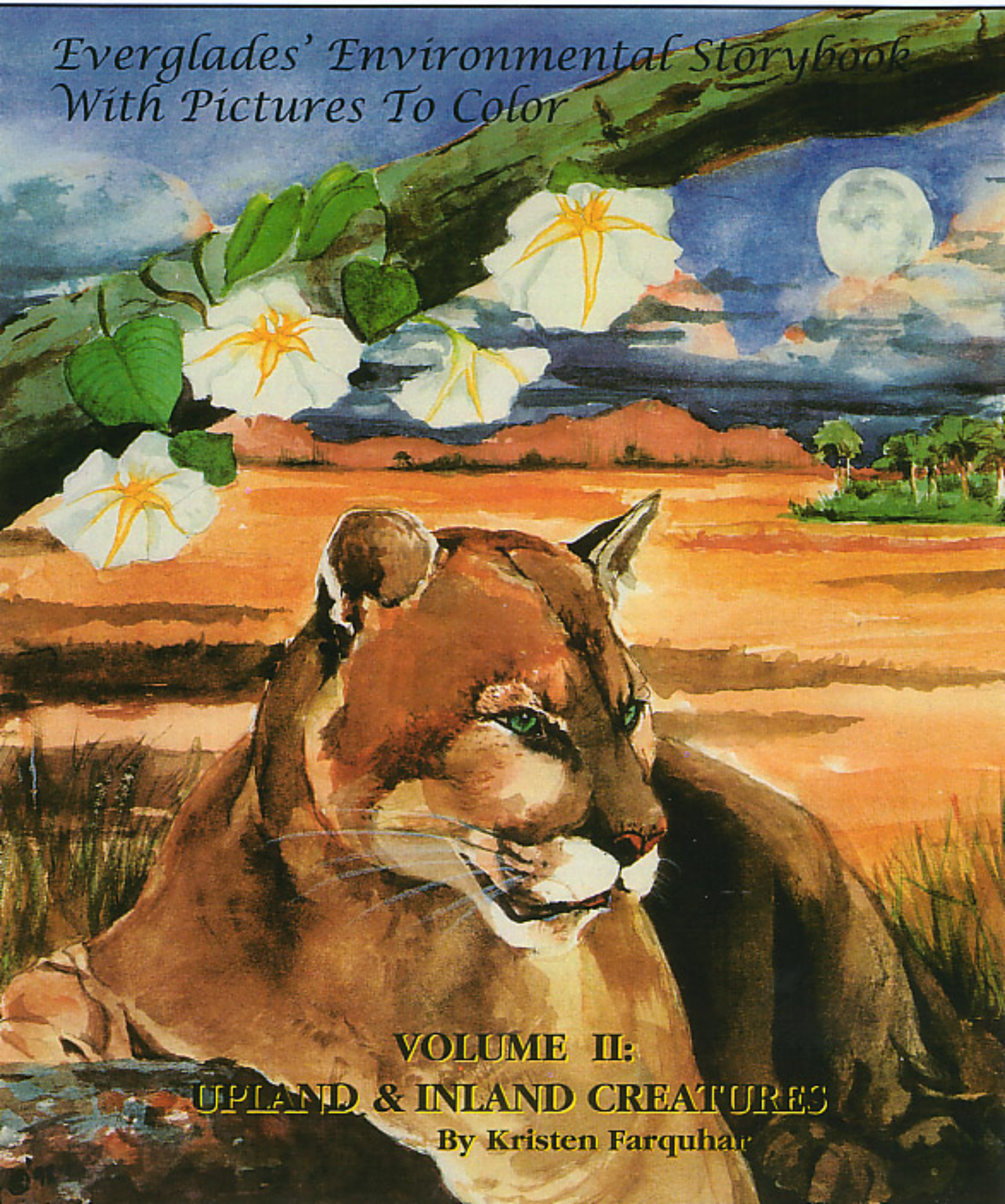
VOICES *of the* EARTH

Everglades' Environmental Storybook With Pictures To Color



VOLUME II:
UPLAND & INLAND CREATURES

By Kristen Farquhar

About This Book

VOICES of the EARTH is for children and adults to enjoy together. This book focuses on some of Florida's threatened and endangered creatures and their habitat. For the first time, they—the Creature Beings, tell their side of the environmental story. *Voices* filled with personality invite readers to relate to Mother Earth and all living things with a deeper understanding and kinship.

Children ages 6 to12 will be particularly receptive to the environmental concepts offered, and younger ones can color while an adult reads. This presents the perfect opportunity for a shared learning experience. By coloring and listening, *VOICES of the EARTH* will help heighten awareness of the natural world.

If there is a need to know more about a species, Part II: The Picture Index, provides information on all 24 species including their current Florida listings: Endangered, Threatened, Species of Special Concern, and how we can help! Action addresses and telephone hotlines to various organizations have been added to promote public participation in environmental affairs. An environmental glossary is located between Parts I and II uniting the two sections with its informative reading. All glossary words are noted in bold print.

With the publication of Volume II, the Florida Everglades Edition of *VOICES of the EARTH* is now complete. Along with Volume I: *Coastal Creatures,* the two books present a new perspective on one of the most unique ecosystems in the world.

Great thanks to Connie Washburn and Marta Whitehouse of Young Friends of the Everglades (YFE). Their interest and support made this new volume possible. These two school teachers founded YFE in 1994. Their vision, heart, and great determination have made this environmental group for children a huge success! It is based on the philosophies of Marjory Stoneman Douglas, author of *The Everglades: River of Grass*. Young Friends is her ECHO... and they speak it well. An environmental outreach program is being offered by YFE to schools in Miami-Dade County, Florida. A membership application to join Young Friends is available in the back of this book.

Additional thanks to Bruce Claypool for his assistance with this project. But most importantly... I am grateful for the love and support from my husband Raymond Red Feather and my daughter Moorea. And last, but not least, I thank *The Voices of the Earth.*

PART I

The Voices and Their Coloring Pages

Animals, birds, and wild things
do not speak in human terms; they speak in a language ancient and seemingly separate from our own. But for the sake of awareness, I have listened... and each species has spoken with warmth, personality and integrity. K.F.

How To Use The Coloring Pages

Color the pages while the animals and birds speak to you. Have someone read the information on each species to you, or read it yourself. Coloring instructions are found at the bottom of each page, and additional suggestions can be found on The Color Wheel, page 28. Updated information on the species can be found in the Picture Index, page 31.

Artist's Note

The best color coverage will result from using colored pencils, and gray shades can be achieved by using a #4B lead pencil. The spirit of a creature will shine through and speak to you if you leave the center of the creature's eye open and white.

PURPLE GALLINULE – eye: red; bill: red with yellow tip; forehead: light blue shield above eye; head, throat, belly and bottom: purple-blue; back of neck, back and tail: light greenish brown; legs and feet: yellow. **BALD CYPRESS TREES** – light and dark green. Water and Sky: blue. Lily Pads: green. **FRAGRANT WHITE LILY**– white with yellow center.

Hey there! I am so glad to finally meet you and welcome you to my homeland — La Florida! Did you know that La Florida is a Spanish word that means *Spanish Flower Festival,* which is Easter? Well, it is and Florida has many flowers, birds, and animals, too! How many different kinds, or **species** do you know?

I am a Purple Gallinule. If my name is too much for you to say, you may call me Rainbow Bird! We are the most colorful of all the water birds. We belong to the bird family called rails.

Most rails are small, between 15 and 20 inches tall. We are not big on flying, and we prefer the ground to be wet, like a marsh or swamp. Rails, (remember, that is me too) have special wings that set us apart from all other birds. Our wings bend at the end like a claw or hand. This gives us extra balance when we crawl through the thick water plants. Our long, beautiful legs and toes help us, too.

My favorite things to eat are seeds, water lettuce, frogs, and all kinds of bugs! Mmmmmmm, I'm hungry. Are you hungry, too? As you have probably noticed — I am not shy, and I am curious about everything! Did you know that Florida was discovered by a man called Ponce de Leon? Yes, that's what they say. But my question is: How could he discover it when there were already people living here? Do you know what Ponce de Leon called them? He called them Indians! Do you know why? He thought he was in INDIA!! Needless to say, Ponce de Leon made a few mistakes. Most American Indians prefer to be called Native Americans, and you can understand why.

Today, Florida has three Native American Nations: Poarch Creeks, who live in the northwestern part of the state; the Seminole, who live mostly in the central part of Florida, and the Miccosukee. They live in south Florida, in the Everglades. All three are separate nations, but they come together in One Heart for the Earth. Go visit them! You'll have lots of fun and learn many good things!

Oh my! I've talked too much again, but *I just love history*! However, in my excitement, I do try to keep an open mind. History does not always tell all the facts, and so I get to play detective sometimes. (I enjoy that!) To me, history is a story about the land and the people. They are One. Traditional native people teach us that we are all related.... I like that. It makes us one BIG family — a RAINBOW family! Yea! Turn the page to meet more of the family!

WOOD DUCK Adult – eye: red; bill: red with grey tip and yellow outline; head: green with 3 white stripes; cheek and upper neck: black; bottom, stomach and sides: white; wing side: yellow-brown (feathers as is); upper wing side and back: blue-black with white edge; tail feathers underneath: pink, orange, and black. Baby – bill: grey; cheek and around eye: yellow; chest: white; body and wings: light brown.

Very glad to meet you. Hi! I'm the one up in the tree. That's my dad in front. Someday I'm going to be *just* as big and *just* as handsome as he is. His name is Phillip Randall Jefferson the third. My name is the same, only I'm the fourth. My mother, my brother, and my three sisters are hiding. They are very shy around people.

Dad and I are brave, even though most times we are shy around people too. But we figured we might never get the chance to speak to you again. Dad didn't know quite what to say, so he's letting me do the talking. We kids can talk to one another. You know what I mean.

We are Wood Ducks. Our favorite place to be is on a lake. Guess where? Right! In the woods. Florida still has some great places where we can live quietly and peacefully. But sometimes, I can hear motor cars. They seem to be getting closer and closer. They really scare me!

Other names people like to call us are the Bride Duck, and Promised One. I guess it's because our feathers are so pretty. In fact, we are called the most *beautiful duck in all of North America*! We grow up to be around the same size as most ducks, but we do have a few differences....

We like to sit in trees. We even put our nests in trees! In fact, not only do I have webbed feet for swimming — I have claws on my feet so I can climb down this tree. And sometimes, I even jump out! But only if my mother calls me.

I love my mother, my father, my sisters, and my brother. Wood ducks like to stay as a family for a long time. We don't like big noisy crowds like other ducks. Yuk! We're very happy with family and a few close friends. Would you like to be my friend? I sure would like that. I'll go tell everyone how nice you are. Then they'll know not to be afraid of you. Wood ducks are scared of people because we're still hunted for food and for our feathers.

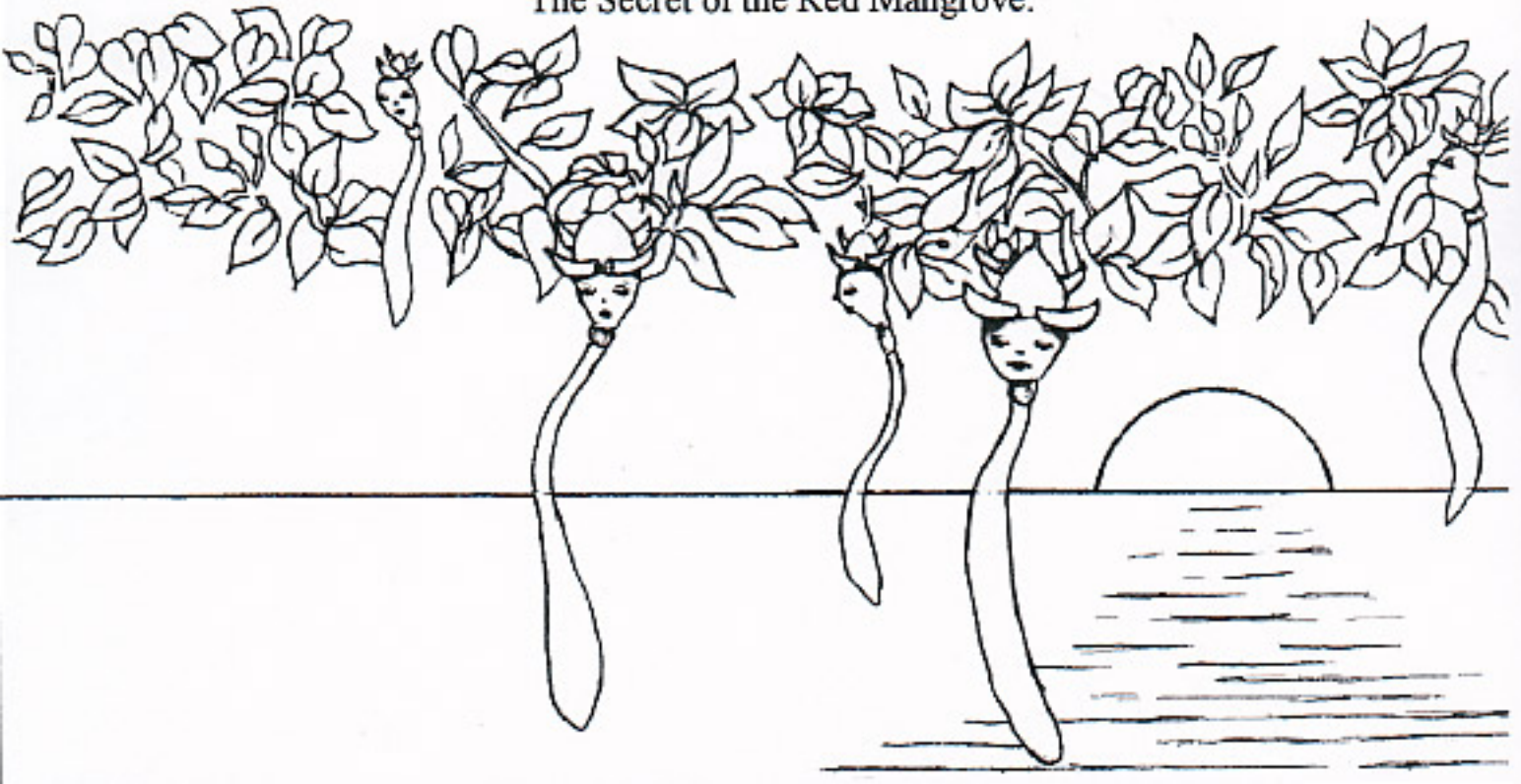
My Grandpop tells me stories about the old days. He says that a long, *long* time ago, humans and animals and *all Earth Relations* lived as one big family. We lived together and at peace. Wow! Isn't that great? He also said that when humans needed food, they would send out a prayer. We would hear and understand the prayer, and we would give of ourselves. At that time, humans only used what was needed, and they always gave thanks. Hey! Maybe it wasn't so bad back in the old days!

Gee Willigers! It sure has been nice talking to you. I just knew we were going to be friends. You might see me, but then again, you might not. But I'll be thinking of you! Bye for now!

I can't believe it! I just can't believe it. I have a whole page in which to tell you my secrets. And you must know, *all* secrets are being shared these days, and I have waited soooo long to tell you mine. I – I hardly know how to say... what I need to say. Oooooo, and now, I'm wasting precious moments. Oh my! Here goes....

I am a Red Mangrove Tree. Our **species** has been living for thousands of years. (Sigh) We make islands, for we are one of the few plant species that can live in salt water. Red mangroves are very important to Florida. We protect her from the strong winds of storms and hurricanes. Our roots are very strong and they help keep Florida's shores from eroding or *slipping slowly* into the sea. We also make food and homes for all the Water Beings.

The center of our flowers grows into a long stem or what is called a *prop root*. Inside there are many hidden seeds. We drop them when they are about 10 to 12 inches long. After they fall, some dive right into the mud and quickly grow another tree. Others float for miles in the water looking for a place to root. You will see us at the beach. Pick us up. Know that what you hold in your hands has been happening for thousands of years. You may also use us to draw pretty pictures in the sand.

Now you know me, and you know how important I am to my beautiful Florida. Tell my story to everyone, and share the Secret of Life in Florida —

The Secret of the Red Mangrove.