

1985 ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE MIAMI RIVER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

ENVIRONMENTAL

- 1) Twice toured the river with representatives of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to call attention to the need for dredging the river to remove contaminated sediments
- 2) Endorsed a Dade County Resolution requesting Congressional authorization of dredging to remove contaminated sediments from the Miami River
- 3) Surveyed Coast Guard incident reports from December, 1984 through May 21, 1985 concerning oil spills and other pollutants in the river
- 4) Endorsed a Dade County Ordinance which will streamline permitting procedures and allow for the use of more short forms in construction along the river
- 5) Met with the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve Advisory Committee to formulate suggestions for the River Chapter of their report
- 6) Through the cooperative efforts of the Environmental Subcommittee, D.E.R.M., the Coast Guard and Florida Marine Patrol, detained a Caribbean cargo ship and required that it post a bond of \$5,000 against a possible fine for pumping diesel fuel sludge overboard
- 7) Endorsed a permit application to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from the City of Miami for the purpose of stabilizing the shoreline at N.W. 7th Avenue and North River Drive
- 8) Toured the river with U.S. Senator Lawton Chiles and U.S. Congressman Claude Pepper to celebrate a \$200,000 appropriation which was approved in their separate committees for a study to determine how polluted river sediments could be dredged from the river
- 9) Through the efforts of the Dade County Planning Department, compiled a summary of shoreline conditions from the mouth of the river to the salinity dam (Appendix A)
- 10) Met with the Board of Commissioners of the Florida Inland Navigation District and the Florida House of Representatives Committee on Community Affairs to discuss possible river projects for funding and legislation

DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL

- 1) Aided in placement of two ships, the 220' Proteus and 195' Rossmery, on the Dade County Artificial Reef
- 2) Continued to work for the removal of the Principe Maya and the Thunderbolt from the river for possible placement on the artificial reef
- 3) Coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, posted legal notice concerning a sunken barge which has been targeted for the artificial reef
- 4) Coordinated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, posted legal notice concerning a sunken houseboat in the river by the 836 Expressway and removed that houseboat from the river
- 5) Secured a computerized listing of all Customs seized vessels on the Miami River and its banks which are being held by private vendors

- 6) Toured the river with U.S. Senator Lawton Chiles pointing out derelict vessels and Customs seized vessels and participated with Senator Chiles in his chairing of a U.S. Senate Budget Committee hearing on federal expenditures and policies related to storage and disposal of confiscated vessels on the Miami River
- 7) Through the combined efforts of the City of Miami Marine Patrol and the Dade County Planning Department, secured a list of 30 vessels which were deteriorating, submerged or partially submerged along the river (Appendix B) and sent that list to the Dade County Department of Public Health and the Florida Marine Patrol for possible action
- 8) Hosted a meeting at which Hurricane Specialist Dr. Harold P. Gerrish of the National Hurricane Center gave a lecture and slide presentation concerning the effect of a hurricane on the Miami River
- 9) Received assurance from the City Commission that the Miami Marine Patrol would be funded with \$100,000 from the Law Enforcement Trust Fund to purchase two new boats
- 10) Through the combined efforts of the subcommittee and the City of Miami Waterfront Board, secured passage by the City Commission on November 26, 1985 of the Vessel Mooring Ordinance.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- 1) Hosted an historic tour of the Miami River for Florida State Legislators in April, 1985
- 2) Initiated the historic site marker program in the City of Miami by identifying eleven sites with historic significance along the river, conducting research, writing texts and securing photographs for the markers; solicited for sponsors of the markers; and ordered the first six markers
- 3) Updated and expanded the Miami River tour guide by adding new sites and more information
- 4) Included telephone listings in the Guide to Citizen Services on the Miami River for local historical organizations and government offices that deal with historic preservation
- 5) Initiated a land swap through the Florida Department of Natural Resources Land Acquisition Section which would allow for the expansion of Paradise Point Park
- 6) Initiated the renaming of Paradise Point Park to the more historically appropriate name of Miami River Rapids Park
- 7) Coordinated an exhibit of local archaeological artifacts at the Hyatt Hotel
- 8) Together with the Historical Museum of Southern Florida, coordinated the Miami River Revival's historical theme with such activities as a Miami River mini-exhibit; canoe, walking and boating tours; a lecture and slide presentation; and a living history encampment on the river
- 9) Publicized the subcommittee's work through articles in three different organizational newsletters
- 10) Researched and initiated the first archaeological site designation in the City of Miami

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

- 1) Conducted a survey of Miami River businesses to which 37 companies responded (Appendix C), personally contacted additional firms and found pollution to be the number one problem and crime the number two problem indicated by the survey
- 2) In cooperation with The Marine Council and the City of Miami, was instrumental in obtaining a \$35,000 grant administered by the Office of Coastal Management of the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation for a Miami River Economic Impact Study

The City of Miami and Dade County have each provided \$20,000 in matching funds to support the study which will be supervised by the City of Miami Planning Department. The MRMC is represented on the selection committee which will choose a consulting firm for the project. The request for proposals from interested firms was sent out the week of October 27. (Appendix D)

- 3) Initiated a study by the Dade County Office of Management and Budget which showed the assessed value of all public and private properties along the river and the relative changes in the assessments of those properties from 1981 through 1984

This and subsequent data to be acquired from local agencies, when combined with the results of the economic impact study, are expected to be useful in exploring how tax incentives may be used to enhance water dependent businesses, what areas of the river may benefit from tax incentive programs, and how business development can best contribute to recreational use of the river.

- 4) Investigated the bridge vs. tunnel issue concerning the S.W. Second Avenue crossing of the river by meeting with the Dade County Public Works Department, the Downtown Development Authority and others to discuss the alternatives

The subcommittee strongly favors the construction of a tunnel. This view is supported by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce and has received a tentative statement of support, pending Board of Directors approval, from the Downtown Development Authority. The subcommittee is being aided in its efforts by the Marine Council whose Miami River Division has agreed to undertake a three-month study of the bridge vs. tunnel question. (Appendix E)

- 5) Reviewed the idea of a Miami River water taxi service and does not recommend pursuing this project at this time.

Current use of ground transportation between the airport and seaport appears to be the most cost effective method of transporting passengers and baggage. This is especially true in view of the additional costs of dock improvements at the seaport and airport. While the Miami River is relatively narrow, it is conducive to conventional water transportation vessels; however, current hovercraft technology appears to be unsuitable for the Miami River for a number of technical reasons, including the noise level associated with those vessels. Certain administrative and enforcement problems (ineffective security, derelict vessels, bridge operations, zoning, etc.) inhibit current utilization of the Miami River for a water taxi service.

PLANNING

- 1) Implemented the "rainbow plan" devised in 1984 for painting the Miami River bridges

Brickell Avenue	orange	completed
Miami Avenue	yellow	in progress
2nd Avenue	yellow	
1st Street	green	
Flagler Street	green	completed
5th Street	blue	completed
12th Avenue	purple	
17th Avenue	red	
22nd Avenue	orange	completed
27th Avenue	orange	

- 2) Received the assurance of the City of Miami Planning Department that following the completion of an economic study of the Miami River scheduled to begin this fall, the City will undertake a comprehensive growth management plan which will address land use, access, shoreline stabilization and enhancement, zoning overlays and historic site protection (Appendix F)
- 3) Endorsed a University of Miami project that beginning with the spring term the School of Architecture will undertake a planning course which will have the Miami River as its subject
- 4) Together with the Dade County Planning Department, toured the river in July to ascertain progress on the upland and shoreline conditions outlined in the 1984 report to Governor Bob Graham
- 5) Secured a response from the City Manager's Office concerning the Upland and Shoreline Conditions Affecting the Miami River, a report which was compiled in May, 1984

As a result of those actions, the subcommittee has also secured a report from the Fire, Rescue and Inspection Services Department and the Public Works Department of the City of Miami which details the procedures for issuing violation notices pursuant to improper upland and shoreline conditions and the appropriate follow-up procedures after the initial violation notice has been served. (Appendix G)

- 6) Compiled the following list of shoreline improvements which resulted from 1984 subcommittee work:
- a new seawall at Venture Terminal
 - buildings demolished, site cleared and a new seawall at Tropical Trading
 - shoreline cleaned and fenced at Aimco Iron & Metal
 - shoreline cleaned and fenced at Metro Iron & Metal
 - repaired seawall and removed damaged docks at Johnson Shipping
 - upland site cleared of vehicles, rusting equipment and shacks at Florida Marine Construction

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUBCOMMITTEE

ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING LAWS

DIRECT OVERLAND RUNOFF: Over 100 businesses which generate small amounts of hazardous wastes are located on the river. Hundreds more are located in storm water basins which dump into the river and its tributaries. If hazardous wastes are not properly disposed of, they can enter the river in storm runoff. Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (D.E.R.M.) pollution control inspectors can ticket property owners who violate state or county water quality standards; however, there are not enough inspectors to adequately monitor all of the potential polluters along the river.

RECOMMENDATION: Urge Dade County to fund more inspectors so that violators can be ticketed. (Ideally, in order for D.E.R.M. to have a real presence on the river, the river should have its own full-time inspection force.)

DISCHARGE OF WASTES AND BILGE WATER INTO THE RIVER: Coast Guard regulations prohibit the discharge of waste water while a vessel is in port. The Coast Guard is not adequately staffed to respond to complaints in a timely manner.

RECOMMENDATION: Urge Congress to provide funding so the Coast Guard may increase its South Florida staff.

EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC

OIL SPILLS: The Coast Guard is the primary agency involved in cleanup of oil spills. D.E.R.M. has established an oil disposal program.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Publicize the Coast Guard phone number and the D.E.R.M. pollution hotline number so that citizens will know the proper numbers to call in the event of a spill; publicize the D.E.R.M. used oil collection/recycling program which teaches citizens how to properly dispose of used oil.

SMALL BOAT MAINTENANCE OVER WATER: Painting, scraping and sandblasting of vessels over the water introduces toxic materials into the river.

RECOMMENDATION: Publicize boat maintenance facilities that provide and properly maintain an embayment or sealed off area for boat maintenance.

THE INPUT OF POLLUTANTS FROM THE RIVER TO ADJACENT PORTIONS OF BISCAYNE BAY: Data collected in the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation study suggested that the Miami River has a considerable influence on the environmental chemistry of adjacent bay sediments.

RECOMMENDATION: Initiate a campaign to call attention to the connection between the river and the bay as a prelude to other actions, enforcements, legislation and funding requests.

LEGISLATION/RULES

BOAT MAINTENANCE OVER WATER

RECOMMENDATION: Urge Dade County to pass regulations which would reduce pollution from this source.

HOUSEBOAT WASTES: Many houseboats on the river and its tributaries empty their wastes directly into the water. The Coast Guard is the agency responsible for enforcing the law which requires these boats to use proper sanitation devices. The Coast Guard will not inspect for compliance unless it is boarding a vessel for some other reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Urge Congress to change the laws to authorize the Coast Guard to delegate its authority to state or local governments when those governments are willing and capable of enforcing Coast Guard regulations; urge the city and county to develop laws that would require live aboards to obtain occupancy permits which would only be issued if hookups to a landside sewer line or approved Coast Guard marine sanitation device were used.

MANATEE IN DANGER: A fairly sizable population of manatee now exists in the river and its tributaries.

RECOMMENDATION: Request that the Department of Natural Resources hold a public hearing/forum in Miami to determine the need, if any, for establishing the river as a manatee sanctuary.

POLLUTED SEDIMENTS: According to a detailed report furnished by the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, the sediments in the Miami River are seriously contaminated with toxic metals and synthetic organic compounds including PCB's.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to seek U.S. Congressional or State authorization for dredging of the river by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation or the Florida Inland Navigation District.

THE RIVER'S SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS: The quality of water in the Miami River has been a cause for concern for over fifty years. The efforts of the Miami River Management Committee have just begun to draw attention to the environmental needs of the river.

RECOMMENDATION: That a permanent organization be formed which will continue to focus on the environmental problems of the river.

FUNDING

STORMWATER OUTFALLS: Water draining off urban roads is often as dirty as sewage. That is why county regulations for new outfalls require that the first inch of rainfall be retained on site. The South Florida Water Management District has recently been delegated the authority to permit stormwater systems, set standards and enforce those standards. Outfalls which are planned or under construction and road improvements will meet current standards, but if pollution from stormwater outfalls is to be significantly reduced, many of the old stormwater systems will have to be retrofitted at great cost.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Urge Metro-Dade D.E.R.M. to seek funding from the Florida Inland Navigation District for a study to prioritize retrofitting of the stormwater outfalls; seek citywide or countywide bond issues for stormwater drainage improvements; urge state and federal governments to provide revolving loan funds for retrofitting of stormwater systems; and seek a 1986 Florida legislative appropriation for abatement of the worst stormwater outfalls.

FLOATING DEBRIS AND TRASH: Ms. Cleanup removes trash and debris from in and along the river four days a week.

RECOMMENDATION: Urge Dade County to continue full funding for Ms. Cleanup.

POLLUTANTS IN THE SEYBOLD CANAL: Data in the D.E.R. study show that the Seybold Canal has unusually high concentrations of some metals (lead, arsenic and mercury).

RECOMMENDATION: Urge the City of Miami to initiate funding for a study of the Seybold Canal.

POOR SHORELINE CONDITIONS: According to a report prepared by the Dade County Planning Department, 10,750 feet of Miami River shoreline are in poor condition. Of that footage, 2,646 feet are publicly owned. Shorelines at the City of Miami's Curtis Park, the right of way east of the 5th Street Bridge and the right of way east of the East-West Expressway are in particularly poor shape.

RECOMMENDATION: Urge the City of Miami to seek funding from the Florida Inland Navigation District for a shoreline stabilization project at Curtis Park.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DERELICT VESSEL REMOVAL SUBCOMMITTEE

- 1) Customs seized vessels are not required to meet Coast Guard lay-up procedures. Some are improperly tied to trees, light poles, etc. The subcommittee recommends that the local Customs office adopt the policy of requiring its vendors to adhere to all Coast Guard lay-up procedures.
- 2) The subcommittee recommends that Governor Bob Graham urge the U.S. Congressional Delegation to promote the adoption of a rule which would require the General Services Administration contract for Customs' vendors to contain a clause which would withhold payment from vendors if they did not comply with Coast Guard lay-up procedures.
- 3) Even though Customs rules were changed in October, 1984 to allow for administrative disposal of confiscated vessels if those vessels were valued at less than \$100,000 (or with no dollar limit if they were transporting contraband), approximately 114 vessels remain in or along the river. The subcommittee recommends that Congress provide funding so the Customs Service may add personnel to its administrative staff. This will allow more vessels to be removed from the river in a more timely manner.
- 4) At present, the river does not have 24-hour police coverage. The City of Miami Marine Patrol covers the river for 20 hours a day. The subcommittee recommends that the City of Miami Marine Patrol be deputized by the Metro-Dade Marine Patrol in order to better coordinate police coverage on the river. The subcommittee recommends that the City of Miami Marine Patrol patrol the entire length of the river from the mouth to the salinity dam as deputies of the County. The subcommittee also recommends that Dade County allow the City of Miami Marine Patrol to use the County's river dockage.
- 5) The County's Artificial Reef Program receives funding from the Florida Department of Natural Resources for towing of vessels to the reef site. The subcommittee recommends that state rules be changed to allow the reef program to receive funds which could also be used for obtaining reef materials and/or cleaning vessels for the reef.
- 6) The subcommittee recommends that the appropriate local agencies mount a publicity campaign to draw attention to the County's Artificial Reef Program and solicit donations for the purchase of vessels. The subcommittee also recommends that the Dade County Commission seek other funding sources for the Artificial Reef Program.
- 7) If the State of Florida decides to institute a salt water fishing license, the subcommittee recommends that a portion of each license fee be returned to the local government for its artificial reef program or habitat enhancement program provided that local government has an organized program in such areas.
- 8) At last count, there were 30 vessels in the Miami River which were deteriorating, submerged or partially submerged. The subcommittee recommends that the State of Florida provide a state-wide budget of \$500,000 from the Florida Coastal Protection Trust Fund to provide grants to coastal local governments for the removal of derelict vessels from the public waters of the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION SUBCOMMITTEE

- 1) Secure sponsors for five remaining historic markers to be placed along the river
- 2) Install the six markers which have been ordered and publicize them with a dedication ceremony
- 3) Urge the City of Miami to continue its historic marker program
- 4) Continue to expand the historic sites guide to include more information and a wider distribution
- 5) Continue to promote activities that foster public awareness of the historic importance of the Miami River including the Miami River Revival in October, Dade Heritage Days in May and National Rivers Month in June
- 6) Work with the Historical Museum of Southern Florida on a traveling river exhibit
- 7) Put copies of the subcommittee's research on file at the Historical Museum
- 8) Compile information and initiate additional archaeological site designations along the river
- 9) Follow through with the land swap, park renaming and dedication ceremonies relating to Paradise Point Park
- 10) Notify the Dade County Archaeologist prior to any development activity along the river

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUSINESS AND FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

- 1) That the MRMC receive support from the Governor to be represented on the Miami Citizens Against Crime in an effort to address special problems of crime prevention along the Miami River.
- 2) That the Chairman of the MRMC appoint a review panel composed of MRMC members to monitor the progress and direction of the economic impact study and growth management plan.
- 3) That the subcommittees of the MRMC produce a constructive plan for reducing all forms of pollution in the river and work with the appropriate governmental agencies to identify offenders and develop an incentive program to reduce or eliminate such offenses.
- 4) That the MRMC work with federal and state legislators to establish a central agency charged with expediting solutions to the river's problems which fall under their jurisdictions.
- 5) That the MRMC continue its study of property assessments and master planning for the riverfront and adjacent parcels with the objective of recommending a tax incentive program to enhance water dependent commercial and recreational activities along the river.
- 6) That the MRMC encourage the collection of any data in the economic impact study and in any studies conducted by other local agencies that may be useful in planning for a water borne transportation system that would serve the Miami River, Biscayne Bay and other navigable waterways. The subcommittee recommends that such planning be contingent on the continued existence and growth of shoreline commercial and recreational facilities that would be required to support such a system.
- 7) That the MRMC continue to investigate the construction of a tunnel or bridge at the S.W. 2nd Avenue crossing. The subcommittee recommends that a public forum be held by the Dade County Public Works Department for a discussion of the issues involved. The MRMC would then make a final decision on the matter.
- 8) That the MRMC aggressively pursue a public information program about specific problems and solutions proposed by the committee so that the local media may improve their own and the public's understanding of MRMC projects.
- 9) That the MRMC immediately implement a program to attract operational funding for the 1986 work of the committee.
- 10) That the MRMC work with the Beacon Council of Dade County to promote the development of businesses along and adjacent to the Miami River shoreline. The subcommittee believes that the Beacon Council's Industry Targeting and Domestic Marketing Task Force would be an appropriate group with which the MRMC could work toward mutual goals.

11) That the MRMC continue its work through the Business and Finance Subcommittee to study waterfront development with the aid of the Ad Hoc Committee comprised of the following:

- a) Dean, School of Architecture, University of Miami
- b) Chairman, Miami River Division of the Marine Council
- c) Ocean Engineer, Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science, University of Miami
- d) Civil Engineer with extensive experience in shoreline development
- e) Miami River Businessman
- f) Executive Director, Marine Council
- g) Chairman, Business and Finance Subcommittee

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE

- 1) That the MRMC support and participate with the City of Miami Planning Department in formulating a growth management plan for the Miami River and in requesting a grant to complete that plan from the Office of Coastal Management of the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation. The Planning Subcommittee suggests that the MRMC assist the City Planning Department in encouraging citizen participation in the formulation, development and implementation of that growth management plan.
- 2) That the MRMC urge that in its comprehensive planning process the City look at active parks as opposed to passive parks as possible revitalization nodes along the river. Those active parks could include such water enhancement activities as marinas, boat and canoe rentals, fish markets, specialty retail centers and restaurants.
- 3) That the MRMC work with city, county, state and federal governments in reviewing their policies on publicly owned pieces of property to determine if their uses are appropriate to the river before signing any new leases.
- 4) That the MRMC work with the city and county in undertaking a systematic plan for landscaping of public properties, parks and rights-of-way along the river which would include upgrading landscape requirements in the existing city and county codes.
- 5) That the MRMC mount a coordinated effort for the "greening of the river" with indigenous materials by working with garden clubs and other volunteer organizations to vegetate and revegetate public properties, parks and rights-of-ways along the river. D.E.R.M.'s tree permitting section and other appropriate city and county agencies could assist in this effort.
- 6) That during the first half of 1986 and periodically thereafter the MRMC continue to monitor upland and shoreline conditions along the Miami River, requesting an update on those conditions including appropriate city and county actions.
- 7) That during the first half of 1986 the MRMC join with the South Florida Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and the University of Miami's School of Architecture in sponsoring a Miami River Bridge Design Competition. Governor Graham has expressed his support of such a competition to promote community awareness of the river and promote active participation in its revitalization.
- 8) That the MRMC establish its permanent headquarters on the river, possibly at a park or other public property. That office could include facilities for meetings, slide shows, a permanent historical/archaeological display as well as offices for a 24-hour marine patrol.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION SUBCOMMITTEE

This subcommittee researched alternatives for the creation of a permanent organization which would unify jurisdiction and centralize responsibility over the river. Although MRMC members generally supported the need for such an organization, the membership could not agree on the exact framework and funding mechanism it would require. The committee decided to do additional research with the aid of legal staff from the City, County and Governor's Office and will make a final determination on this question during the next four months.