

Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Harris Carr discuss the value that Floridians place on the environment, and how recreation plays a part in public interest

Interviewer: How do you feel, in your experience, in trying to educate the public, how do you feel the average Floridian views Florida's environment and what kind of value, do you believe, the average Floridian places on Florida's natural environment?

Marjory Stoneman Douglas (speaking to Marjorie Harris Carr): You want to take that away?

Marjorie Harris Carr: Mmmm, the average...

MSD: Yes, what is the average?

MHC: Well, let me see. I think usually it's someone who uses it like; fishing or hunting or I mean, or admires that, so that's part, or the recreation; like going on the beach, boating. I think that is what the natural environment means to the average Floridian is the opportunity to use the environment in that way. I don't think here, in Florida, you had people, for instance, really upset over air quality. They haven't, you know, had to breathe smog, as they have (undistinguishable). Probably here, in the Miami area, they're more conscious of water....

MSD: Yes.

MHC: ...problems than we are in the rest of the state ...

MSD: (undistinguishable)...so different.

MHC: But I hear, more, of people who are shocked that their favorite area, that they used to go hunting in or go walking in, it has suddenly disappeared. They go down a river and it's messed up. So, I think that the average Floridian, if he is concerned with the environment or aware of it, is aware of it through that part which he uses.

MSD: I think that would be characteristic more of North and Central Florida, where you have had more generations of hunters and people living out in the open. Here, we are largely an urban population and we don't have the wild

areas, you see. We have the Everglades. And we have the coastal area, East coast, Big Cypress and we have the West coast. Most of our people are urban and they recognize the urban problems and the water, of course, is our great problem. But, I think they're becoming a little bit aware of smog.

MHC: How about fishing?

MSD: Well, not everybody goes fishing, around here. Our problems, here, down in the Keys, I've just learned, the wading birds are starving because the commercial fisherman are removing all the mullet. I learned that just this morning.

MHC: Oh, my word.

MSD: Bill Pantel, with whom I'm staying, was feeding a big white heron and small fish that he can catch. There aren't any mullet for the birds. The commercial fishermen are taking it all. We don't have the largest part of our population (tape interruption).

Interviewer: If I understand this correctly, in the non-urbanized areas of the state where you may have more stability of population, the awareness of Florida's natural environment might come from people's recreational use of areas and the changes, over time, that they see in those areas, the deterioration and the loss of those areas. In the urban areas of the state, people may be aware of the natural environment through the pollution problems that they see around them....

MSD: ...and in the water, yes...

Interviewer: ...and in the water that they drink and the air that they breathe.

MSD: Yes, 'cause those are urban problems, all over the country...

MHC: Yes.

MSD: ...and they are aware of them in other parts of the country, too, when they come here.

MHC: It takes both, you see, it takes both; the urban and the rural, to really get somewhere.

MSD: Yes.