



BROWARD SIERRA NEWS



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FOOD RECYCLING – By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Chair

Here are some food wastage facts by the numbers. Bet you didn't know most of them:

- In the USA, on a yearly basis, 40% of all food is wasted.
- 60% of fresh produce is wasted in an average household.
- In tons: 38 million tons of food, which otherwise would have been perfect for consumption.
- In dollars: the amount of good food thrown out is \$160 billion per year, just in our country!
- In dollars: the nation's average household is estimated to waste about \$1,600 annually in food items.
- The conservative estimate of municipal waste management programs is that at least 21% of their bins that are emptied is food.

We could go on, numbers and statistics are plentiful. But what's very troubling is that our country is leading the world in massive waste of food resources.

There are a few reasons are the cause of this alarming (and sinful) waste. For one thing, food here is cheap. We're barely spending a small portion

of our income budget on food, whereas in most countries, it's easily up to 40%, in some countries (for instance, in rural areas in India or sub-Saharan Africa) it's 60 or 70%. Secondly, waste of any and all things and products have become embedded in our national psyche. Even expensive electronics have become "throw-away" items. I'm sure you've seen TV footage of people, even children, climbing on top of electronic refuse heaps in Third World countries, just to salvage the few metals, screws, or whatever can bring in a few cents. One example: having traveled the world throughout my lifetime (and lessons learned about waste) when one morning discarding my \$5 flea market watch, because it stopped working, it was quickly scooped up by someone passing by, saying "Believe me ma'am, we still can fix it here in our country."



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EARTH DAY AT THE MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

– By MaryAnn Soltis, Broward Sierra Vice-Chair



The Broward Sierra Club Group sponsored a tabling at the Museum of Science in downtown Fort Lauderdale, giving young and old alike plenty of information regarding the environment.

Stan Pannaman gave visitors information on a great variety of environmental topics, and we happily recruited several new members from these encounters.

I particularly enjoyed working with the kids (ages approximately 3 to 12), giving them the opportunity to color Earth day appropriate drawings. They especially liked the ones which had a manatee image!

Max Goldstein was a great help to all of us, backing us up wherever needed, and we're thrilled that another wonderful day was spent, promoting the goals of our Sierra Club.

AMERICAN DREAM OR AMERICAN NIGHTMARE?

– By Sue Caruso, Broward Sierra Secretary

Bigger is better, right? If you believe that, then you'll be ecstatic about the new development in northwest Miami-Dade County, just south of the Broward County border. This development, euphemistically called the American Dream, will dwarf the Mall of Americas and supply us with 6.2 million square feet of entertainment, restaurants and shops. Better, right? The 30 MILLION tourists annually will bring revenue to bolster the local economy. The Triple Five Corporation is boasting that this endeavor will create 14,000 permanent jobs. No one will have to travel to Orlando anymore. You can take a submarine ride, right here in the new submarine lake. One man voiced his overwhelming support, since he will no longer have to pay to have his four kids fly out to Colorado when they want to go skiing. They can ski indoors right here in Miami! Better, right? And did we mention that the Graham Family, who sold the land to the afore-mentioned developers, is creating an "employment center" just to the south of the

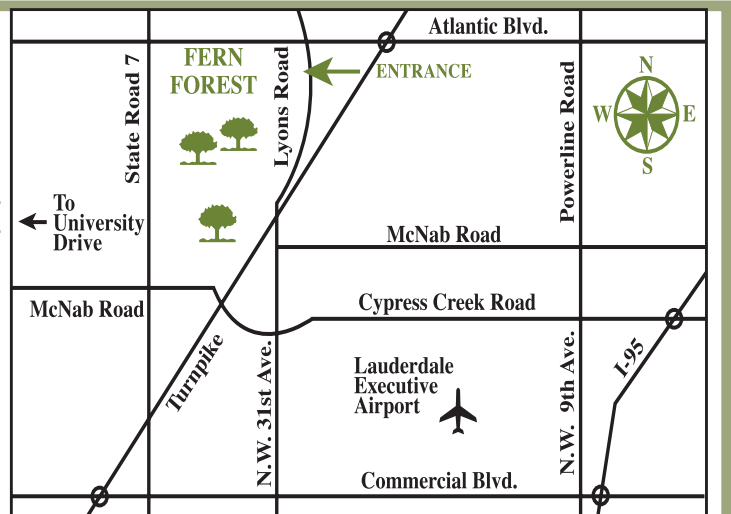
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Broward Sierra Club's General Meetings - The first Thursday of each month we have committee reports and an educational program on conservation or environmental issues.

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, June 7th: After committee reports, our guest speaker will be fisheries and environmental consultant, **Captain Dan Kipnis**. Capt. Dan was trained by former Vice President Al Gore in the Climate Reality Project, and his presentation will be on **climate change and the changing oceans**.



LOCAL SIERRA CLUB OUTINGS AND EVENTS

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



JUNE 2, SAT. 2018 NATIONAL TRAILS DAY 9am - noon at Fern Forest Nature Center. This event is in celebration of the 2018 National Trails Day (<https://americanhiking.org/national-trails-day/>) by the American Hiking Society and is an annual event held throughout the United States by outdoor organizations on the 1st Saturday in June. The Florida Trail Association (www.floridatrail.org) and Fern Forest Nature Center will be hosting the event that feature organizations that have a positive impact on the environment. Activities will include walking tours of the park by Fern Forest Nature Center staff and Florida Trail volunteers, information on invasive plants, ecosystems within the park, water management and Leave No Trace practices. Stop by our booth, learn more and say hello. To sign up, go to www.meetup.com/Broward-County-Sierra-Club-Group/

Food, continued from previous page



In regard to food waste, what has been done so far, what needs to be done, and what's the future going to look like?

There is more and more an all too painful attitude that much food in restaurant kitchens has to be thrown out. But some progress has been made. Some restaurants now have an arrangement with

food kitchens, homeless shelters and the like, to have these perfectly nourishing discards collected. Also, many supermarket chains (Publix comes to mind) deserve kudos for finding ways to let day-old items go to animal shelters, half-way and homeless facilities as well.

Also please note that the sell-by date on an item, is not when the food becomes inedible! It's just the suggested sell-by date. And plans are underway by the FDA to have this misleading information re-examined in order to better inform the public. Nothing mysterious happens to your eggs when they're a week longer in your fridge than the sell-by date stated on the box! In fact, this is one of the best examples: we're repeatedly reminded by many consumer programs, that properly refrigerated eggs, directly from store to home, can be kept for WEEKS!

There is also the tremendous waste in our school systems. I know, we can't avoid all of the waste, because not all children have the same appetite. But several years ago, when still teaching full time, I myself was able to establish a "food-shelf" in the hallway leading out of our school cafeteria. Any student with a somewhat larger appetite than what had been handed to him or her, could pick up the unopened fruit-cup, a milk carton, Saran-wrapped bun or any other item that they still could very well add to their somewhat miserly tray. Alas, after I left that facility full time (although still subbing there at times), the food deposit shelf has disappeared. But to my delight, there are still many children who bring superfluous items to the nurse's refrigerator! And that's where kids go who missed the school bus and thereby their breakfast as well. I am sure that, with a bit of additional food education, this simple idea could be expanded county-wide, on a much larger and more effective scale.

Then there's the waste of perfectly good, but imperfectly shaped produce in supermarkets and wholesale warehouses. We heard when talking to a senior manager at one of our local supermarkets, "The crooked cucumber, odd-shaped apple, even a tomato with a harmless skin-blemish, does not sell," he said, although some stores are selling them as packaged "1 dollar final sale."

What we also learned from other countries, that what we cut off or throw away is cooked and eaten. Carrot top greens, the green outer cauliflower leaves (they're cut up like celery and thrown in with the florets) the leaf-tops of celery stalks (they're thrown in the soup like parsley). And, talking about parsley, that's one produce item of which 95 to 98% is wasted. We heard it from a reliable consumer source, i.e. "it's used as decoration only!" Aah, no wonder I've sometimes seen people look at me strangely when I ate the parsley stem with the deviled egg. But, oh silly me, I just love the taste of fresh parsley.

The future of food waste:

The states of Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, actually all of New England, have a projective plan in place to sharply reduce food waste in the next decade or so. Not only out of sheer

environmental principles, which is another fact brought up by waste management: All food scraps go into the landfill and attract vermin such as rats, horseflies, mosquitos, worms, etc. And rotting food creates methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas. There are some countries where food scraps are not allowed in common garbage bins. They go into separate receptacles, although admittedly, these are cooler climate countries - not an option in sweltering Florida.

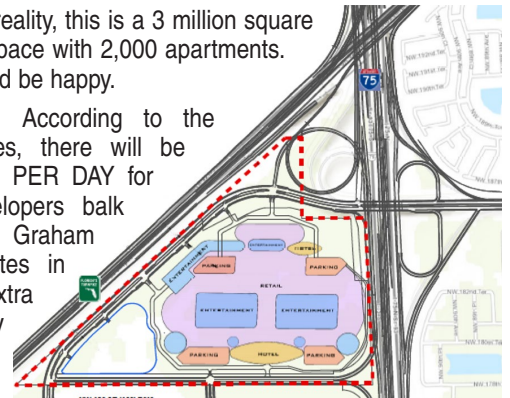
The Morton Salt company has come up with a program whereby it aims to support and actively propagate a zero-waste plan by 2030 when pertaining to food. It supposedly is to take the form of drop off centers for perfectly good (but not sales worthy) food, perhaps even depots for partially consumed items that can be creatively turned into 'something else.' The whole 'food economy,' as they call it, needs a drastic make-over.

Let's make this coming decade the time of No More Food Waste. Hopefully a few more major companies will start leading the way.

Dream or Nightmare, continued from previous page

American Dream? In reality, this is a 3 million square foot office and retail space with 2,000 apartments. WOW, everyone should be happy.

But, not so fast... According to the developers themselves, there will be over 70,000 car trips PER DAY for the "mall" (the developers balk at the term). The Graham development anticipates in excess of 60,000 extra car trips per day. They say that they have this covered. The extra ramps being built to this site can handle this, right? You'd think so, according to the three years of planning, done at great expense to taxpayers. One DOT speaker sheepishly told the panel just that when asked if the plan was sufficient. But, can you REALLY plan for that much increase to our traffic, and the:



- water demand on the Biscayne Aquifer
- billions of gallons of waste water generated
- billions of pounds of garbage produced
- strain on our airports
- reduced air quality
- jobs lost from the local malls, entertainment areas and restaurants
- demands on the school system
- light pollution
- environmental degradation of the Everglades?

Sadly, the Miami Commissioners are blinded by the dollar signs. It seems myopic to think that the tax dollars generated will be sufficient to deal with all the problems that will be created...and irreversible, in many cases.

Broward County officials were considering suing due to the burden on our county residents. However, at the last minute, concessions to help pay for mitigation of the traffic problems were enough to give approval from our county, too.