

## LET THE EVERGLADES WATER FLOW

By Michael Matthews

### Your Voice is Needed Before It's Too Late

Tamiami Trail (US highway 41) cuts through Shark River Slough, one of the Everglades' deepest and most important water passageways. Scientists say this 11-mile section of the 1928 road must be elevated into a "skyway" if Everglades restoration is to succeed. The skyway will be an important first step in returning the historic water sheet flow through parched Everglades National Park and into Florida Bay. It will be beneficial to wildlife by reducing habitat fragmentation and preventing road kill. The project will create jobs and increase tourism while raising Everglades awareness at the same time. Best yet, an 11-mile skyway will serve as a visible symbol of Everglades restoration; a real benefit to the floundering project. This year, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will make a decision on the skyway. The Corps is considering alternatives, such as a smaller-scale, 4-mile bridge – an inadequate "second best" option to the environmentally preferred 11-mile skyway. The Sierra Club believes that Everglades restoration cannot happen without the full 11-mile skyway.

When Marjory Stoneman Douglas called the Everglades a "river of grass" she was referring to sheet flow – how water would flow in a miles-wide sheet from Lake Okeechobee south through the Everglades and out into Florida Bay. Deeper channels in this sheet flow are called sloughs. Sloughs are the life-giving arteries of the Everglades, and when combined with ridges of land shaped by the flowing water you get the "ridge and slough" terrain that once epitomized the area. If we are to restore the Everglades, we must recreate this landscape. Tamiami Trail prevents this because it is a tourniquet, depriving the Everglades of its precious lifeblood while at the same time damming the water and retaining too much on the road's north side. Raising the 11-mile stretch of the highway that crosses Shark River Slough will do much to restore this fragile ecosystem to its true state, and be very beneficial



*Rendering of proposed Tamiami Skyway*

to wildlife. Presently, you can drive across the trail at any time and be assured of seeing some poor animal mutilated along the side of the road. Road kill is a major problem along the Trail. Another related problem is habitat fragmentation. Put simply, the Trail diminishes the habitat available to wildlife, forcing many animals to try and cross the road looking for food or mates. Raising the Tamiami Trail to a skyway solves both of these problems. You can also see that the more skyway we have, the more benefits wildlife will enjoy.

Tamiami Trail used to be a tourist attraction. When it was built, back in the 20's, many people would travel on it just for the experience itself. We can make the Trail an attraction again. Raising the Trail will mean that the view will be spectacular. Imagine yourself driving along that 11-mile stretch with no trees or bushes to block your view—nothing but a 360-degree panoramic view of beautiful Everglades landscape. This will bring more tourists to Florida and the Everglades, pumping millions into our economy. More visitors to the imperiled Everglades mean more awareness of the plight of our embattled wetlands. The skyway will not only be good for our wallets, it will also be good for Everglades awareness.

*continued on page 3*

## Broward Sierra Programs



**JULY 5th: "Hope Takes Wing"**, the saga of the *ultralight flights to bring Whooping Cranes back to Florida's Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge* after a hundred-year absence in eastern North America.

**August 2nd: "A Tale of Two Counties"** documents the 10-year results of two different approaches to managing growth in two Washington, D.C. bedroom counties. *George Sibley, a videographer and producer from Daytona Beach*, has produced a series of documentaries on Florida. Join the discussion with your own city's issues.



Anne Kolb Nature Center is located on the North side of Sheridan Street, East of U.S. 1. Doors open at 7:00 PM. The meeting is open to the public at no charge.

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We hope you enjoy our newsletter. Why not join us right now? Come along on an outing. Get involved, learn about local issues and how they affect you and your community. Just use the membership form on the back cover.



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**Membership Corrections** - To expedite any membership change (new addresses, etc.) or problems with your membership records please send your name, member number, old and new address or problem to:  
**Member Services**, 85 Second Street, San Francisco, CA 94105-3441. 415-977-5653 or e-mail <address.changes@sierraclub.org> or <membership.services@sierraclub.org>  
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## Committee Meetings

### Executive Committee:

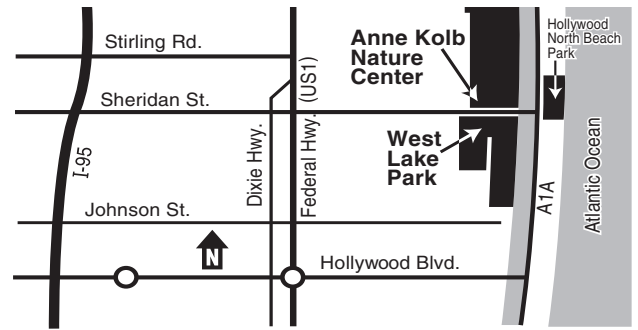
Meets the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 pm, in room 430a of the Broward County Governmental Center. For details call Loren Colburn at 954-761-1355 (or e-mail lorenac1101@hotmail.com).

### Broward Sierra Club Social:

We'll be taking the summer off for socials. The socials will start again in the fall on the 4th Wednesday of the month. If you would like to help out in organizing the socials or you have a great idea for a place to hold a social somewhere in Broward please contact Max Goldstein at 954-296-3411.

### Carrying Capacity Committee:

Contact Linda Brown, Carrying Capacity Chair at (954) 764-1470 or e-mail lbrown@communityusa.com.



## Broward Sierra Club General Meetings

Held on the first Tuesday of every month at Ann Kolb Nature Center (954-926-2480). Outings sign-up start at 7:00 p.m. and the general meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. All members welcome!

To get to Anne Kolb Nature Center: Take I-95 to the Sheridan St. exit. Go East past Federal Hwy. The entrance to Anne Kolb Nature Center will be on your left (After the sign for West Lake Park). The center is before the Intracoastal Bridge.

## THE POWER OF MONEY *By George Cavros, Energy Issue Chair*

Every time you spend a dollar – you make a political statement.

Although you may not consider yourself a “political person,” when you purchase a product you directly endorse an inherent value in that product that’s important to you. Have no doubt, Corporate America is listening to your consumer values. Corporations are increasingly redirecting resources to meet the growing consumer demand for safer and environmentally sustainable items ranging from organically grown foods to hybrid automobiles.

### Buy it and they will come.

Economics 101: If there is a growing demand for a product that is going unmet, producers will step in to satisfy the demand in order to profit from it. The main purpose for a corporation’s existence is to maximize its shareholders’ value. While the environmental community justifiably criticizes corporate short term profit motives as devoid of any environmental stewardship goals, those same profit motives can be exploited by you, the customer, to move multinational corporations towards investing and producing safer, and environmentally sustainable products – effectively placing products on store shelves that federal officials have been unwilling to mandate through regulation.

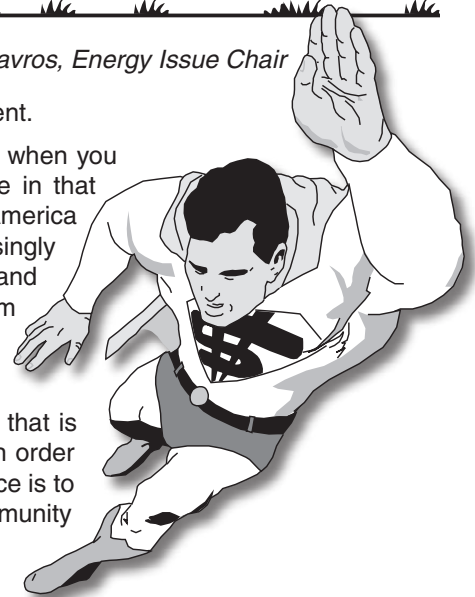
### Cases In Point:

Organic farming is growing exponentially to meet consumer demand for chemical-free food. Americans are slowly coming to learn of the health impacts of pesticides, herbicides, hormones and antibiotics in their food supply. The Centers for Disease Control revealed in a recent report that average Americans carry 116 various man-made chemicals in their bodies. The long term impact of such exposure is unknown, and the E.P.A. and F.D.A. have been too slow to act.

Based largely on consumer health concerns, organic farming has gone from a counter-culture alternative lifestyle to its products being embraced by established brands. There is Gold Medal Certified Organic Flour. Kellogg has Kashi, an organic line cereal, and General Mills has Cascadian Farms cereal. Heinz has organic catsup and Campbell now has organic soups.

Closer to home, Publix recently announced that it’s seeking a piece of the fast-growing organic foods market. They plan to open two natural food supermarkets in Palm Beach County next year called “Greenwise.” No word yet on future Broward stores. Publix will be vying for your business with established natural food operations such as Wild Oats Market and Whole Foods Market.

In another example of the power of consumer demand (and public pressure), Office Depot recently agreed to phase-out all paper products coming from rare and vulnerable forests. It has committed to achieving a 30% post consumer recycled content across all its products. Office Depot now offers a 100% post consumer recycled paper named *Envirotech*. The front of the package has a picture of a forest on it – it’s hard to miss. Office Depot’s commitment came in response to Staples’ office supply stores’ plan to offer more eco-friendly paper products.





Some bad news: Everglades restoration is floundering. Sure, there has been some progress, but in general not enough is happening and any significant Everglades restoration may be in jeopardy. What could help? How about a symbol – something tangible with importance that can easily be grasped? We need a success story that we can all rally around and say, "See, it can be done. Let's do more." An 11-mile skyway could be just that symbol.

Everyone agrees that the 11-mile version of the skyway is the best for the environment. But, sadly, what seems to be driving this decision is money. The plan seemingly being given the most consideration at present is a small, 4-mile bridge with the other seven miles of roadway being raised with asphalt layered on top of it (to compensate for increased water levels expected after CERP). The thinking seems to be that since an 11-mile skyway would have the highest overall price tag (\$250 million) it is the most expensive.

But, the skyway really does make more financial sense than the other alternatives. When broken down to cost-per-mile, here's what we get: the skyway costs about \$20 million per mile compared to the estimated \$30 million per mile for a 4-mile bridge or \$50 million per mile for a half-mile span. The skyway is not only the better decision for the environment; it is also a better bargain all around. However, this is not even taking into consideration that the other alternatives would involve further alterations down the line, raising their price tags and wasting our taxpayer's money. Even though the other alternatives may be cheaper in the short term, and might (arguably) even be quicker to enact, the plan that clearly has the most long-range benefits and that makes the most sense is the 11-mile skyway.

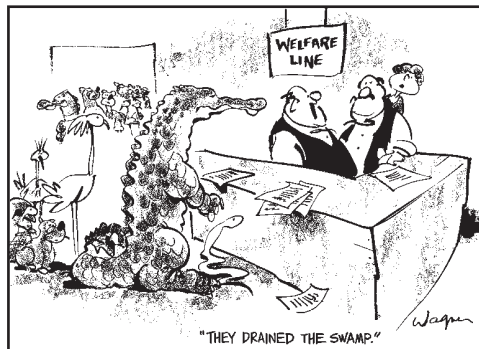
You can see that there are many good reasons to support the 11-mile skyway across Shark River Slough. But, it might not happen. We need your help to ensure that it does. Please let your elected officials know that you support the full 11-mile Tamiami Skyway. Public comment to the draft of the Supplementary Environmental Impact Statement will begin in August, and a final decision will be made by the end of the year. Time is of the essence. Please contact these elected officials as soon as you can:

U.S. Representative Mario Diaz Balart  
Wash. DC: (202) 225-2778 Fax: (202) 226-0346  
Miami: (305) 225-6866 Fax: (305) 225-7432

U.S. Senator Bill Nelson  
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Orlando: 407-872-7161 (toll free from Florida at 1-888-671-4091),  
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Help save Florida's natural environment and set an example for the rest of the country. "Let the water flow."

## OUTING OPPORTUNITY

### SUNDAY, JULY 17TH. BIG CYPRESS WILDLIFE PRESERVE 'NEW ACQUISITION LANDS' HIKE.

We will get an early start at 8 am to hike through a wide mixture of South Florida vegetation on foot trails, overgrown buggy roads and gravel road in the section of the Big Cypress Preserve closest to Ft. Lauderdale. Birds and other wildlife are abundant in this area. Rated moderate to strenuous because of trail conditions and a distance of 6 to 8 miles. Bring sufficient food and water, as well as comfortable hiking shoes that you don't mind getting wet. Due to weather conditions at this time of the year some trail sections may be ankle to shin deep. We will meet at a location on Alligator Alley, then caravan to the trailhead. The road to the trailhead, along the Interceptor Canal is rough gravel - a good chance to utilize your SUV to it's full potential! *Cost: \$3 donation*

Leader: Matthew Schwartz 954-764-2739  
Assistant Leader: Jackie Fisher 954-434-2855



## THE RAPING OF A PARK

By Kelly Hagy

It was just a mobile home park, but to me it was a nature sanctuary in the middle of Dania. There were two beautiful lakes surrounded by pine trees that whispered in the wind. At dusk the light was spellbinding, with the water birds silhouetted against the water and sky.



A swan would feed in the lake with his tail in the air – and then spring back upright to become the essence of beauty. What a show I had through my bay window overlooking the lake through the

pinetrees. It knocked my socks off. I guess I walked around sockless for forty years.

A large family of Coots would chase and dance across the water and nest in the reeds. Turtles could be seen carrying their babies on their backs around the edges of the lake. The frogs sang in different tones, taking turns in the night concert. Gray foxes showed us their babies playing and jumping. Raccoons surprised me one night, climbing the oak tree to eat the turtle they had caught. A mother raccoon came to my patio with her ten curious babies singing their special song. A possum walked by carrying her babies on her back, all in a row, holding on for dear life. Families of iguanas slept on the longest branches of the pine trees, coming down to warm themselves in the sun and graze around the lake. What brightness all these creature brought to me.

It's all gone now. They came in with bulldozers and filled in 90% of each lake, scattering people and creatures. Shocked people were forced to move. Both my parents died in their beds in that park. Many souls died there. I wonder if they walk the grounds at night looking for Paradise Lost. And what of the creatures?

continued on page 4

My husband and I moved to another mobile home park on a huge lake. Here there were white cranes, blue herons and mallards.



One morning my husband quietly called me into the kitchen to see a small owl sitting on top of our wooden shutters – watching us (cats included), as we watched him. He looked like a miniature barn owl. He must have flown in at dusk when the door was open. He flew out again with some persuasion.

The area of Hollywood and Dania is spotted with lakes – or used to be. What a refuge for the creatures it was. Gone now. All the parks have disappeared on the south side of Griffin Road.

This is the second time my husband and I found the land we live on sold out from under us - converted into more large houses, squeezed together so tightly that there's no room for nature. First the rape of Griffin Lakes Park and now the grim reaper appears to be after this one as well. The new owner wants to put up town homes and told all the residents (most of them elderly) that they had 6 months to pull out their own trailers or accept a \$1500 - \$3000 payment for their homes. That's not much when you have nowhere to live. And all the while, money going into the pockets of the developers.

Broward County, Dania Beach, Hollywood – how can you let this happen? We're elderly, but not that elderly... we get around, we shop, we have opinions, we vote, we are still alive!

*Editor's Note: According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade Counties lost 6,700 mobile homes between 1990 and 2000. And no doubt, many more since then, contributing to the continuing urbanization of our beautiful country.*

## ADVERTISE IN THE BROWARD SIERRA NEWS

Placing an ad in the Broward Sierra News does more than reach thousands of local, environmentally sensitive readers. It also helps to offset the costs of printing and mailing the newsletter, making it possible to continue to alert you to issues of local importance and the actions you can take, as well as inform you of events, outings and meetings of the Broward Sierra Club group.

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If you would like to place an ad, please contact Max Goldstein at 954-296-3411 or email him at <maxgold@yahoo.com>.

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