KING MANGO STRUT: URBAN DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARIES – By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Chair

The theme of this year’s King Mango Strut parade in Coconut Grove on December 31st was the Urban Development Boundaries, an issue that affects all of us here in Florida. There’s an ongoing argument regarding the Urban Development Boundary line being pushed westward into the Everglades, specifically in Miami-Dade county. Of course, in the end it will touch all of us.

It does not take much to understand that, when it comes to urban sprawl, once again the powers that be threaten to move the goal-posts, so to say.

On the internet, there’s plenty of information that has been amassed over the past decade or so, as to what’s sustainable, what’s necessary to procure ever more construction sites and, in the end, what would be destructive in non-stop expansion of our urban sprawl. It’s not only the wildlife that’s being pushed into diminishing corners. One is left wondering where the limit is in terms of how much Florida can absorb with the every day influx of more and more residents. Consider the limits to available potable water in our state for future generations, to name but one issue.

Plenty of case studies have been done for and against expanding the Urban Development Boundaries. For those interested, there’s a case study that was done by Holland & Knight’s Joseph Goldstein (www.lawseminars.com/materials/07GMAFL/gmafl_m_goldstein.pdf) and other articles that go back to so-called “managed growth” as of the 1975 Land Use Plan & Policies. There certainly is a fluctuation of opinions, over the past decades, as to what “managed growth” really entails.

Bottom line: the argument was put forward acutely this year by our Sierrans in the King Mango Strut parade that there HAS to be accountability as

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An elaborate presentation was given by Richard Crossley, a very renowned bird expert, who treated us to magnificent pictures of unique birds which had colors and characteristics unfamiliar to us. He also told us about the Dodo bird that was hunted very quickly into extinction due to the fact that it didn’t fly, was therefore easy to catch, and was eaten for its good tasting flesh. A century or two ago mankind wasn’t sufficiently aware of statistics, environmental consequences, etc. But today there’s NO excuse to plead ignorance.

Richard also treated us to magnificent pictures of unique birds which had colors one hadn’t seen before, and made us aware of bird facts we never knew, i.e. some species which have very complex mating methods, besides already existing environmental factors, if not left alone in their desolate habitats, could further complicate their future survival. This presentation was certainly an eye opener. Thank you Richard Crossley!

FEB 3, SAT. KAYAK/CANOE THE SOUTH FORK OF THE ST. LUCIE RIVER NEAR STUART. 10am. This is a beautiful, pristine stream near Stuart. It becomes increasingly scenic and narrow as you paddle. We’ll stop at a remote picnic site and then paddle back to the starting point. This trip is in very gentle water, suitable for beginners. Bring your own kayak or canoe or rent in advance from Ed at South River Outfitters 772-223-1500. Limit 10. Rated moderate. Suggested donation: $3 members, $5 non-members. Leader: Ron Haines 561-315-0528 RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net.

FEB 10, SAT. KAYAK/CANOE BLUE CYPRESS LAKE WEST OFvero BEACH. 10am. Blue Cypress Lake is known for birding and spectacular cypress trees along the shoreline. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=7N8UC0nlVDg and www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ra-zAfDVvo. Sorry, no rentals available. Suggested donation: $3 members, $5 non-members. Rated moderate. Limit 10. Ron Haines 561-315-0528 RonaldHaines@bellsouth.net.

FEB 18, SUN. LAKE OKEECHOBEE BIKE RIDE. About an 18 mile leisurely bike ride, mostly on the paved trail on top of the dam that encircles Lake Okeechobee. This will include a short ride on Hwy 76 to the location of the mass grave site of many of those that died in the hurricane of 1928. It is estimated that 2,500 individuals died as a result of this hurricane. Information will be shared about this tragic story. Bring your cruiser and a spare inner tube and tools for replacement if needed. You need to bring water and a snack that you can eat at the Port Mayaca locks. Sierra Club requires that you use a helmet, so please bring that. This will give you a good perspective of the water issues and how Lake Okeechobee plays a big part in it. We will meet at 11:00 AM seven miles north of the Port Mayaca Locks on US 441 at the J and S Fish Camp and Tavern. You can check their website for directions www.jandsfishcamp.net. Rated moderate. Suggested donation: $5. Leader: Darryl Rutz 954-892-1740 dmrtz2@msn.com.

MARCH 10, SAT. WATER MATTERS DAY 2018 at Tree Tops Park in Davie. More information TBA.

MARCH 11, SUN. HIKE BIG CYPRESS NATIONAL PRESERVE. We’ll hike approximately 6-8 miles on a wilderness trail north of Alligator Alley (about an hour from downtown Ft. Lauderdale). You’ll learn the difference a few inches of elevation makes to the local flora, as you trek through cypress forests, hammocks and prairies. We’ll walk at a leisurely pace, allowing for identification of birds, wildflowers, plants and butterflies. Bring your own lunch to eat on the trail. Rated moderate due to distance and uneven footing. This is a MOSTLY dry hike. Suggested donation: $40 members, $45 non-members (includes dinner on Saturday night, airboat, campground fees, and supplies). Leader: Adriene Barnham 954-328-9447 adrieneb1960@gmail.com. Please register on our “Meetup” page www.meetup.com/Broward-County-Sierra-Club-Group/events/246111268/.

SIERRA CLUB & AUDUBON SOCIETY
– By Ina Oost Topper, Broward Sierra Chair

This year’s January joint general meeting of the Broward Sierra Club and the Audubon Society took place at the Long Key Nature Center in Davie. Doug Young and Pat Cunningham of the Broward Audubon Society did a great job of putting together a nice presentation. Pat Turpening, Ina Oost Topper and Judy Kuchta represented our Sierra Club Excom committee. An elaborate presentation was given by Richard Crossley, a very renowned bird expert, who treated us to many slides of his birding expeditions in just about every region of the globe. He also drew our attention to several bird species which are exceedingly threatened or endangered, or already on the verge of extinction. Global warming is at the heart of this deplorable situation. There are overwhelming indications that due to global warming, many bird species are now changing their hibernating and seasonal migration patterns.

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to where unlimited growth is seriously going to harm our future generations, our already endangered and even threatened wildlife species, AND... when is there finally going to be adherence to previously made decisions. The signs carried said it all: “the Urban Sprawl Monster coming to get us”, with developers in business suits showing overflowing pockets of dollars - this apparently being the final factor that counts.

Our (Sierra) view: the limit has been reached in terms of unbridled growth. Forever moving the goal posts is not going to do us any good in the end.

Point well made, in this year’s King Mango Strut parade.

See our website for more photos from King Mango Strut. Go to www.sierraclub.org/Florida/broward/photo-gallery and click on the link for King Mango Strut.