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



Broward Sierra Club December General Meeting

Time: December 3, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time

The Broward Sierra Group is pleased to host Cris Costello, Senior Organizing Manager for Sierra Club, presenting “How We Stop the Roads to Ruin”.

Please join us on December 3 at 7:00 pm to learn about the threat M-CORES (Multi-use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance) bill presents to Florida ecosystems, its taxpayers, and the climate.

In 2019, with the passage the M-CORES bill to create 330 miles of new toll roads, Cris turned her attention to building a state-wide coalition to stop the proposed toll ways. The No Roads to Ruin Coalition as of today has 99 coalition members focused on mobilizing the overwhelming public opposition to the new roads.

The M-CORES process represents a preference for special interests and developers over the interest of the people of Florida. The No Roads to Ruin will continue to challenge these infeasible, unneeded toll roads.

Ms. Costello is a Senior Organizing Manager for the Sierra Club Our Wild Florida Campaign, which encompasses the Everglades Restoration, Red Tide, Stop Sugar Field Burning, and Wildlands campaigns.

Ms. Costello also coordinates the Sierra Club’s statewide water quality campaign to prevent harmful algal blooms in both coastal and inland Florida waters by eliminating point and non-point sources of fertilizer, sewage and animal manure pollution.

Time: Dec 3, 2020 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Please register in advance for this meeting:

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001b3DVAAAY&mapLinkHref=>

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84621457594?pwd=RHdiT2x5RHByb1dnd1RWWGRUSkIwQT09>

Our Florida Sugarcane 'Bonfires'still no end in sight.....

– Ina Topper, *Broward Sierra Club Chair*

Dear Broward Sierrans,

Update: a few years ago, we wrote extensively about the serious environmental hazards our Florida sugar industry (or as we say, Big Sugar) has saddled us with.

It's NOT just the run off from their fields, going straight into our Florida waters, which we wrote about in our newsletter in more recent times. Just a reminder, for those who recall our Broward Sierra group's attendance at the weekend long Big Sugar summit in Palm Beach some five years ago, this was the first time major attention was drawn towards another major environmental hazard as well. This summit opened our eyes (ears, rather) to a hitherto unknown misery of burning sugarcane debris during harvest time!



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In an in-depth October 22nd Miami Herald article pertaining to sugarcane burning, detailed attention was given to the fact that this outdated practice of debris burning creates serious health problems among the residents in the adjoining areas, stating that "Florida's sugarcane growers are committed to sustainable farming." This completely ignores the well-documented fact that the outdated practice of sugarcane burning creates serious health problems among the residents in the adjoining areas. More troubling is the issue of blatantly allowing this burn practice to take place when the winds are blowing away from the more affluent Palm Beach communities east of the sugarcane fields, thereby ONLY affecting low income areas like Belle Glades, and its surroundings.

With the Sierra Club having been in the forefront of speaking out against this practice, some four years ago the Broward Sierra ExCom team participated in a weekend long Big Sugar summit in West Palm Beach. The acute, asthma-related, respiratory health problems, especially among the younger school age residents, were found to be much more prevalent than had been previously acknowledged. Ironically, it's especially during the cooler months of our South Florida climate, instead of having some fresh air coming into the classrooms, that all schools near the sugarcane fields are forced to keep their windows closed to prevent fine soot particles raining inside, on a daily basis. (As a side note: one of the affected residents who also attended the summit carried with her a white napkin, encased in plastic, profoundly showing the black residue coming down on school grounds, as a result of one day's burning.)

Two major factors still hampering a solution to this archaic practice are, for one thing, the EPA's (still) outdated air pollution standards of only pertaining to either industrial, or 'smoke-stack' pollution, or vehicle exhaust emission standards. Other, less obvious or more localized air polluting causes, were never factored into the equation. Another issue, surprisingly not resolved, is the financial aspect that harvested sugarcane, still containing the leafy, useless debris is compensated less profitably to the farmer.

After the Big Sugar summit, we did hear from the sugar industry that they had been, and still were, continuously giving money to local schools and community centers. One wonders, if this minuscule payoff really substitutes for major health problems in 'helping' these low income areas. Just the same: the sugar industry states that processing bagasse, a sugarcane byproduct, is supplying electricity to some 60,000 households, seems like a small price to pay for NOT taking into account the harmful health issue, STILL enduring in today's times.

Once again, we'd like to point out that for decades much better, environmentally safe ways of removing sugarcane's outer leaves have been used - not only in Australia, but even in the state of Louisiana. (While some of the chaff is often blown onto the fields in a composting fashion, recently other uses for this material have been developed like, for instance, eco-friendly straws as an alternative to plastic. Currently, other creative usage is being developed as we speak.)



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Even Brazil, a country which long ago found out the hard way the high price being paid for severe, respiratory illnesses due to the burning process, is proudly hailing the drastic air quality improvements in adjoining, as well as far outlying areas surrounding the country's sugarcane fields. Appallingly, it seems that here in Florida we're still living in the dark ages by not seriously protesting the flaming, burning sugarcane fields during this time of the year. The few Dollars saved from this practice for mainly profiting the sugar industry, may come at a steep price for future generations of the less affluent. Perhaps, the time has finally come to speak out more forcefully against outdated (EPA?) polluting standards. Or, is it just too simplistic to suggest that sugarcane growers should no longer be penalized for delivering leaf-containing cane to the processing plants?

Finally, let us NOW appeal to our state's sugar industry or, perhaps, even join forces with Big Sugar, to establish new ventures as a side industry, making creative uses of the cane byproducts. In turn, besides much cleaner air, these options may even bring many additional jobs to these embattled communities!

Watching Over Our South Florida Waters – The Miami Water Keepers

– Ina Topper, *Broward Sierra Club Chair*

Dear Broward Sierrans,

I'm sure those of you who were able to join our recent November Zoom general meeting enjoyed the presentation just as much as we did.

For the members who were not able to do so, here is a summation of the magnificent job the (by now, well known) Miami Water Keepers are doing, to promote and preserve our South Florida water bodies! For one thing, it's not just a matter of getting in touch with all the powers-that-be who control our waters, directly or indirectly, to bring awareness of serious deteriorating conditions in these marine environments. It's also is a matter of efforts on a daily basis, testing the cleanliness of said waterways, bays and canals, as well as constant monitoring of our fragile marine life.

Casey Dresbach, our guest speaker for that evening, treated us to an in-depth (virtual) look at all factors now endangering our bays. It's not only our algae-filled rivers and canals anymore. Biscayne Bay, for instance, has come under a magnifying glass this past year for an increasingly faster progression of dying sea grass, due to way too much pollution. You guessed it: drastic increase of (pleasure-) boat traffic, with engine oil flowing freely into the waters, is a major contributing factor. Other detrimental causes along great lengths of our South Florida East coast are sewage leaks, intrusion from septic tank contents and, of course (again!) the fertilizer runoff now into ocean waters as well, from our pristine lawns, and all those golf courses which are dotting the Florida landscape.

An educational part of Casey's presentation was mentioning the continued usage of septic tanks in our 3 southern most Florida counties. The dilemma of still large-scale use and continuing construction of septic tanks is, unfortunately, due to the enormous costs of hooking up single standing homes to municipal sewage systems in further outlying areas. The cost of a hook-up runs at a prohibitive expense of some \$70,000 per residence, versus the in-ground construction of a septic tank of only just \$7,000. Hence, one can understand any municipality's hesitance of budgeting for sewage hookups for hundreds, if not thousands of residences. In this regard, what the future will bring is anybody's guess. Still grudgingly putting up with increasing leakage of ever more aging septic tanks is not going to be the ultimate solution, for sure...

These large areas of sea grass, habitats for fish and many other ocean species, may no longer be a safe haven for marine life when dying at a drastically faster rate. Noteworthy was an aerial photo Casey projected on the screen, showing the huge difference between today, and only a few years back, when a much larger swatch of seagrass was still visible in the Biscayne Bay.



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As a side note, just recently we watched an expose on more than one TV channel about a hitherto less known worldwide dying off of sea stars in many coastal bays and tidal pools. The first signs of this sad phenomena showed itself along the Australian coast. However, in just these last couple of years we are witnessing the same, so-called 'wasting disease' of sea stars along Oregon's Pacific coast as well. Global research is now being done, regarding the underlying cause(s) of sea star demise. As for the Miami Water Keepers, a promising note: great strides have been made with growing coral stalks in aquariums and thereafter replanting them among portions of dying coral reefs in our area.

The jury is still out as to how many MORE coast polluting causes we will be forced to document in the foreseeable future. In this regard, the Miami Water Keepers are at the forefront of watching over our coastal waters, by not just enlightening the greater public, but also ringing the proverbial bell with all those who are in a capacity to keep our coastal waters clean, or even turn the clock back where harm can be undone. This goes for government, semi-government entities, as well as all those private diving & boating venues/companies/firms, whose interests are (or should be) guarding our coastal waters with a vengeance.

A circular logo with a white border. Inside, there is a white seahorse on the left, a white star at the top, and a white crab on the right, set against a dark blue background.

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Casey Dresbach
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Broward Sierra News



Broward Sierra Political Corner

Susan Steinhauser, *Broward Sierra Club Political Chair*

With the election behind us, it's time to look forward to the **Florida 2021 Legislative Session in Tallahassee**. Did you know that the Sierra Club lobbies for environmental legislation? In fact, we are part of a coalition that travels to Tallahassee each year to meet with our state Senators and Representatives to lobby for clean water, clean air, and clean energy. The lobby day is called **Reclaiming Florida's Future for All (RFF)** and this year we have exciting news: **there's a good chance RFF will be virtual!** *Virtual means that those who haven't been able to take the time to travel to Tallahassee in the past may be able to participate this year!* **So, mark your calendars for March 10 and stay tuned for more information.**

Before the legislative session starts, state Senators and Representatives will hold **legislative delegation hearings** where residents can speak about topics and specific legislation that is important to them. These hearings are held in each county. The **Broward Legislative Delegation Hearing** will be held in December. At the time of this newsletter's publication, the exact date had not been finalized, nor had the format. We anticipate it will be virtual. As soon as we have more information, we will share it with you. You may also be able to find more information at:

www.broward.org/legislative.

Other Florida Legislature dates to note:

Feb 8-19	Interim Committee Meetings
Mar 2	First Day Regular Session
Apr 30	Last Day Regular Session

We hope you'll join us for the Legislative Delegations Hearing and/or Reclaiming Florida's Future for All. To be kept up-to-date on these events and environmental legislation in Tallahassee, e-mail browardsierrapc@gmail.com.

Thank you for all you do and remember ...
If everyone acted locally, the globally would take care of itself.



Broward Sierra News



SIERRA CLUB

2020 ELECTION RESULTS ENDORSED CANDIDATES BROWARD

TOTAL: 77.4% of the candidates we endorsed won their race; 25 OF 32

US House: 100% 2 of 2 Ted Deutch & Debbie Wasserman-Schultz

FL Senate: 100% 1 of 1 Perry Thurston

FL House: 85.7% 6 of 7 Robin Bartleman, Bobby DuBose, Mike Gottlieb, Patricia Williams, Evan Jenne, Marie Woodson **Linda Thompson Gonzalez**

Municipal: 71.4% 15 of 21

Municipal Detail

Coral Springs: Seat 3 - Nancy Metayer Seat 5 - Joy Carter

Fort Lauderdale: Mayor - Dean Trantalis District 2 - Steve Glassman

Hollywood: Dist 2 - Linda Hill Anderson, Dist 4 - Adam Gruber, Dist 6 - Linda Sherwood

Lauderhill: **Seat 1 - Mae Smith** Seat 2 - Melissa Dunn Seat 3 - S. Ray Martin

Oakland Park: Commission: Aisha Gordon, Mitch Rosenwald & Matthew Sparks

Plantation: Grp 3 - Jennifer Andreu, **Grp 4 - Marie Siobhan Edwards**, Grp 5 - Nick Sortal

Weston: **Seat 1 - Jason Zauder** **Seat 2 - Kim Schnitzius**

Wilton Manors: **Mayor - Julie Carson** Commission: **Doug Blevins** Chris Caputo

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Congratulations to Brenda Tyminski on winning the blanket throw at our November General meeting. Please join us in December where we'll have another prize for the correct guesser.

Thanks also to Stanislav Milov for donating his photograph for our use. "Stas" Milov has taken many pictures that have graced our Web and Facebook pages. His designs and products can be found at:

<https://www.redbubble.com/people/Dead-Moroz>

Broward Sierra is always looking for volunteers. Which of these committees would be of interest to you?

- ◆ ExCom - Broward Sierra's Board. For more information, e-mail irtopper2000@cs.com, kip.fischer@icloud.com, and/or susancaruso.sierra@gmail.com
- ◆ Membership - New Member Welcome and Youth Alliance. For more information, e-mail susancaruso.sierra@gmail.com
- ◆ Conservation - Community Garden, Fern Forest Beautification, and Development. For more information, e-mail susancaruso.sierra@gmail.com
- ◆ Political - Candidate Endorsement and Legislation tracking. For more information, e-mail susan0725@icloud.com
- ◆ Communications - Social Media and Newsletter. For more information, e-mail kip.fisher@icloud.com.