Dear Broward Sierrans,

Wishing you all a Happy and most healthy New Year from your Broward Sierra Excom. Of all things, health is what's most important. Hopefully, we all got through the Holiday season in decent shape. Perhaps we added a few pounds, but a couple of weeks of salads & veggies will take care of that. Although the Sierra Club does not promote only vegetarianism/veganism, growing veggies takes a LOT less planetary space (and money) than raising cattle for beef consumption!

Our past year has seen some very good environmental advances, but also some things that would make one's environmentalist blood curdle.....

Here are some of the highlights:

• The fracking issue. We’re getting there, we think. Although every time we thought we made progress, out of nowhere some devious pro-fracking entity sticks up its ugly head trying to prevent whatever progress our anti-fracking forces were able to accomplish. The biggest hard-won success is that these days there is hardly a soul in the land who does NOT know what fracking means, or how destructive it is! Truly a big win this year. This year Broward County approved a fracking ban resolution, joining many county and city governments nationwide. We’re on the right track in this regard, having learned that what doesn’t work on a national level could very well work on the state and local levels.

• The Keystone pipeline. Ah, here we’re going in the right direction as well. Again, the fight isn’t over, but now even previously pro-pipeline groups have come around, actually for the same reason as the fracking issue – it’s slowly dawning on even the most aggressive “let’s dig/drill/bore everywhere” people that, alas, it may also destroy THEIR backyards, not to mention ruin their property values.....

• On the state level, the black bear hunt took us quite a few steps backwards. Enough said about this sad issue - all we can do is keep up the fight.

• Also on the state level, is the solar energy debacle whereby the Big Energy Business suddenly sees its Big Profits disappearing on our sunny Florida horizon. Their efforts in trying to promote some form of fees to be levied against solar panel users is abominable. On December 21st there was a major article in the Miami Herald regarding the solar power campaign which states sadly, that this effort (i.e. preventing big energy companies to levy fees on panel users) is fizzling out due to financial disputes among opposing groups. The money is just not there to obtain the additional 400,000 signatures before December 31st, the deadline to get the amendment on the ballot for this coming election year.

• On the local level, preserving and restoring our coral reefs has been a tiresome battle, but some progress is being made now that the University of Miami is successfully able to actually grow healthy coral stalks in their labs. This sounds promising, although way too much coral is still being damaged. Just this week there was a segment on the national evening news about the failed tire-experiment to create artificial reefs. Thousands of tires have become an environmental hazard instead of a boon to reef preservation.

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Thursday, Jan. 14 (7-9 pm): We will not be meeting at Fern Forest in January. Instead we will have a joint meeting with the Audubon Society at the Long Key Nature Center, 3501 SW 130th Ave., Davie, FL 33330. The featured speaker will be James Currie of TV’s “Birding Adventures.”
FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thank you to all of you Broward Sierra members who returned your ballots to vote for your 2016 Executive Committee. All the candidates, Ina, Stan, Darryl and Barbara, were re-elected to serve again on your ExCom. Thank you for your participation in the election process.

Please contact any member of your executive committee and let us know what we did well this past year. We like compliments. And, let us know what you feel we can do better. Any particular subjects or issues you want to hear about at our program meetings? Any environmental experts you know who we could book to speak to our group? Any suggestions for new exploratory outings you desire?

We are here to provide enjoyment of our native lands and wildlife. We encourage political actions to protect these natural resources and it is essential that our members support these efforts. Please join one of our committees. These are Conservation, Political, Membership, Fundraising, and various actions campaigns: Water Quality, Anti-Fracking, Clean Power Plan. 2016 will be a big year for environmental politics. We must be diligent. ExCom is looking forward to hearing from you. Contact Barbara (954-328-2165, b-realtor@att.net) or Ina (954-722-9944, irtopper2000@cs.com)

Looking Ahead, continued from previous page

- Also on the local level, we must continue to work to preserve our dwindling endangered panther habitat and preventing further mangrove destruction. In the year ahead, we’ll surely revisit these issues.
- This year we made great strides, but must do even more to further the increase of recyclable bag usage and to reduce the use of plastic bags. We thank our many Broward retailers who have been supplying (some very beautiful) multiple use shopping bags!
- Thank you also, Broward Sierrans, for being a great support in preserving our beautiful natural surroundings, and for joining our monthly general meetings at Fern Forest.

We at ExCom hope to see you all at our first big meeting of the new year, the joint Sierra/ Audubon get-together!

Please bring your family, friends, neighbors, etc., as we’re also going to brief you on some of our upcoming events for 2016.