Marjory Stoneman Douglas Lecture
Date: May 6, 1983
FIU Number: SPC 930

John DeGrove: JD
Marjory Stoneman Douglas: MSD

[52:20 minutes]

JD: It is a privilege to introduce this beautiful lady; it's what I'm supposed to do, right? I don't suppose that the Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems ever had a more distinguished guest than Marjory Stoneman Douglas. I can't recall one, and I have a good memory. It's our special pleasure and privilege to have her with us here today. I might describe her as the First Lady of the Everglades, the author of *The Everglades: River of Grass*, one of the great books on the Everglades, a lifetime of concern for the Everglades, which really she's more properly described as the First Lady of Florida's environment. She has a concern for all our environment and particularly the environment of South Florida. But not restricted to that, she's been giving me a little lecture on what I better do about St. George's Island.

MSD: That's right, that's right…

JD: And I'm assuring her we're going to do right or bust, and we are…

MSD: That's right. Do right or I'll bust ya. (Audience laughter)

JD: That's right, and she's a tough lady too.

MSD: Oh yeah, real tough.

JD: I have, Marjory, and I haven't said this before, a special message for you, from the Governor.

MSD: Well…

JD: Who I talked to yesterday morning when I was coming down here, and who said to send you his great love and affection…

MSD: Very kind…

JD: And to tell you that he is working hard on putting together a new initiative to get on with the job of protecting, restoring and seeing that, in the future, the Everglades is treated better than we've done in the past. The Governor has not completed in putting together that initiative and I'm not announcing that initiative for the Governor, I'm only giving you a message from the Governor that he is working on that effort and that announcement along those lines and with a detailed set of directions, probably to some special group that he will convene to move forward within the next couple of weeks. His definition of the Everglades is the same as yours. He understands that it starts in the headwaters of the Kissimmee Valley, comes down into the Lake comes down into the Everglades Agricultural Area, the Conservation Area, Everglades National

Park and Florida Bay and all associated areas with it and that what South Florida is all about, and that's what Marjory Stoneman Douglas is all about. To maintain a constant vigil, a constant record of leadership, forceful, not even polite sometimes, when she feels it is necessary to be.

MSD: (laughs)

JD: But, unpolite in the best cause in the world is okay. I have worked with Marjory Stoneman Douglas a long time since 1973, I guess, when she was kind enough to come to Kissimmee to the Governor's conference on…

MSD: Seventy-one

JD: Seventy-one?

MSD: Seventy-one

JD: Well, '71 conference you were at…

MSD: Yeah

JD: But that was the one down at Miami Beach, but then you came to Kissimmee to Governor Askew's conference on growth and the environment at which we upset the Department of Transportation Secretary so that he got up from the table and went home.

MSD: Yeah…

JD: He called for a fairly modest recommendation that was made by somebody, the group leader, somebody in the group, who said that we should just take the funding for the Department of Transportation and

reverse it, and give all the money scheduled for roads to mass transit, and all the money scheduled for mass transit to roads. I thought that was a sensible policy or proposal, and not only that but it was made tongue-in-cheek, but the then Department Secretary didn't take it tongue-in-cheek, I guess, and got up and made a speech about how irresponsible we all were and went home. We got through the conference without him, and we never quite stuck to this policy, but we've made some modest progress in the meantime. I don't recall who that Secretary was and wouldn't say if I did.

MSD: No.

JD: Well, I'm not going to say anything else because I'm already intruding on the time we wish to give to our special guest to talk to us about a place that she cherishes, that she loves and about which she probably knows more than any human being on earth. So we're very happy to have her here, and it's my pleasure to introduce to you, Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

(Audience claps)

MSD: Well, thank you very much. Thank you very, very much John. I love to hear him talk; he does a beautiful job. As a matter of fact, it was in '71 particularly because, I remember it particularly because Dr. DeGrove was chairman of the Governor's Water Management conference at the Beach in '71, and I've said then, that man chairs a big tumultuous meeting in my life. He ran that meeting and never got out of hand for a single minute. And I think because he handled it so extremely well, the conclusions of that conference were especially good. That was when, by resolution of the whole conference, we decided to cut up the state into five water management areas, and I think that was a great step in advance, because it was the first time practically that from the government point of view, the state had been recognized not as just a series of political units, but as a very important piece of geography, which was divided by nature into five areas for which the source of water was entirely different. I, we, could do an interesting lot of talking about all the other areas which now have their separate Water Management District boards, and are coming along variously, especially well in the St. Johns area. Perhaps a little more slowly with us, because ours was already established in 1947 when the Army Corps of Engineers came into Florida with a contract from the State of Florida to do what was called "control of floods" all up and down the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades Basin. And, at that time, the first water management area was established called the I-C-S-F-C-D or the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District. And of course that was so silly, as if there were nothing but floods. The whole idea was to get the water off the Everglades and let everyone sell the land and make a lot of money without any regard at all to the fact that that was all the water there was, and if you got rid of the water, there wouldn't be any drinking water. That thing has not been entirely corrected, I think, in the thinking of the Water Management District to now, because, while it was changed, its title was changed in '71 to be the South Florida Water Management District it still has had the trouble of getting rid of some of its old thinking about flood control. I actually heard a member of that board a couple of years ago state at a public hearing, that when he was appointed on the board, the Governor said, "Now you are here for the subject of flood control." Even in those days the Governor hadn't heard that we weren't doing just flood

control, that we had the whole problem with water conservation in our hands. Thank you very much for the message from the Governor who has indeed learned an awful lot since the time when he appointed that man to be on the flood control board. The Governor has been coming along just splendidly, and my congratulations to him, and he has been learning more and more the problems and difficulties of South Florida. And his whole attitude, which Dr. DeGrove has been kind enough to make public to us, that he is going to do something in a week or two to appoint, I gather, appoint special study groups and so on is all to the good.
We've got an awful lot of studies that we can go on, it doesn't need to be all restudied. We've got studies all over the place, the trouble with most of these studies, especially those that the Corps of Engineers made, they make a study and it gets on top of a shelf somewhere and collects dust and nobody ever sees it again. The first great study, the study of groundwater of Southeastern Florida, by Gerry Parker, which was done back in…well, he was working out in the early forties. That study has been shelved for so long I had the last copy that had been given me turn out to be the last copy anywhere, and Arthur Marshall hadn't even seen it. Arthur Marshall, our great environmentalist, who is head of all this movement hadn't even seen that study of the Southeastern. I don't think you've got it in your libraries, even. And Arthur read it and learned an awful lot, because there is a lot to be learned. Well, anyway, it's been studied and studied and studied, but I hope there will be some coordination of all the studies and we can get on with it. The problem with having the US Army Corps of Engineers in it is that they'll keep on studying until the end of time, because they love [it], and I don't know what they do when they study. They must be doing something else, because they were asked last year to report - the Governor got, Mrs. Tschinkel of the DER, to tell the Corps they had to come and give their reports on the restoration of the Kissimmee River, which we went to the Legislature and the Congress, and Congress told the Corps to start studying the restoration of the Kissimmee River, and Mrs. Tschinkel called them up last January to report and they had nothing to report. They said, "Well we've been studying water quality." They hadn't been studying water quality at all. They got sixty thousand dollars for that, if not more. They were told to go back to study it, began to study it at least, and they were supposed to report in December, and they still came back and they had done nothing. So the problem is, and I'm really doing the end of this speech first simply because I started talking about it this way, that we're going to have to go far beyond the Corps of Engineers to get anything done. And that I'm so, I'm particularly gratified, delighted and interested in the fact that the Governor, I think, is aware of that, and I think, probably will have to come under the jurisdiction of the State of Florida. We're going to have to get the Corps of Engineers off our necks before we get anything done, looks to me. We're going to have to take congressional action, and have it get back to the State. With the State we might be able to get somewhere. Well, as I say, this is the end of the speech first, but never mind that. I hope we can all see the map, if I stand over here on this side, I think perhaps you can all get an idea of it. It shows the whole lower shape of Florida, of which you're perfectly familiar. But this map does not show, which I wish it had, that the South Florida Water Management area, which legally designates the confines of South Florida, begins just north of the Caloosahatchee River, which is here. And I had a big, black pencil or pen, I'd be marking this with an area that would go all the way up to… I hope I'm including Lake Kissimmee; I can't see it very well. We come down around the Kissimmee Valley over here to the east north of St. Lucie County and then so on down. So the shape of the South Florida water management area, and of South Florida, is not

just the natural shape of the southern peninsula, but this funny shape going up to include the Kissimmee Basin, the Kissimmee River. Now, in South Florida, we have actually only one source of water, and that it rainfall. That theory has been kicking around for a great many years, but it was declared so by the EPA some years ago as a sole source area, which means that the federal government, or at least in the administration before this one, could step in and say, "If the sole source of water is going to be in danger, we will not supply any federal money if it's in danger." I don't think this administration would particularly care, but I hope that its not going to last forever, so that that provision will take place again, that no federal money would be allowed for anything that would disturb the sole source of water. Now, the rainfall, and we've only recently brought the studies of the rainfall together, in a little booklet that I should have brought you copies of, which the Friends of the Everglades printed, a little book that's called that says, *Who Knows the Rain?* I got three different people to write essays in it that were people in authority. And we know now that our rain comes from three sources: on the prevailing westerlies, which are the prevailing westerlies of the entire country, when they come south of it we are likely to get rain from there, in the summers, chiefly, and the heavy rainfall season, we get rain bands and thunderstorms from the Atlantic. And the rest of the water that we get comes from the evaporation of rainwater in the wet Everglades. This theory is not necessarily new, but Dr. Patrick Gannon of NASA had been studying the Everglades for a great many years, and came up definitely with that theory, which is another reason for keeping the Everglades wet. If we have, if we let the Everglades dry up by over-drainage, we will lose a third, or at least a third, perhaps more, of our rainfall. If you don't have rain from the water that evaporates and goes up into the clouds and comes down as rain, if you don't have that rainfall and that great cycle out of the Everglades, we are many more steps towards becoming a desert, which we could well become. Now the rest, the shape of Florida, which you are all perfectly familiar with, is one completely of the rock, which we call oolitic limestone. It's not correct to call it coral rock, although there are bits and pieces of coral in it. Under the surface it's soft, that's how the bits and pieces of coral got into it, because we have the greatest coral reef in North America here in the Upper Keys. And when this land, 7,000 years ago, was covered with seawater, and when, 7,000 years ago, it finally rain off, the bits and pieces of coral were in the soft limestone which have hardened under being brought up to the sun. And that, there may be different phases of that limestone. Its called oolitic limestone, as I say, not correctly called coral rock, and it's full of holes, it's like a kind of like a rock sponge, and you see it everywhere. We make houses of it, we make rooms, we makes walls of it, and of some form we make roads of it; very useful. But because it is like a kind of rock sponge, when it is below ground and there is water in it, it becomes the aquifer, because the water is held in the interstices of the rock. That makes an aquifer, an aquifer is nothing more or less than oolitic limestone with water in it, if it hasn't got any water then it's not an aquifer. And the water comes from the surface water, from the surface of the rain and when the rain rains over the entire area, it begins to flow down very gently, or it used to, from the southern from Lake Kissimmee down the lower lakes and the meandering streams of Kissimmee River, through little marshlands and creeks down into Lake Okeechobee, from which it overflowed from the west in the Caloosahatchee, and the east in the Loxahatchee slough. But mostly, down the central arc of the sawgrass Everglades down to the south, to the Ten Thousand Islands to where the Everglades National Park is now.

We call it the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades Basin, or you could call the whole thing the

Everglades. But the Everglades is rightly described as the area of the flowing water and the sawgrass. When you have the sawgrass and the flowing water, you have the Everglades. That is flow, that's not a swamp. For years and years and years it was considered a swamp; but it never was. It's completely flowing water and I think the only smart thing I did about that book was to decide that it was a river. I found out the definition of a river is a body of fresh water moving more in one direction than another. And I was given a map and I kept looking at it and I thought, "Well, then why isn't it a river?" You've got a source up here, of course you have rainfall but you also have the ground source you have the east bank, the edge of oolitic limestone in the Atlantic Ocean and the Everglades, the edge where the cities are. On the west side you have the almost right- angle triangle area of the Big Cypress and Devil's Garden to the north, south of the Caloosahatchee River, which is the west bank of the river, and you have the Ten Thousands Islands and the lower Cape Sable and all that as the delta, so I said, why isn't it a river? And I had been working with Mr. Parker, the hydrologist, who wrote the great report on the groundwater of Southeastern Florida, I said, "Well, Mr. Parker, do you think I can get away with calling it a river of grass?" 'Cause he's the one who told me about the grass and the water. And, the Indians call it Pah-hay-okee, or Grassy Water. And he said, "Why I think you could." Well, I saw him later and I said, "Well Mr. Parker, we got away with calling it 'The River of Grass,' as now has been pretty well adopted and it gets quoted here and there and all that." And he said, "Yes, you got away with it, but you know why you did?" He said because it's true! (*Laughter*). So, that really was well established and I've been very much amused. Mr. Parker is one of our greatest hydrologists and another man who used to be the head of the Geological Survey, Jim Hartwell. They have to go and testify in court cases that it's a river, (*laughter*). It amuses me very much that I really thought it up and now it's been proved to be legal. Hurray, hurray for our side! (*audience laughter*)

MSD*:* Now you see, the whole area is surrounded by salt water, and it is the salt water that has shaped this whole peninsula of Florida. The Gulf of Mexico with its more gentle current that sweeps down to the west, and when the hurricanes come, frays out of the areas of the Ten Thousand Islands so that islands become inlets and inlets become solid land. The whole changing area of that side and the whole great sweep of the Florida current which is only part of the Gulf Stream which goes up the other side of Florida, joins with the Gulf Stream and comes in a great circle in the North Atlantic, comes down again in the Caribbean and up again as the Florida Straits current. That has shaped the whole end of Florida, which we figure, in its present shape, as you see it now, is only about 7,000 years old. The youngest land, no doubt, in the entire area, well certainly of the United States, and I'd rather think, but I may not be sure of that, in the entire Northern continent. Probably nothing else like it in the entire country. And that is why it has been so difficult for people who came down here from somewhere else, and everyone came down here from somewhere else, it has been difficult for those people to understand why it is so different, and why they have messed it up so terribly in their attempts to exploit it. Because it is very late in the history of the country that this part of Florida was developed, that awful word that means so much else then: development, chiefly destruction. They came down here after the Civil War, after the Northern part of Florida was pretty well reconstructed after the Civil War, with a lot of Damn Yankee capital and Damn Yankee interests. Other people came down to the West Coast of Florida, from Tallahassee, when they were defeated Confederates. They came down to Ft. Myers, which is an old Indian

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Lecture
Date: May 6, 1983
FIU Number: SPC 930

War post. And they established themselves again up and down the Caloosahatchee River, with their own Southern tradition. Ft. Myers, and that West Coast, has not wanted, didn't originally want a lot of people coming down, but over here on the East Coast, people straggled down and set up little funny houses with dirt floors and palmetto roofs, anywhere along the beaches and wanted more and more people to come. They wanted to bring up their children with schools and they wanted hospitals and cities. So, the East Coast naturally has developed very much quicker than the West Coast and it's had all the terrible faults of development, which has resulted from this amazing explosion of population. I don't suppose there is any other part of the country, including Southern California that in the last, say, fifty years has developed so rapidly and so tumultuously as the whole Miami area, the whole East Coast, what they call the Gold Coast. I came in 1915, and when I did, Miami was a town of fewer than 5,000 people. Not an attractive town, I don't think it is yet, because it is completely the American habit of coming in and building a town that looks like practically nothing at all, and it's not only just Miami, it's all the towns really. It'll take, maybe in 100 years they'll tear it down and build it over again. It will be constant and harmonious with the amazing background, the great, the marvelous Bay. Even with the filling of the beach and all, the By has been simply wonderful as a site, although it's greatly endangered, and the whole background of the ridge country and the Everglades beyond; a unique and amazing country. Nothing like it in the whole United States; both subtropic and, I'm convinced, tropic, in its vegetation, in its warmth, in its rainfall; all of that. A country that nobody has understood correctly, least of all the Corps of Engineers and, may I say, the Water Management District. Because I'm, delighted to know that the Water Management District of recent years has been, especially recently, working with the Everglades National Park, has begun to see that a great many things were done wrong and they have begun to correct some of the You can see from this map, as Dr. DeGrove said, the attempts to drain the Everglades began, actually, about 1881, when Governor Bloxham, the first Republican…oh well, let's not go into that. Maybe he was Democrat. Can't remember. Was he a Republican or a Democrat? First Democratic governor since the Reconstruction, I guess that was it. Called in Disston and asked him to do something about the flooding, with the way the waters flooded down the Kissimmee, into Lake Okeechobee, the headwaters of the Caloosahatchee. And Disston put in a couple of little canals, I'm a little vague, some canals that destroyed a little lake Flirt that disappeared as a result of that, and some kind of canal work on the mouth of the Kissimmee that I've been vague about, but anyway, he was given half of all the lands he was supposed to drain, and he couldn't even sell it in those days, so he went bankrupt. He couldn't do anymore. So it wasn't until 1906 under Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, who'd run for governor, under the slogan of "Draining the Everglades." It wasn't until 1906 that the first drainage canal was run up from Ft. Lauderdale to Lake Okeechobee. The North New River Canal and the South New River Canal and after that you can see all the canals. It's like a plumbing chart. The whole idea was to get rid of the water; from the overflow water, from the Okeechobee and particularly from the agricultural area. Now the south of Okeechobee, I hope I am pointing to the lake, but you can see it anyway. All the way to the southern part of the lake…in the early days before man, there was a band of tropical jungle trees; bald cypress and willow and pond apple and all that, and in the course of 7,000 years, they had laid down the spilt of their leaves and the rotting of their roots and bark, so that there was a mound of thirty feet of peaty muck immediately around the Lake extending a mile or so south. That was rich-looking black soil, that's what Governor Broward said was the

richest land in the country, all you had to do was put a bushel of it in your garden and that would act as fertilizer. Well, the Governor was nuts: there's no fertilizer in it, there's no nourishment in it. It's like this stuff peat moss that you use for planting things in pots. It holds water and nothing else. So the minute they put the first canals up around the Lake, they chopped down all those jungle trees and began to put agriculture and then sugar on that mount of peaty muck around the Lake. The result of that has been that in the years of cutting the trees and sawgrass off, and letting the sun get on the peaty muck. And the fires, of which particularly have to get the sugar fields ready for harvesting so that the fires that burn into the peaty muck, that thirty feet of peaty muck has disintegrated until now it's only about five feet and the question is; 'What are they going to do, after that is gone?' They're not going to be able to raise sugar around the lower part of the Lake. I'll talk about more of that in a minute. The whole idea was to develop it for agriculture, without any idea at all if any development, agricultural or urban, that would interfere with the sheet flow, was interfering with the water supply of all South Florida. Another thing that the engineers did that was so stupid, they were…they made Conservation Areas One, Two and Three, behind Palm Beach, Broward and Dade Counties, which they diked! Making ponds. They ran canals down from the lake, down to the Conservation Areas. And then from the Conservation Areas, canals are run into the well fields of the cities, in the different counties. Well, it wasn't very long before the Lake water began to be polluted, and that polluted water was run into the Conservation Areas, and we got polluted water run into our well fields, and the pollution continued in the Lake. The last thing the engineers did, that was so completely stupid, was, with the cooperation of the Water Management District, let's face it. I don't think the Water Management District let them do it without their cooperation, I would think they could have stopped them. They ran a straight canal down there in '69 and '70, fairly recently, from Lake Kissimmee down to Lake Okeechobee. It ran straight through and across the meanders of the Kissimmee River, the way the straight marks on a dollar sign run through the curvy marks. That water, it used to come down in the meandering river, of course the meanders of the river collected more water, but they came down very much more slowly.

And any pollutions that got into it, and pollutions did get into it with the developments around it, were slowly purified by the slow course of the water in meadows with the purifying plants and so on. So it was comparatively clean, when it got into Okeechobee. But when they ran this canal down it…in the drained lands, the cattle were brought in and particularly a lot of dairy farms around the northeast edge of the canal and the Lake. You may not know it, but cows produce manure. I don't know that the people in the government knew that, (*audience laughter*). But somebody should have told them! Because the dairy farms dumped square feet of untreated cow manure into the canal and it got into the northern part of Lake Okeechobee, which is supposed to be the reservoir of our drinking water!

So you can, today, fly over the northern part of Lake Okeechobee and it'll be all brown, because what with the pollution, the water hyacinth came in and this very awful weed, called hydrilla, which is below the surface, that came in to pollute the water, to use up the oxygen or whatever it does to the oxygen and destroyed all the great sports fishing of Lake Okeechobee, in fact the commercial fishing of Lake Okeechobee. Then, on the southern edges, I told you of where the thirty feet of peaty muck was, the sugar people came in. The agricultural people came in first, but the sugar people came in and took over, because the sugar people had the idea that, in the United States, we should produce our own sugar. So, they put their sugar

fields there. Now when you plant sugar, you have to have water to plant the small canes in, then you run the water off. You have to irrigate, then you run the water off, for the plants…for the canes to grow. The cane sugar is really a tropical product. The cane really belongs in the West Indies. They tell me it's a chemical…sugar is a chemical action of the sun and water, within the cane, itself. Now, down there, on the southern slopes of Cuba, where…which are ideal for sugar raising, they plant the canes in the rainy season, when the rains have runoff, then the canes grow. They don't have to bother. But, up here they irrigate to plant and then they back pump that irrigated water, with the ash and old boots and human waste and everything like that, into Lake Okeechobee, which let me remind you again, is a reservoir for our drinking water. And, that dirty water got into the Conservation Areas and stood there. Now, standing water does not purify itself. They diked the areas, so they created pond conditions, in which they got an eighty percent evaporation. That may be all right. Maybe we'll get more rainfall on that account, but it's not good enough. But, the pollution stays there; drops to the bottom in a kind of sticky ooze. It doesn't clean up, the bacteria that's there, and so that's what's in our drinking water! And, that is why our drinking water tastes so bad, not because of the bacteria taste, but because of the chemicals. They've got it all full of chlorine, they've got a lot of new chemicals in there, they're putting in it. It's terrible water, you know, because its filthy, you couldn't drink it otherwise. The whole thing is just plain crazy. And nobody, see, not the Water Management District, cause the water management district had to deal with this system, which is a bad system. And I never heard of anybody in the Water Management District ever objecting to it. The objection has to come from the environmentalists on the outside. But now we are beginning to realize the system is bad, and we've got to change it. And I'm delighted that the Water Management District is finally getting on with the job of correcting many of the mistakes in the lower Everglades or all up and down the Everglades area and they're doing it listening to the suggestions of the Everglades National Park. That's all good, but it's not enough. Because, the thing that we've got to do is to restore the water, from the canal, to the Kissimmee River. Arthur Marshall, our great environmentalist, some years ago flew over the Kissimmee Valley and to his astonishment, he saw that the Kissimmee River Basin, I mean the Kissimmee River course, dried up as it was, was still there. That the water was in the canal. That all we have to do is get the water from the canal back into the meandering river. Now whether that should be done by completely stopping up the canal or by partial plugging. I, myself, think partial plugging would do very nicely. And they could still control flooding they get at rare intervals, very well. I don't care how they do it so long as they do it. And we, Arthur Marshall and John Jones of the Florida Wildlife Federation and I, went to the Legislature, back in about '77 and got a resolution through the Legislature, to tell the Congress, "Tell the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to restore the water," to make studies to store that's where I began, by telling you that the engineers were told, then, to study the restoration of the Kissimmee Valley and they've been using that money ever since, but evidently not doing very much in the way of studies. So, that when the engineers got a hold of the thing, there's no controlling it, because it's the Army, you know. It's the Department of Defense they call it now. They think the war is on, here in Florida, I guess, (*laughter*). Cause they've been able to do anything, almost anything they wanted to do. And, certainly they, I keep coming back to the Water Management District, they certainly have not disagreed with the US Army Corps of Engineers. So we've had these two bodies, these two official bodies, with a great deal of old

thinking going on, on our necks, you might say. And I'm delighted that the Water Management District is seeing a great light, but it will be probably necessary to go to the Legislature and get the Legislature to approach the proper committee in Congress to get the US Army Corps of Engineers out of Florida, or as much out of Florida so that the State of Florida can restore the Kissimmee River. Then we've got to tell the people that we've got to get some meanders full of water again and the water coming down Lake Okeechobee, then we've got to tell the people with the dairy farms and all that to clean up their own act. There's no reason at all why they should let all that perfectly good manure go out into our drinking water. It's valuable. They could put in polishing ponds. They could use a great deal of it for fertilizer. They can use it for methane gas. They could use it for all kinds of things. Really, you have to be forced to make money, it's really funny. The same way we've got to get rid of the sugar people. Having the sugar people in Florida is complete nonsense. As I was saying, in the West Indies it's raised to a much greater advantage. They let it grow to about two years, because the longer it grows, of course, the more sugar there is per cane. They generally grind, harvest, iron-grind in the West Indies about two years, it could grow to four years, but two years is commercially feasible. But up here, you see, around the Lake you have freezes, and frosts are the great enemy of the sugar cane, so they've begun harvesting at eight months to a year, so they don't get the sugar content. So they depreciate the soil. They don't get the sugar content. Up to the last two or three years without a sugar subsidy, costing us more for our sugar, because it's so expensive for them, you know. The whole thing is stupid! Why should we pay them to depreciate our property? I can't understand. So, the quicker we get rid of the sugar people, the better, as far as I'm concerned. They should go at any time, now, as far as I'm concerned, (*audience laughter*). Pick up and go. Any minute. We won't miss them a bit. In fact, I am beginning to, this is just heathenish and what I'm saying, I'm taking full responsibility for. Nobody told me to say this. In fact, nobody does tell me to say much of anything, that I can think of, never mind that. (*Laughter*). But, I don't see why we have to have all this agriculture in Florida. What's the use of all this agriculture? Why can they raise tomatoes and beans somewhere else than encroaching on the sheet flow of the Everglades? When it comes to that, that land is getting to be so much more valuable from the developers' point of view, that the developers are buying up agricultural land to develop housing. Well, we don't want them either. So that I would be very happy to see a lot less agriculture around here. As it has been said, again the Water Management District allots more water to agriculture in South Florida than it does to the cities and the people, and whatever light industries which we have that are perfectly justifiable, that we are perfectly justified in having. I see no reason why agriculture should be so important. And I can go on and tell you more about that. (41:35) Because I see no reason why, this is my own theory, mind you, I'm completely responsible for any statement I make. I see no reason why we shouldn't get cheap vegetables from Mexico. Mexico can raise vegetables. All right, one of our great troubles is refugees. People from Mexico coming across the border, into the United States, because they can't get work in Mexico. Why shouldn't we buy our vegetables from Mexico and keep their people home? Why shouldn't we do something about Haiti and let them feed their people there instead of them coming over in leaky boats, trying to be rescued in this country? We haven't faced this refugee problem, which is a problem of this country, which is an outpost and a frontier and the southernmost part of the United States, being surrounded by other countries, by the Third World, with other economic situations. Why should we raise

vegetables, at our own expense, greater expense, when they could be raised cheaper, somewhere else, particularly Mexico. I see no reason why we shouldn't. We're not handling either the vegetable problem or the refugee problem or our neighbor economics problem at all well with any foresight whatsoever. And yet we'll always have refugees when we have food and they don't have it. You can bet your life on that, and we are not facing it.
So, let me get back to vegetables in Florida, I don't think they're so important. Now, I don't want to see this land used for houses. I want the State of Florida to define the sheetflow area of the Everglades and keep the people out. The great problem we have in East Florida is that people have gone and built there without permits, without electricity. They've put in shacks: Florida Power and Light company has found the houses there and run poles out, giving them electricity. So then when the high water comes, as it came three years ago with the flash hurricane, and you had too much water down there in the East Everglades. And recently when we've had these early rains that were so good for a great deal, they began to flood the east Everglades. And the people, who would come down illegally into the east Everglades began to yell and scream for more drainage. Well, let them have floods! That's what we've got to have there is water. They should not be allowed to build in the area reserved for the water. You can't try to do everything at once. You know, we had this odd idea of multiple use, say for a recreation area. You can't use a water system for recreation; you've got to use it for water.

You can't expect it'll do well for water if you use it for building or for hunting or for anything else. So then we've got this bad problem in East Everglades, 'cause people are living there that don't belong there. And they want the State to either buy the land or drain it, well that's stupid, they have no business. In some way, they should go away. You know we used to have that idea about let the buyer beware, if they didn't know that when they bought, it's their own faults; nobody made them. We have a great many more problems in the area, but the main problem is this restoring the Kissimmee, cleaning up Lake Okeechobee and restoring the sheetflow of the Everglades. In that process, we have a lot of minor problems. And I don't know if I've been talking too long. Because the trouble with me is, that when I get started talking, I guess John DeGrove is one of the few people who could stop me. So I should depend on you. Well anyway, I can say a few more words. We have the Everglades National Park, which has been a great asset to the south of us, and I'm one of the two people still alive who was on the committee for the building of the park. But when the park was put in, it was put in south of the Tamiami Trail, which was finished in '28 from Collier County, and it cut off the water to the south, so the Park has never had enough water. And since we've had these other roads, and the whole cutting down of the sheetflow, it hasn't had one-tenth of the water it should have. So the park itself has been changing from a wetland park, which it was a completely unique and wonderful one, but these dreadful trees have been coming in, not only the Australian pine, but the Brazilian pepper, *Schinus terebinthifolius*, I think it is. And, the melaleuca, which has been coming in like mad, in the Park, changing the character of the Park.
Now then, we have the problem of the Big Cypress. The Big Cypress extends to the western border of the Everglades. I wouldn't know how far the Big Cypress goes to the north, except that there's an area immediately to the south of the Caloosahatchee, that we call the Devil's Garden. There's a dome of rock under it, so it's higher. And, it was always very dry and the Big Cypress begins south of that and extends all the way down to Cape Sable, through the Ten Thousand…to the backgrounds of the Ten Thousand Islands. That is a true swamp. It is based on the same old jagged oolitic limestone that the Everglades is, but the limestone is right there.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Lecture
Date: May 6, 1983
FIU Number: SPC 930

When you walk into the Big Cypress there will be standing water comes up above your ankle, but your foot immediately finds the roughness of the rock below it. It doesn't have very much soil. But the great cypress have come in, it's called the Big Cypress not because it's big but because the cypress are. There are two kinds of cypress: the big cypress and the dwarf cypress. The dwarf cypress is in there, but the big cypress… The big cypress you see particularly and I hope you all have gone to Corkscrew, which belongs to the Audubon Society now, and is a primeval cypress forest; perfectly beautiful and beautifully preserved. Well, the Big Cypress has its problems. Years ago in '69 and '70, the lower part of Florida was threatened by the Miami-Dade County Port Authority wanting to put a jetport , which would be north of the Everglades National Park on the edge of the Big Cypress, and we managed to stop it, by getting the federal government to acquire much of the land of the Big Cypress as a wildlife and water preserve. And we got the State to give them a lot more land as a buffer state. So that has been a water and wildlife preserve ever since, well '69 and '70, no that's, well anyway, in there somewhere. But we were not able, yeah, sixty-nine and seventy, but we were not able to buy the mineral rights right under the soil, and that's when the oil people bought the mineral rights and came into the Big Cypress. Now, you cannot take a person's property away from him without due process of law. That's in the Constitution of the United States. The only way we could control the mineral, the oil people in the Big Cypress would be to control the access roads. But if you denied them all access, there would be a large question as to whether that would be what you call a taking process, that is depriving a man of use of his property, which is illegal. However, I don't know if they, I don't know whether they could have claimed that because they could have brought the things out by air, perhaps, but anyway they didn't. So we have

the oil people in there. Now the kind of oil that they've been getting out of their early oil wells has been a very low grade crude. The first oil wells went in many years ago on the Immokalee Road up from the Trail. Number two Sunniland came in many many years ago; I remember going over to see it. They never got anything but crude; so low and so high in sulfur, that the oil itself is not much more than liquid asphalt. And they didn't get much more than a hundred and six barrels a day, which is nothing. So they didn't get much out of the first oil wells in the Big Cypress, but recently they've been doing some experimental drilling and they found, what they call the area, the Bear Lake and the Raccoon Point oil fields have brought in more oil, but it's the same kind of crude and with the situation, as it is, with oil and the expensive refinery, they have no excuse for drilling, now, or getting it, they simply want to insure it, but there's no reason why they should. We don't need that oil. They can hardly afford it themselves. So, we have to tolerate this nuisance. I would like to see a moratorium on oil drilling, until the prices go up or some other reason. Now, whether the State could impose a moratorium is another question. If we got enough public opinion, I bet we could. So, anyway, we have not only the oil people in the Big Cypress, we have the hunters. And we have the hunters in the Big Cypress all over everywhere. However, they are not supposed to shoot for panther. But the panther, which is now very limited; you've been reading a lot about the panther, of course, recently. Officially, there are only about two, ah, twenty left, they're more than that, but still