Thursday, Oct. 6th:
Our featured speaker will be David Stout, Natural Resources Specialist for Broward County. His talk will be on environmental projects planned for Broward County, such as beach re-nourishment, coral reef protection, etc.

DIRECTIONS: Fern Forest Nature Center, 201 Lyons Road South, Coconut Creek is just south of Atlantic Blvd. on the west side of the street. (From the south, NW 31 Ave. becomes NW 46 Ave., and then Lyons Rd. as you pass under the turnpike.) Committee reports begin at 7:30, and the program begins at 8:00. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

Broward Sierra Club’s General Meetings - The first Thursday of each month we have committee reports and an educational program on conservation or environmental issues.

MORE DANGEROUS CHEMICALS IN FLORIDA WATERS
– By Susan Caruso, Broward Sierra Excom Secretary

On August 23, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) convinced the Environmental Regulation Commission to approve a weakening of water quality standards for almost two dozen toxic chemicals. These are chemicals that now will be released into surface water, which is the source of drinking water for millions of Floridians. Their reasoning, i.e. excuse, is that new science is showing these chemicals can be released at “safe levels” for our consumption. The DEP’s website also praises their decision to place standards on 39 new chemicals, while leaving the current levels of dioxin and arsenic at the present standard. According to the Tallahassee Democrat, “allowable amounts of benzene, a well known carcinogen used in fracking and found in high levels in its waste water, would go up three times.” Ken Weaver, a DEP administrator, denies that considerations for the fracking industry played a role in their decision.

According to the DEP’s own website, the chemicals that are being considered for new limits still have to be controlled since “Laboratory toxicology studies have shown that exposure to these parameters through drinking water or food can cause either an increased risk of developing cancer over a lifetime or other non-carcinogenic adverse health effects, such as kidney failure, liver dysfunction, or neurological effects.” If industries are...
already adherent to strict standards and have the technologies in place to meet those standards, why weaken them now?

The current standards for these 23 chemicals are being called “extreme conservatism” throughout the documentation explaining the new standards. Really? I am being excessively conservative if I don’t want poisons such as benzene in my drinking water? Is the increase risk of cancer to 1 person in a million acceptable? That would be an extra 18 people who will be likely to develop the afflictions listed above. Although it is a small percent, it should still be zero increased risk. I just hope that my children or grandchildren will not be one of those 18.

Our local politicians are not on board with these changes, but their hands are tied. The Environmental Regulation Commission that approved this change by a vote of 3 to 2 had two vacant seats, those that represent local elected officials and environmental groups! How convenient that Rick Scott neglected to fill those positions.

What you can do: Urge your city commissioners to adopt the resolution developed and passed by the city of Pembroke Pines. This resolution will be sent to the Federal Department of Environmental Protection, who will make the final decision of whether or not these new standards can be put in place. If every city in Broward County sends this message to the Federal EPA, it can be a very powerful statement that our water quality concerns are being circumvented. Here is the link to the resolution: http://tinyurl.com/PToxicResolution. Or find it on our website at www.sierraclub.org/florida/broward. You may contact me at susan.caruso@att.net or 954-684-6747 for more information.