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

Broward Sierra Club General Meeting

Time: February 4, 2021 at 07:00 PM EST

The subject for this month:

Exploring Florida's Outdoors Virtually with Adriene and Max

Adriene and Max have partnered, with their experience and leadership, to organize several very successful camping trips for the Broward Sierra Club.

They have also helped to organize Broward Sierra Club's Earth Day last March (before the pandemic), and it was a huge success with the help of our Sierra Club team! They both have led some local day outings for the members to experience the beauty of nature locally. Together, they plan to share some photos and stories about their experiences on some of our Sierra Club outings. They hope to energize our participants to become more involved in future outings once Covid-19 is no longer around.

Join the Zoom Meeting at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83144953835?pwd=VjRVSkpoQ3BmOHBrelhYQ1gzVk1YZz09>



Adriene Barmann is a Broward Sierra Club trained outings leader, and the outings chair. She has been a member of the Sierra Club for over 10 years, but has stepped up in her leadership role the past 5 years. As a registered nurse and a team player she has partnered with her fellow Sierra members to create positive camping experiences at some beautiful campgrounds in Florida over the past four years.

She has led day outings at Wakodahatchee, Green Cay and Corkscrew Swamp to educate the participants about the local natural areas to enjoy wildlife and nature's beauty in South Florida. She hopes to plan future outings and promote educational opportunities about the wilderness for our members.



Max Goldstein has been in the Broward Sierra Group for over 20 years, 19 of them as treasurer on our Executive Committee. He is also an outings leader and has helped organize and lead many day and overnight outing events over that time, as well as helping with outings led by the Miami and Loxahatchee groups. Max has tabled at many events attended by the Broward group and participated in park, beach, and reef clean-ups. Max is also the editor of the Broward Sierra newsletter.

Max grew up camping with the Boy Scouts of Palisades Park and the Sea Scouts of Boca Raton. He has trailer camped with his family in New York, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, and Florida. He has also tent camped in New York and Florida. This has given him a great appreciation of nature and the importance of keeping it preserved.

– *Continued on next page.*

Also speaking at the **Broward Sierra Club General Meeting** will be **Andrew Werthmann**



Andrew is President of Werthmann Consulting, a Midwest-based consulting firm, specializing in advancing state and federal policy and political outcomes. His focus is:

- Conservation of Marine Life (in Florida and North Carolina)
- Flood-Prepared Communities
- Restoration of America's Parks
- Clean Energy
- Overhaul of Industrial Animal Agriculture (CAFO)
- Human Health and Industrial Farming (ABX)
- Global Conservation.

Andrew works in various states with a deeper focus on Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan - engaging local and state elected leaders - building support for policies through issues specific sign-on letters and roundtable meetings - working with both Republican and Democratic congressional members to cosponsor legislation and vote in support - producing hundreds of press hits, earned media, letters and op-eds, for various clients and campaigns.

Marine Life: All creatures large and small...

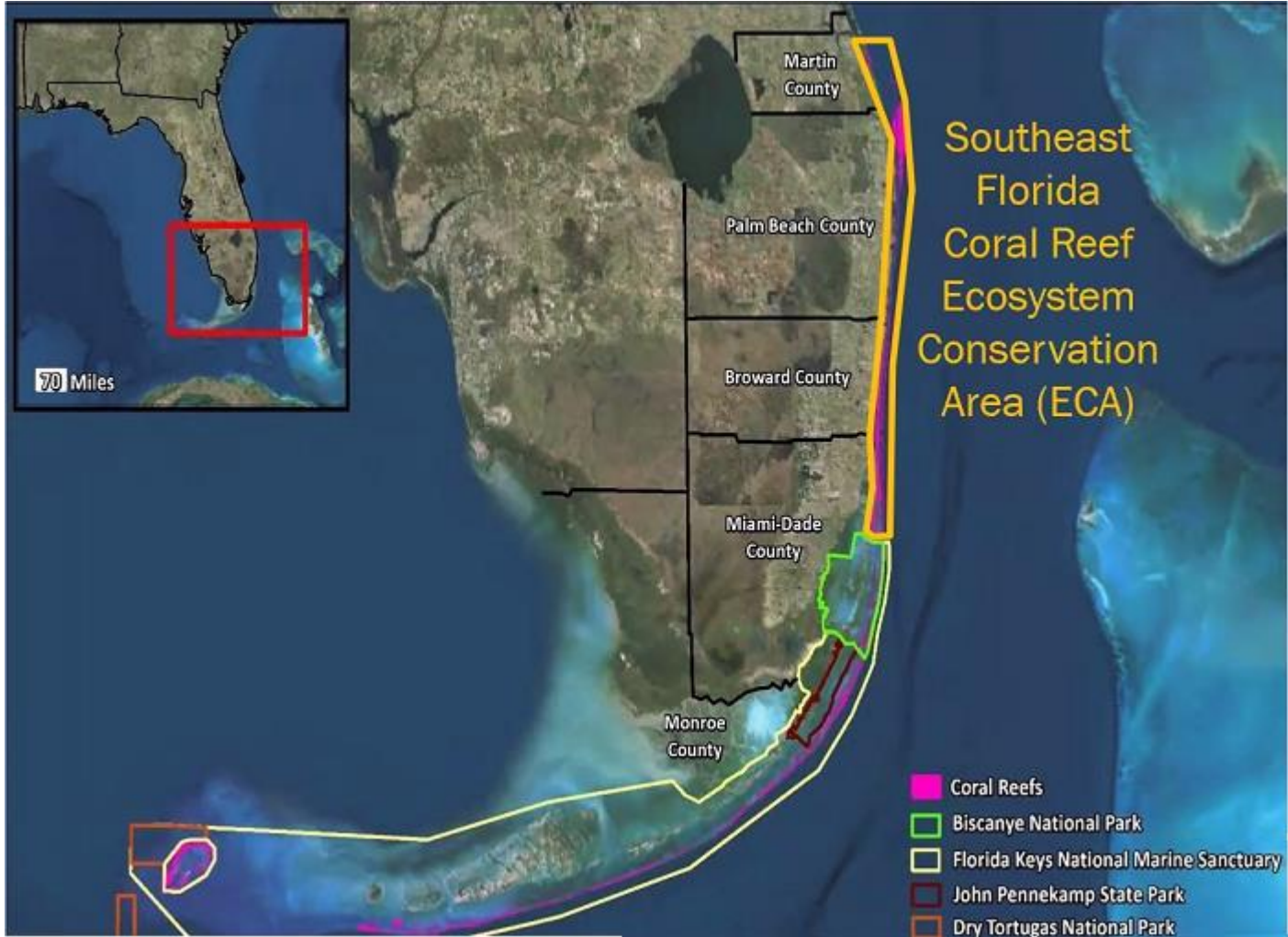
Ina Topper, Broward Sierra Club Chair

An advertisement for Friends of Our Florida Reefs. The background is a vibrant underwater scene with various types of coral reefs in shades of orange, green, and purple. In the top left corner, there is a circular logo with the text "Friends of OUR FLORIDA REEFS" and "FloridaReef.org" below it. The main text in the center reads: "Florida's Coral Reef", "Friends of Our Florida Reefs", "Citizen Support Organization for The Florida Department of Environmental Protection Coral Reef Conservation Program", "Melissa Sathe", "President", "Melissa.Sathe@FloridaReef.org", and "Learn more at www.FloridaReef.org". At the bottom, it says "All content courtesy of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection".

Our first general (Zoom) meeting of 2021 was a wonderful presentation under auspices of Friends of Florida Reefs, with presentations from Melissa Sathe and Scott Sheckman. For those not having been able to join this meeting, Melissa has an impressive resume when it comes to reef restoration with, among other venues, having managed coral reef monitoring, as part of Miami-Dade County's Department of Environmental Resources.

Scott Sheckman is Co-founder of Friends of our Florida Reefs, and between the two they gave us a lot of information about the subject so dear to us here in Broward County: preserving our coral reefs as well as, hopefully, repairing (for lack of another word) a lot of damage which has already been done.

Plenty has already been discussed and written recently about the specific damages caused to our coral reefs, not just off the coast here in Broward County, but also in the adjoining counties north and south of us, especially in Miami-Dade, Monroe, and Palm Beach counties. The complex (and daunting) issue of preserving our coral reefs is part of a comprehensive approach by the aforementioned team to ensure a general healthy marine environment along the South Florida coast for time to come.



The uniqueness of coral species is, in general, not very well understood by many, if not most of our Florida residents, in spite of our close proximity to the reefs. For instance, the thought of even these tiny micro-organisms, which create the uniquely beautiful and varied corals, being real animal life is often a surprise to many people. Yet, that's what they are.... minute, real living beings, or 'animals' if you wish, which secrete a calcium-like substance (*calcareous* is the official word) continuously create the most wonderful under water formations. To mention but a few, they are known by names such as staghorn, brain, or elkhorn coral. A lesser known aspect of all coral forms is the fact that, yes, they actually do procreate, or spawn, usually between April and September when the waters are at its warmest, creating an opaque-like cloud of millions of microscopically small reproductive male and female cells, which combine to form a minute coral egg, for lack of a better word (*planula* is the official term.) This unique spawning feature, taking place once a year, is often eagerly awaited by many marine biologists, who will anxiously linger under water for many hours, to observe AND film this coral spawning - if or when they deem the time to be right for this phenomena to occur.

(As a side note, this past year, coral spawning was actually observed in the University of Miami's coral preservation & research aquariums.)

Taking a step from the tiniest inhabitants of our seas to the giants of our planet's marine life: the majestic ocean whales are in urgent need of major attention, worldwide. Whales have been in existence for millions of years, but this past century has seen a drastic, dramatic reduction of whales, across all species and in every whale habitat around the globe. To name just a few, the more commonly-known whale types are, for example, sperm whales, humpback and blue whales. But recently our attention is being acutely demanded for the MOST endangered whale of them all, the [North Atlantic Right Whale](#), which has been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act since 1970, with fewer than 100 breeding females left in existence.



(Source: Wikipedia)

The massive killing of all 19 whale species over at least the last 150 years has been well documented, and is universally known to be one of the worst actions of human cruelty when it comes to animal mistreatment in every shape or form. However, what contributed to a rapid decline of these majestic marine mammals was the introduction of factory-like ships, which converted every part of a whale's physique for human usage, while still on the ocean. Besides the sizable meat supply of just one whale, the large quantity of fat (blubber) would be turned into oil and soap. The bones were also useful for various every day purposes, although the baleen of a whale was even more sought after, to be used previously in the fashion industry, especially for women's corsets which were a 'must' to be worn by fashion conscious ladies. (A side-note: baleen is often wrongly mistaken as bone material - which it isn't. It's the almost plastic-like fringes in the whale's mouth which functions like a sieve, when taking in large quantities of sea water to strain the much smaller fish for consumption.)

This past decade has seen a much higher awareness of the increasingly progressive decline of the whale population. Although much has been done, around the world, to inform us all about the urgent need for much more, all-encompassing whale protection, it still is not enough. An example is the slow pace of our own government being forced to admit that the Navy's use of sonar on its ships has had catastrophic effect on the wellbeing and lives of the whale population. In addition, the US Government has also mandated speed limits for the largest ships in the Atlantic ocean along the Eastern seaboard, when it became apparent that the massive, much slower whales could simply not move out of the way fast enough when approached by these ships.

Coming back to the most endangered of them all, the North Atlantic Right whale, which finds its home along the Atlantic coast from New England to northern Florida, the most recent number of this now critically endangered animal states as barely just over 400 still remaining. Yet, at this time of writing we're discovering it's even worse: there are right now only 350 left, after a most recent count! And.... HOW did the North Atlantic Right whale get its name? Ironically, when delving into whale research it's baffling to note that it was PRECISELY because this particular whale would stay afloat when killed, which made for a much easier way to transport said animal to wherever it was to be slaughtered.

Last but not least, not surprisingly, once again it's also global warming which contributes to the North Atlantic Right whale's ever speedier demise. The much warmer ocean waters have forced these whales to move to different feeding grounds where they end up swimming much closer to international shipping lanes. And, as mentioned before, the slow-moving whales can simply not exist anymore in a habitat also frequented by a gigantic, very fast sailing fleet of modern day ships.

This article is meant to create urgent awareness of what's at stake with the dwindling whale population in general, but in particular to encourage us all to raise our voices in order to swiftly put in place drastic protection for the North Atlantic Right whale. Let's do what it takes to save this magnificent marine animal from, what looks like, an almost certain extinction.

Upcoming speakers:

March – Richard Grasso, Professor of Law, Nova Southeastern University

April – Dr. Pat Quinn, Broward County manatee coordinator

Broward Sierra Political Corner – Think globally, Act Locally

– Susan Steinhauser, *Broward Sierra Political Committee Chair*

January 20, 2021 was an historic day. We hope everyone was able to watch at least part of the Inauguration and festivities that followed. Now that Democracy has prevailed, let's put it to good use and let our government know that we need clean air, clean water, and all-hands-on-deck to tackle the climate crisis.

The Sierra Club has a proud history of working with elected officials at the city, county, state, and federal levels to make sure they consider the environment when making decisions. *To continue this effort, we need Broward Sierra members, like you, to let our city and county representatives know that clean water, clean air, and addressing the climate crisis are at the top of our priority list.*

Here are three actions to take in February:

1. Go to your city's website to find out who your Commissioner is. Then call and e-mail your City Commissioner to let them know that you're concerned about climate change and would like to know what the city is doing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Click [here](#) to find out who your County Commissioner is. Then call and e-mail your County Commissioner to let them know that you'd like them to ban the use of polystyrene (Styrofoam®) on all County buildings and on all County property. Then e-mail browardsierrapc@gmail.com to let us know where you live and who your County Commissioner is.
3. Click [here](#) to find your Florida State House District, Florida State Senate District, and US Federal House District. Then go to <https://forms.gle/WWCWnwGBMnsrQhgv5> to let us know where you live and what you found were your districts. As the Florida legislative sessions progresses, we'll need all Broward Sierra members (not just our Political Committee) to contact their State Senator & Representative about legislation that's been filed. Keep your eyes open for calls-to-action between now and the conclusion of the legislative session at the end of March.

Thank you for all you do and remember ...

If everyone acted locally, the globally would take care of itself.

