



# BROWARD SIERRA NEWS



Please Recycle

VOL. XXXIX NO. 8 / SEPT 2017

Graphic design & layout by [www.carolewalsh.com](http://www.carolewalsh.com)

[www.sierraclub.org/florida/broward](http://www.sierraclub.org/florida/broward) • [www.facebook.com/BrowardSierra](http://www.facebook.com/BrowardSierra) • [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/BrowardSierra](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/BrowardSierra)

## CELEBRATING SUCCESSES! – By Sue Caruso, Ina Oost Topper & Darryl Rutz

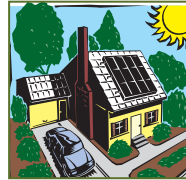
In light of the current political atmosphere surrounding environmental issues, it is important to stop and consider the successes, big or small, that we have achieved this year.



First of all, the Broward Sierra Club sponsored an **Earth Day event** that, despite torrential downpours much of the day, brought out almost 400 people to the Anne Kolb Nature Center. This event was in conjunction with an art poster contest open to all students in the Broward School system, with the theme “Solutions to Pollution.” We received dozens of entries, showing that our students understand the connections of their actions to pollution on our planet. Especially encouraging was the number of families who brought their children to enjoy and be educated about the environment.

Secondly, some state bills that went as we hoped:

**SB 90 is an outcome of Amendment 4 that passed last August.** It will provide a solar tax exemption for commercial properties, and blocked a property tax on residences that improved their property value by adding solar panels to their homes. This, combined with the two solar co-ops with hundreds of members here in Broward County, shows that solar energy is on its way in Broward!



**SB 10 is a bill to create a reservoir to hold and cleanse the overflow from Lake Okeechobee whenever necessary.** This will lessen the amount of nutrient-rich water flowing through the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers from the lake. That polluted water is the cause of algae blooms that killed fish and other creatures in record numbers recently. More good news...the funding for this project was also approved! This is a good sign after our legislators failed to purchase the Big Sugar lands two years ago.

**SB1238 was a bad bill that failed to make it to a senate-wide vote.** It would have allowed FPL to invest in fracked natural gas and charge ratepayers for the cost plus get a guaranteed profit on the investment, even if no gas was produced. This failed, in large part, due to the many calls of outraged citizens. Sometimes, our legislators do listen!

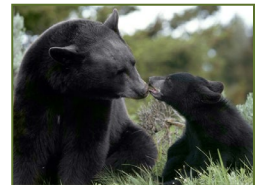
Other successes include:

The dozens of awards presented at the **P3 Ecochallenge**, which acknowledges environmental accomplishments by students, teachers and staff at our local schools. Broward Sierra Club was one of the sponsors for this program. Good things are happening in our schools!

**The local Climate March in Fort Lauderdale was well-attended and garnered media attention.**

**The number of mayors, governors and businesses that have committed to staying with the Paris Accord.**

I hope that by now you have heard the good news about the **Florida Black Bears**. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) voted 4-3 not to have a black bear hunt in 2017 and 2018. This decision was made by the seven member Commission in front of a packed house of about 200 attendees of which about 85 spoke to the FWC in favor and against the hunt. The Sierra Club was represented by Whitey Merkle and Darryl Rutz, both members of the Sierra Black Bear Committee. The FWC staff estimated there was an increase in the bear population reaching the 4000 mark. After deliberation by the Commission, they failed to support a pro-hunt motion made by Commissioner Liesa Priddy. Commissioner Burgeon as usual did not support the hunt. In summarizing, the Commission stated the science was there for a hunt, but citizens of Florida were not ready. They referred to the black bear as being iconic. So all of you that made noise by calling, emailing and contacting officials get the credit for this great wildlife victory. The Sierra Club and other wildlife organizations worked very hard to get the facts out. Many thanks to the members of the Black Bear Committee made up of Whitey Merkle, Laura Hensley, Marian Ryan, Drew Martin, Rocky Milburn and Judy Kuchta. Even though the Committee will be in hibernation, we need to be vigilant of the activities of our Florida Wildlife. **Now that the FWC has stated that the numbers of our manatees and Florida panthers have increased we need to make sure they have a safe habitat.** We love our wildlife and want to see that they become an integral part of our landscape.



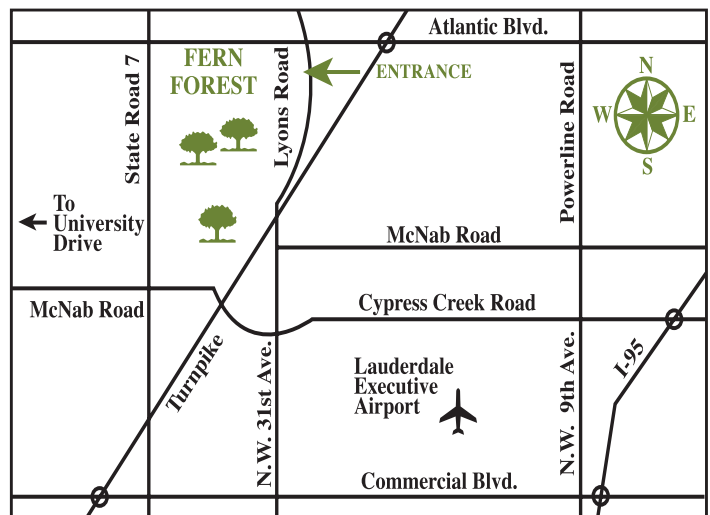
*Continued on next page*



**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.) Committee reports begin at 7:30, and the program begins at 7:45. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

**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.



**SEPT 9, SAT. MOONLIGHT BIKING IN SHARK VALLEY, EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK.** 7:30pm. Moderate 15 mile ride through the Shark Valley Tram Road at Everglades National Park. This flat, paved road is used for tram rides, bicycling, and walking. Along the road (at night) we may see alligators, herons, egrets, nighthawks, snakes and spiders. An observation tower at the halfway point provides panoramic views of the Everglades, stars (on a clear night) and the distant city lights. You are welcome to bring snacks, we will have some snacks at the observation tower. Please plan to meet no later than 7:30 PM at Dade Corners located on 17696 SW 8th St, Miami, FL 33194 (South East Corner of Krome and 8th Street Intersection). We will be driving to the Shark Valley Entrance promptly at 8:00pm. Requirements: Must be 16 years of age or older and have a bike in good repair with front and rear lights. Please bring your own water and flashlight. A spare tire/inner-tube and helmets are strongly recommended. Wear clothing that is appropriate for the season. Mosquito repellent. Red light (to spot alligators). Snacks. *Suggested donation: \$15 - \$20.* Leader: Mark Walters, [mark.walters@sierraclub.org](mailto:mark.walters@sierraclub.org), Assistant Leader: Dany Garcia, [g-dany@live.com](mailto:g-dany@live.com)



**SEPT 24, SUN. SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS LEADER TRAINING 101 AND 102.** 9:00am - 4:00pm in Hollywood. Learn the skills to be an outings leader. *Free to Sierra Club members.* Delicious lunch provided. For details please contact Judy Kuchta at 305-308-8913 or [judykuchta@yahoo.com](mailto:judykuchta@yahoo.com).



**OCT 20 - 22, FRI. - SUN. FLORIDA OUTING LEADERS AND OUTING CHAIR GATHERING.** Myakka State Park. Primitive group campsite. However anyone needing electricity please contact park and reserve your site or cabin. We will have round table discussions and short workshops on topics such as Outing Leader re-certification training, new tools to help build and grow your outings program. You'll leave the weekend gathering inspired to start or grow new and innovative outdoor programs back at home. *\$5 per person per night plus tax but the Florida Chapter will reimburse you.* Bring your own food and drinks. We will have common cooking gear that can be shared. Signup Restrictions: Outing Chairs and Outing Leaders only. For questions please contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-542-6403 or [rudy.scheffer@sierraclub.org](mailto:rudy.scheffer@sierraclub.org).



**NOV 4 - 5, SAT. - SUN. CAMPGROUND CAMPING AND KAYAKING/CANOING ON FISHEATING CREEK** (west of Lake Okeechobee). Framed by bald cypress swamps and hardwood hammocks, Fisheating Creek has long been valued for its scenic quality, unmarred by houses and other human intrusions. Fisheating Creek is critical to the long-term welfare of Florida panthers, Florida black bears, swallow-tailed kites, whooping and sandhill cranes, crested caracara, and a number of other species native to the area. We will camp in the campground and paddle along the creek enjoying the scenery and the abundant wildlife, including deer, feral hog, Osceola turkey, and plenty of gators. Our outfitter will be [www.fisheatingcreekoutpost.com](http://www.fisheatingcreekoutpost.com). We'll meet at the campground on Saturday morning and the outfitter will transport us and our kayaks/canoes to the Burnt Bridge put in point. On Sunday, we can explore some of the trails along the creek. You may bring your own kayak/canoe or rent one. The outfitter's price schedule for the transport is practically the same whether you bring your own vessel or rent from them. *Suggested donation is \$55 per person members, \$65 per person non-members if you will have two people in your boat. If you are bringing or renting a single kayak, the donation is \$75 per person members and \$85 per person non-members. \$30 per person for non-paddlers.* This includes the campsite (both Friday and Saturday nights if you wish), 3 meals (Saturday lunch and dinner plus Sunday breakfast), upriver transport, and canoe/kayak rental, if applicable. RV sites are available at slight extra cost. Moderate. Limit 24. If you wish, you may camp at our main campground campsite on Friday evening on your own – just provide your own meals. Leaders: Judy Kuchta at [judykuchta@yahoo.com](mailto:judykuchta@yahoo.com) or 305-308-8913, Kaatje Bernabei at [kaatjebernabei@bellsouth.net](mailto:kaatjebernabei@bellsouth.net) or 305-298-0277, Max Goldstein at [maxgold@yahoo.com](mailto:maxgold@yahoo.com) or 954-296-3411.

Successes, continued from previous page

## Xeriscaping.

The city of Delray Beach recently adopted a policy allowing its residents to xeriscape their property, no longer being obligated to retain a mandatory lawn in their front yard.



The Greek word 'Xeris' means 'dry', and most xeriscaping literature pertains extensively to the desert climate areas of the South Western United States. In fact, many local ordinances prohibit any lawn needing frequent watering, but instead favor or even MANDATE a front yard consisting of gravel, river rock, or pulverized lava chunks. Then, one may decorate with cactus, agave or whatever the budget may allow. Result? No need to put in sprinkler systems, constantly paying for repairs and replacing sprinkler heads, etc. Conversely, while the drought plagued South West promotes little or no use of watering, we have plenty of water here in Florida, but have been under water restrictions because we don't want our many waterways, lakes and wetlands to become depleted, or inundated with fertilizer runoff used for unneeded, non-native plants.

While many cactus varieties do very well in South Florida, there are some that only thrive in desert-like climates. Instead, what works very well here besides different types of agave, are cycads (palm-like plants) and all succulents (i.e. aloe). And hibiscus is both beautiful and does extremely well. In the tree department Florida cypress, crepe myrtle, poinciana or acacia, live oak, bottle brush are those that never need any care or looking after again. There's also the option of using some colorful ground covering vines (Make sure to take into account the sun's angle for

most of the day, if only partly sun exposed a hardy native plant in a large size box doesn't need any care either.)

With ever greater frequency we have here in South Florida plant & tree giveaways throughout the year on those environmental days like Earth Day, Water Matters, or even local neighborhood events. This is the time to get some free landscaping additions. With that option you're not only enhancing the "green look" of your residence, it will be a most economical venture, both in acquisitions as well as future watering expenses.

Let's hope that MORE xeriscape friendly ordinances are put in place soon. **You may do your part with a proposal at your next city commission hearing.**

Meanwhile, at least ONE South Florida municipality is leading the way! **Kudos to Delray Beach!**

**Lastly, the number of volunteers and people attending our general meetings and local events.** There are so many of you out there who care about what is going on in Washington and at the state level. We look forward to your continued support to keep these successes coming!



See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIMrYHAbqmQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIMrYHAbqmQ) for more Sierra Club success stories.

**It is a good time to stop, and not only reflect on these successes, but commit to reducing our own carbon foot prints. Small actions taken by all of us can make a big difference!**