

Pelican Island Audubon Presents Sustainable Landscaping Conference at Emerson Center

All day **Sat., Jan. 25**, only \$25 (in advance) including a box lunch; \$35 at door. Find all the details at: <https://pelicanislandaudubonsociety.wpcomstaging.com/home-page/3rd-transforming-landscapes-for-a-sustainable-future-conference/>

What Does a Label Tell You?

When you choose something with an ethical label on it, you want to know that it means more than marketing. That's why Fair World Project worked with a global coalition of academics and fair trade advocacy organizations to create the *International Guide to Fair Trade Labels*. This report evaluates the main fair trade and ethical labels out there, taking a deep dive into the standards and whether the standards really support a path out of exploitation for the people they are supposed to benefit. The new edition of the *Guide* provides an in-depth analysis of each label. It also examines the way that the standards are set and takes a strong position: ending exploitation is not just an issue of setting standards. It's about creating systems and supply chains where people have the power to make change. That power comes from organizing, and from people having a say in their workplaces and in the terms of trade.

[from: e-mail from Dana Geffner, Executive Director of Fair World Project, Dec. 23, 2019]

Three More "1619 Project" Workshops

Even if you didn't attend the November or January workshops led by UUFVB member and retired history teacher, Andrew Sorbo, you are certainly welcome to attend the next three. Join us in Fellowship Hall from 10 AM to noon on the first Saturday of February, March, and April. Please sign up at the Social Justice Information Table on a Sunday morning and pick up your handout of selected readings from *The New York Times Magazine* published on August 18, 2019. We are all learning a great deal of American history, but more importantly, after understanding the powerful influence of America's history of enslavement on the present, we can prepare ourselves for a more just future.

Good News for Right Whales

In the October issue we were encouraged to save the North Atlantic Right Whale with an action alert from NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council). On October 29, 2019, a federal court ruled that federal fisheries managers failed to protect critically endangered North Atlantic right whales when opening nearly 3,000 square miles of previously protected New England marine waters to dangerous fishing gear.

The court ordered that, until the government complies with wildlife and fishery protection laws, it must not allow a certain type of entangling fishing gear in areas where right whales are known to gather. Entanglement in fishing gear is the leading threat to these whales, and the National Marine Fisheries Service has stated that even a single death is a threat to their survival since there are only around 400 North Atlantic right whales left on earth. The Court's decision prohibits the use of sink



gillnets — walls of mesh designed to entangle animals that swim into them — in two areas off the New England coast covering approximately 3,000 square miles.

[From: EarthJustice website:

[https://earthjustice.org/news/press/2019/critically-endangered-north-atlantic-right-whales-court-rules-to-protect-from-fishing-gear?utm_source=crm&utm_medium=email&utm_term=newsletter&utm_campaign=191124 ForTheRecord November2019 resend&utm_content=whale ReadMoreButton&curation=newsletter](https://earthjustice.org/news/press/2019/critically-endangered-north-atlantic-right-whales-court-rules-to-protect-from-fishing-gear?utm_source=crm&utm_medium=email&utm_term=newsletter&utm_campaign=191124%20ForTheRecord%20November2019%20resend&utm_content=whale%20ReadMoreButton&curation=newsletter)]

What??? Less Corporate Oversight?

Shareholder resolutions are a highly effective way to encourage corporations to make significant changes to the way they do business. The Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) is proposing to weaken the shareholder resolution process and thereby give more power to corporations. For example, for shares held for a year, rather than requiring \$2,000 worth of stock in order to file a resolution, the SEC wants to increase the amount owned to \$25,000! [from: GreenAmerica.org, e-mail message from Fran Teplitz]

Enhancing Florida's Election Security

Secretary of State Laurel Lee recently announced that Florida has been accepted for membership, along with 29 other members, into the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC), a multi-state partnership that uses a sophisticated data-matching tool to enhance the accuracy of voter registration systems.

Through ERIC, member states can share information from voter registration systems, motor vehicle databases, social security death records, and U.S. Post Office records. This data-sharing agreement will help identify voters who have moved to another state, passed away, or changed their name in Florida.

In addition to enhancing the accuracy of voter rolls, ERIC also improves voter registration by providing information for member states to contact potentially eligible but unregistered voters with instructions on how to register to vote. Prior to the 2020 general election, Florida will spend \$1.3 million to contact potentially eligible voters who are not registered to vote. This outreach is conducted every two years ahead of federal general elections. [from Sen. Debbie Mayfield's *Mayfield Minute*, Dec. 29, 2019]

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

Continues Boycott of Wendy's

The Campaign for Fair Food, the product of an alliance between farmworkers in Florida and a network of tens of thousands of consumers stretching from coast to coast, was born in 2001. Eighteen years later that campaign has won binding legal agreements between farmworkers and 14 of the world's largest food retailers, giving birth to the award-winning Fair Food Program.

Together with the Alliance for Fair Food, the CIW is fighting to bring the final fast food holdout, Wendy's, into the Fair Food Program, and 2019 was the biggest year yet for the national Wendy's Boycott. February marked a major victory in the Student/Farmworker Alliance "Boot the Braids" Campaign, when news broke that Wendy's would not be returning to the University of Michigan campus. The announcement resulted partially from support for the Fair Food Program from students and a resolution of support adopted by the Ann Arbor City Council.

[from: workers@ciw-online.org]

PBS Series "Africa's Great Civilizations"

Mark your calendars for six consecutive Monday nights beginning on January 27 at 7:00 PM. The Social Justice Steering Committee and the Coalition for Racial Justice are presenting this series from PBS, narrated by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Andrew Sorbo will facilitate the discussion following each episode which will be shown in the UUFVB lobby. Each episode is unique, so you don't need to attend them all to learn some fascinating history about our mother continent. And bring a friend to join in celebrating Black History Month!

Five Biggest Florida Legal Issues to Watch in 2020

State and federal courts are expected in 2020 to grapple with these high-profile Florida issues.

- 1. Constitutional Amendments:** The Florida Supreme Court will decide whether the wording of ballot initiatives meets legal standards on proposed constitutional amendments that could go on the November ballot, including legalizing recreational marijuana, allowing the casting of ballots in primary elections regardless of party affiliation, and banning assault-style weapons.
- 2. Felons Voting:** Gov. Ron DeSantis' administration and voting-rights and civil-rights groups are battling in the courts about how to carry out a 2018 constitutional amendment aimed at restoring voting rights to felons who have completed their sentences.
- 3. Guns:** A federal judge has scheduled a trial in October in the National Rifle Association's constitutional challenge to a 2018 state law that raised from 18 to 21 the minimum age to purchase rifles and other long guns in Florida.
- 4. Medical Marijuana:** The Florida Department of Health is challenging at the Florida Supreme Court level how the Legislature carried out a 2016 constitutional amendment that broadly legalized medical marijuana.
- 5. Water War:** The U.S. Supreme Court in 2020 could resolve Florida's long-running fight with Georgia about water in the Apalachicola River and Apalachicola Bay, after a special master issued a report that dealt a major blow to Florida.

[from *Orlando Weekly*, posted By [Jim Saunders, News Service of Florida](#) on Dec 31, 2019]