

Everglades Reporter

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Friends of the Everglades



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Editor: Karen Mashburn

UNESCO Removes Everglades from List of World Heritage Sites in Danger

President's Message by David P. Reiner, II

The greatest threat to the Everglades? Abandonment.

This summer, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO), at the request of Deputy Assistant Interior Secretary Todd Willens, removed Florida's Everglades from its list of World Heritage Sites in Danger. In announcing the move, UN officials "commended the U.S. for its investment of scientific and financial resources to rehabilitate the site." The Everglades has been an endangered site ever since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started draining and diverting it in 1950's, and on the UN list since 1993. Willens urged the World Heritage Committee to remove the Everglades from the list stating that enough progress had been made on Everglades restoration *even if the*



David P.

experts' benchmarks hadn't been met.

At the same time, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) quietly released its Everglades Ecosystem Assessment - an analysis of its ongoing biogeochemical and ecological (environment at large) monitoring of the 2,063-square-mile freshwater portion of the Everglades Protection Area. In typical government speak, the EPA somehow concluded that pollution of the Everglades had declined despite the fact that **50% of the Everglades is now polluted as compared to 34% in 1993.** EPA officials said people should not interpret the shortcomings as signs of failure: "Everyone recognizes that there's more to be done here," said the EPA Director of Water Management in Atlanta.

Veteran Everglades researcher Dr. Ron Jones, however, said the report "puts some spin on the water getting a little bit better, but in the next sentence they say the Everglades is going down the tubes."

There is but one conclusion to draw from all of this, a point

Friends of the Everglades has been trying to make for the last 20 years: **the State Everglades Forever Act (EFA) and Federal Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) plans to save the Everglades are a sham.** For whatever political reason, both entities continue to pump billions of tax dollars into alternately subsidizing polluters and funding abortive pollution abatement attempts. We must continue to pressure polluters to stop; we must stop pumping or draining polluted water into the Everglades; and we must stop flushing billions of gallons of polluted water into our estuaries and oceans. We need our elected officials to complete and expand planned reservoirs and to stop bypassing and expand the filter marshes we all paid so much to create.

The Everglades is more than a feel good environmental pet project - it is still a World Heritage Site and it is the heart of the South Florida economy - nurturing wildlife, drawing tourists, retirees and sportsmen, recharging our declining freshwater aquifers, refreshing and maintaining our bays, estuaries and coral reef systems. It is worth saving if only for the reason that the alternative - massive red tide and fish kills, alternate flooding and unprecedented water shortages and an economy and a lifestyle in irreversible decline - is so clearly in sight.

Help us to spread the word. Get involved. We deeply appreciate your commitment to Friends of the Everglades and our mission. There has never been a more important time to be a member, renew membership, make donations or gift a membership to Friends of the Everglades! We continue to need your support.

As 2007 draws to a close, we ask you to consider Friends of the Everglades when planning your end-of-year donations. Thank you.

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A Very Special Thank You to:

Lois Clark for donating her Marjory Stoneman Douglas newspaper collection.

Patricia Gill for her expertise and patience as we work toward improving our visual identity

To schedule a Young Friends of the Everglades Outreach Program contact Jim McMaster, Outreach Coordinator at the Friends office or via email.

Contact Nancy Fishman, Administrative Director for all other questions or concerns.

Email Alert Network eglades@bellsouth.net

Please email us so we can add your name to our Email Alert Network. This will be used only to alert you to information that cannot wait for our regular communications.

Need More Storage and Treatment in the Everglades



By *Juanita Greene, Conservation Chair*

Friends of the Everglades has long attempted to protect the waters of Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades by fighting to eliminate backpumping of polluted water into them. We recently won an important suit when federal judge Cecelia Altanoga halted the backpumping of polluted water from the



Juanita Greene

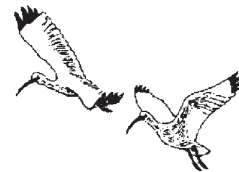
Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) into the lake through three stations on its southern rim. If, as we expect, the ruling survives the appeals of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), U.S. Sugar and (yes, sadly) the Interior Department, then a major question arises: Where is this dirty water to go? At present there is no place to put it without further damage to the Everglades.

The right answer is to put the water into a giant reservoir in the EAA called for in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), half of which

now is under construction by the state. The other half is supposed to be built by the federal government, which so far has failed to come up with the money.

Friends of the Everglades will introduce a resolution at the annual meeting of the Everglades Coalition, January 13-16 at Captiva Island, calling for the feds to complete their half of the reservoir and for the SFWMD to purchase land in the EAA to expand canals and build more treatment areas. We also will sponsor a panel to explore how much more land needs to be purchased in the EAA.

That these actions are needed is evidenced by a recent report of the Environmental Protection Agency that phosphorus pollution in the Everglades water and soil has increased. Cattails, a sure and ominous sign of pollution, have expanded for many miles in the Everglades. This is despite seven years of attempted restoration. Just look north as you travel along Interstate 75 or the Tamiami Trail. Cattails are all you can see, replacing our native sawgrass.



You Can Make a Difference

Make your voice heard by contacting your Federal, State or Local Officials. Don't know who represents you? Go to www.Congress.org. Simply type in your zip code to get the information. A letter, email or fax does make a difference.

If an elected official hears from five or more constituents on a specific issue, the official will take notice!



Marjory Stoneman Douglas' home in Coconut Grove

Update on Marjory's House

By Juanita Greene

Editor's note. The Council does indeed use the old fashioned spelling.

The Coconut Grove Village Council has joined Friends of the Everglades in requesting that the Land Trust of Dade County give to the state a lot it owns next to the home of the late Marjory Stoneman Douglas. The lot then would be joined to the Douglas property, on Stewart Avenue in Coconut Grove.

The Trust purchased the lot, known as the Cole property, with funds raised at the celebration of Douglas' 100th and 105th birthdays. Donors were told that the money would go "to protect her (Douglas') house for future generations" and to "restore and preserve the Marjory Stoneman Douglas house to include the Douglas/ Cole house property". At the time of the purchase there was a house on the Cole lot but it was demolished later by the county as an unsafe structure.

Plans of the Trust to build a research and education center on the site were abandoned in the face of neighborhood opposition. The Trust had obtained a lease on the Douglas house after her death at 108 in 1998 but the lease was returned to the state after an unsuccessful

attempt to move the house to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. Friends of the Everglades led the opposition to moving the house, which would have required that the fragile structure be cut up in pieces.

Speaking in favor of the resolution to give the lot to the state were David Lawrence, former Miami Herald publisher who was chairman of the 100th birthday fund raising; Arva Moore Parks, leading local historian and Friends' President David P. Reiner. Many other supporters of the move were in the audience. The Trust, headed by Sallye Jude, had accepted an invitation to send speakers but cancelled shortly before the meeting, which was on September 4. The Village Council is elected by Coconut Grove residents to serve as advisor to the Miami City Commission.

Friends is working to set up a local group to work with the state on managing the Douglas house and raising funds for its improvement. Any one interested in making a charter donation can reach us at msdhouse@everglades.org.

Young Friends of the Everglades Program Filmed for 'Hometown Heroes'

The producers of DirecTV programming for the Hometown Heroes television show contacted Young Friends of the Everglades. They wanted to film our outreach program for a November program of Hometown Heroes!

In preparation for the filming, Connie Washburn, Founder and Jim McMaster, Outreach Director, rounded up some former Young Friends and some current Young Friends and their teachers from Howard Drive Elementary School.



Park Ranger Doug Vogel educating Young Friends about the Everglades

The filming took place on Loop Road near Shark Valley at Everglades National Park. While the cameras were running, Park Ranger Doug Vogel gave an educational program and led the group on a walk through the 'Glades.

After that, Sarah Kemper, a founding member of Young Friends and recent graduate of FSU shared with the 4th and 5th graders how exciting it had been to be one of the founding members. In 1994 the group worked together to keep a Theme Park from being built in the Everglades. Sarah said



Sarah Kemper sharing early Young Friends experiences

that her earlier participation in Young Friends had great meaning in her life. After she joined Young Friends, she became aware of the importance of Everglades preservation and protection.

Another former Young Friend, Kaitlin Birghenthal, currently a freshman at the University of Miami majoring in Marine Biology and Environmental Science said, "It is truly fantastic that Young Friends is being recognized in such a way. I think we always knew that it would extend far into the future and make a great deal of difference".

Fifth grader Hannah Richter shared with the group the things she and her family do at home and in their lives to be good conservationists. The Young Friends Hometown Heroes segment will air on DirecTV in late November-check our website www.everglades.org for viewing details.

Young Friends today is a program presented to hundreds of Miami-Dade County School students by Outreach Director Jim McMaster. Our thanks to Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) for continuing our Community Based Organization Grant for the past nine years.

If you would like a presentation at your child's school, please contact Jim McMaster at eglades@bellsouth.net.



Jim McMaster presenting the history of the Everglades

Save the Date
Friends of the Everglades Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 13th, 2008
The Garden Room, 3:00 PM
Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
10901 Old Cutler Road
Coral Gables, Florida

Captain Planet Visits Young Friends to Explore Global Warming

By *Connie Washburn, Founder of Young Friends of the Everglades*

On September 24th at Howard Drive Elementary [the school where Young Friends was founded] over 300 fourth and fifth graders and their teachers learned about global warming. The program, presented by David Coburn, 'the voice and heart of Captain Planet and one of Al Gore's 1000 appointees, held the entire audience in awe for 90 minutes of climate control information. "As I was making my presentation – a student version of 'An Inconvenient Truth', I felt so bad for the kids in the audience when I showed them what could happen to their state – Florida –

if global warming isn't stopped and reversed right away", said David Coburn. "That's when I changed the tone and began telling kids what they personally can do to make a difference".

This program has a profound effect on children: Listen to some student reactions: "After the Captain Planet presentation I really did feel differently about global warming. Now I think of the Earth as a wonderfully tasty gourmet sandwich. If it is heated a bit, the cheese will melt into a lovely, thick golden melt. But if it is heated too much, forgotten in the oven, it will roast until there is nothing left. Then comes drought, floods, rising sea levels and hunger. As long as humans are doing the wrong things, this will happen. So I say, why don't we just all reduce the materials we use like fossil fuels, wood, water and stuff we don't need.....and that might be pretty good". George Liu

"Captain Planet made me think about what I did around the house. He made me more interested in the environment and the world and want to fight to help save the environment. He said if we all saved energy we can help stop the melting ice. We can also plant trees to give us oxygen". Dylan Tellam

We all learned from the Captain Planet presentation: I'm hoping this awesome program can be seen by all students across the country.....for more information, visit Captain Planet's website: www.climategrouppltd.com



David Coburn and Young Friends

Florida Hometown Democracy Constitutional Amendment Petition

Here is what Carl Hiaasen said in a recent Miami Herald column about this important issue. "The Hometown Democracy initiative would let citizens vote to approve or reject major changes to the comprehensive land-use plans in their counties or cities. **For the first time, Floridians would have some direct control over how their communities grow**".

Visit www.hometowndemocracy.com to learn more and see how many people have signed the petition. The deadline to sign the petition is February 1, only 3 months from now. If you need a petition, call the office and a copy will be sent to you.

There is a group of opponents, calling themselves Floridians for Smarter Growth. They have created a rival constitutional amendment that would require 10 percent of voters in a city or county to sign a petition, before any land-use referendum takes place. These petitions could be signed only at the office of a municipal clerk or elections supervisor. This inconvenience would defeat any well-intentioned referendum. The interests supporting this alternative peti-

tion include the National Association of Home Builders, the Florida Chamber of Commerce and U.S. Sugar.

Visit www.hometowndemocracy.com, sign the petition and send it to others who want some control over the greed and sprawl that is running amok in Florida.

*The deadline is February 1, 2008.
Do it now!*



Get involved!

**Join Friends of the Everglades
Become a Volunteer
Help sponsor an event
For more information contact our office**

Everglades Natural History

First in a series by James A. Kushlan, Ph.D., Board Member



Jim Kushlan

The Snail Kite

Hovering dozens of feet above the Everglades marsh, a hawk falls rapidly towards the water, hovers just above the surface, drops into the water, and then emerges with its talons tightly grabbing its prize – The prey is not a bird or a rabbit, but a snail.

The hawk heads to a bush, where it alights, snail in talon and there uses an incredibly curved bill to extract the snail from its shell. This Snail Kite is surely one of the more bizarre raptors of the world, but it is one that is emblematic of the Everglades, so much so that for years it was called the Everglades Kite.

It is no longer called that in recognition that it occurs also over much of South America and in the great wetlands of southern Mexico and Cuba. And it occurs elsewhere in Florida, especially around Lake Okeechobee and central Florida lakes. But it is in the Everglades that it is easily observed, studied, and photographed - drive out the Tamiami Trail toward Shark Valley and watch the northern side of the road for soaring, hovering or perched kites. Look particularly around the Miccosukee restaurant. Or head out to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Males are grey; females and young are brown. One of the characteristics to look for at a distance is the white patch on the base of the tail, but beware of confusing them with Northern Harriers that may work the same areas, also glide and hover, and have a white patch above their tail.



Male Snail Kite

Over all its extensive range, it is in these Everglades where its survival skills are especially being put to the test. This kite eats apple snails, only one species of which occurs naturally in the Everglades, the largest species of freshwater snail in North America. Related snails are found in tropical wetlands around the globe, and in fact a similar species has been introduced in Florida through releases from aquaria. High populations of large snails occur mostly where marsh water levels are relatively deep and persistent. But, of course, much of the Everglades naturally dries periodically, even annually. When water disappears, snails become unavailable, many aestivate in the mud, and in severe or prolonged drought snails die and populations decrease. To find places where snails are common, large, and accessible, a basic strategy of kites is to move around a great deal. Radio tagged Snail Kites have been shown to move from the southern Everglades to Central Florida within a year and change

wetlands on average every three months. Or if an area stays wet and productive, a kite may remain there. They are remarkable in finding snail concentrations, and when they do they often nest nearby. In Panama for example, within a couple years of apple snails being artificially introduced in Lake Gatun in the Panama Canals, Snail Kites – not previously known to nest in Panama - were breeding on the lake. Nesting in Florida, usually in bushes over the marsh, is mostly from January through mid summer, but they can nest any time of year that the snail hunting is good. An itinerate species, when feeding conditions are good the kite nests quickly, completes its nesting in 3 months, and renests quickly.

Since kites have always been a part of the Everglades and the Everglades is characterized by seasonally fluctuating water levels and much of it dries annually, how are kites compatible? Kites suggest to us that, in its natural condition, the Everglades was quite variable, with some places drying in most years, some places in some years, and some places in few years. And some places dried one year but not another. Variable rainfall patterns from year to year, month to month and place to place meant



Female Snail Kite

that somewhere was wet enough for snails and for kites, and these places they found through their nomadic peregrinations. A restored Everglades would require the maintenance of such natural variation over its full extent.

But for now, the kite best can be seen and appreciated in places where water levels tend to be high for most of the year because water flow backs up behind levees or is directed into an area. This is why they are especially fond of the southern end of Conservation Area 3A and 3B and southern and eastern edge of Conservation Area 2B, two areas considered to be of critical importance to the species in Florida. In the 1970's a Snail Kite was an unusual sighting in the southern Everglades, but now they feed and nest, not only in the Conservation Areas, but in the cypress swamps south of Loop Road, where water levels have been high for some years now. Things change in the Everglades, as rainfall varies and water management decisions change, but for Kites if one provides the water appropriate for the vegetation and the snails, likely they will come. As for most species, protecting and providing appropriate habitat conditions, albeit for this species perhaps on an intermittent basis, somewhere over the entirety of its range is the key for the continued persistence of the "Everglades" Kite in the Everglades.

We Are Losing the Everglades!



By John E. Childe, Attorney

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) scientists have recently revealed a study of the effectiveness of the Everglades Restoration efforts since 1994, the inception of the Everglades Forever Act. Their assessment is that **over the past 10 years phosphorous contamination has expanded into almost 50% of the entire Everglades system.** That contamination is in the soil, not just the water column. It will take decades if not centuries to undue this damage.

The EPA scientists formally presented their findings to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group at their October 18, 2007 meeting in Coral Springs. Representatives of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) tried to minimize the relevance of the findings, blaming the expansion on recent hurricanes. But the EPA scientists had intentionally included in their Report the Water Management District's own data showing that in 2006, a non-hurricane year, phosphorous input from their Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) pump stations added 147 metric tons of additional phosphorous into the Everglades. That amount of phosphorous is more than three times the limit of 42 tons that the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) had established. It is that input that is causing the phosphorous contamination in the soil.

The EPA Report is a real wakeup call, a red flag, a danger signal that cannot be ignored or minimized. We cannot lose more Everglades.

We at Friends of the Everglades are meeting with all relevant parties to the Everglades Restoration effort to make sure they understand the import of the EPA Report.

The water quality restoration efforts of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which are contained in the Everglades Forever Act, are not working. Radical measures need to be taken now to stem the losses that we have incurred. Water quality restoration needs to be brought back to the forefront of Everglades Restoration. The status quo of studies and goals to be met in the future needs to be replaced with specific programs to eliminate the excessive phosphorous discharges!

Friends has established two specific measures that need to be taken by the State and Federal Governments immediately, if not sooner: First, the Corps of Engineers needs to complete its half of the Everglades Agricultural

Area (EAA) Water Storage Project. Second, the SFWMD needs to

The EPA Report is a real wakeup call, a red flag, a danger signal that cannot be ignored or minimized.

greatly expand the first STA it constructed, STA-1 West, which protects the Loxahatchee Refuge and Water Conservation Area 2, the two most impacted areas of the Everglades. The water storage will provide much needed help to the existing STAs by acting as a retention basin, holding the excess water from running through the STAs when they are not capable of treating the water. To see the full report go to: <http://www.epa.gov/region4/sesd/reports/epa904r07001.html>

Governor Crist signs Executive Orders to Slow Global Warming

On July 13, 2007 at a Climate Summit in Miami, Crist signed Executive Orders that will ultimately provide the state more energy security, create jobs and protect the environment for future generations. The Governor cited global climate change as one of the most important issues facing Florida and committed Florida to becoming a leader in reducing greenhouse gases (GHG). The Executive Orders mandate the following rules and regulations.

- Immediate adoption of rules by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that reduce GHG emissions throughout the state to 2000 levels by 2017, to 1990 levels by 2025, and by 2050 reduce GHG levels to 80% of 1990 emissions.
- Beginning with the 2009 model year, automakers will have to reduce GHG pollutants, such as carbon dioxide, by 25% for cars and 18% for sport utility vehicles, and the adoption of a statewide diesel idling reduction standard.

- The PSC must allow consumers to generate their own electricity and sell it back to the utility at the retail rate (net metering).
- The state building commission must rewrite building codes to increase energy performance of new construction by 15% from the 2007 Florida Energy Code for Building Construction by January 1, 2009.
- A Governor-appointed Action Team on Energy and Climate will be appointed to make recommendations by November 1, 2007 to implement a cap and trade approach to reducing GHG emissions and propose strategies for coordination of energy policy in Florida.
- State agencies and departments will have to reduce GHG emissions faster than the rest of the state: 10% from current levels by 2012, 25% lower than current levels by 2017, and 40% lower than current levels by 2025 – thereby leading by example.



Save the Date

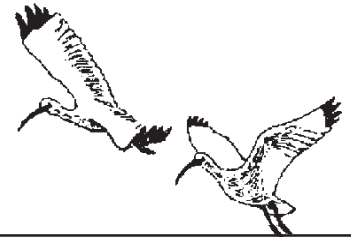
Experience the Everglades

**Second Annual Walk/Bike-a-Thon
Sunday, March 2, 2008 - 8:00 A.M.**

**Shark Valley
Everglades National Park**

sponsors and volunteers needed

Please contact the office at everglades@bellsouth.net, or call 305 669-0858 to join the Experience the Everglades committee. We have volunteer opportunities large and small. We need your help to make the event a success!



Founded in 1969 by Marjory Stoneman Douglas
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