

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas talks about Joe Browder and the opposition of the Jetport*

Interviewer: (17:03) This brings up a theme of all the years when there was great opposition to returning or maintaining the natural system, or returning the system to some semblance of the natural system, with time with the years when the drainage system was put into place and then when that wasn't effective for controlling flooding there was more and more build. And that brings us up the jetport controversy also. I think between the time... what I'd like for you talk about for us is...

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: (interrupting) Well, there wasn't, there wasn't any, well I wouldn't say opposition to the business of having the waterflow correct; they have their system. There wasn't so much opposition, it was the developing people, it was the developers and people who wanted to go in and develop. The parks should be reserved to the proper use of the system. There was no active opposition; it was active intrusion of commercial interests into the area with not enough people who were for the proper handling of the Everglades system. There weren't enough people to be heard, to make themselves heard. That's why it has been so important to get people to understand the whole nature of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades basin. We are now having better and better support all the time, but actually at the time in '69 and '70 after the engineers had put in that canal down the Kissimmee River. Then we had the Miami airport, the Port Authority trying to establish a jet port down just north of the Tamiami Trail that would have been on the edge of the Big Cypress and it would have right in the middle of whatever was left of the sheetflow. That's when the opposition developed; a man named Joe Browder who represented the National Audubon Society, was the one who began to oppose the jetport two years after they had begun to buy out the land. He heard about it, and I know he came to me and said he needed more organized support and that's when I started the Friends of the Everglades to give him support to get rid of the jetport. And Joe Browder himself with what support people could give him, suddenly Joe Browder himself got rid of the jetport. And the consequence, we made the federal government buy up some of that land of the Big Cypress as a water preserve and got the State to buy up an additional lot of land as a buffer state. That is why we have any state control at all of the Big Cypress, but of course we couldn't and what's been the trouble in the Big Cypress is that we could not buy, we did not have money enough to buy the mineral rights, and the oil people got in and bought the mineral

rights, that is why the oil people have been in the Big Cypress, although they don't get a very good grade. The first oil they got from the Big Cypress, was no better than the number two, that came in the number two, Sunniland oil well on the Immokalee road. The oil is so thick and crude, it's got so much sulfur in it that its not much better than liquid asphalt, and the expenses of refining it are very great. But the engineer, the oil people went on and have since developed at Raccoon Point oil field, where they've been getting more than what they did at the other place, which is about 100 barrels a day, which is nothing. They've been getting more than that, but I don't think they're getting very much better oil than what they've always been getting. Why they should want to get it at all, with the glut of oil there is and the expense of refining it, I don't see, I don't see why they don't leave it in the ground at least, and not try to get it out. So the oil people have complicated our conservation of the Big Cypress, they've complicated it enormously. (21:49)