Here’s a belated New Year’s Resolution we can all resolve to try. America is the largest market in the world for toilet paper. But this is definitely not a sustainable practice. In the 1970’s an EPA study concluded that by using 1 ton of 100% recycled paper saved 4,100 KWH of energy to power an average home for 6 months and also saved 7,000 gallons of water. It would keep 60 pounds of pollution out of the air and save 17 trees. Those statistics were impressive enough for me to decide to be earnest about buying only recycled toilet paper. Yes it might be more expensive to purchase, but I wanted to try to be as green as possible. While researching however, I found out more.

Recycling paper is fairly easy to do. It helps to reduce the amount of paper in landfills and is also an important factor when considering how we can reduce our carbon footprints. Did you know that each of us uses an average of 700 pounds of paper products every year? Paper makes up one third of the material that goes into landfills. But let’s talk about toilet paper that goes down most drains into our sewer system. What happens in our water?

Making a roll of white toilet paper from pulp includes a bleaching process to make it whiter, using chemicals which produce a bleaching by-product called Dioxin, one of the most toxic of human made chemicals. When Dioxin is released into the environment, it does not easily break down because natural bacteria does not effectively break it down. When we buy toilet paper bleached know that each of us uses an average of 700 pounds of paper products every year? Paper makes up one third of the material that goes into landfills. But let’s talk about toilet paper that goes down most drains into our sewer system. What happens in our water?

AN END TO TOILET PAPER AS WE KNOW IT?
– By Tanya Tweeton, Broward Sierra member

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THURSDAY, APR. 3RD: Our speakers will be Andrea Ruth Gundersen and a member of the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) Oceanographic Center. She will talk about the Nova Southeastern University Staghorn Coral Nursery Project. Researchers at the NSU Oceanographic Center are exploring scientifically sound approaches to understand, assess, monitor, restore and mitigate injured coral reefs. Ms. Gundersen is a recreational scuba diver and an attorney and a member of the Dive Bar, which has worked with NSU Oceanographic on the Staghorn Coral project.

THURSDAY, MAY 1ST: Our speaker will be attorney George Cavros. George’s primary practice areas are energy and environmental law. He is a former Excom Chair of the Broward County group, and his discussion/presentation with will be on the challenges and opportunities in the energy sector for clean energy solutions to combat climate change.
The Broward Sierra News is available every other month in electronic format. Additionally, to keep you apprised of current Broward Sierra Club events, they will be listed on our website: http://florida.sierraclub.org/broward. If you would like to receive reminders of these events e-mailed to you, subscribe to our Yahoo newsgroup. The address is: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BrowardSierra. Simply click on the blue “Join this Group” icon and follow the instructions. You may have to create a Yahoo ID first, which is easy and free. This will also allow you to sign up for any of the other numerous Yahoo groups. Also like our FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/BrowardSierra, and follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/BrowardGroup.

OKEECHOBEE RIM BIKING
– By Darryl Rutz, Broward Sierra Excom member

A great group of South Florida Sierra Club members took the challenge and biked 29 of the 114 mile Florida Trail around Lake Okeechobee. We all met at the quaint S and T Fish Camp on the Rim north of Pahokee. At the fish camp level it was warm and there was the concern that this would be a hot ride. As soon as we got up on the dike we felt the cool breeze. The plan was to go north for 7 miles, return to the mid-point then go 7 miles south and back.

We were surprised by the number of cyclists going at top speed on the paved trail. We later found out that there were two bike races going on. One was going around the lake and the other race started in West Palm Beach going around the lake and back to WPB. With all this activity we had to stay alert since we were mostly sightseeing.

At the North Point we stopped, had lunch and took a break. The wind was not a big factor in the ride. On the way south the slow breeze was coming from the west, and when we were at the southernmost point there was practically no wind. Here we saw the lock that dumped toxic water into the St. Lucie Canal, causing all the damage to the canal and the lower Indian River Lagoon. In the evening it was a little warmer, but happily, no rain.

Besides the physical exercise, we enjoyed the natural beauty of the lake which was like a mirror, rim canal and the wildlife. Most interesting were the many warblers that would fly up from the grass as we approached them, only to land ahead and repeat the process. There were many water birds perched on the perimeter trees, and of course we saw several gators.

Four and a half hours later we were back at the fish camp. We got some refreshments at its Gator Hole and enjoyed the live music (at this time the outing was officially over). Being hungry we went up the road 9 miles and ate at The Happy Hour Tavern. They had great food and local atmosphere.

The outing was fun, strenuous and refreshing, and enabled us to enjoy the natural and human community of the Okeechobee Rim.

ALL ABOARD FLORIDA ANNOUNCES FT. LAUDERDALE STATION
– By Barbara Ruge, Broward Sierra Vice-Chair

All Aboard Florida, the planned direct rail system, moving people from Miami to Orlando “marks a milestone.” The Fort Lauderdale station location has been announced. The station to be located adjacent to the Florida East Coast Railway corridor on NW 2nd Avenue, will be situated between Broward Blvd. and NW 4th St. Supposedly, the station in this northern section of downtown Fort Lauderdale will “catalyze growth, spur job

continued on next page
creation and stimulate under-utilized areas.” This location will be able to provide connections to other transportation systems, such as Sun Trolley, Broward County Transit buses, and the Wave Streetcar.

The Fort Lauderdale station is one of four planned along the All Aboard Florida route. It will be multi-storied, with lobby, lounge, and food/beverage areas for the comfort of customers and passengers.

“For decades, Broward County’s residents and businesses have advocated for passenger rail in the FEC corridor, and soon that vision will become a reality with All Aboard Florida,” said Broward County Mayor Barbara Sharief. “The downtown Fort Lauderdale station will help stimulate our economy and boost our tourism industry.”

All Aboard Florida’s three other stations will be located in Orlando, as part of the International Airport, in downtown Miami, and in West Palm Beach.

You can obtain timely reports and information about the plans and progress of All Aboard Florida by going to their website at www.allaboardflorida.com. Make your voice be heard – add your input. Information contained in this article is compliments of www.BrowardMPO.org and All Aboard Florida.

My opinion: this enterprise should have been by the people, for the people, built and owned by Florida taxpayers from our Federal grant funds (refused by our Governor). We remain at the mercy of a private corporation, and this transportation alternative may not be affordable to all the people who need it. Time will tell.
with chlorine, used as a paper whitener, we are supporting the paper mills that pollute our environment with dioxin and other products. There are over 500 paper mills in the United States!

Why are we as a society, so sick? So much cancer, etc. Part of the answer lies with the use of toilet paper. Although direct usage of toilet paper with dioxins may not cause health issues, when the paper is flushed down the toilet into the sewage system, the dioxins find their way into the environment. Long term effects of dioxin on our bodies have been found to promote cancer in humans. Behavioral effects and learning disorders were also found in monkeys at just 10 times the dioxin levels found in our bodies. But wait there’s more! It was also found that there is potential for decreased immune responses in monkeys and mice at 25% BELOW the dioxin level in our bodies. Decreased male sex hormones, diabetes occurrences at certain dioxin levels in our bodies, sperm loss, and Endometriosis, occurring at only 10 times the dioxins levels found in our bodies.

Those who are more exposed to the dangerous bleach agent dioxin would be those who eat a lot of fish, workers involved in incineration operations, those who handle pesticides, those working in wood treatment plants, fire fighters and people exposed to industrial accidents and toxic wastes, nursing babies and anyone who was exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam war.

So the answer to curtailing the manufacture of our regular white paper rolls would be to buy unbleached toilet paper. How can we tell if we are buying unbleached, environmentally safe toilet paper? Look for these terms; unbleached, processed chlorine free, totally chlorine free, elemental chlorine free.

Another green option we could consider would be to install one of the high tech versions of the new toilets that wash in front or behind, with water. Some models are certainly not inexpensive. But other less fancy models are in line with regularly priced toilets. 74% of Japanese households already use these high tech toilets. Growth of these modern high tech toilets is estimated to be around 15% a year. The high tech toilets use much less water (and electricity that is required to produce toilet paper) according to the Miami Herald. The water stream is small and aerated, using one to two tenths of a gallon of water. Thus having a toilet like this will allow you to keep your roll of toilet paper much longer.

Or we can buy bidets, like most European countries use, thus using less toilet paper as well. Some of the modern bidets blow air to help the user dry off.

Reusable toilet paper is another option, usually a stack of homemade cloth wipes made from old materials. If that seems too weird, try the recycled unbleached paper.

According to the EPA, if everyone in the USA exchanged only one, just ONE roll of regular toilet paper for a roll of recycled unbleached toilet paper, it would save 470,000 trees! It is not too difficult a belated New Year’s Resolution to find recycled unbleached toilet paper and change our ways. Try looking for it at Target, Walmart, K-Mart, Costco, and Safeway. They also can be ordered on line at Amazon and Drugstore.com.

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The Miami Herald, Sunday March 9, 2014

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 resources:

2. ENN: Environmental News Network – Know your Environment (an on-line newspaper)
3. The Miami Herald, Sunday March 9, 2014