced last month that it has withdrawn the controversial proposal!

In his latest "Bill's Corner," NOAA Fisheries Director Bill Hogarth credits the outpouring of public comments for the agency's recent decision to reconsider the proposed changes to the overfishing regulations.

Thank you for submitting your comments and congratulations on the victory.

— George Cavros,
Energy Issues Chair

Broward Sierra Group Outings

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



FEBRUARY 5TH, SUN. RESTORATION DAY AT TREE TOPS PARK, DAVIE. An opportunity to give something back to the community, your Sierra group and Mother Nature! We're talking volunteer work here, doing whatever is needed at a local park to restore it to its natural beauty. Help keep it wild and clean, while repaying our debt to the park system for the generosity of our beautiful meeting room. Only 3 - 4 hours on a Sunday morning. No experience needed. Bring water and sunscreen. *Cost: FREE!!!*

Leader: Loren Colburn 954-761-1355 or lorenac1101@hotmail.com



FEBRUARY 11TH, SAT. HIKE THE WILDERNESS TRAIL, BIG CYPRESS NAT'L PRESERVE. From 8:15 am to approximately 3 pm. We'll hike 8 miles on a wilderness trail, blazed blue, off Section II of the Florida National Scenic Trail, north of Alligator Alley where you'll learn the difference a few inches of elevation makes to the local flora, as you trek through cypress forest, hammocks and prairie. Some of the trail follows overgrown roadbeds but most of it is over the natural terrain of the Big Cypress. Water can be ankle deep. Bring your own lunch, which we'll eat on the trail. Rated moderate to strenuous, due to distance and 'back country' trails, with trees downed by Wilma. *Cost: Mem. \$3; Non-mem. \$5.*

Leader: Kathleen Rhoad 954-627-2665 or Katrhoad@prodigy.net



MARCH 5TH, SUN. RESTORATION DAY AT FERN FOREST NATURE CENTER, CYPRESS CREEK. An opportunity to give something back to the community, your Sierra group and Mother Nature! We're talking volunteer work here, doing whatever is needed at a local park to restore it to its natural beauty. Help keep it wild and clean, while repaying our debt to the park system for the generosity of our beautiful meeting room. Only 3 - 4 hours on a Sunday morning. No experience needed. Bring water and sunscreen. *Cost: FREE!!!*

Leader: Loren Colburn 954-761-1355 or lorenac1101@hotmail.com



MARCH 11TH, SAT. WILDFLOWER BIKE RIDE IN EVERGLADES NATL. PARK with Roger Hammer. Take a leisurely bike ride on Long Pine Key, in ENP to Pine Glades Lake and back, approximately 12 miles. Entire trip takes about 4 hours. Learn about the 'native' wildflowers and how they lure their pollinators, in this unique ecosystem. Bikes available for rent or bring your own. Rated Moderate, due to distance. *Cost: Mem. \$25 (bring own bike), \$30 (rent trec bike); Non-mem. \$30 & \$35. PLUS \$10 per car entrance into park.*

Leader: Jackie Fisher 954-434-2855 or jfisher@bigfoot.com



MARCH 12TH, SUN. CORKSCREW SWAMP SANCTUARY A casual 2.25 mile trek on a raised, wheelchair-accessible boardwalk allows you to experience 4 distinct environments: pine upland, wet prairie, cypress forest, and marsh. A park naturalist will accompany us so you can learn the wide variety of birds, reptiles, mammals, and plants that inhabit this area from a comfortable vantage point. Rated: Leisure. *Cost: TBA.*

Leader: Loren Colburn 954-761-1355 or lorenac1101@hotmail.com



MARCH 18TH, SAT. HIKE THE WILDERNESS TRAIL, BIG CYPRESS NAT'L PRESERVE. From 8:15 am to approximately 3 pm. We'll hike 8 miles on a wilderness trail, blazed blue, off Section II of the Florida National Scenic Trail, north of Alligator Alley where you'll learn the difference a few inches of elevation makes to the local flora, as you trek through cypress forest, hammocks and prairie. Some of the trail follows overgrown roadbeds, but most is over the natural terrain of Big Cypress. Water can be ankle deep. Bring your own lunch, which we'll eat on the trail. Rated moderate to strenuous, due to distance and 'back country' trails, with trees downed by Wilma. *Cost: Mem. \$; Non-mem. \$5.*

Leader: Kathleen Rhoad 954-627-2665 or Katrhoad@prodigy.net

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.

Make your check payable to: Broward Sierra Outings. Include the name and date of the trip on your check. Include your name, phone number, email and street address.

Mail all checks to: Jackie Fisher, 4992 S.W. 105 Way, Cooper City, FL 33328.

You may call the Sierra Hotline for updates at 954-858-0160.

LOOK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE:

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

Tax Credits, continued from page 1

a tax credit of up to 30% of the cost (\$2,000 max lifetime) for installing PV or solar hot-water systems used exclusively for purposes other than heating swimming pools and hot tubs. The system must use solar power to provide at least half of a home's hot water. The water must be used in the dwelling and the system must be certified by the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation (SRCC).

There is also a \$1,000 tax credit to the producer of a new manufactured home achieving 30 percent energy savings for heating and cooling over the 2004 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) and supplements. At least 1/3 of the savings must come from improvements to the building envelope (everything that separates the interior of a building from the outdoor environment, including the windows, walls, foundation, etc.), or a manufactured home meeting the requirements established by EPA under the ENERGY STAR program.

There are tax credits for buying energy efficient cars. The largest credit applies to the hybrid-drive Toyota Prius: \$3,100 for the first 60,000 cars sold in 2006. As an added incentive, qualifying hybrid cars can drive in the HOV lane on Florida highways once you purchase a \$5 HOV decal from the DMV.

Solar Power, continued from page 2

Although power utilities charge us a surcharge to be spent on conservation incentives and education, they have as much motivation to spend that money effectively as Big Tobacco has for running effective anti-smoking campaigns. Studies have found that we get very little in return for this monthly surcharge. This money would be more effective if it were used to fund a **Sustainable Energy Public Benefit Fund**.

Our appetite for energy, combined with the politicians' unsustainable policy of cramming more and more people into Florida, has resulted in FPL raising its electricity rates to fund the construction of more polluting power plants. That money should instead be spent subsidizing distributed solar power generation. Such poor leadership is no surprise: Florida's state legislature represents its true constituency, the election campaign donors; not the voters. Moreover, Florida's Public Service Commission has a reputation for catering to the utilities rather than the Florida citizens it purports to serve.

What you can do:

1. Make your home more efficient and benefit from the numerous Federal 2006 tax credits
2. Buy Energy Star rated efficient appliances, and replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.
3. Add solar panels to your home. They will pay for themselves in reduced electricity bills.
4. During this Florida legislative session there should be some energy bills that include a renewable energy component. Call your state representatives and ask them to support:
 - Mandatory net metering
 - State rebates for solar panel installations
 - A Sustainable Energy Public Benefit Fund rather than power utility-controlled education and incentives

Learn More:

- Your state representative: visit <<http://congress.org>> and enter your zip code.
- Self-powering your home at Home Power Magazine <<http://homepower.com>>
- Florida Solar Energy Research and Education Foundation <<http://www.flaseref.org>> Solar Hotline at 1-800-59-SOLAR
- Florida Solar Energy Center <<http://www.fsec.ucf.edu>>

The Sierra Club Miami Group Cordially invites you to the Rescheduling of the "Harvest Moon" Dinner and Dance Fundraiser with Special Guest Speaker Jim DeFede

New Date: Friday, March 24, 2006
New Location: The Rusty Pelican Restaurant
 3201 Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne, FL
Time: 7:00 PM to Midnight
Attire: Business Casual/Cocktail
Open Bar, Buffet Dinner & Dancing, Door Prizes & Silent Auction
 \$100.00 per person
 RSVP by March 17th, 2006 Maria Papazian at 305-519-0877
All previously made reservations will be honored for this date

Join the Sierra Club now and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag! (While supplies last)



Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage and receive a free Sierra Club Weekender Bag. My payment is enclosed.

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Contributions, gifts or dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

Membership Categories

	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT		INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
Introductory	\$25		Life	\$1000	\$1250
Regular	\$39	\$47	Senior	\$24	\$32
Supporting	\$75	\$100	Student	\$24	\$32
Contributing	\$150	\$175	Limited Income	\$24	\$32

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Enclose check and mail to: **Sierra Club**
 P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968

ROOMMATE NEEDED to share a non-smoking condo in a quiet neighborhood: Meadow Brook Lakes (Dania). Located about 1 mile from the beach and West Lake Park. Front bedroom (furnished), separate bathroom, Satellite TV, DSL Internet, Lake views, Pool, and Sauna. I am seeking a quiet, non-partier who likes cats. Rent is \$600 per month (first and security), \$650 seasonal (first, last, and security). **Call 954-922-2344.** Please have references.

ADVERTISE IN THE BROWARD SIERRA NEWS

RATES		
Size	1 month	3 months
Business card size ad (3-3/4" x 2")	\$55	\$150
Double size ad (3-3/4" x 4")	\$95	\$255
1/2 page ad (7-3/4" x 5")	\$195	\$525

If you would like to place an ad, please contact Max Goldstein at 954-296-3411 or email him at <maxgold@yahoo.com>.