



BROWARD SIERRA NEWS



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POISONS ALL AROUND US – By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Chair

Much has been written about the many chemical and man-made poisons in our environment. The Flint drinking water crisis is still fresh in our minds, as is the Kingston Fossil Plant coal fly ash slurry spill, the Erin Brockovich lawsuit against the PG&E company, and the Love Canal story in upstate New York decades ago. And even before that we remember the New York City scandal of lead-based paint which caused severe brain injuries among many toddlers, after ingesting paint flecks which had chipped off the apartment walls.



But now some words about the many poisons occurring all around us in Mother Nature. Many of us may not be aware of it, but all around us there are toxic substances we may not even know about. Of course there are the many edible varieties of mushrooms, and it may be interesting to mention that

in other parts of the world there are many more than what's being sold here stateside. But of those that are not edible, some are extremely toxic

and unfortunately, some of them are suspiciously identical looking to the edible type. (That's why one should leave the harvesting of mushrooms in the forest to the experts. We know firsthand of an acquaintance whose mushroom-picking hobby during the weekends almost turned fatal.)

Of all the beautiful plants we have in our gardens or in pots decorating our living rooms, quite a few are rather toxic. Some of them perhaps not as bad as many say, like dieffenbachia and poinsettias, which are very bad for pets and small children, but not necessarily lethal for adults, save for causing extreme intestinal and stomach discomfort. And then there are fruits and vegetables, where a part of it is rather toxic but otherwise a very nourishing food substance. Take for example our ordinary potato, a nightshade plant (don't ingest the blossoms). Or some oriental veggies which have a toxic skin, like bitter melon, which has to be scraped off and then left overnight in a bowl of salty water. And let's not forget the pits or big stones inside some fruits like fresh apricots. (The compound of this seed is nowadays used by the pharmaceutical industry.) Maybe

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JUDGE RULES ON AMENDMENT 1 FUNDS

– By Sue Caruso, Broward Sierra Secretary

Do you remember the Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative (Amendment 1) in 2014? Chances are you voted for it, as did 75% of Florida voters that year in the hope of acquiring land for restoring the Everglades and protecting our water.



Our legislators had other ideas for spending the funds we approved. Much of the money generated has been used to replace the general fund for existing state agency operating expenses (\$160 million this year alone) and offsetting cuts to other programs, with little going to actual land acquisition.

To rectify what many environmentalists feel is a misappropriation of the Land Acquisition Trust funds, Earth Justice filed a lawsuit in 2015 on behalf of several environmental groups, including the Sierra Club. The suit asks the court to compel the Florida Legislature to comply with the Water and Land Conservation Amendment. *Continued on next page*

BROWARD GOES ELECTRIC!

– By Sue Caruso, Broward Sierra Secretary

Buses, that is... On June 12, Broward County Commissioners unanimously voted to purchase five zero-emission buses and to purchase an additional ten in the future. This means that Broward County will have more zero-emission electric buses in operation than any other transportation agency in Florida, once these buses are put into operation.



Our Sierra Club volunteers who met in Broward County to support zero-emission buses.

Each bus will eliminate 1,690 tons of carbon dioxide, 10 tons of nitrogen oxides, and 350 pounds of diesel particulate matter over a 12 year period. Breathing less of these pollutants daily will not only reduce respiratory

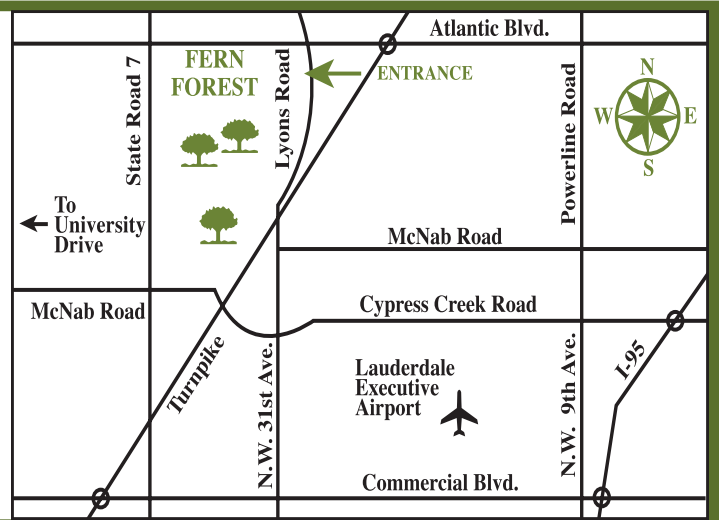
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Broward Sierra Club's General Meetings - The first Thursday of each month we have committee reports and an educational program on conservation or environmental issues.

DIRECTIONS: Fern Forest Nature Center, 201 Lyons Road South, in 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 follows. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

Thursday, July 5th: After committee reports, we will show the movie "An Inconvenient Sequel, Truth to Power." Former Vice President Al Gore continues his tireless fight, traveling around the world training an army of climate champions and influencing international climate policy.



LOCAL SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS AND EVENTS

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



SAVE THE DATE: SEP 8, SAT. PEOPLES CLIMATE MOVEMENT MARCH after months of organizing and movement-building, the Peoples Climate Movement will move tens of thousands of people across the country into action, joining partners from around the world, to show our elected leaders that we demand action on climate change. Eight weeks later, millions more will take those demands to the polls, making Climate, Jobs, and Justice central issues in the mid-term elections and beyond. To learn more and sign up, go to <https://peoplesclimate.org/>

Poisons, continued from previous page

one can say there are 'good' poisons and 'bad' poisons or, rather, some 'bad' poisons can also do good. Only a few years ago one wouldn't have thought of botox injections being able to ward off chronic migraines.

This week I saw an extensive article about venomous fish like the lionfish, a non-native pest in our waters with an extremely painful sting from its spines - yes, we experienced it! It can make an infant very ill. And then there's the poisonous blowfish or puffer fish, very popular in Japan. (In Japanese, 'fugu'.) The glands and especially the livers are so poisonous that they can kill when consumed. Only just a few weeks ago some Japanese diners ate only a minute bit of the wrong fish parts and could barely breathe the very next morning. That's why those fish are only prepared by certified chefs in Japan.



The two broad classes of toxins found in snake venom are neurotoxins (affecting nerve tissue) and hemotoxins (affecting blood cells and causing tissue damage). Either one can cause severe damage if not treated with anti-venom. A note of caution: If any of

our readers ever comes across a dead snake, do NOT touch! The fangs and/or saliva glands from where the venom is projected are 'alive' for at least another 12 hours. So if you don't know when the serpent met its demise, just leave it alone. Then there's the komodo dragon, the largest of the lizard species, in Indonesia, whose inflammatory saliva is so toxic as to simply kill its prey (or humans) in a matter of hours. While it's well known that the very high bacterial count in its saliva is enough to kill, lesser known is the saliva's blood thinning property. Most likely, as the Indonesian biologists tell us, this aspect also causes internal bleeding, so that a bite victim simply goes into shock.

Additionally, there's the well-known poisonous tree frog and, of course, tarantulas, which can kill an infant if stung often enough.



Just recently, while in Northern Europe, I learned that since last year the box moth caterpillar has become a major pest in the region. Partly due to global warming, this invasive pest from warmer climes has eaten its way through major tree stands everywhere in many countries. Lacking its natural predator from where it hails, the caterpillar is now considered a devastating pest. But what's worse, if one has the bad luck to walk under a tree and one of these crawlies falls on your arm or neck, the very fine, almost invisible hairs on the insect's back cause such an alarming toxic reaction on human skin that within minutes the huge blisters look like second degree burn injuries.

Coincidentally, just this month the (fairly new) Frost Science Museum in Miami has an exhibit and digital scavenger hunt on nature's poisons. This may well be worth a trip on a very hot weekend day now that school's out, to take the kids for a very educational visit - in a very air conditioned building. Part of the exhibit are live shows and videos throughout the day.

Enjoy the (toxic) fun while this unusual but most interesting exhibit is still around!

Amendment 1 Funds, continued from previous page

On June 15, Florida Circuit Judge, Charles Dodson did just that, deciding that the constitutional amendment requires funding to be used for land acquisition, and restoration and management of those lands, not for other purposes.

But, the fight isn't over. Some lawmakers, such as Rep. Matt Caldwell (R-North Fort Myers) believes Judge Dodson's ruling is based on a too narrow interpretation of the law, and that the decision will be overturned on appeal.

Caldwell was also quoted as saying, "I think this is evidence of why we shouldn't legislate through the Constitution. These are political questions that need to be solved through the political process. The courts aren't equipped to handle these issues."

Attorney Andy Bardos, representing the House and Senate, said the court's decision should be based on the written text of the amendment, not a perceived intent of the voters, which he called "pure speculation."

However, David Guest, the Earth Justice attorney, believes the case will be decided this year. "I expect we will continue to fight liked caged mink for a little while longer," Guest said. "I think the proper way to do it with something this important, this should really go straight to the Supreme Court and I think everybody's expecting that."

We will continue to follow this issue and let you know how it is resolved!

Electric Buses, continued from previous page

diseases, such as asthma, but also certain cancers and premature deaths.

In addition to the elimination of foul-smelling fumes, these buses are much more quiet than traditional fossil-fuel burning vehicles, thereby reducing noise pollution.



Another big advantage is substantial savings to taxpayers. According to Sierra Club volunteer Michelle Clawson, a single electric bus can save between \$150,000 to \$200,000 dollars in fuel costs alone.

Although most of these vehicles operate on electricity that is generated using fossil fuels, those sources, such as FPL, are regulated by government agencies and must adhere to environmental standards. That makes controlling a few sources of air pollution easier and more likely than trying to regulate millions of vehicles. When our electric generation uses renewable energy sources, it is the best possible way to produce sustainable transportation. Therefore, our Broward County Transportation Department is to be applauded for their hopes to install advanced solar photovoltaic panels on the rooftop of the Copans Road maintenance facility in the City of Pompano Beach that will support the charging for their electric buses.

Sierra Club is supporting Broward County's grant applications for the funding of additional zero-emissions buses and solar panel installation. Let's hope Miami-Dade will follow suit!



HAVE FUN AT THE BEACH!

Broward Sierra Club's Annual Summer Picnic at the Beach

Vegetarians and non-vegetarians welcome

Sunday, August 19th, starting at noon

Dr. Von Mizell-Eula Johnson State Park (formerly John U. Lloyd Park), 6503 N. Ocean Drive (A1A), Dania Beach

→ We're at the Pelican Pavilion. ←

Come have fun and enjoy the food, beach, swimming, snorkeling, and just plain lounging and socializing with other environmentally-minded folks.

This yearly fundraising event helps support the Broward Sierra group's activities and environmental causes. There will be some food and drinks supplied, but please bring a dish or beverage to be shared. Please also bring a contribution of \$5 if you bring a dish or \$10 if you don't. Bring your own recyclable plates and utensils, in order for us to leave "nothing but our footsteps" behind, and set an environmentalists' example. Adults & kids welcome. (There is a \$4 entrance fee at the park, per car with 1 person, \$6 fee for 2-8 people in a car, or \$2 each for pedestrians, bicyclists or more than 8 people in a car.) So please **carpool** if you can and bring **exact change** for the gate.

For more info see our Meet-up group at

www.meetup.com/Broward-County-Sierra-Club-Group,

or contact Max at maxgold@yahoo.com, 954-296-3411 or Judy at judykuchta@yahoo.com, 305-308-8913.

And so we can make sure we have enough food for everyone, RSVP Max, Judy or via the Meet-Up Group.



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