

The Everglades National Park
FIU IDH 4007

EVOLUTION

Jeanette Piotrowski

IDH 4007

Journal Entry #1

September 08,2000

Evolution

Are Alligators Diabetic?

Or better yet why don't Caged Alligators...

I don't know what is it that Alligators do?

My vague concept of the "river of grass" is exactly that,

grass and water.

Although, through the roar of an old cranky engine I found:

Cold, limestone between my toes...

Swaying palms...

Rustling sawgrass...

Surveilling moorhens...

Gliding snail kites...

Dancing egrets...

And preying alligators...

But lastly I found...

A Deep, Dark, Black Vacuum

Engulfing the Grass

Receding the Water

And in the *blink* of our TV Monitors a new building complex was built.

With happy Alligator tenants who pay their rent one day at a time.

To Licensed Landlords.

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driverl@fiu.edu

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The Everglades National Park
FIU IDH 4007

Is the Everglades Raw and Natural?

Jeanette Piotrowski
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #2
September 28, 2000

Everglades National Park is the largest park in the United States. It is for the most part raw everglades, or at least I thought so. During our visit to the park we explored three different areas. Our purpose was to identify various species common to the everglades and start on our bird watching. Of course this was all to enhance our appreciation for our neighboring ecosystem. This it did, adding a sour note to our visit in my opinion. Everglades National Park was supposed to be natural not adapted to benefit man but this it was with pavement and boardwalks.

The visitor center was a prime example of how man changes things. A beautiful pond was behind the main building but it turned out to be a borrow pit, man made. The visitor center itself was a modern structure with the purpose of educating it's visitors with pretty wildlife presentations and a large gift shop. The tollbooth was not much different it was a tall structure similar to highway tolls. Although one cannot blame the state for its modern introduction, we have to look good for the tourist. And the roads of new pavement make easy traveling for anyone.

Royal Palm, our next stop of the day, was a large marsh with another building and relatively new parking lot and a crisp boardwalk. Nature surrounded us but yet it was as though there was an invisible barrier between us. The animals were there, Great Blue Herons and Baby Alligators; close enough to touch yet something essential was missing. The marsh was a tranquil and beautiful letting us walk on its clean boardwalk to identify plant species but the marsh was also a borrow pit. So far I've seen two man made water systems, two nice buildings, new pavement, a crew of workers building a bridge, and a clean boardwalk. I wonder why there is something missing.

Pa-hay-okee overlook was not much different to Royal Palm. It had a nice paved parking lot and a lovely boarded overlook. I have to admit the view was marvelous. Open uninhibited Everglades with Great Egrets and Great Blue Herons. Beneath us the water sustaining the life in the everglades with an empty water bottle and someone's blue hat. Could we get any more natural?

It seems to be that everywhere we go we have to leave our undeniable human touch. May it be in the Amazon, Africa, or our watery backyard the Everglades? It has to be due to our overwhelming need for power and control. We lay pavement and bridges through the Everglades as if to control how the water flows and through where it flows. In classrooms we are taught that with our simple gestures we destroy and ultimately take control of what is not ours to control. If the Everglades are a changing ecosystem, be it because of our human interaction with it or its ultimate destiny, why are we aiding the water flow or laying pavement when we should be letting it transform itself?

Not our entire trip was as modified as Royal Palm and Pa-hay-okee overlook, Long Pine Trail was as natural as I expected it to be. Tall Pine trees with saw palmetto, dense and rocky to walk through. There were only two small cots that I could see from afar. And the three picnic tables that were made out of old dirty wood were where we ate lunch. The parking lot consisted of about eight spots. From a far distance we saw a White Tailed Deer and I did not feel that barrier I had felt before. This might have been due to the ruggedness of the terrain or the surrounding wilderness.

The Hardwood Hammock we walked through also gave me that feeling that it was raw nature we were in. It was a dense hot area with blood sucking mosquitoes. The hammock was infested with poison ivy, which we had to be careful not to crash into. From my childhood recollections poison ivy is much like a

severe case of the chicken pox. Within the hammock there was an old pond, which now can be confused for a miniature swamp. Realizing it was once a man made pond or spring gives one the startling reality that nature is lending itself to our wants and needs and will reclaim its land at will.

Do our stereotypes on nature being dense and difficult ultimately warp our experiences? I think that in some instances they do. Our trip to the Everglades was probably as natural as some of us will ever get. Then why did I feel so cheated? I went to the National Park awaiting Long Pine Trail and the Hardwood Hammock not Royal Palm or the Visitor Center. Am I expecting dirt trails that don't exist anymore, is what I saw nature at its best? I really hope not because if it is, my children have no chance of seeing anything raw and natural.

Everglades National Park has a list of negative complaints from me. Although as unnatural as I saw it to be I walked away with pages full of notes and a ton of new highlights for my Audubon Field Guide. Now the question I have to ask myself is: is what I learned good enough to overlook all of my sour notes? Honesty I haven't answered that yet. But for right now I don't think it is fair to sacrifice one thing for the other because most of the species I saw I can find in a five block radius from my house.

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"Thanks Mom"

Tina Prah
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #1
October 19, 2000

My mother is a "hippie" in every sense of the word. Therefore, as a young child, I spent a lot of time in the Great Outdoors. There were even some years in which we traveled around living on commune farms. I remember the huge gardens where you could always find my mom, and where I earned my nickname "Beans". I recall the cats and goats that were always roaming around, and I remember falling asleep in rooms stacked to the ceiling with bunkbeds, where all of the kids on the farm slept.

So what in the world does this have to do with a reflection of the first day of class? Simply put, it reaffirms the old adage that we become exactly like our parents. When I reached my adolescent years, I hated being outside and going camping with no water or electricity for days--for fun. But now that I am an adult, I find myself becoming exactly like my mother. I enjoy a life of simplicity, and I love being outside--whatever form that may take--be it work or taking a class such as this. Therefore, my single most vivid reflection of this entire first day of class is that fact that I wish my mother was here with me. She would absolutely adore the information being learned, and the contact with nature that occurs (i.e., mucking around and seeing alligators in the wild). As my mother lives in Alaska, she has only been to Miami to visit me once since I moved here, and unfortunately it was within the first few months that I lived here, so I was unable to adequately provide her with answers to her inquiries of the local plant and animal life. But now, even after only one day of class, I feel the need to call my mom and tell her all about the plants and animals I saw, and which are native to Florida and which are exotic species. Furthermore, I am excited to call my grandparents, who still live in Wisconsin, and explain to them the wild edible berries that I ate (cocoa plums) and tell them how much I thought they tasted like wild Wisconsin blueberries.

However, I am also drawn to reflect on the grandest part of the afternoon--the illustrious airboat ride, equipped with illustrious tour guide. I am almost ashamed to admit that this man is exactly the type you would find in Wisconsin, and his command of the English language is also quite similar. But seriously, he was able to provide valuable insight into the areas we were viewing, which can only be gained by living right in it, as he does. And as far as his marshmallow tossing habits, I find no serious wrongdoing. Just as animals who perform in zoos are reinforced for doing backflips with a piece of raw fish, or children who behave well are given candy, I feel these men are reinforcing the alligators and gallinules "good" behavior. They are showing the animals that they really have nothing to fear of these airboats, that the animals do not need to react defensively. And yes, this behavior provides these men with monetary gain, to be sure, but I think also it provides those on the airboat with valuable experience. By this I mean to say that if I were to take an airboat ride and not see one alligator or one bird, I would wonder 1. Why am I out here? 2. Why are there no animals to see? 3. Why should I care about preserving the Everglades if there aren't even animals in them? By allowing common man to see these animals in their natural, wild environment, it gives the common man the opportunity to appreciate these animals even more, versus never having experienced the sight of an alligator casually swimming in a swamp, or a red-tailed hawk perched on a branch. One cannot value what one does not know. And while airboat rides may be considered a "tourist" activity, I feel more strongly that these rides are not just something for tourists, but something for native Floridians, as well. To live in an area like Miami and never see the grandeur of the Everglades which are literally right outside, one cannot be expected to aspire for the preservation of this natural wonder, since one would not have any personal knowledge to draw from.

I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the airboat ride, and I loved seeing the birds and the alligators and the plantlife. These are experiences I would never have had if I were still living in Wisconsin, and it makes

me a better-informed resident of this area.

My mother would be proud.

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The Everglades National Park
FIU IDH 4007

Sit Down You're Rockin' the Boat

Tina Prah
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #2
October 19, 2000

There were two gators in the borrow pond as my new canoe partner climbed into the vessel which we were about to maneuver through the Everglades together. I thought to myself "Please, God, don't rock the boat". Neither of us were especially adept at the art of canoeing; in fact, it was to be her first time ever in a canoe. I just prayed that 1. We would not be joining the gators in the pond and 2. We would not be tipping this canoe at all today.

I wonder if Lt. Hugh L. Willoughby had thoughts like this when he decided to embark on his trans-Everglades trek with Ed. Brewer. Granted, both men seem to have been of the outdoorsy-type, and therefore were fairly familiar with operating a canoe in a safe and efficient manner. But, what if Brewer had turned out to be a prankster, or worse, what if MY partner turned out to be a prankster, and we ended up tipping the canoe in the Everglades of all places?! I mean, after all, this isn't like overturning your canoe in a nice ole Wisconsin lake. There are gators 'round these parts!

However, none of these awful things transpired, and in fact, my partner and I learned to work together really well and did a good job of getting ourselves through the Nine Mile Pond Canoe Trail.

As we paddled along, there were times when we talked and laughed loudly and were probably very annoying to those around us, but there were other times when the beauty of the scenery around us (or maybe it was just pure exhaustion!) made us both very quiet and allowed us to just "be" in the Everglades. As I looked around me at all that was there--above me, below me, around me--I tried to conceive what it would have been like for Willoughby and Brewer, out here for a month with nothing but the mangroves and the sawgrass and the cattails and each other (and of course the gators and snakes). I wondered if it looked very different than it does today and I wondered how the heck they made it without 1. a clearly marked trail to follow and 2. killing one another. I envision that the two men did not talk very much, but just concentrated on poling and observing. I can imagine it got very lonely at times. Maybe they should have rocked the boat, just for fun.

In a sense, however, they did rock the boat. By this I mean to say that, here they were attempting to cross a previously untraversed (except by indigenous people) expanse of territory with little in the way of maps and/or guidance of any sort. How bold is that! I can say that I am half-glad that Willoughby had as much money as he did, because I fear what may have happened if they hadn't been as well equipped as they were.

Many others after Willoughby have gone into the Everglades and rocked the boat, too. The indigenous people of Florida were driven into the deepest depths of the Everglades and over time, the white man has attempted to somehow command the nature of the Everglades by "rocking" its natural state (i.e.: attempting to solve the drainage problem by digging canals). Even today, with the conservation and wildlife awareness that we possess, we as a society attempt to prohibit others from further rocking the boat by protesting against pollution and development in the Everglades. But it is the kind of exploration by literally jumping off the "mainstream" boat (careful of the slippery deck!) that has given us the knowledge we have of the Everglades today. How wonderful it was to be out there surrounded by all of this, with the feeling inside that maybe this was just how Willoughby felt as he looked out upon all this "river of grass".

Even so, I still don't want to swim with those gators. So please, don't rock my boat!

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Closer to the Beast

Reasey Praing
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #2
September 29, 2000

Closer to the Beast

How dare saunter on the pavement path,
Barely ten feet away from fatality.
How fearless staring at the young little dancer of nature,
With shiny lively tail.
How charming the tiny actor,
Improving his glossy tail,
And pouring the water of the Glory Glades
On every golden scale.

How brave turning back on the smiling beast,
Who is just feet away off the wooden barrier.
How slowly moving her snout
Out of the artificial dark green slime.

How cheerfully she seems to grin
With her long crooked mouth.
How neatly spreading her claws,
And welcome other creatures in,
With gently smiling jaws!

What is fear?

The overwhelming joy seems to define its meaning.

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The Everglades National Park
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The Closest To The Beast

Reasey Praing
IDH 4007
Journal #3
September 29, 2000

The Closest to the Beast

The ravenous beast stalks high and low,
Searching for food.
He floats like an old black wood, watching,
Cautious to the sounds around him.

He lies slothfully on the reflexive surface,
Waiting for his prey.
His dark crooked head floats above the water, reflecting
Symmetric image from the quiet plane.

His tolerant eyes stares at every surrounding detail.
He waits, for seconds, minutes, until he spies,
A young little Heron, away from the flock.
He gradually proceeds towards the creature.



Swaying his tail behind his long, scaly body,
He swims closer, drifting like a dead log,
From the grassy water,
Reaching the dry land.

His lengthy crusty body slips like a canoe.
His short strong legs slowly move
Like paddles of the nature,
Forcing the dead wood toward lively soul.

As he approaches his prey, he quietly,
Crawls out of the water and onto the bank.
His feet touch the ground, yet quiet.
He advances towards his game, watching its every move.

As he approaches the back of the bird, the attack begins.
With one swift move,
He leaps to the neck of the frightened animal.

Blood pours onto the alligator head as
The innocent struggles to get free.

When the young victim falls to the ground,
The alligator lets go and starts to
Eat the half-dead creature.
Soon it is dead, the beast
Has won.

And the closest to the beast is reached.



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MIND'S FLOW

Rowena Iliescu
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #1
September 24, 1999

Like heated H₂O am I,
my molecules colliding.
Hotter, bits of me break off
are lost until the rains come.
Everglades: the word
both wishful and poetic.
The *mot juste* or metaphor
for sanity and essence.
At one end I am solely concerned
with new, as much as can be got,
at times ignoring what I am,
or soon what once I was.
In the nether regions drained,
diluted, and not too deep.

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AIRBOAT RIDE

Rowena Iliescu
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #1
September 24, 1999

The airboat: one of many
insults. Maudlin, the human
attempt to interface. Any grace
attained in skimming speed
is undone by the engine's roar.
Though with the aid of ear marshmallows
it's possible to lose oneself,
to imagine mounting a giant cottonmouth
and by its leave weaving
back and forth, back and forth,
an S-shaped sawgrass swath,
which after our passing
slowly rises up again,
leaving not a wake or other sign
of our crossing.
Yet, how to deny
our need? The words,
"at least," too often intoned
to justify some Cause.
"Non-invasive," a relative term
?????
Who has asked the diabetic alligator?

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ECHO AND NARCISSUS

Rowena Iliescu

IDH 4007

Journal Entry #3

October 8, 1999

we skimmed across the glade,
weed parting air---shhh, shhh, shhh.
As if anything needed to be said.
But it did---does.
F'instance, when canoe floated still,
weed was silent,
yet the air was still there.
No sooner would i lift a paddle
then the echoes came again: shhh, shhh.
Did our passage cause so much disturbance?
Why admonish only motion?
Seeking out the hush was like
stopping to try and hear the sound
of footsteps which turn out to be
my own...so that every time I pause
to listen, footsteps pause also.

That was not all. Not at all
what color is the rush anyway?
Sometimes lovely evergreen.
Other times it seemed as though
a fire raging recently,
had charred the weed. And left behind
a thousand burned-out sparkler spikes
to poke their heads above the water's face.
I reached my hands out,
to feel sooty charcoal stalks.
But (magic) they were found to be
still green and supple and smooth.

curiouser and curiouser:
time and space in duckweed world
is not the same as what I know.
a trick of movement
sunlight upon water
iridescent strands of copper pearls
shimmer from behind
an endlessly shifting gauze curtain---
the shadows of the weeds.
This vision strange and wondrous
but like the haunting whispers,
or narcissus trying hard to touch
the beauteous visage before him,
each time I slowed the canoe to look,
the lustrous bronze would vanish,
and plain old spike rush---sooty or green,
remained---leaving me astonished.

a long and hot monotonous day
broken only by a couple
of the ever-present spiders,
one churlish crow and a green-backed heron,
doing its excellent impression of a shrub.
In no way tiresome because
the mystery of the spike rushes
sensory teasing, perceptions so fleeting.
Even now, I do not trust
what I saw or heard.
shhh, shhh, shhh.

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The Everglades National Park
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WATER DEEP, TALLEST TREE

Rowena Iliescu
IDH 4007
Journal Entry #5
November 12, 1999

"If I knew in my mind what it would look like, I wouldn't have to make it." {God and Kathy Koop discussing their work.}

To be slogging seemed to me as destructive as any air boat. I could not shrug off my culpability for any weed uprooted, or colony of single-celled organisms ground underfoot. All too personal. Not. {It was lovely and personal}. What I mean is: it is much easier to distance myself from a sense of responsibility when I am perched far above the surface of the glades on some mechanized monstrosity. When being buffeted by wind and sawgrass, it is easier to remain oblivious to the long and short term damage that airboats have on the glades. Hopefully when passing on foot I leave behind no pollutant, and hopefully the smaller range of my influence makes me less intrusive also. But the sight of lilies floating in the lines of our slogging was distressing. And it struck a chord when our ranger {is it a rule that male rangers must be handsome---this is MY journal, right?} had us spread out since slogging single file would wear a more pronounced path, one less easily repaired. I could liken it to the damage done by clumsy Northern divers who learn in icy lakes to drag their regulators and who forget that sea water will easily bear their weight, while fragile, slow-growing coral reefs are incapable of doing so.

I have an almost daily battle with the people at my work who leave the hose running incessantly and unnecessarily. It seems the sight of me holding a horse's lead in one hand and a clamped hose in the other makes some people want to crush me. It's amazing how angry people can become, when I respond to their impatient query, that I want to help ensure that there be abundant fresh water in South Florida for their {since I be childless} grandchildren.

I run into a similar situation at the dog park, where I am a proud pooper-scooper. I don't suggest this is environmentally more friendly than leaving the poop where it falls, but it is certainly more community friendly. I save my newspaper bags which then act as rubber gloves just perfect for the grasping of the warm, soft boluses. I never initiate the conversation. I never offer a bag. The amazing thing is how many people feel the need to challenge me as I gingerly tote the fetid sack over to a garbage can. The challenge, of course, frees me to let 'er rip {no, not the bag, but my invective, and my spume}. When comes the inevitable, "Why do you bother---it's a dog park? I respond, would you let your child poop here, and not clean it up? Oh, that's different, they say. Twice I found tape worms in my dog's stool, which would have gone undiscovered had I not scooped, I now appeal to their doggie nurturing side. Oh, I

LOOK at my dog's poop, I just don't pick it up, is their answer. Well, I just dislike the thought of anyone stepping in my dog's poo, is my bottom line {what spume!!}. Oh, stepping in poo is a small price to pay for the pleasure of not having to pick it up, is their rationale.

In my efforts to understand their consternation, their need to challenge things I did that have no obvious upon them, I was inspired to try my hand at a rap, which I think, sans music, is just a poem with attitude. Chikka-chikka, whop-whop...

Water Deep, Tallest Tree

If you don't like what I choose
that's okay but don't accuse
me of forcing on you my views.
Since you obviously haven't read the news
about the Everglades and how we use
rainwater that accrues
there during summer, ignorance like yours is what imbrues
our history, for which we still pay dues.
If the significance eludes
your ken while beauty there imbues
my spirit, then I guess I must excuse
you and count myself lucky. Because I am enthus-
iastic and like wading in my running shoes
through Taylor and Shark River Sloughs
while watching sunset's myriad pink and purple hues.
From days like these I receive important clues.
And I realize that zoos
are not where I would choose
to watch a gator while he stews
gets the blues, blows a fuse
coz other gators line up next to him like the faithful in their pews.
But when you're slogging through some sloughs
the reason {unlike Seaworld} is not to comfortably amuse
but rather give you cues
about why we're here, what to do, and what we stand to lose.
So you choose.

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Reinventing the Everglades: Modeling FIU after its Natural Habitat

Hello, welcome to our home page. This is the page where our Senior Honors project will be documented. The theme of our project is to make FIU's environment to look more like its original habitat: the Everglades. With the help of the Society for Environmental Actions (SEA) in both funding and volunteers recruitment, we carried out a series of subprojects which would serve to beautify FIU, make it more environmental friendly (especially for the native flora and fauna), and raise public awareness. In the following pages, our plan of action to "Reinvent the Everglades in FIU" will be documented thru a series of Web-based Slide Shows." If you are interested in learning more of what we have done (and continue to do), please go on to read a more detailed [introduction](#), which would lead to the several slide shows of the different subprojects.

We hope you like it, and thanks for visiting!

Links

[SEA](#). The home page of the Society for Environmental Action, FIU. This page contain info of the different activities the the SEA arranges.

[Everglades Digital Library](#) is the home site for many Everglades related organizations and research projects, as well as a multitude of links to other sites that has topic related to the Everglades.

[Honors Class home page](#) This is the place where the seed of our project started. Has a lot of information about our class, what we do, and what other don't do ;)

[FIU home page](#) This, of course, is the university that we are attending, and the home theme of our project. The site has more information that you will ever want to know. Unfortunately, there isn't enough information about the natural habitat in which the campus was originally part of.

[About the authors](#) contain some information about the crazy kids behind this project.

Disclaimer

The opinions here expressed are entirely those of the authors of the page, and not necessary those of our teachers', SEA's, or God's. Actually, if you find any part offending, we are sure they aren't our views either, they must have been the computer's!!

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this project is to enable FIU to enjoy a natural habitat that is representative of its location. The grounds on which FIU makes its home used to be part of the vast expanse of the Everglades, and as such, the flora and fauna found along FIU's campus should be more representative of its natural habitat. Several steps are necessary in order to start the process of "reinventing the everglades" at FIU. This project has been divided into three sub-projects in order to be as thorough as possible in assimilating FIU to its more natural environment. The three sub-projects are 1) getting facilities management to stop spraying the lakes with herbicides, 2) Planting more native species of plants around the campus, and 3) Raising public awareness through the installation of nature signs for significant species, both native and exotic (usually pests).

FIU facilities management had been continually spraying FIU's lakes with herbicides up until last semester when the Society for Environmental Action (SEA) was successful in convincing FIU to stop spraying and search for alternatives. The cycle of using herbicides, which along with killing algae blooms kills most of the microscopic life forms in the lakes, is a disastrous one since the whole food chain is significantly disturbed by the disappearance of the fauna at the bottom of the food chain. This disturbance inevitably leads to the decrease in population of various forms of wildlife including native species of birds such as the Anhinga. The reason that these harmful herbicides are being used in the first place is because of FIU's "golf course" mentality. The management seems to feel that students want FIU to look more like a golf course than its natural habitat, so spraying the grass near the lakes with rich fertilizers down to the lakes edge has been the standard. Unfortunately, these fertilizers have significant run-offs into the lakes thus causing abnormally large mats of algae blooms. Algae blooms are part of a healthy lake system, but when they start to flourish so abnormally they become somewhat of a pest, so under the system of spraying the grasses heavily with fertilizers, the herbicides thus become the easiest (but not eco-friendly) source of algae removal. So our objective in this sub-project, as well as the objective of those members in the SEA, is to allow the grasses to grow with minimal fertilizers and use native species of flora that naturally "suck up" the

excess nutrients from the fertilizers instead of using any kind of herbicides or chemicals to remove excess algae. Follow this link to see a [slide show of lake spraying](#) and get more detail of this subproject.

Now that the lakes have finally stopped being sprayed, our second goal is to plant more native species of flora around FIU's campus, primarily around the lakes edges. With the proper placement of such plants as sagetaria and sawgrass, not only will FIU be beautified, but the lakes will be healthier thus allowing for a greater number of species of fauna to flourish (this means more native birds). With the help of members from SEA and Dr. Stodder, many native species of flora were obtained from soon to be developed areas. Although we have not received permission to plant these species as of yet, they are being taken care of and ready to be replanted. A [slide show of native flora collection](#) and [our collection effort](#) can be found by following this link.

Our third sub-project consists of creating public awareness through the installation of nature signs. With the financial help of SEA's funding, we plan to install 10 nature signs around FIU's campus. Each sign will contain a picture of a native specie of flora or fauna as well as a description of that specie and its relevance to the everglades ecosystem. Some of the various species of flora and fauna that are going to have [nature signs](#) can be observed by following this link.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to SEA members and volunteers who made the project of beautifying FIU possible. We would also like to thanks many of the professors who gave us very valuable guidelines.

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Lake spraying related photos from SEA:

1. [spraying.1.html](#)

Q: What is the characteristic of a beautiful lawn?

A: One where there is no organism living in it, and there is nothing but a desert of grass.

Above, application of fertilizers in newly placed lawn in the back of the library. Just how much of this do you think will get to the grass, and how much of it will end up in the lake choking the fishes?

2. [sea.1.html](#)

The first necessary step to make FIU a more environmental friendly campus is to reduce the use of biocides and fertilizers to "manage" the campus habitat. In case you wonder why we want facilities management stop spraying, then have a look yourself. This is how the FIU lakes look after they are sprayed for herbicides!

3. [sea.3.html](#)

And here is yet another result from lake spraying!

4. [sea.2.html](#)

According to the aesthetic values of facilities management, a beautiful lawn is one that resembles a golf course. As such, grass should be green, all the way till the very edge of the lakes. With this in mind, they do an excellent job in applying abundant fertilizers to the lawn. Unfortunately, the runoff causes thick mats of periphyton (algae) to accumulate in the lakes. While algae is a good plant that helps in the health of lakes, excessive nutrients from fertilizers cause too much algae to grow. Eutrophication is possible, which may completely change the condition of the lake. Therefore, the overzealous application of fertilizer created the necessity to spray the lakes to keep algae growth in check. One must wonder how much techno fixes we need!

5. [sea.a.html](#)

From this picture we can see the aesthetics that herbicides bring to our lakes. Aside from its unattractiveness, this film on top of the lake prevents the simplest faunal life forms from developing. This prevention leads to an eventual dramatic decrease in the population of most faunal life within the lakes.

6. [sea.4.html](#)

As many would know already, FIU's campus used to be part of the Everglades. Therefore, we strongly believe it is necessary to bring back a wide variety of native plants back to campus. Shown in the photo above is a wetland habitat dominated by cypress in the Big Cypress National Preserve, which is part of the Everglades ecosystem. Indeed, this habitat is very similar to the habitat that FIU used to have before any development was started. Therefore, they serve as a good model example of a healthy wetlands system for FIU.

7. [sea.5.html](#)

Here we see another capture of a healthy pristine system, one in which plants grow freely on the water edge. The plants in the foreground with elongated leaves are called Alligator flags, how appropriate, don't you think?

8. [sea.6.html](#)

Wild flowers would be an aesthetic plus to FIU's lakes, they would be able to grow freely if the grass was not maintained to look like a golf course. The pictured plant is Duck-potato (*Sagittaria lancifolia*).

9. [sea.7.html](#)

Here we see some more beautiful wild flowers: The Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*).

10. [sea.9.html](#)

A complex ecosystem in the Big Cypress National Preserve. Take a close look at how many animals are in the small area captured by this photograph. The most conspicuous animal is the Snowy Egret in the lower right hand corner. But look more carefully, there is also a Great Blue Heron, an Anhinga, a Red-billed Turtle, and even a baby Alligator!

11. [sea.10.html](#)

Wildlife will be more affluent and the ecosystem would be more interesting if FIU's lakes were managed in a more natural way, this is a capture of an otter that emerged 2 minutes later in the same spot captured by the previous photo.

Species present in FIU:

1. [sea.8.html](#)

Of course, FIU does have native species on campus. It is not that we are completely isolated from the Everglades. This photo shows FIU's best display of native plants, in a lake by DM. Here one can observe a wide variety of plants, from Cypress to Pond-apple to Palms. Unfortunately, this is the only lake on campus that has such diverse native species, and many people do not even appreciate this, as can be noted by the ubiquitous accumulation of trash. We aim to correct these problems, as such, our next goal is to bring more native species to campus. With the increased native flora, we also hope to attract more native fauna to campus too. In order to do this, we need everyone's help. This is why we also have another project on raising awareness of the importance of wildlifes to the ecosystem of South Florida. In the slides that follow, more native species that can be found in FIU will be shown.

2. [cypress.1.html](#)

This capture is of a Pond Cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) in the Hennington pond between 8th street and the 117th avenue entrance to FIU. Pond Cypress grows along fresh-water channels and in swamps. They are shorter than Bald Cypress with deciduous leaves more closely angled to the twigs. The cypress is a native to the Everglades and many species of birds enjoy resting upon the branches of the Cypress.

3. [anhinga.1.html](#)

This bird is the Anhinga, also known as the snakebird and water turkey. Because their feather structure is designed to become waterlogged to facilitate diving and movement under water, Anhingas must spread their wings to dry when they emerge from the water. This photo is of an Anhinga resting on a cypress branch in the lake between the DM and BA building at FIU. Anhingas enjoy such areas as cypress swamps, so this cypress is a good place to see an Anhinga at FIU.

4. [anhinga.2.html](#)

Here is another still of the same Anhinga, his attention seems to be diverted somewhere.

5. [stranglerfig.1.html](#)

Located on the West side of FIU's library is a group of Strangler Figs. The Strangler Fig (*Ficus Aurea*) forms a large, sturdy trunk, often with aerial roots. These unique trees usually start their lives growing off of other trees. Its leaves are dark green, leathery, with yellow midribs. The bud leaves unfold from a rolled-up spike. Strangler Figs can be found in hammocks and woodlands throughout certain regions of the Everglades.

6. [butterfly.1.html](#)

Here is a picture of a butterfly fluttering around in the FIU's preserves, which is an undeveloped area. While many exotic species such as Australian pine, oyster plants, etc, are present in the preserve now, it still give a good idea of how FIU looked like before it was developed. Many beautiful creatures can be found lurking about in the preserves due to the dense vegetation that flourishes.

7. [greatblueheron.1.html](#)

Flying over a lake located at the northwestern end of FIU is the Great Blue Heron (or the more appropriate name of Great Gray Heron as they call it in Europe). This large bird is a native to the Everglades. The Great Blue enjoys a wide variety of habitats, one of those even including urban areas. The Great Blue Heron is one of Florida's most widely distributed and easily observed species in this family of long-legged waders. Most heron readily lose their fear of man and may be seen in wetlands along busy highways as well as in suburban backyards, the above capture is a good example of that.

8. [palm.1.html](#)

Royal Palms (Cuban cultivar). Why do we have so many of them on campus?! Is it to show some great sign of patriotism to the Cuba nationals? Do we really want to look like Stanford? It must be true that Values, Aesthetics, and Authority sets the standards for how a prestigious campus is supposed to look like!! Heck, we want the campus to look like a natural environment, where we can really see wildlife. Not that it is bad to have a few royal palms on campus, but in the opinions of the authors, planting so many royal palms just because it is deemed prestigious is not only a waste of money, it even gives FIU somewhat of a monotonous look.

Native plants project:

1. [collection.1.html](#)

Our next project is to collect and plant more native species around campus. This is a photo of one of the collection sites we went, which is in the border of the Everglades National Park, by Tamiami Trail past Krome Avenue by the 2nd flood gate/bridge structure. Well, how much do you think we can accomplish when we start out with beautiful ladies

posing as supermodels instead of really getting dirty and doing the job?

2. [collection.2.html](#)

Here is another collection site that we went to, this one by NE 127 Avenue and 6 Street. In this site, a church will be built on it. The developer was nice to us, and allowed us to extract any plants that we wanted. The site, being lower than surrounding developed areas, is often flooded. Therefore, we were able to collect some valuable wet-habitat native plants, such as Duck-potato, sawgrass, etc.

3. [collection.3.html](#)

A while ago we allowed you to question our ability to collect plants. Well, the photo above should remove all your doubts. After some 4 hours of collection, when it was finally dark, we have already filled up two trucks worth of plants!

4. [repository.1.html](#)

To give a better idea of how many plants we have collected, here are some baby plants sitting in buckets by the green house. As you can see, we have a lot of Sawgrass and *Sagittaria*.

5. [repository.2.html](#)

Another picture of the plants in the green house repository. If you are a plant expert, you can probably recognize them as Duck-potato (*Sagittaria lancifolia*) and Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*).

6. [planting.1.html](#)

Of course, we did not just collect the plants and let them die in the buckets! After a long waiting period, when the FIU executives forced Facilities Management to yield the management of 3 important lakes to the SEA, we started planting ASAP.

After a morning of work, we planted Pickerelweed (*Pontederia chordata*), Duck-potato (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), Spike rush (*Eleocharis cellulosa*), Sawgrass (*Cladium mariscus* ssp. *jamicensis*), and Water Lily (*Nymphaea* spp.) in the Eastern end of the Hennington pond (by the 8th street entrance).

7. [planting.2.html](#)

In the afternoon, we moved to the western end of the Hennington pond. This site is by the corner entrance between 8th street and 117th avenue, where we planted lot of Duck-potato (*Sagetaria lacifolia*) and Pickerelweed (*Pontederia chordata*) around each cypress.

8. [planting.3.html](#)

Here is one of the finishing products of our planting efforts. The critical analyst may be saying we did a horrible job, the site looks more like a swamp than a beautiful garden. But that is exactly what we wanted! The Everglades is a wet land habitat, filled by black mucky soil with half submerged plants. If you are like one of those "critical analyst," then you probably want to break away from the traditional set of Values, Aesthetics and Authorities, because we are about the change all the rules and remake FIU the Everglades again!

9. [planting.4.html](#)

When we said we wanted to make fiu look more like the Everglades, we really meant it! If you have been living in South Florida for any length of time, you should have heard of the enormous amount of money spent in restoring the Everglades. Part of the money is in exotic and harmful species removal.

In the photo above, we are removing cattails, not by using chemicals or machinery, but by manual labor. The task was so tedious that the vice president of SEA, Ian, was quoted saying: "Damn, we really should spray the lake and kill all these cattails!"

Nature Sign project:

1. [sign.duck.html](#)

The Muscovy duck (*Carina moschata*) is one of the most loved exotic pest in South Florida. People like them as pets, thus both children and adult feed them a lot. This friendly environment have contributed to the excessive increase in duck population. When there are too many ducks, the nutrient level in the lakes increases dramatically. This can cause excessive algae growth, as well as cattail growth, which in turn hampers the growth of other important native organisms such as duck-potatoes, alligator-flags, and many others. Furthermore, the Muscovy also competes with other birds, such as Coots and Moorhens, which are much more environmental friendly species (i.e. their excrement contains less nutrients and therefore causes less disturbance in the ecosystem).

If you are environmental friendly, then
DO NOT FEED THE DUCKS!!



The above is a sample nature sign that will be placed around campus. Facilities Management may provides the funding for the signs, while SEA, thru the Student Organization Council, may provides the funding for the posts. Furthermore, we are also waiting approval from the Space Committe to actually place the signs.

2. [signmap.sm.html](#)

The above is a map of the FIU University Park campus where we plan to place our first 10 nature signs (click on the map itself to see a larger image; this map, due to its small size, does not have all the room for the signs listed below). The location and the signs that we are considering are:

1. Bridge by Business Administration: A sign about the Muscovy ducks and encourage people not to feed them.
2. Lake behind the DM building: Anhinga.
3. Again in the lake behind the DM building: Bald Cypress.
4. Northern end of FIU Preserve, near the Golden Panther Arena: Dade County Slash Pine.

5. English Language Institute: Cabage Palm.
 6. South of the VH building: Strangler Fig.
 7. Small pond on the eastern side of ECS: Common Moorhen.
 8. Southern border of Hennington pond, by the 8th Street entrance: Spike Rush (*Eleocharis cellulosa*).
 9. Northeast corner of the Hennington pond, behind the Golden Maidique Arch of Knowledge: Sawgrass.
 10. Lake by Graham Center: Soft-shell Florida Turtle.
3. signmap.medium.html

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10. Lake by Graham Center: Soft-shell Florida Turtle.

Click here to go back to the [page with a smaller map](#).

4. last-slide.html

Thank you for visiting! You have reached the end of our web-based slide show presentation. Hope you have enjoyed. If you have any comment, we welcome them. See the about the authors for info on how to contact us.

Have a pleasant day!

New Photos Not Placed in Slide shows:

- australianpine.1.html
australian pine . 1
- brazilianpepper.1.html
brazilian pepper in ecs
- cypress.2.html
cypress.2
- gumbolimbo.1.html
gumbolimbo

Other Photos:

- [All photos](#)(including many that have not been used in the slide show.) Note: file with sm in the name represent a smaller version of the big brother. of the regular photos.

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