

Broward Sierra News



SIERRA CLUB

FOUNDED 1892

PUBLIC COMMENTS MAY SINK INVASIVE DEVELOPMENT

— By Phil Busey, Conservation Committee Chair

As a member of the Town of Davie's Planning and Zoning Board, I notice that some of Broward's sharpest attorneys specialize in land use planning, zoning, and development. By the time citizens realize the green jungle next door is to be bulldozed for a big box store and parking lot, it is almost too late to speak up. My experiences in the development process will give you some tips to prepare for and resist invasive development.

The bottom line is you must be involved in your city government and with your neighbors, so you can find out about developments in time to respond. If you see bad development coming to your city, call me at 954-579-3932 or email philip@busey.org, and let's get other Sierra Club members involved.

In Davie we take pride in our parks, horse trails, and low density. To protect the western Davie frontier, a rural lifestyle ordinance was adopted which preserves property values, quality of life, and wildlife habitat. South Florida commuters benefit from a green buffer on the east side of I-75, between I-595 and Griffin Road. If you go out at night in these neighborhoods, you can see the stars.



Low density western Davie conserves permeable areas for groundwater recharge and has a future land use designation of agriculture zoning and 1-acre residential. New residents built their homes knowing that was the future land use. But developers saw the green spaces of western Davie as financial opportunity, the last frontier to develop in Broward, if they could get our elected Councilmembers to change the rules.

Development attorneys proposed the Davie Commons shopping mall, at the northeast corner of I-75 and Royal Palm Blvd., across from Weston. This 152-acre property and adjacent areas such as our Farm Park are the largest undeveloped green area along any urbanized roadway in South Florida. If the developers application is approved to change the future land use from Agricultural to Commercial, the shopping mall can be permitted, puncturing the green buffer. No one is denying the owners their full rights to develop their property under present laws and land use and zoning. But the developers, wanting to make more money by developing commercial, told residents that the shopping mall will bring Davie a tax revenue surplus, resulting in lower taxes, based on fuzzy math.

The Commons is bad for the common interest because excessive traffic will worsen roads that are already overcrowded, it has only one way in and one way out, (a possible public safety nightmare), and this area of South Florida has reached or exceeded its level of sustainability. Any large new projects, such as this shopping mall, will spin off more growth and cost a higher burden from taxpayers to provide transportation, water, and schools. Our Planning and Zoning board voted to deny this application, but the Town Council voted to approve it after they were lobbied hard by the people who gave them campaign money.

Citizens who band together at the last minute to oppose invasive development discover their property is threatened by an opponent who is richer, smarter, better organized, and who has more years experience in development than all the people in the neighborhood combined. Development attorneys work with political consultants to help elect candidates for "smart growth" (a euphemism for all growth) and pay for grass roots campaigns to create the look and feel of community support.

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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.

Broward Sierra Programs

Wednesday, Apr. 8th: Ed Tichenor, the Director of **Reef Rescue**, will be giving a presentation on the unique biology of the coral reef ecosystem, the threats to them (including coastal construction, disease, nutrient pollution and the impact from greenhouse gases. and ways you can help to preserve this natural wonder.



The meeting and program will be held at the Fern Forest Nature Center, 201 Lyons Rd. S., Coconut Creek (see map on next page).

Wednesday, May 6th: Barry N. Heimlich, environmental advocate, birder, fisherman, nature lover and bird photographer will present an original slideshow of the **Birds of the Everglades and South Florida**. By the time this talk is over, you will be familiar with the various ecologies of the Everglades and be able to identify all of South Florida's wading birds and many others.



The meeting and program will be held at the Anne Kolb Nature Center on Sheridan St. in Hollywood. (see map on next page).

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.



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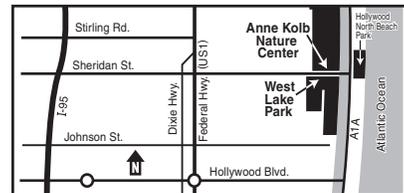
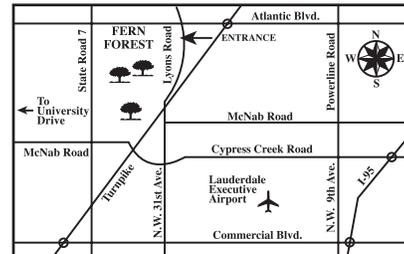
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If further assistance is needed, please contact your local Membership Chair, Andrea Saifman 954-817-1749.

Broward Sierra Club General Meetings

Broward Sierra Club's General Meetings are held on either the 1st or 2nd Wednesday of each month (see schedule below). **This month's meeting will be held on Wed., April 8th at the Fern Forest Nature Center**, 201 Lyons Road South, Coconut Creek, just south of Atlantic Blvd. on the west side of the street. (Between Atlantic and Commercial Blvds. Lyons Road, south of Atlantic is the same street as NW 31st Ave., north of Commercial) (see map).

Next month's meeting will be on May 6th at the 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, before the Intracoastal Bridge (about 1/2 mile after the sign for West Lake Park on the right).

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.



GENERAL MEETING SCHEDULE AND LOCATIONS

We meet at Anne Kolb Nature Center on the first Wednesday of every odd numbered month (with the exception of September, which will be at Fern Forest), and at the Fern Forest Nature Center on the second Wednesday of every even numbered month (plus September). Here is the schedule for the upcoming year:

Wed. Apr. 8: Fern Forest
Wed. May 6: Anne Kolb
Wed. Jun. 10: Fern Forest

Wed. Jul. 1: Anne Kolb
Wed. Aug. 12: Fern Forest
Wed. Sep. 9: Fern Forest

Wed. Oct. 14: Fern Forest
Wed. Nov. 4: Anne Kolb
Wed. Dec. 9: Fern Forest

Executive Committee Meetings

First Tuesday of each month. Contact Brion Blackwelder at 954-262-6135 for time and location.

The Broward Sierra News is published every other month. To keep you apprised of current Broward Sierra Club events, we will have them all listed on our website: <http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward>. If you would like to receive reminders of these events e-mailed to you, you will need to **subscribe to our Yahoo newsgroup**. The address is: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BrowardSierra>. Simply click on the blue "Join this Group" icon and follow the instructions. You may have to create a Yahoo ID first, which is easy and free. This will also allow you sign up for other Yahoo newsgroups, of which there are many.

Stop by the Sierra Club Table at THE 16th ANNUAL SOUTH FLORIDA SINGLES' LIFESTYLE EXPO "Single Living in Paradise"

Sunday, March 29th, 2009, at The Fort Lauderdale Marriott North Hotel, 6650 N. Andrews Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL.

The show will feature over 80 Exhibiting Companies, 10 Free Educational Seminars, Speed Dating Sessions, Entertainment & Music, and South Florida's Largest Singles' Dance Party! Over 800 singles are expected to attend this exciting community event.

The show is open to the public. Admission is \$15 in advance or \$20 at the door. There's plenty of free parking available.

NOTES FROM THE EDUCATION CHAIR - By Ina Topper

Thanks to those folks who have contacted us and shown their keen interest in saving our environment and lessening our carbon footprints. Perhaps this is also the right moment to encourage those of you who may have a question or two, or who'd like to host an in-depth talk about creative recycling at any facility, schools etc., to get in touch with me at 954-722-9944.

It's been a pleasure to find out that today's students are, indeed, interested in the environment, and doing research and writing essays in this regard. The burrowing owl on school grounds was brought to our attention by some alert Sierrans!



We've also learned that there's still a lot to be done in educating the public, as well as businesses, when it comes to recycling awareness. Due to one reader's alertness, we contacted a retailer about excessive waste of plastic bags at a particular store.

Especially delightful was the enthusiastic staff at an assisted living facility who, during a recycling chat around the holidays, showed me even more ways to reuse paper cups and other discarded materials for holiday decorations, than I could have come up with. (And I thought I was quite creative!)

Thank you all for staying in touch.



Sierrans on the Tall Ship in 2008. (Photo by Jackie Fisher)



Hiking the Addition Lands in November, 2008. (Photo by Patrick Kerr)

April 11th, Sat. Earth day Deerfield Beach

9am-12. Deerfield Beach Recycling Drop-Off Center, 401 SW 4 St (Between I-95 and Dixie Hwy. - off Hillsboro Blvd.) 10am: Ribbon cutting for new "Green" Educational Center, 11am: Renowned climate change speaker Captain Dan Kipnis, 9am-12: Paper shredding.

Davie Commons, continued from page 1

Development attorneys host supper parties, pledge jobs and affordable housing, selectively dole out charity money to win the favor of community leaders, and give out free tee-shirts to people to show public support for invasive development. The atmosphere creates division in the community. Opponents to growth are sometimes smeared as NIMBY (not in my backyard) elitists who do not understand the plight of the underprivileged who need jobs and affordable housing. We must respond that when invasive development threatens any neighborhood, we will stand in solidarity as if all neighborhoods are threatened. If the rules were changed to harm any neighborhood, all neighborhoods are threatened.

Despite Broward's strong and well-financed growth lobby, citizen opposition can be quite effective if you start early, keep your eyes open, and communicate with others. Cities in Broward have citizens' advisory boards that are one of the early warnings and an early sounding board for inappropriate development. The citizens Planning and Zoning Board in your city meets generally once per month to consider plats, variances, zoning changes, land use changes, and periodically the Comprehensive Plan. There may also be a Development Review Committee that looks at construction site plans. These two committees allow public testimony, depending on the type of application. Citizens advisory committees can be quite helpful in listening to fellow citizens before a matter ever gets to the City Commission, at which point you have another opportunity to speak your mind. Unlike elected officials who worry about raising reelection dollars from developers and their attorneys, most of us on the advisory committees don't have a career in politics and if anyone will listen, we will.

The last chapter has not been written on the Davie Commons but we have been doing everything we can to resist this invasive development.

Local Sierra Group Outings

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



APRIL 5TH, SAT. BIRDING WALK AT THE HAROLD CAMPBELL PUBLIC USE AREA. Join us for a late afternoon to sunset walk in the largest constructed wetland in the world, located less than 20 miles from Weston. The area is part of Stormwater Treatment Area 3/4, which was created at the border of Broward and Palm Beach Counties to filter water entering the Everglades. Rated easy - dry walkways, and fine for beginners. Bring some food for a picnic as well as your binoculars. *Cost: \$5 members, \$6 non-members.* (Broward Group) Leader: Matt Schwartz 954-865-4306 (best) or <matthew3222@yahoo.com>

Matt's May hike TBA - check the Broward Sierra website for details.



APRIL 11TH, SAT. OCEAN TO LAKE TRAIL DAY HIKE. 8am. We'll hike from Riverbend Park west of Jupiter to the Jonathan Dickinson State Park marina. The total distance is 11 miles. More details are available at <http://lox.floridatrail.org/our-trails/the-ocean-to-lake-trail>. Rated strenuous. Limit 10. *Cost: \$5.* (Loxahatchee Group) Leader: Donna Brown 561-317-8288 <donnabrownintl@gmail.com>



APRIL 18TH, SAT. EARTH DAY BICYCLE RIDE. We'll start at Anne Kolb Nature Center where we'll learn about the ecology of the mangrove habitat, then bicycle to John U. Lloyd State Beach Park, and attend the Ecofest Beach Bash. We'll have lunch at the park cafe. *Cost: \$3.00 plus cost of lunch (includes entrance to the park).* Bring your own bike. (Broward Group) Leader: Judy Kuchta 954-924- 5001 <judykuchta@yahoo.com>



APRIL 26TH, SUN. SIERRA CLUB EARTH DAY APPRECIATION PROJECT. We'll clear exotic plants from Tree Tops Park and learn about the threat of these plants on our native ecology. This park really needs our help! Refreshments provided. (Broward Group) Leader: Judy Kuchta 954-924- 5001 <judykuchta@yahoo.com>



MAY 9TH, SAT. SUNSET CRUISE ON A TALL SHIP IN BISCAYNE BAY. Enjoy a sunset sail on a 2-masted schooner, out of Miami, around northern Biscayne Bay. The 2 hour sail includes snacks, but you are welcome to bring your own. Bring your mother, wife (Mother's Day is Sunday), 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: \$27 members, \$30 non-members.* (Broward Group) Leader: Jackie Fisher, 954-434-2855 <jfisher@bigfoot.com>, Asst. Leader: Kip Fisher



MAY 9TH, SAT. SENIOR WALK IN TREETOPS PARK. We'll meet at 8am for a leisurely walk in the park. *Cost: \$12 (lunch provided).* (Broward Group) Leader: Barbara Curtis 954-946-7359 <legalbarb@aol.com>

JUNE 13TH, SAT. SENIOR WALK AT DEERFIELD ISLAND PARK. We'll meet at 8am and take the boat shuttle to the island for a leisurely walk in the park. *Cost: \$5 (plus cost of lunch at a restaurant afterwards).* (Broward Group) Leader: Barbara Curtis 954-946-7359 <legalbarb@aol.com>

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 or go to <www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms>.

For sign-up, payment and further information, please contact the outing leader.

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LOOK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON OUR WEBSITE:
<<http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward>>

RAINWATER – DON'T POLLUTE, RECLAIM!

– By John Shave, Broward Sierra Club member

All over the country, communities are implementing 'low impact development' projects to control stormwater pollution, flooding, erosion, and educate their citizens how to be better stewards of our resources by utilizing rainbarrels, raingardens permeable paving, more vegetative swales, etc. (See www.lowimpactdevelopment.org)

South Florida municipal groundwater withdrawals (the vast majority from the Biscayne Aquifer), were estimated at 790 million gallons/day in 1995. Meanwhile, approximately 150 billion gallons of rain water (average) falls in Florida daily. In large downpours, rain flows into stormwater sewer systems, overloading them, flooding leaking septic systems, contributing to pollution of our waterways. Between that runoff, and large scale evaporation (largely because so much of our urban areas and roadways prevent normal rainfall from draining directly into the earth, as it did before the massive development, and creation of the massive urban 'heat islands' in South Florida), most of that rainfall, (as much as 85%) never gets to the Biscayne Aquifer to recharge it!

And, it is estimated that up to 50% of those millions of gallons of water, taken from the Aquifer and used by all the South Florida municipalities, goes to irrigation: a figure that could be radically reduced by widespread use of the millions of gallons of wasted rainwater instead! Cities are reusing much of that water, which is a great conservation practice, but is also an expensive procedure, compared to simply saving and utilizing more of the millions of gallons of fresh rainwater that we all automatically flush (with all the pollutants) into the storm drains to pollute our beaches, reefs, and impact our vital tourist industry.

Every municipality in South Florida is being told by the South Florida Water Management District to restrict water use. Every citizen should be encouraging all the many municipalities in Broward County to add rain water harvesting, rain gardens, programs to disconnect downspouts from storm drains, and all the 'low impact development practices' to our water conservation plans here. There are many hundreds of websites from other states in our country and communities all over the world, that describe thousands of successful, profitable projects, implementing all these low impact development tools as indispensable components of their water conservation programs. Rainwater harvesting is the oldest, most well-

proven method of controlling storm water pollution, flooding, and erosion, and is well documented to save homeowners, and businesses money as well as putting many people to work in a successful and prosperous industry around the world.

- <www.wikihow.com/Reduce-Stormwater-Runoff-at-Your-Home>
- <www.nrdc.org/water/pollution/lid/lidinx.asp>
- <www.floridarainwaterharvesting.com>
- <www.sierraclub.org/healthycommunities/buildingbetter/2006/report.pdf>
- <<http://www.harvesth2o.com/>>

The EPA and many communities and foundations all over the country are funding stormwater pollution-control projects for vegetative swales, raingardens, rainbarrels, commercial rainharvesting systems, permeable paving etc.

- <<http://www.togethergreen.org/Projects/GranteeDetails.aspx?granteeID>>
- <<http://www.dcgreenworks.org/index.php>>
- <www.epa.state.oh.us/pic/nr/2008/november/OEEFClermont.html>
- <<http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/aug2008/2008-08-18-093.asp>>

Every homeowner should know that simply by attaching plastic or metal extensions to their rain water downspouts, and directing the huge flow of annual rainwater from their roofs into swales, raingardens or just to lawn areas (away from storm sewers), they are making a big contribution to South Florida water conservation.

Florida wastes more of its precious rainwater resource (many billions of gallons), than most states ever get each year, by flushing it (with all the local 'nonpoint source pollution') down the storm drains to contaminate our waterways.

Contact your local City and County officials and find out how to get financial incentives enacted here for homeowners, schools, and businesses, to disconnect their downspouts from the storm sewer system, to purchase and install rainbarrels, raingardens, more vegetative swales, and commercial rainharvesting systems.

An example of very proactive city addressing its drought conditions aggressively, is the City of Austin, Texas. Check out their water conservation links, with several pages and financial incentives on rainwater harvesting for its citizens! <<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon>>.

Other communities all over the world (Australia, Canada, England, Europe, Bermuda, India, etc, and many states all over the U.S.) have supported and financed for many years, these most basic of water conservation and low impact development tools, so neglected here, in the long, massive over development of South Florida at the expense of our resources and environment.

All these simple, green technologies offer the opportunity for job development here, as other industries lose jobs to the struggling economy. It is up to all our local business, civic, and elected leaders to promote all these neglected 'sustainable' industries to help energize South Florida's economy and protect our threatened water supply.

- <www.nrdc.org/enterprise/greenjobs.asp>
- <www.greenforall.org>
- <<http://events.greenjobsnow.com/events/show/5172>>

For info on his workshops on rainbarrels and 'low impact development practices', contact John at johnshave@att.net or 954-920-9009.



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You can donate directly to our environmental work here in Broward County. Your donation will support our county-wide environmental programs, including our efforts to protect Florida panther habitat in South Florida. Contributions and gifts to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts.

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