

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas talks about why she loves the Everglades*

(About 3:10)

Interviewer: (5:50) What did you love about it?

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: About what?

Interviewer: Well, about the Everglades?

MSD: Oh, the whole thing, of course. The whole thing was this marvelous expanse of flat green land with its strangeness and its openness and its birds and all that, sure, you love the whole thing. Wonderful. It's utterly unique, you see, there is nothing like it anywhere else in the world. And you get that sense of it up... (coughs) I've flown over it many times and have never ceased to love it.

Interviewer: You know, when it was first proposed, uh, as an addition to the National Park System, it was unusual, as I understand, because the other parks were ones that, primarily, had great geological features: mountains, river valleys, what they call the tall trees parks, and yet this park did not then and does not now look like any of those parks.

MSD: Well, of course, that's the beauty of it. It's not the average park; it's the only one of its kind. As far as having geologic features, of course it has plenty of geologic features, only not mountains and waterfalls and woods and all that. But its features are geologic, because it's the geology of the underground structure that makes it. But it is absolutely unique, but it doesn't have that kind of drama that a lot of people like in wilderness landscapes and people will go up the trail and look around and say "well there isn't anything here, what is there to look at?" They're the kind of people that need something dramatic to call their attention to it, but for those people who see the beauty in it, the quietness of it and the wonderful silence of it, it is a park that you understand and like better and better. I had a friend, I had friends over from London and we took them out a great deal in the Everglades and they simply loved it. Particularly my favorite place is that Pahayokee Overlook which is down just a little bit below the visitor's center when you first go into the park. It's called the Pahayokee Overlook. Pahayokee was the Indian name for "grassy water," and that was one reason I named the book "River of Grass" because I knew the Indians called it

“grassy water.” It’s up some height, you climb a few stairs to a covered place, and up there I notice when people are there, they’re all very quiet because it’s the silence that is so wonderful. You hear the wind rustling in the grass, maybe a bird in the distance and you get the sense of the sawgrass and the openness and the island hammocks are out there. It’s a most beautiful place. Well we took these English friends of mine around and when they saw that, they sat down and they had, I remember looking over at David, his name was David Dewar, and he had this rapt, ecstatic expression on his face. He really was seeing it the way we did. And coming back, I said, “Well, you know David it’s not a dramatic park.” “Oh no!” he said “Its not a dramatic park, it’s a lyric park.” And it is, that quality of great, quiet poetry. It is a poetic park, a lyric park, and not everybody can understand it. And the people that can’t understand it, let them go somewhere else. You know, because they don’t understand that, that’s just too bad for them, not for the rest of the people who do understand it (laughs) but it’s wonderful and remarkable in just that way. (9:30)