

*Dr. Shirley Taylor speaks about the Future Development of the Keys*

Mary Therese Delate: Our last speaker for today is Dr. Shirley Taylor. Dr. Taylor lives in Tallahassee. She is chairperson for the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Coastal Management and came down to Islamorada for a meeting yesterday for that particular committee. She is also on the Board of Directors of the National Sierra Club. (Feedback)

Dr. Taylor: How's that? All right? I'm really... (Feedback)

Delate: Wanna switch places?

Carston Rist: Shirley, why don't you come over here? It's because of the amplifier.

Delate: How about this? I'm glad we have some electronic experts out here.

Dr. Taylor: Yes, we do need technological help. It's been really excellent to have these two days in the Keys. I guess it looks like I'm wearing one hat, but I'm really wearing a couple. From the National point of view, my particular interest in coastal issues moves around the country from Alaska to Maine, because I'm chair of Sierra Club's National Coastal Committee, and one of Sierra Club's top priorities is managing coastal areas rationally and reasonably, and there are different problems in every part of the country. But in the state of Florida, my own personal priority, is well managing the coasts of Florida, in terms of coastal management, and the Keys are not the least of this, and for that reason, the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Coastal Management decided to have a regional meeting and we met here yesterday, and a number of you I saw there. It's very important for us to understand and listen to what is going on in the Keys. I was already aware of a lot of it, but I learned a lot more yesterday. We have no power to make things happen, but we can advise, and that is our charge, to advise the governor and cabinet on new laws or new things that should be done to better manage the coast of Florida, and we do have recommendations that we will take back. In terms of the future, it seems to me that it's very plain from all we've heard yesterday and today, and listening to Dr. John DeGrove, who used to serve on our advisory committee, by the way, but our governor graduated him into heading the Department of Community Affairs. It's plain that the future of the Keys is right now, and it's also plain that it's everybody's responsibility, and nobody can wait for somebody else to do it, and that in

unity is strength. Obviously, not all of us are going to agree about everything that we would like to see done in the Keys, but I think the most critical thing is for more people to find at least single important issues on which they can agree. Because, so far, as long as we're divided, and so long as citizens are divided about what they work for, the other side wins: whatever the other side is. And so I think that's extremely important, in terms of what we've heard today, it reminds me, I've heard mentioned, the Overseas Highway. And I've heard it down in the Keys, and now Bert this morning spoke about the Overseas Highway, and I had just looked at a clipping which showed that nearly forty years ago, there was dreamed and described to be planned an overseas, ocean parkway the length of the Keys, connecting the mainland with Key West. And I always liked to look at practical places to start, and it seems to me like this could be a very interesting starting point for each portion of the Keys, wherever that road is. As Al Burt says, "it brings the bad and the beautiful," and it does, and I guess the bad is more obvious right this minute. But I was thinking about the challenge it could be to every community to make things happen that make the area more beautiful in their area, and I'm not talking about trees right now so much, as the things that are possible to see and enjoy along that part. I was thinking about the history that was described for the Tavernier area, and yet, when I drove through there, I was not aware, since I live in North Florida and although I've been to the Keys before, I wasn't aware of the things that I missed. So, I guess what I'm challenging the Keys to produce is something that would be in the same concept as, say, the skyline drive in the Blue Ridge Mountains through the Eastern part, up along the Eastern part of the US. It's slower driving, there are a lot of interesting points in which to stop and look and learn. There's history, natural systems, interesting plants, places to look at animals. Think of all the things that are possible in very small access areas along the Keys. And in fact, more public areas with more kinds of public use that make people appreciate the sand and the ocean and the natural systems, and this could be a very interesting odyssey, which could take quite a few, well, more than one day. It would take a longer time, and that should please businessmen because people have to eat and they have to sleep while making this slower pilgrimage through the Keys. So I guess that's what I'm challenging people to do and state agencies to think about in terms of park planning, which could tie into this very well, and so I guess that's the challenge I leave you with. I really think what you do now is exceedingly important, and the positive things that you can think of to work together on, understand each other's interests and concerns and come to a common goal, I'm very optimistic that state cooperation and

county cooperation can go forward and you and your voices and your votes at ballot boxes can make the difference, so I challenge you to find your role and take it on now.