

Everglades Reporter

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Friends of the Everglades

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Editor: Karen Mashburn

A Message from the President



David P. Reiner, II

Dear Members and Friends,

Thanks to everyone who participated in our first annual Walk/Bike-A-Thon, and a special thank you to Everglades National Park Superintendent Dan Kimball and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson for helping us lead the way. What a great event! Hope to see you all there next year.

So far, 2007 has seen some remarkable changes in the political, public and legal

landscape with respect to Everglades restoration. In April, Governor Crist appointed Shannon Estenoz to the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Ms. Estenoz is a former Everglades program director for World Wildlife Fund, former National Everglades Coalition Co-Chair, and is the regional director for the National Parks Conservation Association. Ms. Estenoz will have few friends on the Board with many Big Sugar and Developer holdovers still remaining from Governor Bush's run. She will need, and deserves, our support. Drop her an email and wish her good luck – sestenoz@npca.org.

Speaking of the SFWMD, in a rare nod toward the environment (prodded by a drought – in both water and federal funding) the District approved a new rule which will force new water users to explore alternative water sources before tapping into our overburdened aquifers! The federal funding spigot for Everglades restoration has been off since the Florida Legislature extended pollution deadlines a couple of years ago at the behest of Big Sugar.

Public concern with, and involvement in a broad sweep of environmental issues continues to grow. The Florida Hometown Democracy movement is on its way to collecting the 600,000 petition signatures it needs to put a referendum on the ballot in November to take back urban development ap-

proval authority from our fickle local government gatekeepers and return it to the voters. Your help is required. Please visit their website and find out how you can help. (floridahometowndemocracy.com)

Local outcry against sprawl development, poor storm water management, dirty coal fired power plants and increasing mercury contamination has brought a new wave of speakers to generally sedate public planning meetings to voice their displeasure with some local planners.

Finally, we are still giddy over the huge victory in our Lake Okeechobee case and are quickly moving to capitalize on that momentum by seeking full federal court oversight of state pollution practices. Allowing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to continue to oversee Clean Water Act permits is a little like giving the fox the keys to the chicken coop. I would like once again to thank our attorney John Childe for his dedication, Johnny Jones, Wayne Nelson and Audubon's Dr. Gray for their expertise and our own Herb Zebuth for his knowledge and sacrifice. I also thank all of our members who have kept us going all these years.

David P. Reiner, II, President

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Experience the Everglades

By Nancy Fishman, Administrative Director

Our First Annual Walk/Bike-A-Thon

February 25, 2007 was a magnificent day to *Experience the Everglades*. Nearly 80 supporters, old Friends and *new* Friends gathered at our first annual fundraiser at Everglades National Park. Bright and early, participants set out on either a 10-mile cycling course or a leisurely stroll along the one-mile Anhinga Trail.

The walkers were led by Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson and Everglades National Park Superintendent Dan Kimball.

Commissioner Sorenson was delighted to walk alongside others who share her commitment to preserve and protect the River of Grass. She reminded us how important it is to speak out and contact our elected officials to implore their commitment for true Everglades restoration.

While walking with us amongst the numerous photographers out to capture a shot of an Anhinga catching its prey or a gator sunning itself, Superintendent Kimball explained the history of the Park and treated us to his vast knowledge of the ecosystem and its amazing inhabitants.

First-timers to the Everglades were quite taken by its beauty and serenity. It was especially heartwarming to hear the children's comments about the fragility and threats to the region and their interest in working to ensure its survival (see Hannah Richter's article on page 6).

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped make the day a success. Roasters 'N Toasters, The Vitamin Shoppe and Shaklee provided refreshments. Be sure to visit our website, www.everglades.org for details about our second annual day to *Experience the Everglades*, a day where you can make a difference.



Commissioner Katy Sorenson and Park Superintendent Dan Kimball



Dave Reiner, President of Friends

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas House

By Juanita Greene, Conservation Chair

The small cottage in Coconut Grove that Marjory Stoneman Douglas designed, built and lived in for more than 70 years will not be moved, as the lease holder had proposed. The new state administration nixed the proposal in the face of heated controversy.

Opponents to the move included a group of about 50 "Marching Marjorys" who participated in Coconut Grove's annual Mango Strut Parade. Both sexes dressed in typical Douglas attire: flowered dress, straw hat, large eye glasses. "If you move my house I will kick you in your River of Grass" read one of the signs. The marchers included Janet Launcelot, Susan Wilson, Connie Washburn and Juanita Greene, all board members of Friends of the Everglades. Glenn Terry,

Coconut Grove parade official, Theo Long, director of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Nature Center, and Roxcy Bolton, civic activist, helped in the organization. Jim McMaster of Friends got the Coconut Grove Village Council to oppose the move.

Although the house and grounds suffered neglect, Friends took the lead in opposing its transfer to Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, suggesting instead that the state, which owns it, take it back and fix it up. The state has recovered the lease and for the time being will use it to house a ranger from the nearby Barnacle historic site. Friends will help organize a citizens' advisory committee to work with the state on long-term plans.

Commentary on the Everglades Agricultural Area

By Juanita Greene, Conservation Chair

How do you stop private development on land that desperately is needed for public purposes?



Juanita Greene

This is a core question involved in Everglades Restoration. Up to now it has not been answered. Government could of course condemn the land, but today in Florida such action virtually is unthinkable.

The private lands in this case are the sugar cane fields south of Lake Okeechobee, comprising about half a million acres. A growing number of agencies and individuals involved in Everglade Restoration now see the Everglades Agricultural Area as the best, and

probably the only place left to store water. It sits south of Lake Okeechobee in the heart of the Everglades.

Because we have drained half the Everglades, we now must send to sea more water than we use, damaging estuaries on both coasts and creating a water loss we no longer can afford. But if we save the water where will we put it?

Where the cane now grows, there once was water, at least for part of the year, and more was added when the lake overflowed. Then in the early 1950s the Army Corps of Engineers drained the area for agriculture at taxpayer expense. Now private interests are viewing the EAA for uses that would deter or defeat Everglades Restoration.

The largest part of the EAA is in Palm Beach County. The county zoning ordinance allows only farming and the extension of existing rock mines. A county study of the EAA is under way to evaluate, among other things, industry claims that restrictions on mining would slow development in all of South Florida. A major mining company has filed suit that if successful would nullify the county's moratorium on new mines. A similar nullification was proposed in the state legislature.

Applications for other uses in the EAA are pending. One sugar company has notified the county it will seek urban development on 15,000 acres now covered in sugar cane. Florida Power and Light Co. is applying for two new power plants near the EAA, obviously to serve anticipated future development. A proposed port on the south shore of Lake Okeechobee would require development in the EAA. Two landfills and new roads are planned.

A major battle looms on the future of the EAA as more

The longer government waits to secure the EAA for water storage, the more difficult and expensive it will be. The challenge is for government to find the means and the courage to move now.

environmentalists see it as playing an integral part in Everglades restoration. Construction of a huge reservoir in the EAA is about to begin, but that will not be enough. Pressure is on the Army Corps of Engineers to revive a plan for a flowway through the western part of the EAA.

In the early 70s when it was easier to get environmental protection laws through the legislature, it passed one giving the state more oversight on local development. This tool still is available but the state will not use it in the EAA, saying Palm Beach County's present zoning ordinance provides adequate protection. But as we all know, zoning laws can be changed.

The longer government waits to secure the EAA for water storage, the more difficult and expensive it will be. The challenge is for government to find the means and the courage to move now.

Our 38th Annual Meeting and Founder's Day Celebration

Members gathered to elect the 2007-2008 Board of Directors at Friends 38th Founder's Day Celebration and Annual Meeting on March 11 at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden. It was a day to honor our beloved founder, Marjory



David Reiner and Juanita Greene at the Annual Meeting with a cake with Marjory's picture on it

Dr. Thomas Van Lent, Featured Speaker at our Annual Meeting

Dr. Thomas Van Lent is currently a Senior Scientist with the Everglades Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of America's Everglades. There, he provides scientific and technical support to non-governmental organizations involved in Everglades restoration. He has worked for the South Florida Water Management District, where he worked on the development of the computer model used to develop the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project (CERP). Dr. Van Lent also has worked as a hydrologist for the National Park Service, and served as the Deputy Director of the South Florida Natural Resources Center. He has held academic positions at the University of Virginia and South Dakota State University, and conducted research in stochastic hydrology and groundwater flow. He holds a doctorate in Civil Engineering from Stanford University.

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Stoneman Douglas, and to honor those who have been tireless in their dedication to saving the Everglades.

The second annual Marjory Stoneman Douglas Environmental Award was given to Juanita Greene. Recognition also went to Friends' legal team, led by John Childe, our outstanding General Counsel. This year was especially rewarding due to Friends' victory of the S-2, S-3 (Lake Okeechobee) back-pumping cases. After receiving his award, Mr. Childe presented Defender of the Everglades awards to Herb Zebuth, Johnny Jones, Wayne Nelson, and Dr. Paul Gray.

Members also had the opportunity to be educated by Kristina Trotta about the proposed Everglades Skyway which is a key project in moving Everglades Restoration forward.

Tom Van Lent of the Everglades Foundation gave a very interesting presentation.

In addition to a very successful silent auction, the day concluded with members and guests enjoying refreshments, especially the beautiful birthday cake which was decorated with Marjory's picture.

The Marjory Stoneman Douglas Environmental Award to Juanita Greene

Juanita Greene, past president of Friends and current vice president and conservation chair, was honored at our annual meeting with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Environmental Award for her leadership and dedication to our cause. Following in Marjory's footsteps, Ms. Greene's spirit and commitment to the everlasting health of the Everglades is her life's priority. Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson, 2007 recipient of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas award made the presentation.



Juanita Greene with the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Environmental Award, presented by Katy Sorenson

Defender of the Everglades Award Recipients

These four prominent people, acting as witnesses on behalf of Friends, made the victory in the Lake Okeechobee backpumping cases possible. We are indeed fortunate to have them as part of our team, as they are some of the most knowledgeable and well respected experts on Lake Okeechobee in the country. Herb Zebuth, Johnny Jones and Wayne Nelson are board members of Friends.

Dr. Paul Gray is a scientist with the Florida Audubon Society who is a leading expert on Lake Okeechobee. He spends a lot of time in his airboat, inspecting the condition of the lake. He is the science advocate for Lake Okeechobee representing the environmental interests before all state and federal regulatory agencies. Dr. Gray lives in Florida, FL.

Herb Zebuth is a scientist who worked for many years for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, but never allowed himself to be promoted out of civil service so he could battle to save the lake while working within the system. For 23 years he was representative of the Department of

Environmental Protection, (DEP) for all matters relating to Lake Okeechobee. He continues the fight now that he is retired.

These two experts were the principal witnesses in our successful lawsuit against backpumping polluted water into the lake. Besides being experts in their fields, they are citizen warriors who fight constantly to save Lake Okeechobee from destruction.

Johnny Jones is a name that still evokes admiration and respect from environmentalists, although he retired a long time ago as director of the Florida Wildlife Federation. We can thank Johnny Jones for the Big Cypress Swamp and many other environmen-

tally critical places that now are in public ownership. We honor him for his many environmental victories that have left South Florida a better place today. Like Paul and Herb, he never gave up the fight and, despite failing health, remains in it today.

Wayne Nelson has been an advocate for Lake Okeechobee since 1985. He was the first person to invite our attorney John Childe down to provide advice and representation on dealing with the pollution of Lake Okeechobee. His group (FADE) Fishermen Against Destruction of the Environment, acted as a co-plaintiff with Friends on the S2, S3 case.

How will climate change affect our River of Grass?

Dan Kimball, Superintendent of Everglades National Park, testified before the U.S. House Interior, Environment subcommittee. Here are excerpts from Mr. Kimball's testimony.

The Everglades ...are a giant limestone sponge that helps to absorb the floodwaters from tropical storms and hurricanes; and one of the major engines of tourism for South Florida.

During the last 130 years, the Everglades have been put in peril by a series of water management projects that were conceived with good intentions, but with little understanding of the ecosystem. The ability of the ecosystem to store water – for both people and nature – has been seriously compromised. The existing “plumbing” of South Florida makes it almost impossible to improve conditions for one user of water without harming another.

The Department of the Interior, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State of Florida, and the Native American tribes, has embarked on a 35-year, \$11 billion effort to restore the greater Everglades. This effort is even more critical in a time of rising seas.

A rise in sea level of between 7 and 23 inches, as projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, would submerge tidal flats and inland freshwater marshes and impact the species that inhabit these areas. If sea level rises 23 inches, it could submerge the park's pinelands, one of the rarest ecosystems in South Florida. Rising sea levels could also erode beaches, leaving fewer habitats for nesting sea turtles.

Florida Bay could be affected not only by sea level rise, but by rising temperatures as well. The IPCC report predicts that sea surface temperatures could rise between 2 and 5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100. Scientists have linked high sea surface temperatures in 1987 to the seagrass die-off that occurred that same year. Higher sea temperatures could fuel algal blooms or promote marine diseases.

Sea level rise would likely push salt water into the Everglades and threaten the viability of South Florida's drinking water supply. Today, surface water from the Everglades is the principal source of freshwater for the underlying Biscayne Aquifer, which is in turn the source of drinking water for close to 5 million people in South Florida.

Given its geography and topography, the Everglades is very vulnerable to sea level rise. Sea level rise would impact the ecosystem, the park's infrastructure, our visitors, and our greater South Florida community. Everglades National Park is undertaking a number of actions in response to climate change. We will continue to monitor indicators of climate change in the park, and adapt accordingly based on what the science tells us. Most importantly, we will continue to do everything we can to restore the River of Grass, resulting in an Everglades ecosystem that will be healthier and more resilient to the effects of climate change.

Young Friends of the Everglades Presentation

By *Connie Washburn, Outreach and Education*

On Friday, February 16, fourth grader Hannah Richter was amazed by what she learned about the Everglades at a Young Friends presentation. She really cares about nature and the environment. That is why she's a member of 'Nature Club', an interest group at The Cosmos Center at Howard Drive Elementary School. Hannah was in class during a special presentation given by Jim McMaster, Young Friends Outreach Director, and Connie Washburn, Founder of Young Friends. A history of the Everglades and of Young Friends was presented, followed by a program on water conservation.

Mr. McMaster is Director of our Young Friends program that is presented in schools at the fourth grade level through a grant from the Miami-Dade County Environmental Resources Management Department (DERM).

Ms. Washburn invited the students and their families to join Friends for the 'Experience the Everglades' Walk/Bike-A-Thon on February 25. Hannah went home and shared her new-found information, and asked her mom if they could participate in the Walk.

We met Hannah again on the Walk and asked her to share her enthusiasm in a newsletter article, and to speak to the members of Friends at our Annual Event on March 11. She spoke confidently to a room full of adults and gave us hope for the future. See Hannah's article below.



Jim McMaster and Hannah Richter

The Everglades Needs Our Help

By *Hannah Richter, age 10*

As a fourth grade student at Pinecrest Elementary and the Cosmos Center at Howard Drive Elementary, I feel that it is my responsibility to tell you that the Everglades needs your help!

A few weeks ago I was informed about an organization called "Young Friends of the Everglades", which was founded by Connie Washburn and her students in 1994. She and Jim McMaster came to Howard Drive Elementary to speak about this group to the Nature Club in Cosmos. They talked to us about the Everglades hero, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. I call her a hero because she did so much for the Everglades and is the main reason we probably have as much of the Everglades left today, as we do. Young Friends of the Everglades is an organization that gets young people, such as me, interested in helping to preserve the Everglades. For example, they held the first annual Walk/Bike-A-Thon to show people how beautiful and important the Everglades is. The event was also to show the participants what a great donation they'd made to preserve all these amazing animals and plants species.

The Everglades is a one of a kind place on earth and the pride that can be felt in helping to save it is unbelievable.

Ever since I joined, I've thought to myself, "Wow, I, one person of the billions on Earth, can help make a difference that affects everyone." Complete destruction is closer than ever and if we don't take action NOW, we'll lose this unique ecosystem forever.

Friends and Young Friends of the Everglades are working together to make a difference. It's going to take much more money and labor than we'd like, but we're not quitters. They say it'll take about 40 years to restore the Everglades. If kids all around Florida are aware of what's happening, then we might actually have the power to save the Everglades. I'm excited about being part of this organization, and I want everyday kids like me to care and help the cause! I'm not going to lie and say it's going to be a walk in the park, but YOU can make a difference!

Everglades Coalition Award to John Childe

The Everglades Coalition Awards Friends' Attorney Highest Annual Award

At the 2007 Annual Everglades Coalition Conference, held in Orlando on January 20 and 21, 2007, the Coalition awarded Friends' attorney, John Childe, its highest award, the George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year.

George Barley was a key figure in the early Everglades Restoration movement. He and his Foundation funded key legislative initiatives to make the polluters pay their fair share to clean up the pollution they have caused in the Everglades and to develop and get passed the Environmental Amendment to the Florida Constitution. He died in an airplane accident. But his efforts have continued with the Everglades Foundation, spearheaded by his widow, Mary Barley.

In the introduction of the Award Juanita Greene, Conservation Chair of Friends, stated that "for the past 14 years Childe has stewarded us toward major Federal Court Determinations that will insure water quality restoration in the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee". She emphasized that throughout those 14 years Friends got little help except

from the Miccosukee Tribe and individual members of the Friends of the Everglades to pay for the litigation.

Pointing to the Supreme Court Remand Order in 2004 and the recent Federal District Court Decision in the Lake Okeechobee case, Juanita stated that "we are very close now to a final determination that NPDES permits will be required for the major discharges of the South Florida Water Management District that are not being given any treatment or permit requirements under the State's Everglades Forever Act".

Childe emphasized in his acceptance of the award that he was "highly honored" by the award, and by being included with the past recipients. He went on to say that he was confident that Federal District Court would find the Water Management District backpumping discharges from the S-2, S-3 and S-4 pump stations into Lake Okeechobee and the S-9 into the Everglades are required to have a Federal Permit. Addressing the new Secretary of the Florida Department of Environ-

mental Protection, sitting in the audience, Childe reiterated the need for those permits to require the discharges to meet all



John Childe addresses the Coalition

water quality standards as soon as practicable. Those requirements would go a long way to bring about real water quality restoration at the time and place necessary to provide clean water to the restored flow into the Everglades.

The Greening of Coral Gables

By Connie Washburn, Outreach and Education

On Tuesday, April 24 Coral Gables Mayor Don Slesnick and the entire City Commission received the 'Defender of the Climate' Award for signing on to the 'US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement' (USMCPA). Broward County Audubon President, Doug Young and Friends VP, Connie Washburn presented the award to the city for its efforts to 'Go Green'!

As of April 23, 2007, 464 US Mayors in 50 States representing 62 million citizens have signed on to the USMCPA, including 31 Florida Mayors!

Under the Agreement, participating cities commit to take the following three actions:

1 Strive to meet or beat the Kyoto Protocol targets in their own communities, through actions ranging from anti-sprawl land-use policies to urban forest restoration projects to public information campaigns.

2 Urge their state governments, and the federal government, to enact policies and programs to meet or beat the greenhouse gas emission reduction target suggested for the United States in the Kyoto Protocol — 7% reduction from 1990 levels by 2012.

3 Urge the U.S. Congress to pass the bipartisan greenhouse gas reduction legislation, which would establish a national emission trading system (more information: www.climatecrisis.net)

Mayor Don Slesnick said, "Our city is committed to taking various actions to protect the climate, the environment and the earth's resources. 'Sustainability' is our goal—to ensure our future existence, we are going as 'green' as possible."

Coral Gables, Florida 2007

We greatly appreciate our volunteers, and the generosity of the people and businesses who donated food and items for our winter events.

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