Friends,

2020 was a year of new tests and challenges for all of us, but at Friends of the Everglades it also provided us with the opportunity for innovation and finding new ways to connect with our grassroots supporters and to advance our Everglades advocacy.

Through the tremendous efforts of our staff, Friends was able to pivot our outreach programming more than ever to the digital realm, with our Clean Water Conversations and the re-formation of our Young Friends of the Everglades curriculum, which was made completely available through our website portal. We are now developing strategies for tracking the Florida Legislature and members of Congress, to communicate to our followers where lawmakers stand on some of the issues that are most important to us — adjusting operations at Lake Okeechobee, adding sufficient treatment marsh to match the new Everglades reservoir’s capacity, treating the toxic algae issue first and foremost as a health crisis, and the constant battle to prevent growth into our wetlands.

Just as the Everglades serves as a buffer from storms and saltwater intrusion in South Florida, our grassroots supporters — you all — served as a buffer for us from the unique challenges of a global pandemic, and we can’t thank you enough. Your support was needed more than ever and you came through in a big way, with dozens of people signing up as inaugural members of our new Marjory’s Circle program.

As you read through this report, you’ll see that there is a lot to celebrate from 2020 and even more to do next year. We look forward to seeing you all (hopefully in person!) in 2021 and continuing to earn your support in helping us protect, preserve, and restore the only Everglades in the world.

― Marjory Stoneman Douglas

“She’s a nuisance where it counts. Do your part to inform and stimulate the public to join your action. Be depressed, discouraged, and disappointed at failure and the disheartening effects of ignorance, greed, corruption & bad politics — but never give up.”

— Marjory Stoneman Douglas

PHIL KUSHLAN
BOARD PRESIDENT

“The Everglades is a test. If we pass it, we may get to keep the planet.” — Joe Podger
A Fighting Legacy

When Marjory Stoneman Douglas founded Friends of the Everglades in 1969, it was with the specific intent of stopping an international jetport from being constructed in the Everglades. We won that battle (with a little help from our friends). However, destructive development proposals and a lopsided water-management system continue to threaten the Greater Everglades ecosystem. Today, our efforts stretch from the Lake Okeechobee region — where we’re working to protect the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries from toxic discharges — to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. The River of Grass, as Marjory Stoneman Douglas coined it, is a vast, interconnected system. What’s good for the southern Everglades also is good for the north. It boils down to moving more clean water south from Lake Okeechobee. We remain devoted to that cause.

Goals and Focus

OUR GOALS:
• Compel government agencies to comply with existing environmental laws, and resist any efforts to weaken such laws.
• Encourage politicians to recognize the long consequences of their actions.
• Spread awareness of the importance of the Everglades to the South Florida ecosystem.

OUR AREAS OF FOCUS:
• Advocating for more equitable management of Lake Okeechobee in order to stop toxic discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, and to protect residents and ecosystems from harmful algal blooms.
• Restoring the flow of clean freshwater to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay.
• Working with allies to end pre-harvest burning of sugarcane fields, an environmental injustice that disproportionately impacts Glades communities south of Lake Okeechobee.
• Blocking development proposals that encroach on the vital remnants of the Greater Everglades ecosystem, including proposed expansion of non-military aviation at Homestead Air Reserve Base.
• Coordinating scientific research and policy positions in order to spur Everglades preservation and restoration.

The mission of Friends of the Everglades is to preserve, protect, and restore the only Everglades in the world.

Even as COVID-19 upended our worlds, the Army Corps of Engineers pressed forward with a new plan for managing Lake Okeechobee. When it takes effect in 2022, it will impact ecosystems and people from the northern estuaries to Florida Bay. Our team at Friends of the Everglades has stayed the course, working to ensure the new plan minimizes the risk of toxic algae blooms.

Also in 2020, we worked to oppose the extension of State Road 836 in Miami-Dade County, which would encroach on the Everglades but do little to reduce commute times. An administrative law judge agreed, and now we’re waiting on the Florida Cabinet to uphold the judge’s order in 2021.

And we reengaged in the battle to keep commercial aviation out of Homestead Air Reserve Base, which sits between Biscayne National Park and Everglades National Park. The U.S. Air Force rejected a proposal for commercial aviation at the base in 2001, and we believe that position should be upheld today.

With so many people homebound in 2020, we launched a series of virtual Clean Water Conversations to educate the public on Everglades issues. Thousands of you attended as we put a spotlight on threats such as sugarcane burning and pollution in Biscayne Bay. We received so many positive responses that we kept these events going in 2021.

Despite all the distractions of 2020, your dedication to preserving the only Everglades in the world was undiminished. In fact, the pandemic prompted more of you to get out there and deepen your connection with Florida’s unique and magnificent environment.

Many of you have stepped up your support of Friends of the Everglades by becoming Founding Members of our Marjory’s Circle donor program. When we launched the program in June 2020, we hoped to have 50 Founding Members within a year, and we are proud to say we exceeded that target early.

We’re deeply grateful. Thank you for enabling us to carry on the environmental legacy of our founder, Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

Sincerely,

Launched a monthly series of educational livestream events, Clean Water Conversations, to keep residents informed and engaged about Everglades issues amid COVID-19.

Offered new methods for the public to engage directly with elected officials via digital technology on Everglades.org

Joined forces with the Stop the Burn coalition to put an end to pre-harvest sugarcane burning, which harms air quality and poses health risks to residents.

Took a leading role in efforts to stop expansion of non-military aviation at Homestead Air Reserve Base, which is situated between Everglades and Biscayne national parks.

Assisted a successful legal effort to halt extension of State Road 836 into the eastern Everglades in Miami-Dade County.

Advocated for ecological and human-health protections in the Army Corps of Engineers’ development of the new Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM), which will take effect in 2022.

Joined an amicus brief, petitioning the U.S. Supreme Court for review of a judgment against environmental advocate Maggy Hurchalla, in a case that has implications for citizens’ rights to petition their governments.

Supported the No Roads to Ruin coalition, a group of environmental organizations and businesses working to repeal the M-CORES toll roads, which would cut through sensitive habitat, including panther territory.

Formed a Friends of the Everglades Policy & Science Committee, including experts from Stetson Law School, Florida Gulf Coast University and Florida International University, to deepen our expertise and foster more effective advocacy for the Everglades.

Revived our Young Friends of the Everglades program with virtual learning materials at Everglades.org.

Created a new mid-level donor program, Marjory’s Circle, to advance our legacy and elevate our impact.

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Executive Director

Eve Samples

Senior Vice President, Science & Conservation

2020 Highlights:

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In June 2020, we launched a new donor program, to advance the legacy of our founder, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. We are immensely grateful to our Founding Members of Marjory’s Circle:

**By the Numbers**

- **7** Livestream Clean Water Conversations Hosted
- **16,000** Viewers Engaged in Clean Water Conversations
- **2,244** Supporters Sent Action Alerts to State and Federal Leaders on Everglades Issues
- **1,775** Signatures on the Fix the FLO Petition

**6** New Subjects Added to Our Online Young Friends of the Everglades Portal:
- Key Deer
- Sea Turtles
- Florida Panthers
- Everglades Reading List
- Everglades Learning Activities
- Sing for the Everglades

**52** Members of Marjory’s Circle (As of April 2021)

**About Marjory’s Circle:**

**MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS** was one of the most remarkable individuals in environmental history. Her seminal book “River of Grass” transformed the world’s view of the Everglades from swampy wasteland to national treasure, and she sounded the alarm to threats facing the Everglades long before they were widely understood. Marjory was a journalist and activist who devoted her life’s work to the idea that America’s Everglades were a litmus test for our planet, and she mobilized the public when she founded Friends of the Everglades in 1969.

Today, Friends of the Everglades stands as the single best hope for creating the change Marjory envisioned through advocacy, scientific research and litigation. Members of Marjory’s Circle contribute $100 per month or $1,200 annually to help sustain Marjory’s legacy and ensure its continued role in preserving the future of our River of Grass and its connected waterways. For more information, visit www.everglades.org/marjorys-circle.

In June 2020, we launched a new donor program, to advance the legacy of our founder, Marjory Stoneman Douglas. We are are immensely grateful to our Founding Members of Marjory’s Circle:

- Constance Washburn
- David and Susan Welch
- Cristina Boeri
- John Kozjak
- Susan Lloyd
- Marianne Ireland
- Peter Upton
- Kenan Siegel
- Marilyn Brooks
- Richard Trotta
- Cheryl Belles
- Spencer Bartram
- Addiphus Busch
- Steven Swann
- Don & Jeannett Slesnick
- James McDermott
- Jill Preston
- Gary Graham
- Elliott Mackie
- Steven Rowe
- Vicky Linville
- Alan Farago
- David Preston
- Rising McDowell
- Shareshten Senior
- Robert Stein
- Martha Singleton
- Sebastian Jano
- Carine Williams
- Beverly Young
- Blair Wickstrom
- Joe Traba
- Page Rogers
- Valerie Ricordi
- Camila Quaresma/Sharp
- Milda Vaivada
- Philip Kushlan
- Ty Nelson
- Nicole Mader
- The Jane Garnett & David Booth Charitable Fund
- Billy Minnors
- Lucie Alessio
- Thomas Cole
- Alyn Golub
- Viki Conrad
- Marvin & Lee Cook
- Katrina Lavene
- Sandra Thurlow
- Wade Mayberry
- Ellyn Stevenson
- *Scott Evaul
- *Mary Esala
- *Joined after our first 50 Founding Members
**Why We Love Friends of the Everglades**

“Young Friends of the Everglades planted the seed of how special our Florida ecosystems are and how intricately they connect to our lived experiences. It gave me an understanding about the vulnerability of our shared environment at an early age.”

— Allison Janae Hamilton, visual artist and student in Constance Washburn’s fourth-grade class in 1994

“I met Marjory Stoneman Douglas while teaching fourth grade in the 1990s at Howard Drive Elementary in Miami. My class was studying the history and science of the Everglades, and the children were perplexed about a proposal to build a theme park in the Everglades. That was how Young Friends of the Everglades was born. We were planting seeds when we taught children about the wonders of nature.”

— Constance Washburn, Board of Directors officer and co-founder of Young Friends of the Everglades

“As a fourth-generation Floridian, I grew up exploring much of the Everglades’ natural beauty with a variety of outdoor activities throughout my youth. Now a resident in Stuart, I am thrilled to pass on my love of the waterways to my family and work alongside Friends of the Everglades, and other advocates, to preserve this one-of-a-kind resource.”

— Todd Weissing, Stuart resident

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### 2020 Financial Report

**Expenditures**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Education and Outreach</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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**Support**

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<td>Trusts/Foundations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$389,675.00</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Board of Directors**

- Philip Kushlan, President
- Peter Upton, Vice President
- Alan Farago, Conservation Chair
- Connie Washburn, Secretary
- Richard Trotta, Treasurer
- Ray Judah
- Nathaniel Linville
- Dave Preston
- Camila Quaresma-Sharp
- Robert Stein
- Sylmarie Trujillo

**Staff**

- Milda Vaivada
- Elizabeth Wheaton
- Blair Wickstrom

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**Champions Spotlight**

“These organizations provided game-changing support to Friends of the Everglades in 2020.”

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900 SE FEDERAL HWY., SUITE 323, STUART FL 34994
(305) 669-0858 • info@everglades.org
There are no other Everglades in the world. They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth; remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them…

Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades: River of Grass*