

*Introduction with a speech by Alice Wainwright read by Carston Rist*

Mary Therese Delate: Ladies and Gentlemen, I'd like to begin our press conference today. Thank you all, (Feedback) thank you all for coming. Can everyone hear? We've got a PA system that's working. I'm Mary Therese Delate with the Florida Sierra Club, and we have four very important people here at this table, who are very concerned about the Florida Keys. Their concern for Florida environment has been manifested by their years of hard work for the environmental concerns, and I'd like to introduce you to each one of them, and they will tell us a little bit about why they're here. First of all, unfortunately, Alice Wainwright is not with us today. She has sent Carston Rist from Tropical Audubon. Alice Wainwright is the coordinator for the coalition of the Southeast chapters of the National Audubon society, and Carston has a statement to read to you from Mrs. Wainwright, who is vacationing at the moment. (Feedback)

Carston Rist: You want me to use the microphone?

Delate: Yeah. Thank you, Carston.

Rist: Alice Wainwright regrets that she's not able to be here today, and I will read her statement now: "We congratulate the Sierra Club for organizing this meeting that will focus public attention on the plight of the Keys. For too long, the burden of protecting the Keys unique environment has been born by conservationists such as the Sierra Club, the Isaac Walton league, The Friends of the Everglades, some civic associations and the Florida Keys Audubon society, with the able leadership of captain Ed Davidson. Seven years ago, or so, I went to Key West to speak in support of the designation of area of critical state concern for the Keys. I had been a member of the ELMS Committee, which drafted the state guidelines for the designation process. In respect to the designation of the Keys, our high hopes have turned to ashes. Nothing has been accomplished to make the designation of the Keys, largely because of lack of enforcement by the county and the state. Now, it appears that a fresh start is imperative. The starting point, of course, is a sound, equitable, county-led plan. Because the Keys, geographically and environmentally, presents many unique problems, we hope Monroe county will employ top flight consultants to assist in developing a plan containing criteria that would allow development, and, at the same time, protect the environment. For example: open space requirements could be set off by permitting cluster developments with density controls. The protection

of beaches, mangroves and the impact on nearby coral reefs should have the highest priority in any land-use plan for Monroe County. We believe that the time has arrived for responsible county leaders to recognize that the phrase: 'there is a limit to growth,' applies to the Keys. As we all know, public services such as fire and police protection, sanitation and capacity of roads are now completely stressed. Public support is essential to insure the adoption of an appropriate land-use plan. Civic and conservational organizations will play a vital role in conducting meetings to inform the public of the importance of a sound and realistic land-use plan. The force of public opinion is needed to convince public officials that in considering zoning changes, the Keys can no longer afford the luxury of zoning permits that destroy the very natural features that attract people to the area. Too often, zoning restrictions have dealt a blow to the environmental integrity of the Keys. Those who do not share our views may question our right to criticize what has happened to the Keys. I would respond by saying that nature made the Keys, not man, and that they constitute a magnificent part of the state to be cherished and enjoyed by all Floridians. We say, that the rape of the Keys natural environment must be stopped before the point of no return has been reached. I'm optimistic, however, and believe that the tide has turned. The past has put the spotlight on questionable zoning changes and procedures, which has aroused public opinion. Also, with John DeGrove as head of the department of community affairs, we anticipate closer co-operation between the state and Monroe county officials. The future of the Keys is indeed at stake in terms of both the quality of life for its citizens and the quality of it's environment. Let us join forces in helping to put an end to the degradation of this beautiful area."