



1000 Friends of Florida

Everglades Protection Accomplishments

2006-February 2015

Since its inception, 1000 Friends of Florida has had an active presence in southeast Florida, focusing particular attention on growth and development issues that impact the greater Everglades ecosystem. 1000 Friends promotes sound planning and public policy and educates citizens and public officials on smart growth. When planning and education are not sufficient, 1000 Friends will litigate to uphold important planning principles. This is a summary of 1000 Friends' major accomplishments in protecting the greater Everglades ecosystem from the impacts of inappropriate growth and development:

Preventing inappropriate development, facilities and infrastructure within the greater Everglades ecosystem:

- In December 2014, filed a legal challenge to **Minto West** at the old Callery Judge Groves Site in Palm Beach County to prevent sprawl and increased traffic congestion from the proposed addition of several thousand homes and more than 2 million square feet of commercial space on a 400-acre tract immediately adjacent to the Acreage and near Royal Palm Beach in rural Palm Beach County.
- Should the proposed plan amendment for thousands of new homes and millions of square feet of commercial space be approved for **Avenir** in rural Palm Beach County, anticipate filing a legal challenge over the plans for this 4,800-acre tract in Palm Beach Gardens that would dramatically impact the environment and infrastructure, especially already crowded roads.
- Over a three-year period, led the successful advocacy campaign that convinced the Palm Beach County Commission to relocate the proposed **Scripps Biomedical Research Institute** from Mecca Farms, a remote site on the fringes of the Everglades, to a more appropriate urban site at the FAU Jupiter campus, near the I-95 corridor.
- To protect the Everglades and promote restoration, played a major role in securing relocation of the **proposed Inland Port** from an inappropriate site in the Everglades Agricultural Area to the more appropriate Florida Crystals site near South Bay. Also participated in successful settlement meetings with the Florida Department of

Community Affairs, Palm Beach County and Florida Crystals to approve appropriate comprehensive plan amendments for the Inland Port's South Bay location.

- Joined with the Sierra Club and Florida Wildlife Federation to successfully challenge three mining permits (**South Bay Mine, Bergeron, and Lake Harbor Quarry**) within the Everglades Agricultural Area in Palm Beach County on the grounds that they conflicted with the County's adopted comprehensive plan. Previously worked to secure a moratorium on rock mining in Palm Beach County, and participated in a series of facilitated stakeholder meetings on the issue.
- Partnered with Clean Water Action, Tropical Audubon Society and three local residents to file a legal challenge to stop an inappropriate land use decision by the Miami-Dade county Commission allowing **Cemex Construction Materials** to undertake lake excavation and rock mining in dangerously close proximity to Everglades National Park and surrounding water resources.
- Successfully lobbied the Governor and Cabinet to prevent the inappropriate expansion of the **Miami-Dade County urban development boundary** as a result of a suit filed by 1000 Friends, the National Parks Conservation Association, and the Florida Department of Community Affairs.
- Filed a legal appeal and provided expert testimony on the **Martin County Sunset Groves/AgTEC plan amendment** proposed to convert more than 1,700 acres from agricultural to industrial/commercial park.
- In cooperation with the Guardians of Martin County and the Martin County Conservation Alliance, successfully advocated against proposed **Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) Hobe Grove and Harmony** located outside of Martin County's urban service area.
- Again partnering with the Guardians and Conservation Alliance, convinced the Martin County Commission to vote unanimously against three major comprehensive plan amendments that would have allowed the **Extreme Water Sports** complex to locate in rural Martin County, also outside the urban service area.

Promoting sound planning:

- Continue to actively participate in an update to standards for the **Ag Reserve** in western Palm Beach County to avoid more sprawl, road congestion, and loss of agricultural lands.
- Continue to support the City of West Palm Beach's efforts to oppose the extension of **State Road 7** due to impacts on the city's drinking water source, the Grassy Waters Preserve, and its potential to open Northern Palm Beach County Everglades lands to massive development, including Minto West and Avenir.
- Helped identify objections to halt the **Sugar Hill Sector Plan**, encompassing 67 square miles of farmland in rural Hendry County, which would interfere with Everglades

restoration priorities in the region, and previously supported efforts by the state and South Florida Water Management District to purchase these lands for Everglades restoration.

- Overcoming the “fairly debatable” standard, successfully challenged two Palm Beach County comprehensive plan amendments (**Balsamo and Lantana Farms**) which would have inappropriately converted rural lands for urban and suburban development.
- Worked with the **City of Atlantis and the Towns of Lantana, Palm Beach Shores, Ocean Ridge and Haverhill** in Palm Beach County to provide transportation efficiency statements and recommendations regarding improvements under the auspices of a grant through the State Energy Office, and assisted the city of Lake Worth with its energy audit and Climate Action Plan.
- Released the special report, ***Planning Strategies for the Everglades Agricultural Area***, which focuses on how planning can complement on-going land acquisition and restoration efforts.
- Over a 7-year period, successfully challenged **Pinecrest Lakes Estates** in Martin County, a critical legal case with statewide ramifications, which upheld the supremacy of local comprehensive plans to guide and control development and resulted in the demolition of built and occupied apartment buildings not consistent with the locally adopted plan.
- Provided significant input into the **Martin County Rural Lands** study, focusing on 200,000 acres of rural and agricultural lands outside the county’s urban service boundary, and opposed sweeping changes to Martin County’s comprehensive plan that, among other things, would have allowed inappropriate clustered development in rural areas.
- Provided extensive comments to Martin County regarding proposed **Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) amendments** to the comprehensive plan in order to support the county’s successful urban service boundary, wetland protections and other important measures.

Building support:

- Honored **Martin County Commissioner Sarah Heard** with 1000 Friends’ Community Steward Award for her steadfast advocacy and leadership on maintain the integrity of Martin County’s Comprehensive Plan.
- Through 1000 Friends’ **Better Communities Awards Program**, honored Palm Beach County planning initiatives to promote compact development, including recognizing the Lake Worth Community Redevelopment Consortium (2013), Northwood Renaissance Community Development Corporation in West Palm Beach (2005), and City of West Palm Beach (1997). Also honored Everglades restoration leaders Col. Terrence “Rock” Salt for his work on the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force and Col. Terry

Rice for his leadership as Jacksonville District Commander of the Army Corps of Engineers.

- Conducted a series of meetings with local, state and federal environmental and academic leaders and organizations to identify issues and concerns associated with a proposed major **wind farm near Lake Okeechobee**, and participated as a stakeholder in a series of facilitated meetings held by Palm Beach County.
- Participated in the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties' **Digital Public Square** to provide an interactive forum for community conversation, collaboration and outreach on pressing issues facing county residents.
- Participated in a series of **River of Grass meetings** sponsored by the South Florida Water Management District to identify alternative scenarios for Everglades restoration in light of reduced land acquisition ability.
- Conducted **educational field trips** for Palm Beach County Commissioners to help them better understand the impact of local government decisions on the Everglades in Palm Beach County.

Providing statewide leadership:

- On an ongoing basis, advocate before the Legislature, Governor and Cabinet for **sound state policy** that promotes smart and sustainable development and prevents sprawl.
- Continue to file **legal challenges** on significant growth management issues that have statewide ramifications.
- Conduct studies, prepare special reports, hold webinars, send email alerts and host a comprehensive website to share **cutting-edge, Florida-specific planning strategies** to save special places and build better communities.
- Assisted with the establishment of the **Florida Conservation Coalition**, headed by former Governor Bob Graham and 1000 Friends of Florida Chairman Emeritus Nathaniel Reed, to educate and advocate for better water and growth management programs.
- Released the manual, **Wildlife Habitat Planning Strategies**, which focuses on strategies to integrate wildlife habitat planning into local and regional planning efforts.
- As a result of Florida 2060, conducted a facilitated roundtable and published **Working to Sustain Florida's Working and Natural Lands: A Call to Action**, to address the dramatic estimated loss of agricultural land natural lands in Florida over the next 50 years.
- Developed **Florida 2060** and **A Time for Leadership**, studies identifying challenges and opportunities for the next 50 years as the state's projected population doubles to 36 million.
- The Everglades Foundation presented **1000 Friends Chairman Emeritus Nathaniel Reed** with the Everglades Legend in 2008 for his "pioneering environmental work and his refusal 'to accept no for an answer' when addressing the needs of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem."