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CauseWays

July 2009

Dear Debbie,

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings this summer, check out our speakers! We have a great outing coming up too, a snorkeling trip to John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park. Don't miss out on the fun, and a chance to learn about our coral reefs. The trip is filling up fast, so sign up soon!

General Meetings

General Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of each month at the Coconut Grove Sailing Club. The social time starts at 7:00 PM. At 7:30 PM we make announcements, and the speaker starts at approximately 8:00 PM.

July 13th - 7:00 PM - Coconut Grove Sailing Club - 2990 South Bayshore Drive

Hi everyone, we have some great speakers coming up, check them out and come spend some quality summer time in one of Miami's best kept secrets, the Coconut Grove Sailing Club. Parking is free in the lot

Featured
Article

Virigina Key

**Master Plan:
We need more
time to come
up with a
better plan**

while you are attending the meeting.

July 13th: Eduardo Salcedo - Division of Natural Areas Management of Miami-Dade County Parks
Open Space Master Plan - Eduardo Salcedo will discuss and solicit feedback about the County's Open Space Master Plan. This plan is a 50-year vision to create a livable, sustainable place for us to live. Come check it out!

Sierra Club
Miami Group
Website

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Website](#)

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August 10th: Author Larry Perez

Man-o-War, Mormon & Manatee Keys: Mysterious Monikers of our National Parks

In his book, Words on the Wilderness, author Larry Perez traces the origins of over 400 unique place names in south Florida's national parks. Sometimes frightful, sometimes puzzling, and sometimes laughable, each name provides a glimpse into the human experiences set amidst the area's natural splendors. But do they hold more value than a mere mention for history's sake? Larry will help answer the famous question: "what's in a name?"

September: Dr. Jack Parker

Virginia Key Master Plan to go to City Commission in June

Is This the Plan our Community Wants?

VIRGINIA KEY UPDATE: The Virginia Key Master Plan went from the fast track back to the station when Miami Mayor Manny Diaz suddenly pulled its presentation from the June 25 Miami City Commission agenda after punishing reviews from the two city advisory boards, which unanimously rejected it.

His spokesperson told the Miami Herald they will now listen to residents: "We want to take residents' concerns into account, and see how we can address those concerns."

And in the July 1st, Miami Herald, the City Manager wrote in a letter to the editor the city is considering revising some concepts. <http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/letters/story/1121935.html>

The Manager was responding to the Herald's June 25 editorial, "Virginia Key plan is a dud." The editorial said, "...The plan's emphasis on commercial development, lodging and a conference center is all wrong...The Virginia Key Master Plan needs as little cement as possible..." The Herald offered its own

revisions: "...A place to walk through nature preserves, hang out at the beach or take the family on a spin along a biking trail. These are what the master plan should emphasize.."

<http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/editorials/story/1112815.html>

It's still possible the plan could pop up on the City Commission Agenda as early as July 9.
(View the last proposed plan at www.virginiakeymasterplan.com).

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Contact City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and City Commissioners:

Mayor Manny Diaz, (305) 250-5302; Mannydiaz@miamigov.com

Commissioner Marc Sarnoff (305) 250-5333; msarnoff@miamigov.com

Commissioner Joe Sanchez (305) 250-5380; jsanchez@miamigov.com

Commissioner Tomas P. Regalado (305) 250-5420; tregalado@miamigov.com

Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones (305) 250-5390; mspence@miamigov.com

Commissioner Angel Gonzalez (305) 250-5430; agonzalez@miamigov.com

Let them know what you think, give them your ideas. Tell them this Master Plan should not be rushed, we need more time.

Write a letter to the editor: heralded@miamiherald.com

MIAMI MARINE STADIUM: The World Monuments Fund has commissioned a new engineering study of the Miami Marine Stadium, the first step in the restoration of this icon of modern architecture now threatened with demolition. (www.wmf.org)

BIKING VIRGINIA KEY: It turns out the best "rural bike ride" rolls right through Virginia Key, according to the Miami New Times Best of Miami 2009. "...Escape the urban bustle, clear your head, take in some beautiful views...On the way back, take a ride through the Virginia Beach loop, and if you time it right (with minimal stops, this route should take an average biker a little more than an hour), you'll catch a sunset over the Miami skyline from that postcard-perfect vantage point ..."

FACEBOOK: Updates, new links and photos at the Friends of Virginia Key Facebook group for updates, links and new photos.

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=88158191391&ref=ts>

Blanca Mesa
blancamesa@att.net

Sierra Club Miami Group Submitted this letter to EEL.

July 6, 2009

Ms. Cynthia Guerra, Program Director
Environmental Endangered Lands (EEL) Program
Miami Dade County DERM
701 NW 1st St.- 6th Floor
Miami, FL 33136

RE: Virginia Key EEL Application (Spring 1999)

Dear Ms. Guerra:

The Sierra Club-Miami Group respectfully requests reactivation of the EEL application for Virginia Key, first submitted Feb. 1, 1999 and that this matter be set on the agenda for consideration for the next available application cycle.

It is our understanding DERM has completed a biological assessment of the island and a determination was made that certain natural areas and lands on Virginia Key are eligible for inclusion in the EEL program. Please advise what is the next step in the process to have Virginia Key island become a part of the EEL program.

As stated in the original application, Virginia Key island possesses one of Biscayne's Bay's most diverse natural environments. This natural barrier island contains seagrass beds and intertidal sand/mud flats, mangrove and herbaceous wetlands, beach dune communities and coastal hammocks. These ecologically important areas provide habitat for hundreds of species of fish, marine invertebrate, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, birds and plants. Significant findings of the biological evaluation prepared by DERM in 1999

include:

The wetland areas are one of the last remnant habitat types of this kind in Miami Dade County.

The beach and dune communities are essential sea-turtle nest beaches, possess several threatened and endangered plant species, and comprise a significant amount of this type of community in Miami-Dade County.

The coastal maritime hammock communities provide vital resources for wildlife species, including migrating songbirds that travel down the Atlantic coast flyway, including many rare migrants like the pine siskin, Tennessee warbler, Swainson's thrush and indigo bunting.

The piping plover uses the beaches as wintering grounds. The Bill Sadowski Critical Wildlife Area contains the largest remaining portion of unaltered mangrove forest on the island. The area was so designated by the Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission in 1990 to protect the extraordinary habitat values of the area. This mangrove wetland is typical of a coastal band mangrove estuarine community with a dense, mature mangrove forest. The seagrass and seagrass community within this area is an important undisturbed spawning area for many species of fish and invertebrates.

Among the many federally listed wildlife species observed using Virginia Key are: bald eagle, wood stork, piping plover, least tern, loggerhead sea turtle, green sea turtle, American crocodile, Atlantic bottlenose dolphin, and the West Indian manatee.

The waters in and around Virginia Key are used by manatees for feeding, resting, mating, traveling and calving. Virginia Key includes a State designated Bird and Wildlife Sanctuary, including raptors such as bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and osprey, and various species of hawks as well as Species of Special Concern, including royal tern, sandwich tern, brown pelican, black simmer, little blue heron, white ibis , snowy egret, and reddish egret and roseate spoonbill.

Mangroves on Virginia Key provide potential nesting and roosting areas for many rare bird species, including the Cuban yellow warbler, gull-billed tern and white crowned pigeon. The mangrove canopy provides habitat for local songbirds and is an important food sources for migrating bird species traveling on long distance routes.

Today, just as a decade ago, the unique natural areas of Virginia Key face development pressures. In fact, a final proposed Virginia Key Master Plan is currently pending approval by the City of Miami Commission which contains significant commercial and recreational development. The development proposals are on portions of the island that are within and/or adjacent to natural areas that provide critical habitat to endangered and threatened species.

Furthermore, the proposed Master Plan does not provide for restoration of natural areas in the disturbed areas, including the former landfill site. There is a significant natural area remaining in the landfill site which is a remnant of the mangrove forest and an area of hardwood hammock vegetation. It is located

between the eastern slope of the landfill and to the adjacent roadway. In addition a newly constructed culvert can provide tidal connection to the mangroves wetlands to the west, even though this area has been isolated from the surrounding wetlands due to roads. There is a potential for restoration of this area, after a remediation plan is completed.

The Environmentally Endangered Lands (EEL) Program was created to fund the acquisition, protection and maintenance of environmentally endangered lands by identifying and securing these lands for preservation. The acquisition, restoration and conservation of Virginia Key lands by the EEL program will ensure that they are shielded from development and will continue to thrive as natural habitats.

Furthermore, the EEL program's ability to seek matching grants and donations, including the State of Florida's Preservation 2000 program and Florida Forever, will provide the necessary funding to restore and preserve Virginia Key's natural areas.

Attached please find the original application, the biological assessment completed by DERM, and various supporting documents concerning the currently proposed Virginia Key Master Plan, as well as new articles, and maps supporting our application.

We look forward to working with the EEL program.

Sincerely,
Debbie Matthews
Chair, Sierra Club, Miami Group

cc: City of Miami - Mayor Manny Diaz and Commissioners
City of Miami Manager - Pete Hernandez

Waste Minimization Committee

Public Meeting in Orlando August 4th

Legislation enacted in 2008 sets a new statewide recycling goal of 75% and directs Florida DEP

to develop a program achieve this goal. DEP's draft recommendations will be available for public review at www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/ no later than July 21. Get Involved! There will be a Public Meeting to solicit feedback in Orlando August 4, 2009 at:

Orlando City Hall, Council Chambers
400 South Orange Avenue

From 1:00pm - 5:00pm.

Email Linda Demler for more info or to volunteer to help Sierra's Waste Minimization Team. (linda.demler@sierraclub.org).

To see our webpage on this issue, [click here](#).

Disappointing Vote - The American Clean Energy and Security Act

Miami, FL - As Independence Day approaches, the Sierra Club Miami Group expressed its profound disappointment with the actions of Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen for her failure to protect the coastal communities of Miami and the Keys from the impacts of climate change.

Last Friday, Representative Ros-Lehtinen voted against The American Clean Energy and Security Act, a clean energy bill that will create jobs, move us off dirty fuels, and reduce global warming pollution. Despite her opposition, the landmark bill passed the House of Representatives and is now headed to the Senate.

"Ileana missed the boat," said Debbie Matthews, chairwoman of the Sierra Club Miami Group. "She could have voted to curb climate change, but instead she succumbed to pressure from the oil and coal lobby. That's not what her constituents expect."

Representative Ros-Lehtinen's vote was particularly disappointing because she represents the low lying coastal communities of Miami Beach, Miami, Key Biscayne, Coral Gables, Pinecrest, Palmetto Bay, Cutler Bay, Islamorada and Key West.

All nine communities have signed the Mayors Climate Protection Agreement to urge federal government to meet or beat greenhouse gas targets recommended by the Kyoto Protocol and pass legislation to establish a national emissions trading system.

Passage of the Clean Energy Act will strengthen the country's footing as it enters international climate negotiations in Copenhagen this December.

"This Fourth of July, the Country is one step closer to declaring it's independence from fossil fuels," said Jonathan Ullman, South Florida/Everglades senior organizer for the Sierra Club. "We are charting a new direction to preserve our communities and our planet for future generations. That's something to celebrate."

Miami Group Outings Information

Our outings are listed as Leisure, Moderate, or Strenuous. Be realistic about your physical condition and the degree of challenge you enjoy. Come ready to paddle, bicycle or hike and share the work. There are no passengers on our outings, only participants.

Family trips are open to everyone. Once you have made a reservation, we ask that you make a serious commitment to attend the trip. Cancellations are detrimental to our program.

Our outings leaders are unpaid trained volunteers.

Camping trip fees typically include food, transportation, canoes and campground fees. Trip participants need to furnish their own tents, backpacks, sleeping bags, and personal gear. Because of changing costs, outing fees listed may be changed at the opening of the trip.

If you are interested in a trip, call or e-mail the trip leader and ask for details or come to the signup table at the general meetings. Reservations are open at the general meeting three months in advance of the trip. At the leader's discretion, reservations close one week before the date of the trip. Please sign up early for planning purposes.

All reservations must be accompanied by a non-refundable deposit. Make all checks payable to Sierra Club Outings. Please write the name and date of your trip on your check and include your phone number. Deposits are \$10 on trip fees of up to \$100 and \$20 on trips over \$100. Fees on trips of \$15 or less are to be paid in full with your reservation. Full payment is due 30 days in advance of the trip. Please send all payments to the trip leader.

If you must cancel, call the leader or assistant leader as early as possible. If you cancel 30 days or more in advance, your deposit will be refunded. If you cancel less than 30 days in advance, you lose your deposit. If you cancel 7 days or less in advance, you will forfeit all fees at the discretion of the leader.

2009 - 2010 Miami Group Outings

August 15 - Snorkel John Pennekamp State Park. Join us for a snorkeling adventure off of Key Largo in an underwater state park. Learn about reefs and reef life. Cost will be \$27.25 for members and students and \$32.25 for non-members. Price includes all gear and tax. Please BYOF (bring your own food). Moderate - some swimming experience needed.
Leader: Shalom Mayberg, Mrmayberg@hotmail.com. Assistant: Debbie Matthews, treehuggerdeb@gmail.com.

South Florida Group Outings

July 11th - Weedon Island bike and walk. We'll have a morning bicycle ride followed by a walk on the trails, and a visit of the Cultural and Natural History Center. Learn what the preserve has to offer. Call for details Ben Berauer, 727-392-2821, bfberauer@aol.com (Suncoast)

July 25th - Early morning - Riverbend Park, Jupiter. Beat the summertime blues with a shady bike ride. We'll get an early start and ride only ten miles for about an hour and a half. Hard packed gravel bike path, much of it in the shade. Ride is very leisurely and pleasant. Limit 20. Must email ronaldhaines@bellsouth.net, or call 561 315-0528 to reserve your spot. (Loxahatchee)

August 1st - Treasure Island Sunset Beach Walk. Beach basket picnic followed by a walk and watching the sun set and full moon. Come join other Sierra friends and discover what your local beaches offer. Call for details Ben Berauer, 727-392-2821, bfberauer@aol.com (Suncoast)

July 25th - Lovers Key Hike. 2-3 mile hike on a barrier island near Bonita Springs that is home to West Indian Manatees, bottlenose dolphin, roseate spoonbills, marsh rabbits, and bald eagles. Contact Sue at susiesstuff@mac.com or 239-530-0515. State park fee is \$5 per vehicle (2-8

people) or \$3 per person (Calusa)

August 29th - 2 pm. Mote Marine Lab Tour (Sarasota) Followed by dinner at the Dry Dock Restaurant overlooking Sarasota Bay and an evening walk on South Lido Beach. Explore the secrets of the sea with touch pools, shark, dolphin, manatee and sea turtle exhibits and over 100 other species of marine life. Viewable working labs and high-tech interactive exhibits showcase the world-renowned research of Mote Marine Laboratory. Discounted group rate for the marine lab is \$12.00. Limited to 15 people. Reserve with Em at 239-472-8973 (Calusa).

For Meetup references, please go
<http://www.meetup.com/Sierra-Club-Northeast-Florida-Group/>
 Many of these outings are FREE!!

Florida Training Events/Outings

July 17th - 20th - 9:00- 5:00

The University of Florida is sponsoring a SOLO **Advanced Wilderness First Aid (AWFA) course** at [Paynes Prairie State Park](http://www.floridastateparks.org/paynesprairie) (<http://www.floridastateparks.org/paynesprairie>).

Cost is \$300 (tuition only) for the 4 days. Receive a two year certification from SOLO. Instructed by UF staff. Contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com.

August 1st - 2nd

The University of Florida is sponsoring a SOLO **Wilderness First Responder(WFR) Refresher course** (\$200). This class is for those interested in a more intensive course. For more information Contact Rudy Scheffer at 727-726-8375 or e-mail: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com or www.soloschools.com

September 26th - Outing Leader Training OLT101 for new outing leaders, recertification and a prerequisite for OLT201. Location in the Tampa Bay area. For more details contact: Rudy Scheffer, 727.726.8375 or email: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com.

October 3rd - Outing Leader Training OLT 201. A requirement for Outing Leaders who want to lead overnight trips away from cars. Location in the Tampa Bay Area. For more details contact: Rudy Scheffer, 727.726.8375 or email: rudy@adventuresworldwide.com.

Local Environmental Events, Meetings and Classes

Green League Summer Social
Hugh Taylor Birch State Park
Pavilion 3
Saturday, July 11, 2009
11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Potluck lunch: Please bring a dish to share.

The park has a lot to offer for activities. Our pavilion is near a playground and barbecue grills. It has electricity (small capacity), restrooms, and water. The park will take care of recycling.

Be even more eco-friendly by carpooling to the park with other Green League members and bringing your own cloth napkins, kitchen towels, and serving spoons to use in your dish.

You may also want to bring .

- Games, music, etc. to share with others.
- Cameras to participate in the park's photo contest.
- Future members (Children are welcome.)

* Sunscreen is encouraged.

A few park guidelines to remember:

- Pets must be leashed at all times inside the park.
- Alcohol is allowed, but only in designated areas.

Park Entrance Fees may be in affect.

It is \$4.00 for up to 8 people per vehicle.
Single-occupant vehicle entrance fee - \$3.00

Please contact Leona McAndrews at craftcrazy@hotmail.com

if you have questions.

Fairchild Challenge News

What an incredible Fairchild Challenge year it has been! The student entries for each option leave us inspired and hopeful for their future and ours.

If you were unable to attend this year's Awards Ceremonies, please take a moment to review the elementary school (pilot), middle school and high school recipients of the 2008-2009 Fairchild Challenge Award, those who received the highest honors, and those inducted into the Fairchild Challenge "Schools of Excellence".

<http://www.fairchildgarden.org/education/fairchildchallenge>

We applaud all 125 participating schools, the 2200+ teachers that give the Fairchild Challenge program wings and the 50,000+ students whose work inspires us all to become better stewards of our environment and give us hope for the future!!

Please check our website, www.fairchildchallenge.org and our facebook page for updates as we are now in the planning stages for the 2009-2010 Fairchild Challenge!!

Volunteers Needed for Open Committee Positions and More!

In the Miami Group we have committees that are busy at various times of the year. Some have meetings and some just work together online.

The Festivals Committee members staff a table with environmental information at the many events around town. If you like talking to people about living green and saving the environment, this is a fun group. See our website for more information or email Maria Papazian, Miami-enviroed@florida.sierraclub.org.

The Education Committee works to encourage and support environmental clubs and leaders in our elementary schools. Maria Papazian is also leading this committee and looking for more help. Come to the general meeting and find out how you can help.

The Conservation Committee works to educate the public on environmental issues in Miami and encourage government leaders to Think Green. We are just starting-up so help us organize and get moving. Email Debbie Matthews (treehuggerdeb@gmail.com) or Shirley Lowe at shirleylowe107@gmail.com, or come and talk to them at the next General Meeting.

The Executive Committee makes the decisions for the club. We meet on the last Thursday of the month. Elections are held each December and we are always looking for new members. Email Debbie Matthews (treehuggerdeb@gmail.com).

The Newsletter Editor needs help finding and writing stories for our newsletter each month (treehuggerdeb@gmail.com).

The webmaster needs help. Email Betsy (Miami-webmaster@florida.sierraclub.org). Some rudimentary html knowledge is helpful but she is willing to train assistants.

Inner City Outings (ICO) is part of the Miami Sierra Club committed to introducing underprivileged children to all the nature spots Florida has to offer. Field trips, beach cleanups, hiking, camping, canoeing are all great opportunities to reach out to a child. ICO meets on the 4th Thursday of the month in downtown Miami. Email Mark Walters for more information (mark@icomiami.org)

Volunteer interns are needed at the Regional Office of the Sierra Club here in Miami. If you have some time, we need help sorting and clearing out our files, and we need someone to help make phone calls. Call Jonathan at 305-860-9888, or e-mail jonathan.ullman@sierraclub.org.

Miami Group Contact Info:

Chair/Newsletter Editor: Debbie Matthews - treehuggerdeb@yahoo.com
Vice Chair: Barbara Lange bjlange@bellsouth.net
Secretary: Stephen Mahoney rsmahoney@bellsouth.net
Treasurer/Website: Betsy Grass Miami-Webmaster@florida.sierraclub.org
Conservation Co-Chairs: Barbara Lange /Shirley Lowe shirleylowe107@gmail.com
Everglades Chair/Energy Chair:
Mark Oncavage 305-251-5273
Education Chair/Festival Chair:

Maria Papazian- 305-519-0877
ICO: Mark Walters - mark@icomiami.org
Outings Chair: Jim Gross-JMGross3013@aol.com
Outings Sec: George Fedorko - 305-254-1716
Political Chair: Kent Harris Robbins
Membership Chair: Mary Jo Castells - mcast030@fiu.edu
Meeting Sponsors: Georgia Guerra georgiapg@msn.com
Program Director: Shalom Mayberg mrmayberg@hotmail.com
General Meeting Programs - Shalom Mayberg - mrmayberg@hotmail.com
Web Assistant - Volunteer for this position!
email Miami-Webmaster@florida.sierraclub.org
Newsletter Assistant - Volunteer for this position! email Debbie treehuggerdeb@gmail.com
Festival Greeters - Volunteer for this position! call Maria at 305-519-0877
Student Outreach - Megan Fast
Legislative - Volunteer for this position! Email Debbie treehuggerdeb@gmail.com

Board Members: Barbara Lange, Betsy Grass, Debbie Matthews, Kent Harris Robbins, Maria Papazian, Mark Oncavage, Megan Fast, Shalom Mayberg, Shirley Lowe and Stephen Mahoney

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends, family and colleagues.

Do you want to contribute to the newsletter, do you have photos to share? Email them to me. Thank you Mike Matthews for helping me edit this edition, or for setting us up with a new format!

Sincerely,

**Debbie Matthews - Newsletter Editor
Chair - Miami Sierra Club**

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