



EVERGLADES ACTION!

Everglades Action! is our quarterly newsletter providing articles of interest to Foundation stakeholders about restoration developments, water management issues and other ecosystem activities associated with America's Everglades ~ Spring 2010

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WASHINGTON, D.C., TO PLAY HOST TO THE FIRST-EVER AMERICA'S EVERGLADES SUMMIT

An idea germinated a little over a year ago that was preceded by lively banter about the impact a planned advocacy-only event in Washington, D.C., would have on advancing Everglades restoration. In between the conversation about advocacy, just how much time would be allowed for participants to consume a finger-licking good barbecue meal and how much attention would be generated across the Beltway if an airboat could jet across the National Mall?

"The more the idea of convening a summit to generate support among policymakers for restoration of America's Everglades took shape, the more sense it made," said Kirk Fordham, CEO, Everglades Foundation.

"While we obviously decided against the airboat on the Mall, it was clear to see that our board of

directors and environmental partners really began to embrace the concept and pledge their support to make it happen."

So on May 19 and 20, businesses, lawmakers, conservationists and administration officials will channel their collective energies and ideas and meet in the nation's capital for the first-ever America's Everglades Summit, a landmark event designed to build on growing support among policymakers for restoration of America's Everglades.

The Summit will highlight both the ecological and economic benefits of protecting and restoring the Everglades—one of the world's most unique natural wonders. The Summit Roundtable, moderated by Tom Brokaw, will feature a multi-media discussion including conservation and business leaders as well as top government officials from Washington and Tallahassee who will review the roadmap for Everglades restoration. Following the Summit Roundtable will be a celebration on Capitol Hill featuring the blues- and rock-infused music of Blues Traveler to commemorate the work that has been done to date to advance Everglades restoration. On May 20th, attendees will be encouraged to engage members of Congress to advocate for continued support for Everglades restoration funding.

To register and learn more about the two-day event, please visit the America's Everglades Summit website at www.evergladesummit.org. Registration-related questions can be directed to Everglades.Summit@gmail.com.



PYTHONS IN PERSPECTIVE

From the time European settlers first set foot in South Florida, the introduction of non-native plants and animals have impacted the Everglades. While some species have been relatively innocuous to the Everglades ecosystem, others have done tremendous harm.

Pythons are among the newest threats to the stability of the fragile Everglades ecosystem. A study by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) found four of the world's largest snakes - the green anaconda, the Burmese python, Northern African python and reticulated python – as well as the boa constrictor, have established feral colonies in South Florida.

Gordon Rodda, a USGS zoologist in Fort Collins, Colo., who co-authored a study on pythons with colleague Robert Reed, told the *The Miami Herald* that these species could tilt the natural balance of the Everglades ecosystem.

“It’s important to put things in context as we look at the vast challenges confronting the modern-day Everglades ecosystem,” says Dr. Tom Van Lent, senior scientist, Everglades Foundation. “Are pythons a problem? Yes, they are among the worst kinds of biological pollution and steps are being taken to address what these reptiles are doing to the ecosystem. Regardless of how damaging these reptiles are to our native fauna, we still need to stay focused on the immense magnitude and scope of pending projects to save the entire Everglades from the impacts of drainage, chemical and nutrient pollution and opportunities to sustain the drinking water supply.”

In addition, the recent cold weather has reduced the python population somewhat and weather could be a significant factor in curtailing the spread of these animals into habitats outside the state of Florida.

These snakes, often reaching more than 20 feet in length, are big enough to eat just about any prey and are too big for most predators. The risk to native wildlife is serious. Thousands of pythons now roam the Everglades. The snakes eat wading birds, raccoons, deer and other native wildlife.

Pythons arrived in the Everglades in the 1990s. It is believed that people who purchased them released the snakes into the Everglades when they no longer wanted to keep the snakes as pets.

Pythons are difficult to find and capture. Florida Sen. Bill Nelson, Rep. Kendrick Meek and Gov. Charlie Crist are among those leading a battle to prevent these reptiles from spreading further across the Everglades.



STING AND JOHN MCENROE HEADLINE RECORD-BREAKING EVERGLADES FOUNDATION BENEFIT



Sting



John McEnroe

Tennis ace **John McEnroe** and musical guest, **Sting**, joined a record-breaking 840 guests – many of them dedicated Everglades advocates – at The Breakers hotel recently in support of the “River of Grass” at the fifth annual Everglades Foundation ForEverglades Benefit to raise more than \$2 million for Everglades restoration science and outreach efforts.

Sting entertained the crowd with a superb private performance and John McEnroe served as the Master of Ceremonies. This year’s event was hosted by chairpersons Cindi and Nick Bollettieri; Sonia and Paul Tudor Jones II; Elaine and Ken Langone; Polly and David Ober; Lia Reed and honorary chairman Jack Nicklaus to benefit the Foundation.

During the cocktail reception, Everglades Foundation board chairman, Paul Tudor Jones II, made a special presentation to Florida Governor Charlie Crist, paying tribute to his efforts to advance Everglades restoration and sustain an ecosystem that provides an unmatched quality of life for residents and visitors and recreational benefits for millions of people.

FAKAHATCHEE STRAND: HOME OF THE GHOST ORCHID AND OTHER NATURAL WONDERS

A mere two-hour drive from Miami and Fort Lauderdale is a wilderness that can claim the moniker “Florida’s Amazon.” The Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park features about 80,000 acres of awe-inspiring swampland punctuated by water depressions called sloughs.

These sloughs are covered with a dense tree canopy of cypress, pop ash, royal palm and pond apple. The constant moisture created by the shroud of vegetation results in a microclimate, allowing a rich variety of orchids, bromeliads and other air plants to thrive year-round.

The Strand can also lay claim to being America’s natural orchid capital. Besides being home to the mysterious and beautiful ghost orchid, Fakahatchee’s environment allows for 47 species of orchids to thrive alongside 39 species of ferns and 14 species of bromeliads. In

addition there is a healthy community of royal palms numbering between 5,000 and 7,000 trees.

Options to access the Strand include the 2,500-foot boardwalk, a slow car trip along the 11-miles Janes Scenic Drive or hiking about six miles of passable trails along the east and west tramways. You could take a guided swamp walk or just set out on foot for a self-guided tour.

Guided swamp walks to the Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park are offered the first three Saturdays of each month. Fee is \$50. Friends of Fakahatchee can make arrangements. Call (239) 695-2907 or visit friendsoffakahatchee.org. It is a great time of year to spot a multitude of the denizens of “Florida’s Amazon” including pileated woodpeckers, otters, red-shouldered hawks, alligators and the occasional black bear.



EVERGLADES FOUNDATION BOARD EXPANDS WITH THE ADDITION OF BARBARA WHITNEY CARR AND CHRISTOPHER H. BUCKLEY



Barbara Whitney Carr and **Christopher H. Buckley** have been named directors of the Everglades Foundation board. Carr, a resident of Florida and Illinois, co-chairs the Everglades Foundation’s Advisory Committee and has extensive leadership experience with non-profit organizations. She spent nearly 20 years at the Lincoln Park Zoological Society, serving as its executive director and president. She was also president of the Chicago Botanic Garden for more than a decade. Carr helped create the

Academic Affairs Program at the Botanic Garden and teamed with Northwestern University, the Illinois Institute of Technology and the University of Illinois to develop several outstanding academic programs.

Carr earned a degree from Denison University in Ohio, an M.A. from the Illinois Institute of Technology in Landscape Architecture and an M.S. from Northwestern University in Plant Biology and Conservation.

Buckley, a longtime fly-fisherman and attorney, was a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, one of the largest law firms in the United States with multiple domestic and overseas offices. He worked in the firm’s Washington, D.C., office.

Buckley represented the Atlantic Salmon Federation in its successful petition to have the Atlantic salmon listed as an endangered species in the few remaining Maine rivers in which it spawns. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Salmon Federation and has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Environmental Law Institute. He has also served as President of the Barker Foundation, a non-profit adoption agency in Washington, D.C.

Buckley graduated from Harvard Law School and is a member of the Ristigouche Salmon Club. He owns homes on the Grande Cascapedia River in Quebec and on Islamorada in the Florida Keys.

THE FINAL FOUR – EVERGLADES FOUNDATION NAMES 2010 FELLOWS

The Everglades Foundation recently named four talented graduate students to its 2010 Fellowship Program after concluding a rigorous selection process. Over the next year, these student scientists, working with the science team of the Foundation, will delve into new research projects designed to uncover answers to water-related dynamics of the Everglades ecosystem and provide opportunities to show how their individual research initiatives can aid restoration.

The candidates are:



Hugo R. Sindelar IV (University of Florida): Sindelar is examining algae scrubbers and their potential for phosphorus removal. Excessive phosphorus is a major pollutant of the Everglades ecosystem. This would answer some fundamental questions concerning phosphorus removal within biological systems. The knowledge gained will assist in maximizing phosphorus removal from the Everglades.



Sylvia Lee (Florida International University): Lee is tackling the dynamics of diatom community structure across Everglades regions and providing periphyton Geographic Information System maps essential to understand the trends occurring in the Everglades ecosystem.



Yiwei Cheng (Georgia Institute of Technology): Cheng is developing a hydro-ecological model to understand the relationship between water-nutrient flow and vegetation patterning in our wetlands in order to improve management practices in the Everglades.



Sen Chen (Florida International University): Chen will look at the role of reduced organic sulfur in methylation of mercury to advance our knowledge of mercury biogeochemistry in the Everglades. This will explain environmental methylmercury trends and local peaks, providing a solid scientific foundation for policy makers with regards to fish consumption advisories.

These graduate students will be called upon to present the final results of their research about a year from now to science team members and supporters. For more information, contact Melodie Naja at (305) 251-0001, ext. 229.

Everglades Foundation Staff: ~ **Mark L. Kraus, Ph.D.**, Chief Operating Officer ~ **Stanley Boynton**, Vice President of Development ~ **Kirk Fordham**, Chief Executive Officer ~ **Richard Gibbs**, Senior Director of Communications ~ **Mitzi Moody**, Administrative Assistant ~ **Meissa Ray**, Development Assistant ~ **G. Melodie Naja, Ph.D.**, Water Quality Scientist ~ **Tom Van Lent, Ph.D.**, Senior Scientist ~ **Stephen E. Davis, III, Ph.D.**, Wetland Ecologist

The Everglades Foundation is dedicated to ensuring a restored Everglades by creating relevant and creative solutions to complex restoration issues.

WWW.EVERGLADESFOUNDATION.ORG



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