



Broward Sierra News



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

Broward Sierra Club January General Meeting

For the January 7th general meeting on Zoom, the Broward Sierra Group is pleased to host Friends of Our Florida Reefs (FOFR).

Friends of Our Florida Reefs (FOFR) <http://www.floridareef.org/> is a nonprofit citizen support organization, dedicated to conserving and protecting over 100 miles of vital coral reefs (directly offshore SE Florida between Miami-Dade and Martin Counties), by enhancing and complementing the critical efforts, programs and activities of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's [Coral Reef Conservation Program](#).

Melissa Sathe, President

Melissa Sathe is a South Florida native and grew up in Ocean Ridge. She received her B.S. from Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Master of Science in Marine Biology from Nova Southeastern University where she was a graduate researcher for the Coral Reef Restoration, Assessment and Monitoring Lab. After completing her degree, Melissa worked at Miami-Dade County's Department of Environmental Resources Management where she managed coral reef monitoring field work and then onto the FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program (FDEP CRCP) as the Reef Injury Prevention and Response Technician.

Melissa currently works for Coastal Eco-Group, a private environmental consulting business, as a Senior Marine Biologist.

Scott Sheckman, Co-Founder, Treasurer

Scott was born and raised the Philadelphia PA area where he was introduced to the wonders of the oceans via the aquarium hobby trade and family vacations. Scott is a nonprofit development professional, nature lover, and creative person based in South Florida since 2010.

Upon joining the on-going [SE Florida Coral Reef Initiative](#) in 2013 and further participating in the [Our Florida Reefs](#) community working groups, Scott saw a need for a classic nonprofit "Friends" group to assist the [FDEP Coral Reef Conservation Program](#) in their various responsibilities and activities to conserve & protect the vital natural coral reef ecosystems along the SE Florida Coast.

After about a year of development, Scott and the founding board were able to officially launch FOFR in April 2015. www.isheck.net.

Time: January 7, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time

Topic: Our Florida Reefs

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82863062812?pwd=eWJOcDVCN01ZYU4zQk1KZGE3Z3VHUT09>

Happy (Hopefully) New Year

– Ina Topper, *Broward Sierra Club Chair*

Dear Broward Sierrans,

At the end of this year, 2020, let's start out by saying that to simply wish everybody a very Happy New Year may seem to come across as too perfunctory, considering the tumultuous year we're about to leave behind. There's no need to sum up the hurdles many of us have had to endure - and still are.... both in terms of health and personal wellbeing, as well as the financial hardships many are facing.

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Apart from the catastrophic Covid-19 pandemic, this year may also turn out to be the year of our nation coming to terms with long existing inequalities in our society: sharp divisions, even deep chasms, between the many varied segments and social strata of our communities. This true awakening throughout the nation may ultimately be seen as a positive point in the year 2020, in having brought about a great deal of understanding and empathy for each other as fellow humans. Last but not least, the year 2020 shall live in infamy when, henceforth, we're being forced to acknowledge that this was the year when global warming truly took off, even faster than had been expected (or hoped for). Plenty has been said on these pages about warming oceans, rising sea levels, dying seagrass and coral reefs, disappearing flora & fauna species, but once again the current year seems to be one of the [warmest on record](#). As an example: 2020 was the second year when both the Roman and Greek hurricane alphabets ran out! (More on this in Max Goldstein's column in this newsletter.)

On a positive note: as a by-product during the early Pandemic months when life all but stood still, we saw crystal clear skies due to almost zero air pollution, and in many suburbs or even city parks, the silence made animals venture out during daytime. So, maybe it means with all our efforts we CAN turn the clock back after all!

On a related note: **Happy Birthday EPA!** On December 2, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed "Reorganization Plan No. 3," establishing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Learn more about EPA as it celebrates 50 years of environmental protection. Learn more about the history of the EPA [here](#) .

May we hope, dare say, that the next year can only be better! Hopefully, we can all meet again in person, at our Fern Forest venue, in the not too distant future. Therefore, from our Broward ExCom team, wishing all our members a very good, even a happy New Year nevertheless!

Broward Residents Need to Say No to Roads to Ruin

– Ina Topper, *Broward Sierra Club Chair*

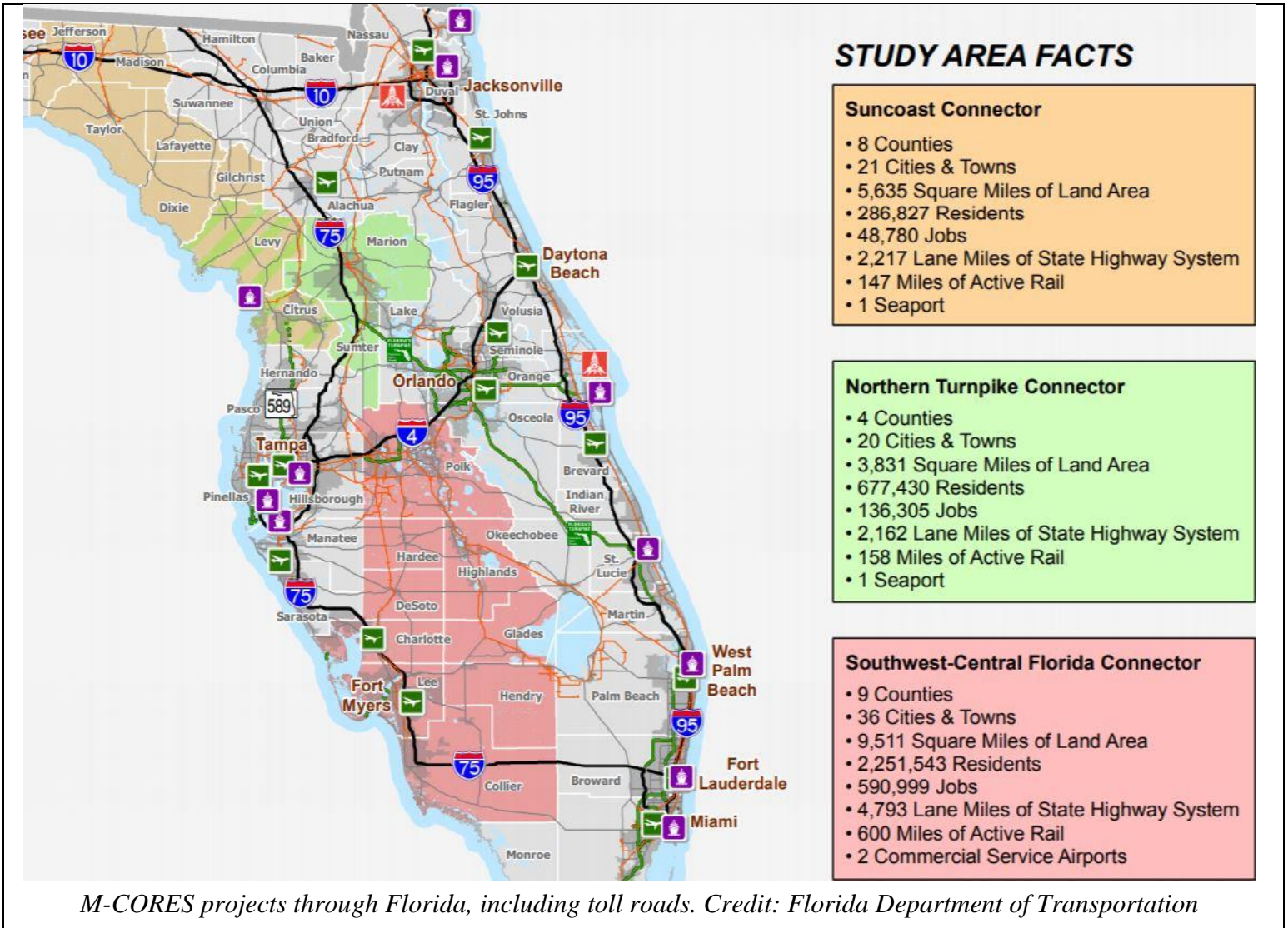
Our most recent Broward Sierra Zoom meeting featured Cris Costello, a long time Sierra member as well as a Florida Sierra Club Organizing Manager, a rather incomplete way of stating what Ms. Costello really does, or has done in the past! Besides having spent time with the Peace Corps in Honduras, Cris has been at the forefront of taking up issues like Everglades Restoration, Red Tide (aka algae blooms), combating sugarcane debris burning, preservation of wildlands, water quality issues, etc. Let's just call it a grab bag; without people like Cris Costello, the Sierra Club could not do what it does - or has done so far.

A synopsis of the topic being discussed at this meeting: at this time we're increasingly being informed in our local press about the so-called M-CORES issue. This acronym is supposed to stand for Multi-Use Corridors of Regional Economic Significance, a fancy (but deceptively positive) way of stating how there are plans on the table in Tallahassee to completely cover the state of Florida with a quantity of new highways, left to right, north to south. Worse, these new planned highways now on the drawing tables are specifically criss-crossing the last remnants of still pristine parts of Florida.

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M-CORES (Continued)

We've already had to contend with unbridled development in our state in every way, shape and form. A major amendment to reign in unlimited suburban construction was narrowly defeated just a few years ago, with the developers financially outspending pro-unlimited state wide construction 4 to 1 on daily TV ads versus those ads promoting limits to further invasion of Florida's natural habitats. Nowadays, most studies are either strongly objecting to these highway plans or, at best, barely eyeing the projects lukewarm, while also still wondering about this sudden supposedly urgent highway need.

According to Sarasota/Manatee MPO site, <https://www.mympo.org/blog/fdot-announces-website-for-florida-multi-use-corridors-of-regional-economic-significance-m-cores>: "The M-CORES program has multiple goals, including job creation, revitalizing rural communities, and to provide regional connectivity using technology to help enhance quality of life and public safety. During the process, protecting the environment and natural resources will be a priority."

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Let's think about that for a moment: do we need all these highways? The initial proposal from the powers-that-be in Tallahassee were enthusiastically stating that these newly planned connecting highways were to (and we quote): "Revitalize rural communities, encourage job creation, (becoming) a regional connectivity while leveraging technology, enhancing the quality of life and public safety, and protecting the environment." The more one reads and re-reads these supposedly positive, but rather vague, arguments for massive statewide highway construction, the more some serious questions come to mind. Oh, and it may not be a coincidence that 'protecting the environment' is coming in last, as an afterthought, proof that it's obviously not a priority. But, one begs to ask, WHAT does a labyrinth of highways do to enhance the quality of (rural) life? And, the vaguely worded 'leveraging of technologies' or 'enhancing public safety' doesn't exactly come to one's mind when thinking of major highway construction.

Some studies having been done in the meantime, with one FDOT task force characterizing the multiple highway construction project as follows: "The entire M-CORES process has been flawed, and represents a callous preference for special interests and developers over what is best for the people of Florida." This sums it all up, as to what's been happening here in our home state far too often: the almighty Dollar is talking and the political angle associated with many of such projects is crystal clear: WHAT does it take to, once again, stand up to the developers with their friendly Tallahassee connections to, once again, put a stop to a dubious construction project that's not needed, not been asked for by the populace, and wastes lots of our Florida tax dollars, never mind the destructive environmental impact.

Just to mention the first casualty: our Florida panther, which has been increasingly driven to ever smaller patches of vital habitats, and will most certainly become extinct should these plans go through. (This not being the place to explain the unique Florida panther existence, leave it to once more explaining that it's a solitary animal, in need of lots of roaming space.)

Luckily, in recent months, there has been increased exposure of this ludicrous M-CORES proposal, in the local- or state-wide Florida press. Also, some very contradictory aspects have been highlighted, i.e. an argument was made that the 'expanded highway system would better facilitate hurricane evacuation. This falls flat on its face when realizing that one newly planned highway will mostly follow the coast line - exactly where the residents would have to get away from with an approaching hurricane. Another, and MOST damning fact, against M-CORES, mentioned in every newspaper article so far and also brought up by Ms. Costello, is that an overwhelming 93% of Florida residents polled were vehemently objecting to the project(s) with only 4% thus far in favor of M-CORES. This leaves us wondering what Tallahassee is thinking, pretending to govern our state, with having the 'best interests of Florida and its residents' in mind (!?!).

About Hurricanes

– Max Goldstein, *Broward Sierra Treasurer*

Well, this has been a year like no other, and I'm sure we're happy to see it end. We had protests that turned into rioting and looting, the wildfires in California and Australia, and of course, the pandemic. (Too bad about all the social distancing; if there was ever a year full of possible themes for the King Mango Strut parade, this would have been it.)

And, there were the hurricanes.

By the end of the hurricane season (11/30/2020), we had 30 named storms, beating the record of 28 named storms set back in 2005. As in 2005, we exhausted the conventional list of storm names and had to use the Greek alphabet to come up with new ones.

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So, let's start with a little information on naming storms. In the Atlantic, we start with a new list every year, whereas in the Pacific, they continue from the previous year. So in 1992, while we were dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, Hawaii was battling Hurricane Iniki (which was, FYI, hindering the production of Jurassic Park).

Now, when we have a hurricane that results in great loss of life and/or causes a huge amount of damage, we retire the name. There will never be another Hugo, Katrina, or Sandy. So, you may wonder, what if it's a Greek Letter storm? Do we retire a letter of the Greek alphabet? No one knew, back in 2005, as we had never used up the regular alphabet before. But now with Hurricanes Delta (\$4.1 billion) and Eta (nearly twice that), we have two names (or letters) to retire. So, the current thinking is we'll name (and retire) them as Delta 20 and Eta 20, in case we have an extensive season again.

In summary, global warming is pushing us into new territory that we don't want to be in. Thirty storms in a single season is yet another grim milestone that we'll have to deal with, so we need to stop warming the planet:

<https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/2020-track-be-one-of-three-warmest-years-record>

Remember, at 12:01 AM on January 1, 2020, we were all wishing each other a happy new year. But wishing for one and making it happen are very different things. Everyone needs to be environmentally responsible, because hindsight is now, literally, 2020.

Broward Sierra Political Corner

– Susan Steinhauser, *Broward Sierra Club Political Chair*

If you made a New Year's resolution to take environmental action this year, we have just the thing for you!

Broward Sierra members have the opportunity to participate in a program with other environmentally-minded residents in their community. In each city, we'll get to know the Mayor and Commissioners, we'll learn about local regulations that impact the environment (whether positively or negatively), and we'll keep our eyes open for local projects that will impact the environment (also positively or negatively).

Perhaps the best part is that we'll get to suggest environmentally-friendly legislation and projects that will protect our water and air and help address the climate crisis. To learn more about this wonderful opportunity, click [here](#) to let us know who you are and where you live. It takes fewer than 30 seconds to complete the form. And if you have some extra time, let us know if there are any environmental issues in your city you'd like addressed and/or which environmental issues interest you most in general. Perhaps you're interested in wildlife protection, building community gardens, reducing plastics use, protecting our oceans/waterways/drinking water, helping Floridians go solar, or making our cities more bicycle-friendly.

We want to hear from YOU and what interests YOU!

Wishing everyone a healthy, happy, safe New Year!



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Congratulations to Susan Steinhauser on winning the blanket throw at our December General meeting. Please join us in January 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.

Congratulations go out to the re-elected and newly elected members of the 2021 Broward Sierra Group Executive Committee

- ◆ Re-elected for 2-year terms are Adriene Barmann and Max Goldstein. Adriene also serves Broward Sierra as the Outings Chair, and Max as the Group's Treasurer
- ◆ Newly elected to the Committee for 2-year terms are Leah Weisburd and Pamela Klondziela.
- ◆ Remaining members of the 2021 Executive Committee are Chair Ina Topper, Secretary Pat Turpening and Sue Caruso, who serves as Conservation and Membership Chairs

Thanks to all who not only ran for Committee seats, but worked to make the 2021 ExCom election a success.