



BROWARD SIERRA NEWS



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OIL SPILLS – By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Excom Chair

You may have thought you've heard or read by now all there is to know about oil spills. Yet, there are some facts, figures and updates, that you may not know about.



We know that the damaging consequences of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico were horrendous for wildlife, especially marine life. But the profound, long term, even more catastrophic effects of the Gulf's oil spill disaster are

not widely known. Even now after 5 years, far too many bay dolphins are still being found dead, due to the simple fact that their more fragile bodies just cannot handle the remnants of the spill, which is still spoiling the Gulf waters. And there are some fish species that are still not safe to eat. The types of fish called scavengers tend to eat worms on the bottom of the Gulf (with its thick layer of oil goo which is going to be with us for a long time.) The worms are tainted with oil residue, in turn the fish absorb this vile composition and.... they're just not safe for human consumption. Do all of you know that the thick oily substance on the Gulf's floor has a circumference of over fifteen and a half miles? And few people know that the oil is STILL leaking from a small bottom flume where the oil platform once stood!

Thirty-five years ago, one of the first major oil spills, which alarmed the entire world, took place in Panama, when 50,000 barrels of crude oil spilled from a ruptured refinery at the Panama canal entrance. This was the first time that oceanographic

institutes took it upon themselves to record the consequences, which were to last for many years to come.

The Smithsonian Oceanographic Institute was the first to ring the alarm bell when, several years later, they documented from the air gray-black (read: dead) mangroves in a widespread area. The Scripps Institute has also added oil spill consequences to its oceanographic research programs.

But even as early as 1969, an oil spill in Massachusetts' coastal salt marshes was deemed to have long term devastating catastrophic effects on these very fragile coastal marsh habitats.

And we don't need to be reminded that in 1989, the Exxon Valdez in Alaska's Prince William Sound seemed to be a forebearer of oil spills yet to come.

Some facts by the numbers:

- BP's oil spill in the Gulf released 130 million gallons of oil in the surrounding waters.
- So far, BP has spent four billion dollars on claims arising from the spill.
- The state of Florida had the bulk of the claims, over 74,000, out of which 62,000 have been paid so far.
- BP's fine for the spill, due to its reckless neglect and carelessness, is over 20 billion dollars, part of which is to be earmarked for nature restoration.

Perhaps a good omen is a report from the Audubon Society that several bird colonies along the Gulf coast seem to be doing quite well.

Continued on next page



Broward Sierra Club's General Meetings - The first Thursday of each month we have committee reports and an educational program on conservation or environmental issues.

DIRECTIONS: Fern Forest Nature Center, 201 Lyons Road South, Coconut Creek is just south of Atlantic Blvd. on the west side of the street. (From the south, NW 31 Ave. becomes NW 46 Ave., and then Lyons Rd. as you pass under the turnpike.)

Thursday, June 1st: Our guest speaker will be **Jason Liechty**, Broward County Environmental Projects Coordinator. Jason's presentation will be on the **Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact**.



Committee reports begin at 7:30, and the program begins at 8:00. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

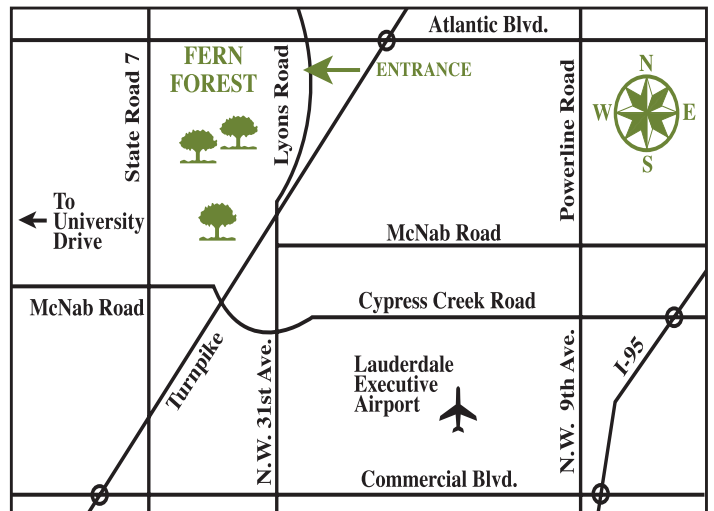
Thursday, July 6th: **Dr. Patrick Quinn**, Broward County Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department Natural Resources Specialist, will be giving a presentation on **Manatee Health and Numbers in Broward County**.



August: Instead of our usual Thursday meeting in August, we will be having our annual picnic on the beach at John U. Lloyd State Park in Dania Beach. More details to follow.



Thursday, Sept 7th: **Prof. Eric Vandernoot**, FAU Astronomy and Physics Coordinator, will be giving a presentation on **the viewing of the Milky Way in September and October**.



LOCAL SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS AND EVENTS

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



JUNE 7, WED. MIDWEEK BIRD WATCHING HIKE. 6:30pm - 8:30pm. Join us for a bird watching hike at Cypress Creek Natural Area. We will take a leisurely hike through mesic flatwoods and wet flatwoods, while keeping an eye out for any of the hawks, warblers, woodpeckers, owls, jays, vireos, and others that may be present in the area. Cypress Creek Natural Area is located at 10035 Indiantown Road, Jupiter (parking lot is across from McDonalds). Rating: Moderate, must be able to hike at least 2 miles in uneven trails. Please bring water, comfortable clothing and shoes, bug spray, and your own binoculars. The leader will be carrying a trash bag to pick up any trash noticed along the way. Participants will be expected to assist. Cypress Creek is a hidden treasure a short distance from the heart of Jupiter. Come experience this gem while spotting a few of our feathery friends. *Suggested donation: \$3 Sierra Club members, \$5 non-members.* Contact: Frank at Redstar8194@hotmail.com or 561-427-4511.



JUNE 14, WED. MIDWEEK BIRD WATCHING HIKE. 6:30pm - 8:30pm. Join us for a bird watching hike Pine Glades Natural Area. Pine Glades is a wetland wonderland attracting all types of wading birds, including Roseate Spoonbills, hawks, woodpeckers, warblers and many others. Pine Glades Natural Area is located at 14122 West Indiantown Road, Jupiter. Rating: Moderate, must be able to hike at least 2 miles in uneven trails. Please bring water, comfortable clothing and shoes, bug spray, and your own binoculars. The leader will be carrying a trash bag to pick up any trash noticed along the way. Participants will be expected to assist. Pine Glades is a great place to watch the sunset, spot a multitude of birds, take in the beautiful scenery, and spot wildlife. *Suggested donation: \$3 Sierra Club members, \$5 non-members.* Contact: Frank at Redstar8194@hotmail.com or 561-427-4511.



JUNE 16, FRI. EXPERIENCE NATURAL FLORIDA AT NIGHT. 7:30pm. Join us for a night tour of the Pine Glades Natural Area. We will hike approximately 5 miles on dirt trails in the dark. We will be looking and listening to the sounds of nature in this beautiful preserve located at 14122 West Indiantown Road in Jupiter. Wear comfortable clothing - long pants and sleeves recommended, hiking boots/sneakers. Bring water, bug repellent, and a small flashlight. We expect a half-moon on this evening. We will hike a while, then stop and sit at some point to listen to the night sounds. If we are lucky, we might be rewarded with the call of a Barred or Great Horned Owl. There are also bobcats, foxes, boar, coyotes, deer, and other critters in the Preserve; we will keep an eye, and ears, out for them. They are planning to build a water park adjacent to this preserve, so this might be your last opportunity to experience it in its current state. The hike is open to anyone aged 13 and over (with adult). Participation is capped at 12 so reserve your spot today. Rating: Moderate - Must be able to navigate uneven surfaces and hike 5 miles. *Suggested donation: \$3 Sierra Club members, \$5 non-members.* Contact: Frank at Redstar8194@hotmail.com or 561-427-4511.

The Broward Sierra Club is delighted to host an advance screening of the new documentary film, **"FROM THE ASHES."** This screening will take place on **June 7 at the Tamarac Community Center**, 8601 W. Commercial Blvd., Tamarac, FL 33321, starting at 7pm in the Coconut Palm room. The film highlights the work of the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, partner organizations, and frontline communities, and features organizers and volunteers in Montana, North Carolina, and Texas.

First, the film provides a compelling and compassionate counter-narrative to Trump's promises to revive the coal industry, at a time when coal keeps re-emerging at the center of the political debate in this country.

Second, it celebrates and lifts up community voices and the role of grassroots advocacy in shaping our energy future, including the great work of Sierra Club organizers, at a time when the activist spirit is being reborn in this country.

Third, it shows there's a path forward on climate, clean energy, and environmental justice in these hard times, and reinforces the very important message that progress is still possible.

RSVP at <http://tinyurl.com/June7Ashes> to ensure that you will be able to see the film. Time is short and seating is limited, so RSVP now.



NEWS FLASHES – By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Excom Chair

- Finally: Coral Gables is the first Florida city that voted to ban all plastic bags!
- A Delray Beach brewery is the first to have created a biodegradable six-pack ring for beverage cans - an immediate benefit for the endangered sea turtles and other marine life.
- On the other hand, a recent item in the Miami Herald tells us that a remote, uninhabited island in the Pacific is so densely packed with plastic trash along its beaches that it has to be called the highest density of ocean plastic refuse found so far.
- We're well on our way to finally see the south of Lake Okeechobee reservoirs become reality (to hold and filter

the lake's overflow, to flow to the south into the Everglades, instead of polluted waters being diverted to the East and West coasts). It looks like we're winning the battle to restore the natural flow of the Southern Everglades, thanks to the public's support and concerned politicians in Tallahassee

- Another winner: the python hunters! Money talks.... This new team of trained snake hunters from all walks of life, was paid an average of \$29,000 per hunter during the first months of this year, for catching over 80 gigantic pythons. A real bargain, scientists tell us.
- However, another invasive animal species is now finding its home in South Florida: the tegu lizard. Maybe training a tegu hunting team is now in order...

Oil Spills, continued from previous page

One more fact: while the Gulf's BP oil spill was by far the biggest until now, the people in-the-know just told us recently at a special oil spill hearing, that if the Gulf loop currents had been slightly different, as is often the case around the Florida Straits, Fort Lauderdale's beaches would have been covered with bigger globs of congealed oil than those seen all along the Gulf's beaches!