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

First Things First: the Corona Virus

Sierra Club has our own response to the COVID-1. The Sierra Club is adapting and responding so we can keep doing the important work of protecting our natural environment and fighting for a just, clean energy future:

<https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra-club-covid-19>

Polluted Waters

– Ina Topper, *Broward Chair*

In the past we, as well as other organizations, have written plenty about water pollution. It was even the theme for the Broward and Miami-Dade Sierra entries in last two Coconut Grove King Mango Strut parades. For 2018, it was Red Tide and Green Slime, and for 2019 we attacked plastics in our water.



For those not in the know, this tongue-in-cheek satirical parade is held annually on the last Sunday of the year, in downtown Coconut Grove.

The Broward and Miami-Dade Sierra Clubs have always collaborated to present memorable exhibitions of our environmental concerns. Our group is typically the largest in the parade.



Unfortunately, aside from these now famously familiar causes of water pollution, to name but a few, the fertilizer run-offs from our Florida golf courses and agricultural pesticides freely flowing state-wide into our water-rich environment, there are polluting causes that leave us baffled, to say the least. In this regard we were recently informed about a major water polluting hazard now becoming more prevalent - *even here in Broward County.*

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Broward Sierra News



Caleb Merendino, one of many wonderful volunteers, (and which many environmental organizations could not do without), informed us that his organization is nowadays busily removing trash from our lakes and canals. This is *not* only just plain garbage; the collected debris contains increasingly *lots* of discarded medical refuse - *including* used syringes! This is starting to sound like the problem they had on Long Island in the late 1980s and again in 2018.

Speaking of Caleb Merendino, the Broward Sierra Club would like to introduce you to a most wonderful organization: The Advocates for Clean & Clear Waterways, based in Washington D.C. Both Caleb Merendino, as Executive Director, and his associate Benjamin Swanson (with an additional entourage of volunteers) have been cleaning up our local Broward County bodies of water from exactly this type of extremely dangerous debris. Not once, but repeatedly, they have hauled several bag loads of medically discarded items. Besides the aforementioned syringes with exposed (!) needles, there were also (as identified by medical staff): albuterol solution tubes, diabetic testing lancets, and other assorted items. Upon showing photographs of said debris to a medical institution, the staff confirmed that it all looked like an “abundance of improperly disposed of medical waste.” In other words, more like a commercial establishment avoiding disposal fees. While several bags of said refuse were retrieved from the South Lake in Hollywood and along the New River, some of this hazardous trash was also removed from nature preserves where people were found swimming in close proximity to exposed syringes (see picture below).

(By the way, if you're not sure how to dispose of used syringes, here is a link to the FDA website <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/safely-using-sharps-needles-and-syringes-home-work-and-travel/best-way-get-rid-used-needles-and-other-sharps>)

The Advocates for Clean & Clear Waterways is a 501(c)(3) organization, which means that it's run entirely on donations and manned by some very dedicated volunteers. <https://www.waterwayadvocates.org/> Kudos to Caleb, and all those associated with him, in this admirable endeavor!

We're keenly aware of the 'shock'-value of alerting our Broward readership to this despicable and most hazardous type of water pollution. Perhaps something for us Broward Sierrans to get involved with? If not in the form of lending a helping hand for a clean-up day, at least to contact your local representative about this issue. We know that there are at present numerous issues making life more difficult than ever before. Yet, this may be something that should be thoroughly investigated by all the powers-that-be, and/or law enforcement, so as to bring the culprit(s) to task. This to prevent this most hazardous environmental problem (and an illegal act) from getting even further out of control.



The Advocates for Clean & Clear Waterways collected 11 bags, found one syringe along the shore, and were able to pull out several large items as well.



Broward Sierra Club July General Meeting

<https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details?formcampaignid=7013q000001aqrKAAQ&mapLinkHref=>

Broward Sierra Club is proud to welcome Dr. Nicholas G. Aumen to present at our July 2nd. online general meeting. Professor Aumen brings a wealth of expertise and knowledge about the Everglades Ecosystem. He is the Regional Science Advisor for the Southeast Region of the US Geological Survey. He also oversees the greater Everglades Priority Ecosystem Sciences Program.

His former positions include aquatic ecologist for Everglades National Park and Research Director at the South Florida Water Management District in West Palm Beach.

Broward Sierra Club August General Meeting *(link to be supplied as the date gets closer)*

The speaker for August will be Deborah Foote. Ms. Foote is the Government Affairs & Political Director for the Florida Sierra Club. She will discuss how elections impact the environment in that it is our elected officials who ultimately pass legislation that can help or harm our environment. She will also discuss how the work of the Sierra Political Committee impacts elections by endorsing environmentally-friendly candidates and also campaigning for them.

Update on the Governor's Actions on Bills from the 2020 Legislative Session

Here is a rundown of the final outcomes:

- Governor DeSantis vetoed [Senate Bill 410](#); a bill that would have further weakened Florida's already crippled laws that attempt to provide for the intelligent use of the state's lands. The margin of passage in both chambers is not enough to override a veto.
- Governor DeSantis signed the misnamed "Clean Waterways Act," [Senate Bill 712](#). Sierra Club urged legislators to "fix" SB 712 and provided pragmatic amendments to make the bill more protective of water quality, but what Governor DeSantis signed is the result of weakening, over and over again, the language to fit the needs of the state's biggest polluters.
- Governor DeSantis signed [Senate Bill 172](#), which harms home rule, strips Key West of its reef protection sunscreen ordinance, and jeopardizes one of Florida's most precious and unique natural resources.
- Governor DeSantis signed [Senate Bill 1794](#) which continues to place more restrictions on backers of ballot initiatives, including:
 - Raising the threshold for initiatives (10% to 25%) to trigger judicial review and preventing petition signatures from rolling over to the next ballot.
 - Requiring that signatures must come from 1/2, instead of 1/4, of the state's congressional districts
 - Allowing any citizen to challenge a petition gatherer's credentials
 - If a petition gatherer's paperwork is not in order, a legal elector's signature is invalidated with no means to cure the defect
 - Reducing the "shelf life" of signed petitions by one half to a single year
 - Supervisors of Elections are to charge the "actual cost" of verifying signatures.

Check out Sierra Club Florida News for more information:

- [GOOD NEWS! GOVERNOR DESANTIS VETOES SENATE BILL 410](#)
- [GOVERNOR SIGNS POLLUTERS' WATERWAYS ACT: Why is DeSantis Ignoring Blue Green Algae Task Force Recommendations?](#)
- [GOVERNOR DESANTIS CONTINUES TO FLOUT HOME RULE BY ENDING KEY WEST'S SUNSCREEN ORDINANCE](#)
- Check out our [2020 Legislative Scorecard](#)