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

## To Our Readers

– Ina Topper, *Broward Chair*

We hope you're all keeping safe & sound in these very troubling Pandemic times. We're keeping our general meetings, but they will be remote using Zoom for the time being (see below).

Perhaps some of you may think of helping those affected most, i.e. our many residents (even members, we're sure) who've suddenly lost their jobs. One way of helping is, perhaps, volunteering a day or so to stand in line at a foodbank handing out urgently needed supplies to families in need - of course taking into account personal safety precautions. Or, if knowing of a neighbor who has hit hard times, JUST order a delivery of food items, from one of the many supermarkets, to their address. These very personalized Pandemic contributions may make a world of difference, not just for the financial help, but most definitely to promote a more compassionate, neighborly society in our own backyards. See you again, hopefully, when, once again, we can get together at Fern Forest.

## Message from the Editor

– Max Goldstein, *Broward Newsletter Editor*

As you may expect, all our upcoming events (Earth Day, summer picnic, outings, etc.) are on hold indefinitely until the danger of the pandemic has passed. We are, however, going on-line with our meetings. On May 7, the Broward Sierra Club will be holding our first virtual meeting. Catherine “Cat” Uden of Oceana will be talking about Protecting our Oceans. Problems include: Ocean acidification, over-fishing, dead zones, mercury pollution, shark finning, offshore drilling/oil leaks, and probably the biggest of them all (hint: just Google “trash vortex”). How important are the oceans? Life in the ocean depends on phytoplankton, mostly microscopic organisms that float at the surface and, through photosynthesis, produce about half of the world's oxygen. That’s how important.

Please register at: <https://www.meetup.com/Broward-County-Sierra-Club-Group/events/270187979/>

Instructions are at: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q0000028dvTAAQ&mapLinkHref=>

So, any good news? Earth Day started 50 years ago to help raise awareness about the impact we are having on the planet. Well, the pandemic has provided a brief respite for the planet, a respite from human activity.

- Penguins are wandering in Cape Town
- Lions are napping on the roads in South Africa
- Goats are swarming in Wales
- In Thailand and South Florida, conservationists have seen more sea turtle nests than they’ve had for years.

Just Google before and after pictures of the air pollution because of the pandemic and you will see what a staggering effect the lack of human activity has caused. Globally, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are expected to fall 6% this year, according to the World Meteorological Organization. Will this be enough? No. The UN says in their Emissions Gap Report 2019 (<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2019>) that to avoid a dangerous rise in temperature, global emissions must fall 7.6% each year for an entire decade. And with all the countries focused on economic growth after the lockdown ends, people will do whatever is necessary to get back to where things were. The Financial Times says the number of coal-fired plants China approved in the first three weeks of March was more than all the plants approved in all of 2019, according to Data from the Global Energy Monitor.

So, it seems that the respite may be short-lived, but this also shows that the earth can be healthier if we acknowledge the harm we are causing. And the fact that emissions are down is not all good news for the environment, as discussed in [Mother Jones](#)

A report I do recommend viewing is called “The Road to Change” by CNN, which everyone should find and watch. It specifically mentions South Florida as one of the places to be most affected by sea level rise.



# Broward Sierra News



## Oil Drilling in the Everglades

– Ina Topper, *Broward Chair*

Just this week I found some articles in local papers that, in spite of it all, write that oil companies haven't given up yet on STILL drilling for oil in our Everglades.

A few steps back: just a couple of years ago, in 2017 to be exact, the whole issue of oil exploration in our pristine marshes came up again when it was a private firm that had required rights to start drilling in the Big Cypress Preserve. (For those not in the know: this is until date the heavily preserved area for our almost extinct Florida panther.)

In fact, it was at that time that one of our very active Broward Sierra members, Matt Schwartz, managed to get some pictures taken from the air out of a helicopter, showing the heavy damage that, over time, quite a few (some rather small) oil companies had already caused, crossing over into our neighboring Collier county. Yet, again several smaller oil companies have persistently requested to be allowed oil exploration in various corners of the Everglades.

For a while it looked like the battle was temporarily won, and the whole issue was (again) put on the backburner. The US Army Corps of Engineers was, once again, told to go back to their blueprints and come up with a true assessment as to what damage might be caused in this environmentally sensitive area. Credit where credit is due, it was also Governor De Santis who surprised us at the time by withholding his approval. But, again: the latest report this week, (we're talking mid-April), is that this same US Army Corps of Engineers is softening its position. Burnett Oil Company, the same firm that caused heavy damage a few years ago, is once again allowed to have its temporary stop on oil drilling reviewed.

It was way back in 1943 when the first attempts were made to allow for oil drilling in the Everglades. Let us mention at this time that the comparatively very small amounts of oil which might possibly be won, is causing a significant damage to the point of most of it being irreversible. Yet, it was in the seventies when the Collier family, for which the county was named, and who still owned a good portion of the Big Cypress preserve, were once again allowed to restart their drilling for oil. The Miami Herald, specifying that all environmental organizations have constantly and aggressively opposed this wrecking of such pristine lands, also quoting Florida's director of the Center for Biological Diversity, Jaelyn Lopez, that "it's baffling that the agency could (again) change its mind about the documented widespread damage in the preserve". And, when one looks extensively into the oil drilling history of South Florida, time and again it's mentioned that the major damage caused to this environment is done for comparatively minute amounts of oil.

So, we ask, what does it take?

What is to be done to, forever and once-and-for-all, stop these attacks on our beloved Everglades? Not only does, once again, the Florida panther face an all but certain extinction from our Florida soil, it also means even further damage of deep tractor tire tracks. This includes the fact that our every day, potable water is also dependent on clean water in the Everglades. In this regard, it's puzzling that at some time the US Army Corps of Engineers did mention a possible violation of U.S. Clean Water Act, a statement that now seems to have been all but forgotten.

The further ruination of the Everglades: It's something we will have to look into, as the Broward Sierra group, rather sooner than later.

*To be continued...*

## Broward Sierra Political Committee

– Susan Steinhauser, *Broward Political Chair*

Do you want to protect Florida's land and water, but you're not sure where to begin? Broward Sierra is here to help. Our Political Committee sorts through the issues and lets you know how you can help, whether from home or (when the time comes) in person. Send us an e-mail to let us know what you want to protect and we'll help you get started: [BrowardSierraPC@gmail.com](mailto:BrowardSierraPC@gmail.com) We look forward to hearing what you have to say!



# Broward Sierra News



## In Memoriam: Kristin Jacobs

– Ina Topper, *Broward Chair*

We were sorry to hear that Florida State Representative Kristin Jacobs passed away on April 11, 2020. She represented the 96th District, including Coconut Creek, Margate, Coral Springs and Parkland in northeastern Broward County. A very popular voice for our environmental cause was lost with Ms. Jacob's untimely death, not just for the preservation of nature and wildlife in general, but specifically for our region as well, as a Florida lawmaker.

Ms. Jacobs, a State Representative since 2014, was a very active local advocate as well, long before her entree in Tallahassee, as a longtime member of the Broward county commission. And yes - we as the Broward Sierra group may take some pride in having supported her seeking (successfully!) the post of a Florida State Representative. In fact, we had the pleasure of having her at one of our general meetings at the time, when she spoke about what her goals were regarding our state's environment. After her enthusiastic speech we wholeheartedly endorsed her and, needless to say, were happy to see her win this seat. As part of a plethora of objectives to benefit our state, Ms. Jacobs specifically made it her mission to also fight for more localized issues in our own backyard.



In this regard she was instrumental in creating the South East Florida Regional Climate Compact. This so-called Compact would specifically stand up and promote issues regarding our state's four Southern counties of Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe. (It doesn't need elaboration that as Florida's most densely populated region, it is specifically vulnerable to sea level rise as a direct result of global warming.) As a result of her work to combat global warming issues President Obama at the time went out of his way praising her endeavors in this regard as "a model not just for the country, but for the world".

Soon after arriving in Tallahassee, one of the first goals to protect marine life was aggressively putting in place a ban of our state importing shark fins. Although so-called 'shark finning' was already banned throughout the United States since 2000, somehow the fins were still entering the States, thanks to a regulatory loophole, solely by way of Florida. (This cruel act of maiming sharks, just for the sake of its fins' use as a soup ingredient, is well known to lead to a cruel, immediate death of a shark, even endangering the future existence of these phenomenal species.)

Ms. Jacobs, being instrumental in permanently halting any dried shark fin import throughout the U.S.A., was very appropriately honored in person in Tallahassee when, in March, the final bill SB 680 was unanimously adopted. Her permanent legacy will live with us forever, thanks to this bill now carrying her name as the Kristin Jacobs Ocean Conservation Act.

Kristin, we shall not forget you for being part of our Broward Sierra's environmental mission!

