

Earth Day Forum at the Emerson Center April 22 at 6:30 PM “Trouble in Paradise”

The Emerson Center in collaboration with the Social Justice Steering Committee presents “Trouble in Paradise: What’s happening to Florida’s Water Supply,” a free Earth Day forum. The Pelican Island Audubon Society will give away one-gallon pots of Bald Cypress, Mahogany, and Live Oak seedlings at 6:30. The featured film “Saving the FL Springs” created by the Global Connection starts at 7:00PM.

Panelists David Cox, (Board Member of the Soil and Water Conservation District of IRC), George Glenn (Legal Advisor to the Pelican Island Audubon Society and the Clean Water Coalition of IRC), and Alexis Peralta (Stormwater Educator for IRC) will discuss the informative film at 7:45PM followed by an open Q & A session.

RSVP to the office, 772-778-5880 or e-mail Kelly Stevens at marketing@theemersoncenter.com

Healing and Reparations

What happened to the 40 acres and a mule for freed slaves as part of Reconstruction? After a meeting with a group of Black preachers in 1865, Union General William T. Sherman issued an order to distribute 40-acre plots of tillable land to freedmen and to mandate that the communities formed within the new territory govern themselves undisturbed. But the same year, President Andrew Johnson reversed the order and returned those lands back to Confederate owners.

The US government has delivered reparations to Indigenous peoples forcibly removed from their lands, to Japanese internment camp survivors, and has reached a settlement with survivors and families of the Tuskegee Experiment. But it has not made any major steps since Sherman’s order toward reparations to African Americans who descended from enslaved people.

That’s why Rep. Jackson-Lee (D-TX) reintroduced HR-40 in 2021 to create a commission to study the economic impacts of slavery and enduring racism and recommend a formal apology. California has made history by becoming the first state to launch its own task-force to study and recommend reparations. [from: *Green American* magazine, Spring 2021]

Be Sure to Clean Up Your Dog’s Poo

The organization Clear Choices Clean Water of Indianapolis, Indiana, collected this data for us:

- 47% of US households have at least one dog.
- That amounts to approximately 53 million dogs.
- Each of those 53 million dogs produces about 0.75 pounds of waste per day which amounts to nearly 40 million pounds per day.
- That equals about 275 pounds of poo every year for each household or 14.5 BILLION pounds annually.

Do your part and help keep that waste out of our stormwater and ultimately our waterways by picking up your pet’s poo. How to properly dispose of pet poo?

- Bag it and throw it in the trash.
- Consider using **biodegradable bags**. Biodegradable bags can be thrown in the trash but can also be composted. But be sure not to use compost containing dog waste on vegetable gardens or food crops.

Building A Better Planet

Harness the wind and the seas and the sun
and build engines that those may work to power
the trains and the factories, to filter the salt from
the oceans, to light the lamps at the armchairs of
the old.

Gather the seeds of the earth and plant them in
fertile soil, that they may grow;

Then take the fruit of their growth and
haul it in baskets to feed the poor, the ill.

Teach the little children to care for their
fragile world, and for each other.

Find the just, and elevate their ranks to spread their
justice among us.

Build houses of wood, or bricks or wattle,
according to where you live. Build hills of what is
waste, and cover them in meadows,
for children romping, and animals grazing.

Pay for it all, according to what you have.

Grow simple, and enjoy the world.

It is all we have.

by Deming Holleran
April, 2020

Harmful Proposed Florida Legislation

Since the 2021 legislative session began in March, Florida Conservation Voters and our partners have been pushing hard against harmful energy preemption bills.

SB 1128/HB 919 - Preemption on Restriction of Utility Services - will take away the rights of local governments to decide how our communities are powered. It will prevent municipalities from having any say over the types of fuels which utilities may distribute or use to generate power within their community, and **effectively make any commitment to 100% clean energy impossible.**

Your voice is urgently needed to stop these bad bills. The next committee stops for SB 1128/HB 919 are the Senate Rules Committee and the House Commerce Committee. Call or e-mail Erin Grall or Sen. Debby Mayfield or your local legislators. [see fcvoters.org by Zac Cosner for more information]

Farmworker Justice

Things you can do:

1. Purchase certified Fair Trade foods; Fair Trade means there is a high likelihood for farmers and farmworkers to be paid better and thus experience better living conditions.
2. Contact your representative to voice your support for immigration reform that includes a path to immigration status and citizenship for undocumented agricultural workers and their family members.
3. Advocate for and buy organic products and fight toxic pesticides. Farmworkers are exposed to high rates of pesticides which are harmful to human health and have been linked to cancer, Alzheimer's Disease, and birth defects, among others.
4. Demand better lives for farmworkers by signing the Essential Workers Bill of Rights, mandating a safe workplace for essential workers. Go to greenam.org/EssentialWorkers
5. Read about and take action with Soul Fire Farm which compiled a document with Northeast Farmers of Color that has dozens of ideas for reflecting on and taking action for food sovereignty. see: soulfirefarm.org/get-involved/take-action [from: *Green American* magazine, Spring 2021]

3 Ways to Help the Planet Today

1. *Ditch the glitter.* When tiny pieces of plastic enter the ocean, seabirds, fish, and other marine life gobble them up. It's fun, but it is plastic that eventually gets into our waterways. Last year scientists found the highest concentration of dangerous-to-sea-life microplastics ever measured on the ocean floor, about 1.9 million pieces in 11 square miles. For art projects, a good substitute is colored salt or rice. And check your make-up kit since some have sparkle from microplastics. Instead consider products that use synthetic mica for a sparkly but biodegradable alternative.

2. *Embrace earth-friendly fashion.* 11.3 million tons of textiles went into landfills in 2018. Alternatives? Wear those jeans and other clothes a little longer. Or shop thrift stores or online second-hand stores like ThreadUp or buy from Patagonia's Worn Wear line of clothing made from recycled garments. If you buy new, try Levi's and Madewell; both companies have partnered with "Cotton's Blue Jeans Go Green" program which gives discounts to those who turn in a pair of jeans before buying a new pair. Patagonia also gives you store credit for returning merchandise to them when you no longer want it.

3. *Be food smart.* We throw away 30 – 40 pounds of our food supply (219 pounds per person on average) in the U.S. every year. The majority happens in grocery stores, restaurants, and food service businesses, but it happens at home too. Eliminating food waste saves you money and saves landfill space. [from *Parade* magazine, April 11, 2021]

UUSC Hosts Virtual Celebration

Please save the date for UUSC's virtual Human Rights Celebration on **Thursday, June 17, 2021** at 7:00 PM ET / 4:00 PM PT.

We hope you will join UUSC for an evening of inspiration and celebration in advance of the UUA's General Assembly. The event will honor social justice leaders, feature a keynote presentation, announce congregational recognitions, present a musical performance, and welcome appearances by special guests.

There will be no charge for this event. Look for more details and how to register in the coming weeks. Watch your e-mail from UUSC or from the Social Justice Steering Committee for the link.