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Message from the Editor

– Max Goldstein, *Broward Newsletter Editor*

We at the Broward Sierra Club Executive Committee (ExCom) hope this issue finds you and yours are in good health and taking the necessary precautions to stay safe during this challenging time. Note that all Sierra Club activities (outings, trips, and meetings) are cancelled through the end of April 2020. Please consult our website for further updates.

But before you read about our Earth Day, I want to explain what went into this (it was a *lot*): contracting people to set up and break down the canopies for the exhibitors, buying bags and fans for handouts, coordinating speakers and their presentations, making sure exhibitors have certificates of insurance and notarized affidavits that they have passed criminal background screenings (required by Broward County), arranging a shuttle for overflow parking, getting free kayaking, creating maps and handouts for attendees, advertise on social media, AND coordinating all this with the fine people at Anne Kolb Nature Center (shout out to Joanne Howes and her co-workers; we could NOT have done this without them).

Note: The following article was written well before the corona virus became a pandemic, so it will not reflect the current state of affairs.

Broward Sierra Club’s 50th Earth Day

– Ina Topper, *Broward ExCom Chair*

April 22nd – The yearly date that Earth Day is celebrated all across the globe. This year is Earth Day's 50th anniversary, and to celebrate this special event, the Broward Sierra chapter decided to also create a unique occasion in a very special way.

In order to not take away from the real thing (the many celebrations that will likely take place at the end of April, most definitely also in our very own backyard here in Broward county), it was decided by yours truly (the Executive Committee) to celebrate a bit earlier, i.e. the very first Sunday in March. Although... living here in South Florida there was also a secondary reason, a very practical one: the early rains at the start of our rainy season could very well spoil the fun if we waited till the REAL Earth Day weekend would come around (we did have a lot of rain on our first attempt a few years earlier). And, as it turned out, we were ahead of all the closings due to the Corona virus!

SO right we were the all-day event, held at the beautiful Anne Kolb Nature Center in Hollywood, spent with an immaculate sky hovering over us. Even better, the weather was just cool enough to make it a most wonderful celebration. The speakers, scheduled throughout the day, were very enlightening with their in-depth presentations. Those who wanted to spend a bit more time outdoors were treated to all kinds of opportunities to avail themselves of the just perfect temperature, be it joining in a nature walk or, for the younger crowd, partaking in activities specifically catered to kids. Last but not least, those who wanted to go kayaking could do so for free on this special day - courtesy of the Broward Sierra group.

We would like to thank the following for participating in our Earth Day event:

Exhibitors:	Speakers:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Department of Environmental Protection / Friends of Our Florida Reefs / SE Florida Coral Reef Alliance • Coral Restoration Foundation • Miami Water Keepers • Sea Turtle Oversight Protector • Broward County Office of Resiliency • Surf rider • Florida Native Plant Society • Audubon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott Sheckman & Michelle Gaulty: Florida DEP/Friends of our Florida Reefs • Paddy Cunningham: Paddy Cunningham's Birding Adventures • Aryan Ranjan: TED Talk • Collin Schladweiler: Miami Water Keepers • Richard Whitecloud: Sea Turtle Oversight Protection • Dr. Harold Wanless: Univ of Miami Geology • Catherine Uden: Oceana

And finally, a big thanks to George Cavros and the Converted Garage Band for volunteering their time to entertain us through the entire event.

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Broward Sierra Club's 50th Earth Day *(Continued from page 1)*

A synopsis of the specific issues that were highlighted by all the experts who had graciously agreed to come join us this day we had:

Scott Sheckman and Michelle Grauly, from Friends of our Florida Reefs, talked to us about the increasingly precarious situation of our coral reefs. There are still some in our community who do not even KNOW we have reefs right off the Fort Lauderdale beaches!

Also, as part of ocean awareness, Catherine "Cat" Uden of Oceana informed the audience about the ever-increasing urgency to keep our oceans debris-free. While one would think it should need extra emphasis, the horrendous amounts, tons of it, really, of a multitude of plastics presently floating throughout our oceans is one issue that can keep someone up at night. Not only are these plastics turning into the minutest mini-pellets, ingested by every marine animal, the multitude of plastic bags is, to our great dismay, being confused as food by those magnificent sea turtles we're so proud to have along our coasts.

When it comes to water, the Miami Water Keepers' speaker Colli Schladweiler informed us at length how our waters need to be kept clean - not just for us to swim in but alas, the seagrass especially in the Biscayne Bay area is dying....What will happen to future shoals of fish that use these grasses as their 'home' is all but anyone's guess.

Coming back to our beloved sea turtles, Richard Whitecloud, who we've had the pleasure of inviting many times for his unique and very entertaining turtle presentations, spoke in more detail about what's so precarious for the turtles' food situation. Some species live almost exclusively on jellyfish! Needless to say, a shiny, floating plastic bag will look identical in this regard and easily mistaken for a daily meal by these unique marine creatures. One thing more when it comes to the sea turtle: with the increase of our planet's warming, the turtle eggs are just not staying at a healthy temperature, so to say, and due to the beach sand temperature deciding on the offspring's sex, way TOO many females are nowadays seeing the light. Oh, and talking about light: of course a lot has been done about shading the street lights on Fort Lauderdale's ocean front. But the higher apartment buildings and hotels being constructed in recent years at a phenomenal pace are not helping the baby turtles finding their way into the ocean, instead of heading in the wrong direction - for the boulevard.

Dr. Harold Wanless, of the University of Miami's Geology Department, gave us a very scientific account of how the sea level especially here in So. Florida is rising much faster than was ever predicted. One shudders to think how the NEXT predictions might even be more worrisome than at the present time.

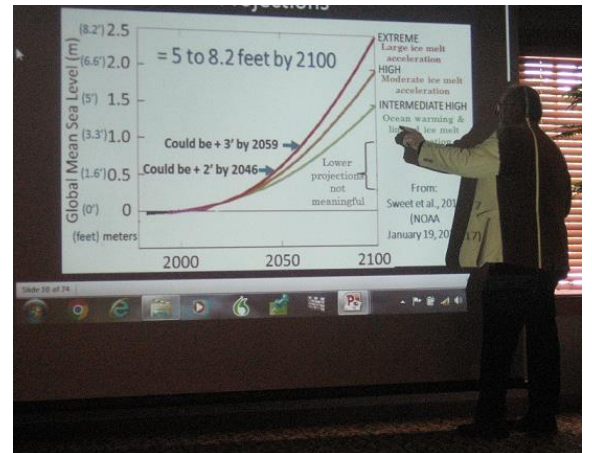
I'll end this article by mentioning TED talk speaker Aryan Ranjan, who was truly inspiring, strongly encouraging us all to not just 'listen' but start getting involved in preserving our environment for future generations. And, we mention here the 'bird lady' as she may be called, Paddy Cunningham, also known from the Audubon Society here in South Florida, who can just about identify any bird that's calling South Florida home.... Maybe some of you may want to join her some day on a so-called "bird-hike", which also makes for a wonderful walk in mother nature.

We're pleased to add some pictures in this newsletter - and maybe see you next time!





Broward Sierra News



For more pictures, visit our Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/pg/BrowardSierra/photos/?tab=album&album_id=2784319044989987