



# Broward Sierra News

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## A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR SIERRANS!

– By Ina Topper, Broward Sierra Excom Chair

Hopefully, going the environmental route, if you're accustomed to X-mas trees in your house, you'd see to it that the real trees get properly mulched:

[Chip-a-Tree Program](#)

If electronics got replaced, donate the old ones if are still in good working order. If not, recycle them at:

[Broward County Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Site.](#)

You will need to show Broward County residence.

### The year in review

Just a fistful of issues we've been working on. We've seen some successes! The black bear hunt is still temporarily on hold. The attempt to start drilling for oil (yes... imagine that!) in the Everglades is also on hold, hopefully for good (but do not underestimate the power of big corporations chasing the almighty Dollar). There's also more awareness regarding preserving our coral reefs, thanks to more exposure of this environmental problem.

On the other hand, seagrass is dying in the Biscayne Bay. The aquifer is endangered due to ever more seawater seeping in (who wants to drink salty water from the kitchen faucet)? As for invasive species, finally, it seems, we're making a dent in the Burmese python population with some new approaches i.e. snake hunters brought in from afar! Just a few things brought to the fore - there's still much to be done.

Thank you for keeping up the good work and this coming year, hopefully we'll see you again at our Fern Forest general meetings.

### Rivers

Throughout the centuries, as we learned in school, settlements, towns and thereafter cities were always established along waterways. We're not only talking about New York City on the Hudson Bay, and then Captain Henry Hudson sailing up the Hudson all the way, after which many small towns were founded on its banks. Think also about Boston, Philadelphia, and the list can go on.

In ancient times the native Americans knew about the value of waterside settlements, only mentioning here the short Miami river, which runs just a few miles inland from the mouth of Biscayne Bay. Hopefully, you all are aware of the significant find, now a couple of decades ago, the so-called Miami circle, at the Biscayne Bay river mouth.

### Rivers (Continued)

To refresh your memory: when developers dug into the ground at this location (and there are always some archeologists mandatorily present) they found items from erstwhile Indian tribes, most probably Tequesta. (We don't know why the Tequesta Indians, together with the Caloosa, completely disappeared - like the Anasazi in Arizona.)

Water meant, and still means, 'Life'. Without water we cannot live, just as we could not do anything without rivers to navigate, or presently use rivers or subsidiary canals to irrigate land for our vital produce to grow. Many movies have been made, throughout film history, about the role rivers have played for all of mankind.

Robin Haines Merrill, whose name has now become solidly attached to movies about rivers, besides promoting art galleries in our area, did a magnificent job organizing a whole Sunday of River Movies recently, at the Savor Cinema in downtown Fort Lauderdale - formerly known as Cinema Paradiso. The movie marathon ran the gamut from our Miami river to the Los Angeles river (yes, there is one). In between there were the very well done documentary style movies about, for instance, the Detroit river, Chicago river, Colorado river. Besides the obvious objective of bringing to the forefront the vital role of rivers, it also meant a significant exposure of how, in recent times, rivers became horribly polluted. This is where it all came together: we, as environmentalists and the river movie makers. We'd like to also mention here that Katja Esson, the filmmaker, has been nominated for an Oscar! (As a side note, there are currently discussions with PBS, to have the movie series shown nationwide on this network.)

Talking about polluted rivers, we as Florida Sierrans think immediately of our big recent scourge, the deadly green, algae polluted rivers in our state. But what about, more than a half century ago, the Ohio river, which spontaneously went aflame for days, due to all the heavy combustible debris floating on its surface? And another severely polluted river issue comes to mind, now known as the Erin Brockovich film, the Love Canal in upstate New York, which contributed to a much higher cancer rate among children. Oh, and what about the residents of Flint, Michigan, having been 'treated' to use of untreated river water. (Yes, Flint is mentioned in the Detroit River movie.)

## Rivers (Continued)

Another issue of river water abuse we learned about on this movie afternoon pertained to both the Los Angeles and the Colorado river. The Los Angeles river basically serves as a necessary overflow of sudden rain storm related floods coming in from the ultra dry deserts East of the City. Most of the time, while it's in its more shallow stage, this water body even serves as a setting for the nearby urbanites as a recreational area, many even taking a swift dip during the brutally hot California summers. But WHY, pray tell, are indifferent residents throwing their refuse along its banks? Yes, even discarded furniture nowadays!

The Colorado river earned its fame from having carved its way through rocks, creating the Grand Canyon. Yet, albeit less malicious, some form of abuse has come its way by increasingly diverting its waters for simply creating agricultural land in the Southwest desert.

If, at one point upstream, the Colorado is still a gloriously roaring river, when it finally reaches the Mexican border to run into Baja California, it resembles nothing but a little dribbling trickle of water. Luckily, as an international venture, the water districts on both sides of the border have joined forces to turn the clock back. In an effort to no longer victimize small town residents on the Mexican side. They depended, for all their daily needs, on this previously still flowing, albeit smaller river. But after the water supply coming to a halt a few years ago, some relatively unimportant smaller dams are now eliminated, ensuring again a much increased water flow.

If and when the river movie series comes to TV, make a point of setting aside time to watch them all. It gives a much more expanded perspective of what river pollution means, in whichever form, besides our well-known fertilizer affluent caused pollution here in Florida.

# LOCAL SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS AND EVENTS

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



**Saturday, January 6, 10 AM – Biking at Riverbend Park in Jupiter.** Leisurely morning bicycling in the woods at Riverbend Park [Click here](#). Bike rentals may be available. Bicycle helmets are REQUIRED on all Sierra Club bicycle outings. Moderate. Limit 10. \$3 members, \$5 non-members suggested donation. Ron Haines, 561-315-0528, [RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net](mailto:RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net)



**Saturday, January 13, 9:00 AM to noon - John Prince Park in Lake Worth.**

This is a leisurely bicycle ride through John Prince Park and will take about two hours. Helmets are required on all Sierra Club bike outings. Where: At the first parking lot on the right after entering John Prince Park at the Lake Worth Road/Lake Osborne Drive entrance in Lake Worth. This is BEFORE the basketball and tennis courts. Look for other folks with bicycles and say hello. Moderate. About 12 miles. Limit 10. \$3 members, \$5 non-members suggested donation. Ron Haines, 561-315-0528, [RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net](mailto:RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net).



**Saturday, January 20, 10 AM – Canoe/kayak the Winding Waters Natural Area in West Palm Beach.** Leisurely morning paddle, suitable for beginners. Sorry, no rentals available. See it at <http://discover.pbcgov.org/erm/NaturalAreas/Winding-Waters.aspx> Suggested donation: \$3 members, \$5 non-members. Moderate. Limit 10. Ron Haines, 561-315-0528, [RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net](mailto:RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net)



**Friday, February 23 – Sunday, February 25. Myakka River Camping Outing.**

We will be camping at the Youth Area 2 at the youth campsite located across the street from the park (no electricity, but there is a men and women's bathroom with heated water and one shower nearby). We will meet at the campground on Friday afternoon to set up camp. We will have dinner around the campfire (bring your own Friday night dinner). Parking will be in the main park across the street, but you can drop off your camping supplies first, and then park your car. On Saturday we will spend the day in the park visiting the bird walk, taking a one hour guided air boat ride, and going on a 2-hour hike on the Bee Island Loop nature trail to the canopy walkway. Sunday morning we will take a bike ride in the park.

**What to bring:** Please bring your own tents, (no RV's) and bring camping supplies. Participants will be responsible to bring the following meals: Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and Sunday breakfast. There will be propane stove on the campsite to cook your meals.

**Important to know:** Total cost per person for the weekend is \$40/Sierra Club members and \$45 for non-members (includes dinner on Saturday night, airboat, campground fees, and supplies).

Please register at our Meet-Up page:

<https://www.meetup.com/Broward-County-Sierra-Club-Group/events/wqjzcpyxdbfc/>