# FLORIDA'S PARADOX OF PROGRESS:
# AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGINS, CONSTRUCTION, AND IMPACT OF THE TAMIAMI TRAIL

by

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# ABSTRACT

This study illustrates the impact of the Tamiami Trail on the people and environment of South Florida through an examination of the road's origins, construction and implementation. By exploring the motives behind building the highway, the subsequent assimilation of indigenous societies, the drastic population growth that occurred as a result of a propagated "Florida Dream", and the environmental decline of the surrounding Everglades, this analysis reveals that the Tamiami Trail is viewed today through a much different context than that of the road's builders and promoters in the early twentieth century. While construction projects that aim to prevent, or limit the once celebrated environmental destruction caused by the Tamiami Trail, the unrelenting and economically stimulating growth of South Florida continues to uncover a "paradox of progress."

This study is dedicated to all of my family, friends, and colleagues who have provided much needed support, guidance, and affection.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AAA | Automobile Association of America |
| CCC | Citizen Conservation Corps |
| CCC-ID | Indian Division of the Citizen Conservation Corps |
| CERP | Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan |
| C&SF | Central and Southern Florida Project for Flood Control and Other Purposes |
| CSCF | Conveyance and Seepage Control Features |
| DOI | United States Department of the Interior |
| FFWC | Florida Federation of Women's Clubs |
| FSI | Friends of the Seminole Indians |
| FSRD | Florida State Road Department |
| GRR | General Reevaluation Report |
| IRA | Indian Rights Association |
| NAIS | National Animal Identification Program |
| LRR | Final Limited Reevaluation Report and Environmental Assessment of the Tamiami Trail |
| ORI | Office of Road Inquiry |
| RGRR | Revised General Reevaluation Report |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |

# INTRODUCTION

Throughout the twentieth century, the construction, implementation, and expansion of the highway system has played a dominant role in reshaping the social, cultural, and economic aspects of life within the United States. By accommodating an evolving set of needs, including personal travel, economic development, and military transport, cities, towns, and communities throughout America manipulated the natural environment in order to implement local and national transportation systems. As a result, the physical and social environment of the United States is drastically different today and reflects the triumph of time over space that the canals, railroads, highways, and airlines imposed.

For historians Phil Patton and Clay McShane, changes made by modern transportation systems result from motivations outside the material benefits of community assimilation or economic prosperity. As expressed through the writings of Crevecoeur, Tocqueville, John Steinbeck, and Jack Kerouac, the capacity to travel freely throughout the American landscape has become a social expression that quenches an American desire for constant mobility and change. Due to its unparalleled ability to facilitate travel at any time, and to any destination with a suitable road, the highway system serves as a symbolic embodiment of American ideals such as freedom, liberty, and democracy.[1]

Whether resulting from tangible motivations or some subconscious incentive, the highway system has had an immense effect on both the physical and social environment of South

[1] Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), x, and Phil Patton, *Open Road: A Celebration of the American Highway* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 12. For further information regarding Americans restoring their novelty in movement see J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters From an American Farmer* (Gloucester, MA.: P. Smith, 1968). For information discussing the ease of Americans in being restless see Bernard-Henri Levi, *American Vertigo: Traveling America in the Footsteps of Tocqueville* (New York: Random House, 2006). For information regarding on the impact of automobile travel in the twentieth century see Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (New York: Viking, 1997), and John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Penguin Books, 4th ed. 2006).

Florida. Through the construction, implementation, and evolution of the highway system over the past century, South Florida has become one of the most populated and prosperous areas in the United States. Even despite its current cosmopolitan status, historians Helen Muir and Charlton Tebeau depicted South Florida as frontier territory as recently as the 1920s.[2] Politicians and business leaders believed that the formidable environment of the Everglades hampered economic development of the region as it prevented traffic between the port cites of Tampa and Miami on opposite sides of the peninsula. Overcoming this barrier to tourist travel and industrial development would have positive long-term consequences for economic growth.[3] This coincided with the emergence of a new era of "leisure and mobility" in which the region was primed to become the perfect destination for those seeking to vacation and live in a tropical climate.[4] If both coasts could be united, unrestrained movement, growth, and progress would surely follow. After 1928, transportation boosters who yearned for the ability to travel from one side of South Florida to other would finally receive their wish through the construction of the 273-mile highway known as the Tamiami Trail.

As illustrated throughout the historiography of transportation, the pursuit of unrestrained movement can have negative, sometimes unforeseen, consequences not only on the environment, but also on the society the transportation system intends to assist. From the construction of the Erie Canal as described by historian Carol Sheriff, to William Cronon's depiction of Chicago's

[2] For information pertaining to the barrenness and desolation of South Florida through the historical prospective of Miami see Helen Muir, *Miami U.S.A.* (New York: Holt, 1953). For information pertaining to the barrenness and desolation of South Florida through the historical perspective of Collier County see Charlton Tebeau, *Florida's Last Frontier: The History of Collier County* (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1966).
[3] Gary Garrett, "Blasting Through Paradise: The Construction and Consequences of the Tamiami Trail," in *Paradise Lost?: The Environmental History of Florida*, ed. Jack E. Davis and Raymond Arsenault (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2005), 261.
[4] Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 172.

influence through the expansion of railroads during the nineteenth century, transportation reconfigured the landscape and re-aligned social, political, and economic opportunities—empowering some and closing possibilities for others.[5] The construction of canals and railroads in the 19th century and highways in the twentieth century produced conflicting outcomes in the "progress" of American history.

According to historian Tom Lewis, the introduction, construction, and evolution of the highway system in the United States, became a "stage," on which Americans "played out a great drama of contradictions."[6] The process of molding natural environments into "second nature" eliminated unique species of flora and fauna, dispossessed people from their homes and in some cases even restricted the very movement once promised in an effort to fulfill ideals of social progress and economic efficiency. What once seemed to be an efficient approach of providing economic progress, convenience, and personal freedom, became a source of contention. As the post-World War II population of the United States grew, and efforts to accommodate larger volumes of automobile traffic increased, the dilemma between progress and preservation became increasingly apparent and raised questions about the potential environmental, social, and cultural hindrances.

Despite its importance over the past century, little scholarship has been devoted to the evolution of the highway system within South Florida. In an effort to understand both the positive and negative consequences of the highway evolution on the environment and people of

[5] For information detailing the unforeseen consequences of the Erie Canal in relation to the various social, political, and economic groups of New York see Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996). For information pertaining to the development of the railway system in conjunction with the city of Chicago during the latter half of the nineteenth century, see William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, W.W. Norton, 1991)

[6] Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (New York: Viking, 1997), ix.

South Florida, this thesis will analyze the origin, construction and operation of the Tamiami Trail. Completed in 1928, the road's proponents envisioned a modern highway that would bisect the Everglades and link the Atlantic coast city of Miami to the Gulf Coast port of Tampa. Paradoxically, although the roadway had the support of some important Tampa businessmen, it never reached the city, stopping short at Fort Myers. Indeed, the route generated considerable conflict throughout its thirteen years of construction and figured prominently in the division of Lee County to create Collier and Hendry counties. The highway transformed Native American life from more traditional activities to an important constituent of modern tourism. In addition, the roadway, which would be designated a National Scenic Byway acts as a dam to block water flow from Lake Okeechobee and thereby has had a devastating effect on the ecology of the Everglades. Finally, although the highway failed to link the east and west coasts of Florida in the economic ways envisioned by early boosters, its eastern terminus became one of the busiest roads in the Miami Metropolitan Area.

Soon after the completion of the highway, the Dade County Commissioners published *History of the Tamiami Trail and a Brief Review of the Road Construction Movement in Florida*. Written by Joseph Reese, the history provides a thorough examination of the origins and process behind the Trail's construction. Rather than focusing on the sentiments and views of the planners in relation to the Everglades, Reese directs much of his attention to the bureaucracy, policy making, and economic funding attached to the Trail. Probably written to the specifications of the county commissioners, the book describes events ranging from the informal meeting in 1915 between Francis W. Perry and James F. Jaudon that launched the idea behind

the Trail, to the decision to reroute the Trail through Collier County in 1926.[7] While this text is valuable for its descriptions of the political and economic actions used to complete the Trail's construction, it fails in specifying any insight into the planners' views and sentiments with relation to the Everglades.

In 2005 historian Gary Garrett filled the historiographic void by connecting the origins and methods of the Trail's construction to the sentiments and views attached to the Everglades at that particular time. Garrett reveals that entrepreneurs and editors of contemporary agricultural journals expected South Florida to become the "market garden of the earth" as development construction diverted, drained, and destroyed the Everglades to hopefully expose a rich muck for modern farming. Highway planners expected construction of the trans-Florida link to destroy the Everglades and promote economic growth. However, he concludes that the Trail never fulfilled the expectations of South Florida boosters, and today stands as a "scenic nature route"—neither economic spur, nor central to the "Save Our Everglades" movement.[8]

In order to examine the evolution of the relationship between the people, environment, and highways of South Florida, this thesis will expand upon the themes and perceptions of reclamation, prosperity, and supposed feasibility of the Trail briefly stated in Garrett's text. Fortunately, there are abundant primary source materials including a collection of personal papers, manuscripts, rare books, periodicals, personal diaries, and scientific or engineering reports critical to the origins, contexts, and construction of the Trail. According to historians John B. Rae and James J. Flink, much of the promotion and popularity drummed up for automobile and highway system came from automotive trade journals in the early twentieth

[7] Joseph Reese, *History of the Tamiami Trail and a Brief Review of the Road Construction Movement in Florida* (Miami: Tamiami Trail Commissioners of Dade County, Florida, 1928), 4-7, 17-19.
[8] Henry Fitzgerald, "A Five Million-Acre Garden," *South*, September 1926, 1; Garrett, 264.

century.[9] Examples of promotional activities can be seen in the April issue of the 1928 journal titled *Southern Highways*, which was dedicated to the origins and construction of the Trail. Many of the articles also discuss the sentiments and views of the builders both before and after the Trail's construction.

The people most commonly affected by the decisions of planners and developers have been the "minorities who did not possess the political power to challenge them."[10] According to the environmentalist and staunch defender of the Everglades Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the South Florida interior was in no way meant to be the home of human beings.[11] However, three wars with the United States during the nineteenth century pushed the Seminoles into the harsh environment of the Everglades. There they discovered its environmental wealth and lived in relative seclusion. The construction of the Tamiami Trail "opened the South Florida interior to agriculture, lumber workers, tourists, and moonshiners," and drew the Seminoles into the modern consumer culture of tourism.[12]

As illustrated through the works of authors Patsy West, Brent Richards Weisman, and a Miccosukee Indian named Buffalo Tiger, the level of acceptance or willingness to assimilate into the tourism economy varied from Seminole to Seminole. As soon as construction began, some Seminoles set up camps designed to attract tourists, and sightseers willing to pay for the Seminole expertise in hunting or to experience their unfamiliar culture. According to West, even though these camps signaled the end of Seminole isolation, they also increased the economic

[9] For information pertaining to the influence of automotive trade journals on the rising popularity of the automobile in the early twentieth century see James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), and John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971).
[10] Lewis, x.
[11] Brent Richards Weisman, *Unconquered People: Florida Seminole and Miccosukee Indians* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1999), 66.
[12] Garrett, 272.

independence of the Seminole people and established tangible bases from which the Seminoles could maintain their way of life and freedom from the government.[13] In large part, these decisions to become economically and politically independent provided the Seminole people with the power they would later wield in battles to open gambling casinos on their reservations located throughout South Florida. However, according to Weisman this same assimilation also had a drastic impact on the split of the Seminole nation into the Seminoles and Miccosukee during the 1950's. The Miccosukee generally were more apprehensive in dealing with the government and were concerned with maintaining their traditional way of life.[14] This thesis will attempt to determine the positive and negative effects of the Trail on the Seminole people from the time of construction to the present day.

In the decades following the Trail construction, South Florida has become a place where people from a variety of nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds have come seeking new opportunities. In an effort to accommodate this explosion of people, cities and towns throughout South Florida stretched their boundaries and pushed into the Everglades using various forms of construction inspired by the Tamiami Trail.[15] Yet, because the perception of the Everglades has changed through the work of environmentalists since the Trail's construction, the expansion and development of South Florida does not carry with it the same support as it did earlier.

Since the Trail's completion, the Everglades have become a National Park, a World Heritage Site, and a cultural icon found in novels and country songs.[16] Because environmentalists, scientists, and ecologist have discovered that the Everglades is a vast

[13] Patsy West, *The Enduring Seminoles: From Alligator Wrestling to Ecotourism* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1998), 85.
[14] Weisman, 131.
[15] Garrett, 275.
[16] Grunwald, 3.

ecosystem that requires the unaltered flow of water to replenish forests, tree islands, and mangrove swamps, the Tamiami Trail is now seen by environmentalists, scientists, and ecologists as a deterrent to the overall health of the region. Even Congress, the very group that provided the funds needed to complete the Trail in the 1920s, has now, as part of its Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 and subsequent renovations starting in 2009, determined that the Trail must undergo a drastic transformation in order to allow an easier flow of water. The final chapter of the thesis will analyze how the Everglades have evolved from a symbol of urban development to an environment worth saving, and how these two aspects within the narrative of the Trail are manifesting themselves into a paradox for South Florida's future. This thesis' definitive goal is to bridge the gap between the administrative documents detailing the origins and construction of the Tamiami Trail, and the work of environmentalists and historians over the past fifty years detailing the environmental impact of human movement and expansion throughout South Florida. It is in the belief of the author that while migration to South Florida, increasing interactions with the Seminole people, and deterioration of South Florida's environment may not be due exclusively to the completion of the Tamiami Trail, the Trail's existence certainly contributed, and continues to influence these and other themes throughout the region.

# CHAPTER ONE: THE ORIGINS OF CONTRUCTION

## Developing Landscapes

Within the historiography of South Florida, authors have described the Everglades as an "ancient wilderness," or a "primeval" force of nature that flourished for ages until the introduction of development at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet from an ecological perspective, the region is still relatively young.[17] Through the amalgamation of water and land over a five thousand year span, the Everglades at the onset of the Trail's development had become as wild and uninhibited as any other wilderness in the United States. To understand the high expectations of the early developers, and ensuing difficulties encountered when attempting to make these expectations valid, it is vital to first provide both a geological and ecological biography of the land the Tamiami Trail intended to transform.

About 100 million years ago, the same tectonic plates that had shifted and compressed the Earth into one large mass 200 million years prior, began to shift once again and split the supercontinent Pangaea into several different land formations. It was during this cataclysmic divide that the Florida Platform would form and become an appendage fastened to the present-day North American landmass.[18] Despite being on the frontal edge of an area experiencing continental convergence, the Florida platform escaped with no serious damage with the basement rock of the peninsula remaining both flat and intact. Either from the splintering of Pangaea, or the ensuing volcanic activity in the vicinity of the Bahamas, the Florida platform would also be

[17] Grunwald, *The Swamp*, 14, and David McCally, *The Everglades: An Environmental History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 1.
[18] McCally, 2, Geologists believe this to be true, due to the types of rock found at the basement of the platform. The Osceola granite and high-feldspar volcanic rock are both indicative to region of West Africa, and in particular, near the nation of Senegal.

aligned with a gentle tilt to the west. This slight tilt, combined with the flatness of the peninsula's basement rock, would prove to be fundamental in establishing a general drainage pattern for the Everglades in the future.[19] However, even with the fusion of the Florida Platform and the North American landmass in place, the peninsula of Florida was still under the sea.

Without having the knowledge of a geologist, the subsequent period of marine submersion might appear as unimposing and uneventful to the overall ecological operation of the Everglades. Yet it is because of this lengthy time underwater, some ninety-five percent of Florida's geological history, that the basement stratum of the peninsula has a substantial layer of limestone. During this time the flora and fauna of the region experienced periods of both growth and extinction. In fact during the largest mass extinction of all time at the beginning of the Mesozoic period, some 96 percent of all marine life became extinct.[20] Underneath the surface of these terrestrial and oceanic transitions, the Florida Plateau remained on the ocean floor collecting the skeletal fragments of the extinct flora and fauna, and transforming it into both flat and porous limestone. Over the next 70 million years, the amount of limestone deposited roughly equaled the subsidence of the basement rock. This allowed the limestone to maintain a constant position in relation to the surface of the water. Due to this lengthened period of accumulation, the limestone deposits of South Florida range from 13,000 feet near the southern shore of Lake Okeechobee, to roughly 20,000 feet at the southernmost edge of the peninsula, as opposed to the 4,000 feet of limestone found in the middle of peninsula.[21]

[19] S. David Webb, "Historical Biogeography," in *Ecosystems of Florida*, eds. Ronald L. Myers and John J. Ewel (Orlando: University of Central Florida Press, 1990), 72.
[20] McCally, 4.
[21] *Ibid*, 5.

Nevertheless, as important as the limestone is to the environment of the Everglades, the region still needed to rise above the surface of the ocean in order to form into the recognizable ecosystem that it is today. The frequent inundation or expansion of glaciers during the Pleistocene era would produce this necessary geological transformation. About 2.5 to 3 million years ago, the peninsula of Florida began to experience recurring cycles of ice glaciers in the process of either melting into water, or refreezing back into glaciers. Because of the constant changes in the sea level, the geology of the region would acquire characteristics during both processes that would become crucial for the development of the Everglades' bedrock and its boundaries.[22]

During periods in which the surrounding glaciers were in the process of melting, the highly porous limestone could not hold the water at the land's surface due to the hydrological interaction between freshwater and saltwater. This resulted in a severely lower water table that became as permeable as the limestone underneath and later as the main source of freshwater for the people of South Florida.[23] Conversely, during the periods in which the glaciers were both freezing and expanding, Florida became a much larger, cooler, and arid landmass. Yet it was the high winds produced during these continuous changes in temperature that would prove to be most crucial in forming the boundaries of the peninsula. When the glaciers were in the process of expanding, the high winds would combine with the arid climate to create an environment full of large, shifting sand dunes. During periods in which the glaciers were melting, the high winds would subside and the sand dunes would become static until the expanding seawaters engulfed these sandy formations. Through the constant recurrence of glaciers either retreating or

[22] *Ibid*, 5-6
[23] Grunwald, 15.

expanding, the sandy formations left behind would eventually become the eastern and western coastline of the Florida peninsula.[24]

These traumatic phases of transformation might have inflicted serious damage to the geological structure of the region's strata if not for the flatness of the limestone developed some 70 million years earlier. Due to the uniformity of the peninsula's surface, a minimal amount of erosion occurred during episodes of exposure. This would allow for a diverse combination of geological and terrestrial elements including fresh water marls, sandy formations, calcite sediment, and limestone. If the limestone had experienced any notable damage or weathering during the Pleistocene era, the limestone would have produced a much more homogenous environment. Conversely, the irregularity of the ice-age strata provided the foundation for various hydrological phases that subsequently allowed "the development of the Everglades' rich mosaic of wetland environments."[25]

To summarize, the rock formations of the Florida peninsula provided three major components to the natural environment that would stand in the way of those developers and builders of the Tamiami Trail in the early twentieth century. First the basement rock, which was once a portion of the current African continent, proved to be the source of the Everglades' westerly tilt and ensuing course of drainage. In the ages that ensued, the nautical conditions and immeasurable amount of marine life that perished from generation to generation combined to form a porous and flat layer of limestone on top of the basement strata. This limestone would come to ease the introduction and accumulation of future geological compositions such as fresh water marl, sand, and calcite sediment. Finally, the rise and fall of the sea level created by the

[24] McCally, 7-8.
[25] *Ibid*, 8.

cyclical melting and freezing of the surrounding glaciers produced the sandy boundaries necessary for confining the Everglades to the interior of the peninsula.

*Water: An Important Ingredient*

As important as limestone, marl, and sand are to the region, what truly makes the Everglades as beautiful and daunting as any other ecosystem on earth is the abundance and function of water vis-à-vis life within South Florida. This relationship would become evident through three essential and dependable components: the end of an ice age causing a rise in the surrounding sea level, the solution of the region, and the hydroperiod of the environment during a given year. The process of *solution* refers to the ability of slightly acidic rainwater to dissolve limestone, whereas a *hydroperiod* is determined by the number of days per year in which a section of Florida can expect to be flooded.[26] Certainly the solution and hydroperiod are both direct and vital ecological bonds between the region's rock and water. Yet, for these processes to effectively dissolve the region's limestone, or for the region's rainfall to consistently flood and sustain the boggy environment, an elevated sea level would certainly need to be in place. These three components were, and continue to be dependent on each other. For an element so crucial in establishing this wetland system, any interruption or deterrent existing within the relationship between these three elements, would place the overall ecological health of the Everglades at risk.

In concurrence with the end of the Wisconsin ice age, the impact of water began to take its shape on the environment of South Florida. As mentioned before, the melting of the surrounding ice sheets not only caused the sea level to rise while reducing the landmass of the Florida peninsula, but it also inundated the underlying table of porous limestone while elevating

[26]*Ibid, 9.*

the water table closer to the surface. Subsequently, because freshwater floats on top of salt water, the presence of this new source of freshwater began to produce important environmental consequences. Species of trees and plants ranging from cypress, willow, ash, cattail, and water-lilies could now all thrive within these new sites of freshwater. This abundance of surface water would also provide the impetus for evaporation-convection precipitation, thus allowing the once dominate sand dune region the capability of transforming into a scrub oak savanna.[27]

The increase in rainfall also allowed for the hydrological process of solution to produce a greater effect on the formation and ecological functioning of the Everglades. When the limestone of the region came into contact with rain, some of the rock would start to dissolve. Combined with the rising water table, this chemical reaction would begin to bring more groundwater to the land's surface, which directly enlarged the range of the wetland flora. Subterranean solution also proved to be vital in building the geological formations of the Everglades. To the naked eye, the surface of South Florida's interior appears to be rather flat. However, due to aquifers underground dissolving layers of limestone from below, minute valleys and plateaus began to form throughout the lower half of the peninsula. The 2,500 square-mile basin found between the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee represents one of these diminutive, yet important transformations. In this particular basin, the limestone below dissolved just enough so that the surface began to slouch down slightly. Due to the process of underground solution, a perfect valley appeared, offering the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and meandering Kissimmee River a drainage outlet during times of excessive rainfall. More importantly, scientists and ecological writers over the past century have produced enough

[27] Patrick J. Gleason and Peter Stone, "Age, Origin, and Landscape Evolution of the Everglades Peatland," in *Everglades: The Ecosystem and Its Restoration*, eds. Steven M. Davis and John C. Ogden (Delray Beach, FL.: St. Lucie Press, 1994), 164.

evidence to establish this valley as the headwaters of a complex hydrological ecosystem that traverses through the peninsula and into the heart of the Everglades.[28]

As mentioned before, although the landscape of the region might appear flat to the naked eye, the topography of South Florida is actually full of miniature peaks and valleys due to the subterranean solution. Any slight change in elevation could easily transform the rock, soil, and environment of a particular landscape. For instance a water-lily bog that remained saturated with water all year long would be slightly lower in elevation than a marsh of sawgrass with a ten-month hydroperiod. Subsequently, the decomposition of each plant formation would also be completely different, creating a variety of interactions with the soil and rock formation in each corresponding region.[29]

*Culmination of an Ecosystem*

It is in the formation of the region's soil that the culmination of a 5,000 year old process becomes evident. The combination of the limestone's permeability, the elevation of the terrain caused by subterranean solution, the length of different hydroperiods, and the subsequent collection of plant life would create a range in soils varying from calcite mud and peat, to the even more specific Okeechobee muck and Okleelanta peaty-muck. Depending on the particular length of the hydroperiod and the ensuing plant assemblage, the soil of the region could reach levels of tremendous fertility. The unique Okleelanta peaty-muck located between the Okeechobee muck around south rim of the lake, and the Everglades peat to the south was one such example. Due to the constant shifts between dry and wet seasons, as well as being

[28] McCally, 10.
[29] Grunwald, 18.

extremely responsive to fluctuations in the water-level, this peaty-muck was especially favorable to a variety of plant life. The organic vestiges of willow trees, elder trees, and sawgrass would combine to form soil so fertile that it would later become treasured by the developers and agriculturalists in favor of building the Trail.[30]

By the time plans for the Tamiami Trail began to take shape, the Everglades had developed into an environment as expansive, intricate, and unique as any other in the world. With distinct characteristics ranging from a large spatial scale, habitat heterogeneity, and a compliant hydrological system, the Everglades had in many ways developed into a living organism that depended upon the uninterrupted interaction between these ecological traits.[31] The flow of water streaming from the Kissimmee River Basin, or the decomposition and reemergence of the wetland flora, are two examples discussed earlier of this self-perpetuating environmental preservation. Because the Everglades did not immediately appear as a complete wetland environment, this system showed both environmental resiliency and progression even in the absence of developers and planners. Although it is uncertain as to what the Everglades might have looked like in another 5,000 years, what is certain is the extent with which the Everglades used organic materials such as water and flora, to continually shape the nature's conditions for a favorable existence.[32]

Yet, due to the actions of politicians and developers during the early twentieth century, the process of rejuvenating and replenishing the Everglades through a natural process would essentially come to an end. For these individuals, the traditional environmental structure of the

[30] Gleason, et al., "The Environmental Significance of Holocene Sediments," in *Environments of South Florida, Present and Past II*, ed. Patrick J. Gleason (Coral Gables: Miami Geological Society, 1984), 301-304.
[31] McCally, 21.
[32] In order to extrapolate further on this statement, discussion on the environmental functioning and overall health of the Everglades will occur in the third chapter. This discussion will contextualize the impact of the Trail to the Everglades through the lens of a rise in both scientific knowledge and environmentalism. Also see McCally, 30.

Everglades stood in the way of Florida's progress. If Florida was going to advance from an economic and social standpoint within twentieth century America, nature could no longer dictate or shape the conditions of the Everglades. With the Tamiami Trail in place, a new era would begin; one in which the rules of nature would be trumped by the rules of progress.

## The Clash between Nature and a Dream

At the turn of the twentieth century, politicians, developers, and entrepreneurs throughout the United States began to adhere to the tenets of what many scholars have defined as the American dream. During attempts to alter the political policies, social norms, economic success, and physical landscape of the day, these individuals began to believe that their efforts would produce progress, innovation, and development throughout the United States. In concurrence with an increase in the nation's technological prowess, efforts to achieve this ambiguous American dream began to not only become more realistic, but also more daring and disrespectful with regards to the forces of nature.

Outside of the Seminoles and plume hunters living within the southern portion of the peninsula, many Americans from an emotional and physical standpoint considered Florida to be a frontier landscape.[33] Naturally, for those in favor of achieving this American dream, Florida became a perfect setting to extend this new progressive form of political, social, and economic thought. However, once within the state this vision would shift and change into what historian David McCally terms the 'Florida dream.' For McCally, this dream assumed three major forms of physical expression: a tranquil beachfront lifestyle, the possibility of a sustainable subtropical

[33] Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Neighbors in Tampa* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 46, quoted in Gary Garnett, "Blasting through Paradise", 262.

agriculture, and the opportunity to create an abundant urban landscape.[34] Over time the 'Florida dream' would come to embody the traditional American desire to search for and obtain a better life somewhere new despite the inherent deficiencies. For wealthy industrialists and politicians like Henry Flagler and Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, Florida was the place where groups as opposite as rural farmers and urban dwellers could find economic and social success through the correction of its environmental shortcomings. However, as evident by the historiography of South Florida, often the methods to rectify these supposed faults will produce new shortcomings and also destroy the very qualities that attracted those to Florida in the first place. The insistent desire to convert and shape the natural world for human needs certainly becomes evident through the vision, construction, and implementation of the highway transportation system.

*The Contexts of a "Driven" Society*

Prior to the creation and introduction of the automobile, the railroad during the nineteenth century became the basis of America's most lucrative and dominating form of transportation. Due to a lack of national (and thus financial) support, the maintenance and supervision of roads fell to the responsibility of local governments. At the state level, the most common form of support arrived in the form of grants designed to provide access for privately administered turnpikes. However, these turnpikes were limited to Mid-Atlantic States such as New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland.[35] This lack of support stifled the momentum necessary for the roadway system to topple the already universally accepted railroad system.[36]

[34] David McCally, "The Everglades and the Florida Dream," in Davis and Arsenault, 142.
[35] Owen D. Gutfreund, *Twentieth-Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 8.
[36] Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 10.

The quality of the roads themselves were also in terrible condition, with most covered by mud in the winter or dust in the summer. Even if by chance a road was in good conditions, often it would end with no connecting road or link in sight.

Ironically, the shift to improve both the quantity and quality of the nation's roads would come from individuals fond of riding bicycles during in the 1880's. These bicycle enthusiasts and corresponding riding clubs titled their cause the Good Roads Movement, and over the next couple of decades their vision of creating an America with a sound and capable roadway system would eventually come to fruition. Through the help of journalists, engineers, and farmers, the movement convinced Americans to abandon the view of the roadway system as a privately operated entity, and accept it as a public enterprise. The ideals and opinions fostered by this movement informed the demands and discussions for the construction of roads similar to the Tamiami Trail.

Through the momentum built by the movement, the Populists ultimately became a valuable ally for the creation of a highway lobby that advocated for the construction of new roads and the improvement of unkempt roads already in existence.[37] In 1893 the movement was able to influence legislation in Congress to form the Office of Road Inquiry (ORI). This agency assisted state governments with the research, surveys, and technical assistance necessary for state highway projects. With help from ORI over the next twenty years, the movement educated the public with pamphlets and books, coordinated publicity campaigns, and supplied pre-drafted bills for state legislatures. Automobile Association of America (better known today as AAA)

[37] Gutfreund, 9-11.

formed in 1902 under the structural tutelage and recommendations of ORI and the Good Roads Movement.[38]

With the support of the Good Roads movement and the ORI, the construction and improvement of roads eventually developed with the growing consciousness of what historian Paul Sutter has termed, "culture's idealization of nature as a space for leisure."[39] During the period known as the Progressive Era, Americans began to view nature as a place to escape from the daily struggle of industrialization and an arena to express one's masculinity. Prior to the regulation of time in industrial or institutional work spaces, leisure and labor were concepts closely intertwined with one another. Sutter believes that the separation of the two, both from a temporal and spatial perspective, was instrumental to the Progressive Era's creation of outdoor recreation.[40] In order to quench this new enthusiasm for outdoor leisure, Americans produced and consumed whatever related to the natural setting of the wilderness. This ranged from vacation homes or camps, to the paintings and poems of transcendental artists such as Thomas Cole or Henry David Thoreau during the 19th century, or the feathers from plume birds living in the Everglades.[41]

Not every American could afford the time, money, or the means of travel to view the natural environment often enjoyed exclusively by the social elite. The introduction of Henry Ford's Model T would change these impediments drastically. Prior to the rapid production of the Model T, automobiles from Europe and the United States were only affordable to the nation's

[38] *Ibid*, 13.
[39] Paul Sutter, *Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002), 23.
[40] *Ibid*, 22.
[41] For information about John Muir or Henry David Thoreau's writings and their thoughts about nature during the Progressive Era read Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). For information regarding the attraction and fashion of plume bird feathers read Stuart B. McIver, *Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003).

upper class, due to the high cost of production, their meticulous construction, and the subsequent quality of each unit. Ford's ability to produce massive numbers of automobiles though the introduction of assembly-line production, enabled middle-class Americans to purchase an efficient automobile at a reasonable price. Ford's advertising spoke directly to ordinary buyers as it proclaimed, "No car under $2,000 offers more, and no car over $2,000 offers more except the trimmings."[42] For middle-class Americans this process of automobile manufacturing essentially "democratized" the ownership of an automobile, thus enabling individuals and their families the opportunity to travel and see natural environments throughout America's landscape.[43] With the Good Roads Movement, government legislation, public philosophy, and manufacturing processes in place, Florida, and in particular the Everglades, would become the ideal location to execute the era's opinions, ideas, and values.

*"Little Better Than a Wasteland"*

The biggest impediment in the way for the proponents and developers of this 'Florida Dream' would be the mysterious and saturated ecosystem viewed by Spanish explorers as "little better than a wasteland."[44] Ironically, those who were supporters of the 'Florida Dream,' only had to look to the results of the 1890 census, as well as Fredrick Jackson Turner's famous "Frontier Thesis" to shift from "wasteland" perceptions.[45] For individuals such as Allan H. Andrews of the *American Eagle*, the landscape south of Lake Okeechobee was actually the

[42] James J. Flink, *The Automobile Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), 37.
[43] Sutter, 24.
[44] McCally, *The Everglades*, 40.
[45] Carolyn Merchant, "Resource Conservation in the Twentieth Century," in *Major Problems in American Environmental History*, 2nd Edition, ed. Carolyn Merchant (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 312.

nation's "last remaining frontier" and its presence invited Americans to come and settle.[46] Unfortunately for those who cherished the 'Florida Dream,' this vast ecosystem stretching across the southern Florida landscape named the Everglades, limited inhabitants to the coasts with torrential summer rains, natural springs, and the uninterrupted flow of water south from Lake Okeechobee. For some Florida historians, the goal to overcome this problem and drain the Everglades, echoed many of the same emotional and physical bonds held by pioneers settling in the western frontier during the latter half of the nineteenth century.[47] This allusion to the western frontier appears fitting due to the same urges to conqueror the land displayed by both the western settlers of the nineteenth century, and the Floridian developers of the twentieth century. For the settlers, businessmen, and entrepreneurs moving into twentieth century Florida, this "last remaining frontier" would certainly present itself as a formidable opponent.

Prior to the conception of the Trail in 1915, the public and private efforts to drain the Everglades of its water provided modest results during seventy years of grueling labor. Through the notable use of both private funding from Philadelphia millionaire Hamilton Disston in the 1880's, and the public policies of progressive Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward in the early 1900's, canals were designed and constructed to divert water from the overflowing Lake Okeechobee. Unfortunately for proponents of the 'Florida Dream,' the collapse of Disston's fortune in 1896 and Broward's departure from office in 1909 left only small dents in the shield that was proving to be the South Florida landscape. Nevertheless, the intense public and private requests to drain the Everglades continued.

[46] Baynard Kendrick, *Florida Trails to Turnpikes, 1917-1964* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, 1964), 68.
[47] For more information concerning this reference to Turner again see Mormino and Pozzetta's quote in Garrett, "Blasting through Paradise", 262.

The perceived benefits expected from the removal of water, explain why such a wide range of individuals, over such a long period, advocated the complete drainage of the Everglades. Many Florida historians conclude that the reasons behind these adamant calls for drainage stem from the agricultural benefits of the bed of ancient muck lying underneath the ecosystem's surface water and vegetation.[48] Because the region was untouched by the plows of earlier farmers, and relentless rainfall allowed for a twelve-month growing season, advocates for drainage believed that the region could be sustainable for any conceivable crop.[49] Newspapers around the state exclaimed that the soil in the region would allow South Florida to become for America, "what the Nile River Valley is to Egypt." [50] Still, these perceived agriculture benefits would be for naught if the state did not have a suitable transportation system to deliver to potential markets, the region's harvest in a quick and efficient manner. As a result of an informal meeting in April, 1915 between Florida National Guardsman and tax assessor Capt. James F. Jaudon of Miami, and Francis W. Perry the president of the Fort Myers Chamber of Commerce, the plans to construct a public works project stretching the limits of imagination and technology were put in place.

## Origins of Construction

When Jaudon and Perry returned from their meeting in Tallahassee, the plan to connect the two coasts of South Florida was occurring as politicians and developers aimed to bring the Dixie Highway to Florida. As Jaudon and Perry were garnering support for their proposal in their respective communities, the Dixie Highway Association was meeting in Chattanooga,

[48] Grunwald, 56, McCally, *The Everglades*, 17, Garrett, 263.
[49] Garrett, 263.
[50] "The Tamiami Trail," *Collier County News*, April 26, 1928, pg.5.

Tennessee, to decide where to route the highway designed to connect Chicago with Miami. Unfortunately for the delegates from central Florida, the members of the Association excluded their region from the route. However, in spite of their disappointment, these same delegates decided to organize their own roadway convention and invite influential individuals from all over the state to participate in the first meeting of the Central Florida Highway Association. Ironically, it was at an Orlando meeting on June 10, 1915, that members of the association agreed to support the proposal of Jaudon and Perry's road in South Florida as a major objective for the "good road program" of the state.[51] If the origins of the name or the name itself were sources of contention amongst the delegates, the perceived impact of the Tamiami Trail served as a unifying factor, with some even stating that the qualities of the Trail matched those of the legendary Appian Way of ancient Rome. In the short span of two months, the spontaneous plan of Perry and Jaudon became a planned highway project from Miami to Fort Myers.[52]

The proposals and verbal support for the construction was one thing, attempting to build the road was another. Before any construction could actually commence, Dade and Lee County officials needed a thorough survey of the Everglades in order to prove that the construction of this highway would be feasible. In order to complete this arduous task, officials called on the assistance of the Seminoles to direct Jaudon and his surveying crew through the formidable and dangerous environment of the Everglades. Ironically, the Seminole people who guided and assisted these crews became obstacles later for developers and businesses once the Trail was completed. This would not be the last time the founders of the project would use the help of the Seminoles, while steadily subduing the stature of their society and culture. A Seminole named

[51] Kendrick, 70.
[52] The Tamiami Trail," Collier County News, April 26, 1928, pg.5..

Jack Tigertail, serving almost as a twentieth century Sacagawea, led Jaudon and his surveying crew across the muck, sawgrass, and cypress groves on a two-week expedition that started on August 5, 1915. The safe passage and return of Jaudon's crew, and the revelation that the greatest depth of water encountered was no more than six feet deep, proved to be enough for Dade and Lee County officials to agree to fund a highway project.[53]

Regardless of the early optimism propagated from this expedition, visions expressed by the founders of a quick and easy task were misleading and naïve. As evident by the required guidance of Seminole Indians familiar with the foreign landscape, the environment of the Everglades was still a dangerous and unfamiliar setting for white south Floridians. Compounding the delay of the project even further, both commissions in Dade and Lee counties experienced unforeseen impediments. For Lee County officials, Ft. Myers' infrastructure lacked the foundation necessary for a swift and thorough building process. During the 1890's the only way to reach the small town was by ship via the Gulf of Mexico. The first railroad and automobile arrived in the town in 1904 and 1908 respectively.[54] In addition, there was no bridge or road on either side of the Caloosahatchee River north of the town to allow travel from Tampa once the Trail was complete. Despite these obvious obstacles, Lee County officials remained encouraged and confident that construction from their part would continue to run efficiently, a confidence that rested in part on their ability to raise $177,500 worth of bonds.[55]

Much like their Lee County brethren, the confidence of Dade County officials for a quick construction seemed both unrealistic and impractical. For Dade County officials the plan was not only simple, but sure to bring an increase in economic benefits to the state. The Trail would

[53] Kendrick, 70; Reese, 10-11.
[54] Karl H. Grismer, *The Story of Ft. Myers: The History of the Land of Caloosahatchee and Southwest Florida* (St. Petersburg, FL.: St. Petersburg Printing Company, 1949), 164, 186, 213.
[55] Garrett, 265.

be built by digging a canal and crushing the excavated rock for a road running parallel to the waterway. With both a road and canal in place, saturated lands adjacent to the Trail would drain, resulting in new agricultural areas designed to increase both the population and economic revenue for the state.[56] Considering the previous difficulties experienced by both Disston and Broward in constructing an effective system of drainage canals, building a road by excavating an adjacent canal also seemed problematic. Yet, Dade County officials continued to issue bonds and press ahead with construction despite these impeding challenges. In 1916 the J. B. McCrary Company of Atlanta was rewarded the contract and the responsibility for building the Miami portion of the Trail for the large sum of $241,500.[57] The unrelenting optimism exhibited by both Dade and Lee County officials, clearly demonstrates that both past and present disappointments would not impede the vision of those set on constructing this monument to Florida's progress. For those invested in the future success of Trail, failure would not, and could not be an option.

*Early Efforts and Failures*

An examination of the methods used to construct the Trail, reveals both the difficulty the ecosystem presented for construction, and the lengths project managers were willing to go in order to mold and divide the Everglades. The attributes that form the uniqueness of an ecosystem unlike any other in the world, were also the same elements that proved to threaten the project from its beginnings. Because of the large amounts of water, muck, alligators, and snakes, construction seemed almost unfeasible and impractical. Not until the work began, did engineers and workers, wading in hip-deep mud, realize the daunting task at hand. However, beneath the

[56] Reese, 13.
[57] Kendrick, 70.

surface water and soft muck, stood a firm foundation of hard limestone formed during the Pleistocene epoch some 2.5 to 3 million years ago.[58] With this limestone in place, engineers believed that by spreading a flat layer of crushed rock over this foundation, a firm and proper road bed would form. Unfortunately this method proved to be ineffective in both wet and dry weather. During wet weather, rising water and muck submerged the rock bed, while dry weather burned the leftover muck onto the surface of rock bed. Because of these setbacks, the engineers determined that a uniform and indestructible roadbed constructed out of the limestone at hand, would have to take place in order to combat the shifting elements within the Everglades.[59]

Using a construction process known as dredging, workers used large machines to first scrap away the surface of muck to reveal the limestone necessary for the foundation of the road. The water left behind slowed the movement of these large dredges down to a methodical crawl. Straddling each side of a resulting canal, the dredger slowly "walked" while digging a cubic yard of sand, muck, and water with each scoop.[60] With the limestone exposed, workers performed the dangerous task of loading and detonating dynamite into the exposed area in order to break apart loose pieces of hard limestone designated to form the base of the Trail. As the project evolved, both a large canal and road appeared foot by foot until the coasts of Florida were connected.

During the early phases of construction, workers and engineers encountered difficulties stemming from both the harsh environmental and economic conditions of South Florida. For those building the Trail, danger and discouragement were daily occurrences. On some occasions, equipment designed to drill and dredge sank beneath the muck through the holes excavated and intended for the deposits of dynamite. In order to move forward, additional labor

[58] McCally, 5-8.
[59] Kendrick, 81.
[60] Nelson Manfred Blake, *Land into Water –Water into Land: A History of Water Management in Florida* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980), 232, and Kendrick, 81.

needed to retrieve and restore these tools, bogged down workers for days. Special labor crews moved ahead of the engineers in charge of drilling and dredging, in order to clear a path through the muck and sawgrass to ease the movement of the heavy tools left behind. Often working in water and muck up to their waists, these workers encountered the added dangers of crocodiles, alligators, insects, and venomous water snakes, while dragging their equipment either by slow-moving oxen or upon their own shoulders.

By 1919, it was becoming evident that Lee County officials would be unable to raise additional bonds for the funding of the project. The growing sense of uncertainty towards funding large construction projects during the nation's involvement in the First World War, led Lee County officials to focus on projects that would have an immediate impact on the citizens of the county. For the next four years, Lee County officials would divert funding and efforts towards the construction of a bridge across the Caloosahatchee, rather than support a project with only thirty miles of finished road running east from Naples into the Big Cypress Swamp.[61] The burden of a cross-Florida road fell on the shoulders of Dade County officials and construction crews. The project seemed at this time to be dead in its tracks, and unable to gain the economic momentum crucial to connect the gap over the vast, formidable environment. However, the tenacity and will of a few influential individuals eventually provided the money and publicity necessary to resume construction of the Trail.

Before the financial problems of 1919, Jaudon with the help of others intent of building the Trail, organized the Chevalier Corporation in 1917.[62] As president of corporation, Jaudon believed that the construction and completion of the project would eventually increase the value

[61] Garrett, 266, Reese 16-17.
[62] Kendrick, 83.

of lands lying adjacent to the Trail. Under the stipulation that the road be rerouted seven miles south through Monroe County and Chevalier-owned real estate, the Chevalier Corporation agreed to fund and build the remaining portion of the unfinished Trail.[63] After Dade and Lee County officials agreed to the proposal, Jaudon and the Chevalier Corporation continued the construction from the east coast of South Florida in 1921.[64] However, the drive to complete the rest of the Trial ironically originated in the under developing west coast in the form of an injection in both publicity and economic interest.

*Blazing the Trail*

By 1923, the speed of construction from both coasts of Florida was traveling at a snail-like pace across the Everglade landscape. Capt. Jaudon and his Chevalier Corporation continued to hack and build its way west from Dade County, while Lee County officials and construction crews concentrated on other more imperative public works projects within the county. However, because construction efforts from either side of Florida continued in some fashion, the idea and goals of the Trail were still the minds of Floridians bent on making a profit off the vast frontier. In order to keep the momentum for the Trail alive, a group of west coast businessmen decided the best way to generate public interest and exposure towards completing the Trail would be to "blaze" across the proposed route in eight Model T Fords.[65] The pending success of the expedition hopefully would prove to the general public and government officials in both Tallahassee and Washington the feasibility of automobiles traversing this formidable environment.

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[63] *Ibid*,.
[64] Garrett, 267.
[65] Russell Kay, "Tamiami Trail Blazer: A Personal Memoir," in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Jan., 1971): 278.

At the time of the expedition, there were a number of well-traveled Seminole trails running from Miami to Fort Myers, and if someone was willing to forego the comforts of twentieth-century life, the journey could be made in seven days. With the assistance of eight Model T Fords, a 3,000 pound vehicle named an Elcar, and two Seminole Indian guides named Abraham Lincoln and Little Billie, the planners of the expedition expected the entire trip to last only three days.[66] Headed by Ora E. Chaplin, a manager of a trust company based in Fort Myers, the expedition aimed to explore the frontier, note any obstacles in the way, and record the distance traversed.[67] On the morning of April 4, 1923, a group of twenty-three men comprised of Chaplin, the two Seminole guides, and a collection of businessmen, government officials, and newspaper reporters, set off from Fort Myers with little understanding of what to expect. The excitement behind the expedition was so palpable in the region that both Thomas Edison and Henry Ford were among the large crowd gathered to send the expedition on their way. Unfortunately for the men of the expedition, this excitement quickly turned into danger and anxiety.[68]

After traveling through brush, the Royal Palm Hammock, and open fields of marshland the motorcade reached the end of the Lee Country road grade on the first night of the expedition. From this point forward, the expedition would have to "blaze" a trail through the harsh environment of muck, marshland, and cypress hammocks. Their movement on the second day clearly illustrated the difficulties and challenges that lay ahead. After leaving the grade, the lead car drove for about a hundred yards before submerging under the muck. Another car soon followed with the same result. Even the 3,000 pound Elcar succumbed to the muck and mud of

[66] Garrett, 267, Kay, 279.
[67] Kendrick, 72.
[68] Kay, 280-281.

the Everglades. By the end of the first night, seven automobiles needed the assistance of tractors sent from Lee County to be pulled from the muck, with the Elcar left behind. The visions of reaching Miami in three days would be quickly dashed by the early difficulties and subsequent progress of the expedition.[69]

Nevertheless, the expedition continued to push forth in order to beat the rainy season that would arrive shortly. The expedition had a sufficient number of men to push individual cars from the marsh, but if the rain caught them in the muck, their chances of making progress decreased considerably.[70] By the second week of the expedition, supplies became a critical problem. Planners had estimated the expedition would only last three days, and the allocations of the rations were much smaller than what would be needed to continue the trip. Fortunately for the "Trailblazers," the hunting, tracking, and environmental knowledge of the two Seminole guides proved to be instrumental in the success of the expedition. Even though the expedition traveled at a rate of less than fifteen miles a day, the two Seminole guides were able to provide much needed guidance and subsistence to the other men of the group.[71] On numerous occasions, both Abraham Lincoln and Little Billie left the motorcade to retrieve venison, turkey, water, and other provisions. Ironically much like Sacagawea and Jack Tigertail before them, the assistance of these Seminole guides, and the subsequent success of the expedition, eventually led to the complete transformation of the environment the Seminole people called home.[72] If not for the help of both Abraham Lincoln and Little Billie, the expedition would have certainly failed.

Eventually after three grueling weeks, the expedition soothed the anxiety of the general public by arriving in Miami on April 27, 1923. The difficulties in traveling through the

[69] Kay, 281, Kendrick, 74-75.
[70] Kendrick, 75.
[71] Garrett, 267.
[72] Kendrick, 77-78.

Everglades from one coast to the other fulfilled the original intent of the trip by capturing the attention of both the national press and general public. Some estimated that the motorcade brought over 35,000 newspaper columns of publicity during the expedition in both the United States and Europe.[73] Writing salacious stories about the men fighting for their lives against wildlife, or the possibility of becoming captives of Seminoles who resented their intrusion, the news agencies' lack of knowledge intensified the fascination.[74] Even though the "Trailblazers" accomplished nothing of constructional progress during their travels across the Everglades, they were able to finish the journey and generate enough publicity to advance the construction of a roadway across the state.

*The Impact of Collier*

The true impact of the "Trailblazers" still garners debate among historians today, but the contributions and influence of a wealthy businessman named Barron G. Collier does not. Millionaire advertising executive, Collier bought Useppa Island near Fort Myers two years prior to the "Trailblazers" expedition. After acquiring a citrus grove and an old railroad on the same property, Collier suddenly decided to move his business headquarters to the end of the railroad in the small town of Everglade.[75] Eventually over the next two years, Collier developed Everglade and soon acquired over 1.3 million acres of undeveloped land in Lee County. Collier, like many other wealthy land speculators and businessmen throughout South Florida, believed that the construction of a road opening up the Everglades to potential agricultural and commercial opportunities would cause the value of land throughout the region to skyrocket. To advance this

[73] Kay, 287.
[74] Kay, 286.
[75] Garrett, 268.

economic boom, Collier proposed to offer the state of Florida a deal it could hardly refuse. In exchange for financing the remaining construction of the Tamiami Trail, the 1.3 million acres of land in Lee County owned by Collier would become a new county named Collier County.[76] Even though the state had agreed to allow the Chevalier Corporation to complete the construction, Jaudon could not compete with the financial security provided by Collier's immense wealth. To make matters worse for Jaudon, construction in Dade County remained stagnant with little progress accomplished. Building on the excitement generated by the "Trailblazers" expedition, the state of Florida agreed to Collier's proposal and handed over complete financial control of construction despite objections from Jaudon and Lee and Dade County officials.[77]

For Collier, the added bonus of routing the Trail through Collier County became enough motivation to put his construction crews and dredges to work immediately. In order to finance the construction, Collier used his fortune as collateral to float a $350,000 loan. With the finances and the hiring of dredgemaster Otto Neal in place, construction moved west from the town of Carnestown and reached the deserted portion of Lee County's work in December of 1923.[78] Once construction crews started dredging in the direction of Dade County, the early success stagnated as it had done in previous efforts. The discovery of rock under the water and muck on this portion of the proposed Trail forced construction crews to blast their way across the Everglades. Prior to 1925, Florida's consumption of dynamite placed seventeenth among other states throughout the United States. At the height of construction in January of 1927, there were

[76] Garrett, 268, Kendrick, 82.
[77] Reese, 17.
[78] Garrett, 269.

only two other states using more dynamite.[79] Even with this influx of money, dynamite, and construction, the efforts of Collier and his crew from the west, started to look similar to the earlier efforts of the Chevalier Corporation from the east.

In order to change the speed and efficiency of the project, Collier hired an engineer with fourteen years of naval experience named D. Graham Copeland. Starting in 1925, Copeland turned Collier's company town into a makeshift military boot camp, complete with whistles designed to announce times to wake up, eat lunch, and quit work. Although the construction under Copeland's leadership continued at a slow pace, its relentlessness was unmatched by any prior effort. With a seventy-five man work crew living in trailers and fighting off the heat and wildlife of the Everglades behind the dredges, Copeland managed to plug along east from Carnestown.[80]

In 1925 the early efforts of Collier and Copeland became justified through the financial takeover of the project from the Florida State Road Department (FSRD). Due to the previous success of the "Trailblazers" expedition, and the appeal of Collier's subsequent proposal to provide the state with land for a new county, the FSRD realized the importance of this road and decided to provide Collier with the capital necessary to finish.[81] Through the influx of FSRD money, Collier's workforce became four times larger, while the amount of machinery used to complete the road increased by a factor of five. Through the state's support, Copeland pushed forward and eventually reached the work completed by the Chevalier Corporation in Monroe County. Instead of connecting the two ends together, Collier wanted his road to travel exclusively through Collier County. Despite the frustration of citizens around the state who

[79] Reese, 22.
[80] Garrett, 270.
[81] Kendrick, 83.

believed the extension would be a waste of taxes, the FSRD accommodated Collier's wishes by funding the construction of twenty miles of road north of the already existing tract in Monroe County. Due to the persistence of Collier, the Loop Road would be eventually created and become part of what is known as the Big Cypress National Preserve today.[82]

## Completion and Relevance Moving Forward

Although the last ten mile stretch of the road would not be complete until 1929, a celebration was held on April 29, 1928 to mark the connection of Florida's two southern coasts.[83] Publications throughout the state exclaimed that the completion of the Trail would turn Florida into America's center of agriculture with the ability to produce enough food to feed almost half of the nation's population.[84] Others went even further to state that the impact of the Trail would eventually match that of the Appian Way in Ancient Rome.[85] By the end of construction, the total cost of the project to the various businessmen, corporations, counties and state departments involved would eventually reach approximately $7,000,000.[86] For those concerned with travel, the Trail would be worth every penny. By using this new thirty-foot wide highway, travelers would now be able to bisect the state and experience the formidable environment of the Everglades through the comfort of their own automobile.

Throughout the history of the United States, politicians, entrepreneurs, or common citizens have used advancements in technology to control and manipulate the natural landscape in order to build modes of transportation. These systems have provided Americans with the

[82] Garrett, 271.
[83] Kendrick, 87.
[84] Capt. Jack De Lyste, "Building Collier County, Florida," *Southern Highways*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Apr., 1928), 2.
[85] Horace A. Dunn, *Florida Highways*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Mar., 1928), 1.
[86] Kendrick, 86.

ability to obtain monetary profit, extract natural resources, or create a more efficient infrastructure. However upon further examination, environmental, social, and cultural issues within transportation systems often produce what historian Carol Sheriff termed a "paradox of progress" in her examination. Sheriff's paradoxical story refers in particular to the construction of the Erie Canal during the nineteenth century, when Americans utilized technological improvements to obtain economic enhancement and population expansion, all while overwhelming the natural landscape and producing social and cultural consequences upon central New York.[87] Even though Sheriff's story is representative of the thoughts, actions, and methods of construction for individuals living in nineteenth century New York, many of these same contradictory issues eventually presented themselves following the Trail's completion.

Through the lofty ideas and actions of individuals and entities such as James F. Jaudon, the Chevalier Corporation, the "Trail Blazers of 1923," and Barron G. Collier, the dissection of the Everglades evolved into one of the most ambitious and innovative public works projects ever constructed within the state of Florida. The construction of the Trail certainly changed the landscape of South Florida, and became a manifestation of the willingness to create a developed state. However, when examined in juxtaposition with the geology of South Florida, the methods employed by the builders of the Trail also reveals either complete disregard or ignorance in understanding the ecological intricacies of the Everglades. Blasting, dredging, and blazing their way through an environment that required a flow of water without impediment, the builders of the Trail pushed the Everglades down a path of environmental damage with ramifications reaching far beyond economic development or population growth. In subsequent years, the Trail

[87] Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

would initiate new interactions, present broader questions, and reveal the relationship between the natural environment and systems of transportation to the people of South Florida. With the Trail now in place, South Florida and its people would enter into a period punctuated by its own "paradox of progress."

# CHAPTER TWO: THE IMPACT OF THE TAMIAMI TRAIL ON THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF SOUTH FLORIDA

When the paving of the Tamiami Trail finally concluded in April of 1928, those responsible believed that their efforts would soon initiate an age full of progress and innovation. With the Trail now in place, the perception of South Florida would no longer carry with it the reputation of being a desolate environment cutoff and isolated from the rest of the "civilized" world. The once inhospitable wasteland would now become a flourishing utopia, attracting not only new businesses and workers but also becoming America's new center of agricultural production.[88] For men such as Barron Collier, James F. Jaudon, and the "Trail Blazers of 1923," the Trail represented even more. It became a symbol of Florida's commitment to transform itself from an unsophisticated, primitive state, to one of modernity and development. With the South Florida landscape now altered, the economic and social prospects of the region would begin to justify an investment that extended over the first thirty years of the twentieth century.

However, as evident throughout the environmental and transportation history of the United States, the effects of a road construction project do not always adhere to the original intentions or expectations of those responsible. While the ingenuity and industry displayed by Americans not only transforms and affects the land, water, and air of a particular environment, it can also bring about unintended consequences upon the people, society, and culture of that same environment. According to historian Tom Lewis, the introduction, construction, and evolution of the roadway system in the United States became a "stage," on which all Americans "played out a great drama of contradictions."[89] For Lewis the process of molding natural environments into a

[88] De Lyste, "Building Collier County Florida," 2.
[89] Lewis, *Divided Highways*, ix.

"second nature" not only altered the habitats of unique flora and fauna, but also dispossessed people from their homes, and in some cases even restricted the movement the process once promised in an effort to fulfill ideals of economic efficiency and social progress. The people most affected by the decisions of planners and developers were often "minorities who did not possess the political power to challenge them."[90] In the case of the Tamiami Trail, the Seminoles living within South Florida embodied this assessment.

Due to the common perception that South Florida was a barren and empty wasteland at the time of its construction, proponents of the Trail believed that the road would ultimately attract and amend, rather than discourage and diminish any opportunity available to the region's people. Advocates believed that if more individuals and families traveled throughout the interior of state, more businesses and more communities would certainly follow. Yet, even with these optimistic sentiments in place, there was little consideration given to the possible impact of the Trail regarding those Seminoles already living throughout South Florida. Early journal articles and documents detailing the construction and completion of the Trail adopted a tone similar to that of a modern-day travel brochure, and offered little analysis of future ramifications.[91]

These documents either detailed the benefits and appeal of driving the Trail, or promoted the achievements of those bringing prosperity and progress to South Florida. References to the Seminole people were limited to descriptions of the Seminole guides, Abraham Lincoln and Little Billie who assisted the "Trailblazers" during their expedition of 1923, or to their potential as attractions. There was little or no discussion regarding the possible negative economic, social,

[90] *Ibid*, x.

[91] For further reading regarding both the importance of the Trail to the people of South Florida at the time of construction, as well as the either disregard or trivialization of Seminole culture see journal, *Southern Highways*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Aug., 1928).

and cultural consequences of the Trail to the Seminole people. If change was to come to the lives of the Seminoles, the politicians, developers, and businessmen in power believed this transformation would be positive to Florida, and to the Seminole people.

## Assimilation Following Conflict

To understand the early impact of the Trail on both the culture of the Seminole people, and role it played in their subsequent interactions with the businesses and travelers of South Florida, it is necessary to trace the history of interaction between Seminoles and whites that dates to the three Seminole Wars of the mid-19th century. Following the Third Seminole War in 1858, the lives of the Seminole people within South Florida changed significantly. Due to the difficulty in traversing the environment, the guerilla fighting style of the Seminoles, and the low number of Seminoles remaining, American forces began to view a formal surrender as an unfeasible task. Those responsible for removing and transporting the Seminoles to Oklahoma or any other Indian territory in the west, estimated there was only about one hundred Seminoles left throughout South Florida. If the remaining Seminoles were not going to attack American interests unless provoked, the need to track those able to fight seemed both inconsequential and a waste of military resources. It was at this point that American military and political leaders decided to cease military operations and let the Seminoles live in what was perceived as a horrid, uninhabitable environment.[92]

For the Seminoles, this unfounded speculation served as an important intermission from the conflict and disorder that characterized most of the nineteenth century up to 1858. Although

[92] James W. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993), 143.

the number of the families was drastically smaller than those of the past, the remaining Florida Seminoles were now able to move within the confines of an environment that at the time seemed too harsh for settlement by whites. Whether raising cattle in the present-day Big Cypress Preserve, hunting deer in the Big and Little Hunting Grounds south of the Miami River, or handling cases of murder, robbery or general misconduct at the annual ceremony known as the Green Corn Dance, the Seminoles were able regain some stability and hold on to, or recapture, values intrinsic to their culture.[93] In this matriarchal society women maintained droves of hogs and harvested corn, while the men hunted aquatic animals such as alligators and manatees. These responsibilities not only became important as a means for daily survival, but also as a measure of maintaining the traditions and customs used by the Seminoles prior to white settlement of Florida.

While the end of military operations presented the Seminoles with an opportunity to regain their footing, it also laid the foundation for future relationships based on trade and commerce with American settlers moving into the region. Migration throughout the United States continued with great intensity under the inspiration of achieving economic prosperity. For those not willing to migrate west from the urban centers of the East, Florida seemed to be a place where one could realize this economic dream while not expending the amount of time and resources needed to move west. Nevertheless, because of the length, brutality, and methods used to remove the Seminoles from their land during the three Seminole Wars, the relationships and interactions were justifiably tentative and gradual in their formation. Immediately following the end of hostilities, the remaining bands of Seminoles viewed any potential encounter with whites in the region through a prism of skepticism. Encounters with whites could result in

[93] *Ibid*, 149; West, *The Enduring Seminoles*, 4.

imprisonment, forced deportation to Indian territories in the West, or death. Seminoles were so wary of Indian/white interaction that the tribe punished or ostracized those guilty of mixing with whites. Seminole women were not even allowed to look at whites, and Seminole children were told to turn their backs and avoid any white person.[94] However, the Euro-American impetus for achieving the "Florida Dream" pushed the economic, social, and cultural interactions between the Seminole people and whites to inevitability with the increase in population and infrastructure.

*The Impact of Cattle and Exploration Begins*

The increase in Euro-American migration, and subsequent economic contact encouraged Seminoles to trust some whites and form enduring relationships. Cattlemen and ranchers became the Seminoles' biggest ally within the ever-changing Florida cultural and environmental landscape. Introduced by the Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century, cattle had become essential not only to Euro-American economics and culture, but also to the livelihood of Seminoles living in South Florida. Before cattlemen were transporting livestock throughout the treacherous landscape of the western United States, Florida rancheros, "Crackers," and Indian tribesmen developed rangelands and fought for control over of one of the largest industries in Florida during the nineteenth century.[95] Ranching cattle was tough and fraught with environmental dangers such as wolves, bears, panthers, and mosquitoes. There were no fences out on the open Florida frontier, so cattle sometimes mixed with the herds of other ranchers. To confuse ownership even further, cattle rustlers often benefitted from this open range to alter, or

[94] Covington, 146.
[95] The term "Cracker" is derived from the sound of a large whip. Often these cowmen will use a large 12-foot whip to herd cattle from place to place.

reproduce the branding of cattle in order to claim livestock that did not belong to them. These actions ironically brought some whites and Seminoles closer together. [96]

The ability of the Seminoles to know where, when and how to drive cattle, became necessary for whites during the Civil War. With most of their supply lines, railroads, and rudimentary roads cut off from conflict, the Confederacy needed the grazing lands of Florida to feed its army and people. [97] Prior to the war, the state of Texas was the primary supplier of beef to the southern region of the United States. As the strategy of the Union to blockade the south began to take shape, Texas was unable to provide the forces of the Confederacy with food rations necessary to fight a war. Due to the need for the grazing of cattle to be both widespread and uninterrupted, Florida and the vast lands in Seminole possession became vital for the war efforts of the Confederacy. The cooperation of the Seminole people became so valued, that Florida's Governor John Milton agreed to provide them with tools for farming, ammunition for protection, and even a designated agent to interpret and serve with the Seminoles' best interest in mind. Unfortunately the rewards promised to the Seminoles for their efforts in the "Cow Calvary" never materialized due to the economic strain felt during Reconstruction. [98] However, these interactions during the Civil War did bring the once isolated Seminole people closer to whites in the region, and also served as the catalyst for the important cattle programs established in the early half of the twentieth century.

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[96] Joe A. Ackerman, "America's First Cowman", in *Florida's Cowboys: Keepers of the Last Frontier*, ed. Carlton Ward, Jr. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2009), 9-10.

[97] For more information on the importance of Florida in supplying the war efforts, economy, and people of the Confederacy during the Civil War see, Robert A. Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse: Florida in the Confederate Economy* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1995); Joe A. Akerman, *Florida Cowmen; A History of Florida Cattle Raising* (Kissimmee, FL: Florida's Cattlemen Association, 1976); and for reference within historical fiction see, Patrick D. Smith, *A Land Remembered* (Englewood, FL: Pineapple Press, 1984).

[98] Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, "Indian Cowboys: Descendents of the Great 'Cowkeeper'", in Ward, Jr., 32.

Even with the intangible gains made through their exposure and inclusion in the cattle business, the economic and social advancement of the Seminoles was unstable. The Seminoles once hunted otters, deer, raccoons, and alligators for a lucrative international hide market, and searched rookeries for exotic birds in order to satisfy a burgeoning millinery trade.[99] As the Seminoles came into greater contact with whites, they encountered other aspects of Euro-American culture. Rather than use a bow to hunt, produce pottery, or use deerskins, the Seminoles depended on modern weapons such as the .44 breech-loading rifle, iron pots and pans, as well as flannel and other textiles.[100] While these introductions might have eased Seminole life, developers such as Hamilton Disston devastated a fragile environment that had sustained the Seminoles for generations. In 1956 an elderly Seminole named Pete Tiger, explained the effect of the drainage program enacted by developers: "In the old times we could paddle our canoes for many days and hunt the deer and the alligator. Now the white man has drained the Glades with his canals to make fields for his tomatoes and sugarcane. Our canoes cannot run on the sand and it is forbidden to cross the white's man fences. And the deer and the alligator each day go farther away."[101]

A series of water manipulation projects designed to transform the environment, coupled with an encroachment of migrating settlers from the northern United States, again soured relations between the Seminoles and whites living in South Florida. The traditions and customs that once defined the everyday life of the Seminoles came under siege from groups that aimed to transform the environment for economic prosperity. For the developers and politicians with a financial stake in the future development of Florida, the mere presence of the Seminoles in the

[99] West, *The Enduring Seminoles*, 4.
[100] Covington, 154.
[101] Ben Lucien Burman, "The Glamour of the Everglades," *Reader's Digest* 72, 1956, 149, Quoted in West, *The Enduring Seminoles*, 5.

Everglades was viewed as being detrimental to both the agricultural promise and the ability to attract future residents or travelers to the region. Instead of using the forceful measures of the past that were characterized by bitter and costly warfare, investors and developers decided to use an approach that centered on educating and developing the agricultural prowess of the Seminoles living throughout South Florida.[102]

## A Change of Sentiment

As developers and builders dredged land around the Kissimmee River, there were those within the federal government who still considered moving the Seminoles to Oklahoma at the turn of the twentieth century. In an effort to learn more about the customs of Seminole society and what a possible move would mean for relations between the two groups, the Bureau of Indian Affairs sent Indian Agent Clay MacCauley to gather information and determine exactly how many Seminoles were in fact living within the South Florida wilderness. After observing and living with the Seminoles for three years, MacCauley found that there were thirty-seven extended families living in five distinct areas.[103] However, it was MacCauley's report detailing the negative sentiments surrounding a possible move to Oklahoma that produced the greatest impact on Seminole policy. As a result of MacCauley's report detailing the Seminoles' harsh reception regarding living in lands out west, the federal government terminated any plans remaining for a potential move, while also appropriating money for homestead tracts in Florida.

Yet despite the change in policy, the federal government failed to take the next step and question whether these homestead tracts were attractive to the Seminoles in the first place. Even

[102] Covington, 156.
[103] Clay MacCauley, *The Seminole Indians of Florida* (Bureau of American Ethnology Fifth Annual Report 1883-1884, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1887), 523-526.

as the appropriations continued, agent after agent returned from the South Florida with the same answer. The Seminoles were very skeptical and found no reason to assimilate. These sentiments were compounded by an increase in white settlements, or agents reneging on their promises of providing suitable land. Even if agents were able to find acres of available tracts, these lands were often undesirable. This level of distrust severely strained interactions between whites and Seminoles in South Florida.

*Awareness and Advocacy*

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Seminoles of South Florida were beginning to feel the pressure from the onslaught of American settlers establishing themselves in coastal towns throughout the region with new or developing infrastructures. With increased competition to hunt, gather, and farm, the economic and cultural practices of traditional Seminole life were becoming increasingly difficult to foster or retain. To make matters even worse, both the combined efforts of private and government agencies to aid the Seminole people often ended in failure. Whether due to the failed promises of the federal government, the refusal of the Seminole people to learn English, the outright rejection of agricultural activities in designated areas, or the prevalence of alcohol in Seminole society, the lives of the Seminole people were undoubtedly becoming more difficult as settlers and businesses moved into South Florida.

Despite these setbacks, there were some individuals within the state who made it their life's work to see the Seminoles treated with respect and placed on a reservation to live in peace and continue the traditions that were synonymous with Seminole life. For Minnie Moore-Willson, one of the founders of Friends of the Seminole Indians (FSI) and wife of a Kissimmee real estate man named James Willson Jr., the land speculators and businesses moving into

Florida did not warrant the right to profit off every parcel of property. Born on August 14, 1858 in West Newton, Pennsylvania, Moore-Willson grew to love Florida and took a vested interest in the Florida Seminoles after visiting the state for her vacations during the winter months of the 1880's. After moving to Kissimmee permanently, both she and her husband became accomplished writers for various wildlife magazines, members of the Audubon Society, and advocates for establishing bird sanctuaries throughout the state.[104] However, where Moore-Willson had her greatest impact on both Florida society and Indian policy was through her tireless effort to secure a state reservation for the Seminoles of South Florida.

In 1896, Moore-Willson combined her passion for writing, and concerns over the plight of the Seminoles to provide a detailed account of their life. The Willsons often invited influential Seminoles to Kissimmee to discuss the conditions of tribal life, and to receive monetary aid. After years of such interactions the Seminole leaders decided to extend an invitation to the Willsons to observe their families in the Everglades, their homes, and general societal environment for the first time. Following their time in South Florida, Moore-Willson compiled their daily observations of Seminole life into a book, *The Seminoles of Florida*, in the expectation of attracting "good people" to the cause of the Seminole people, as well as to shed light on their "moral and material" well-being.[105]

At the time of publication, Moore-Willson believed that most Americans had either completely forgotten about the American Indian, or were leisurely taking their time to "finish the

[104] Ruthanne Vogel, "Everglades Biographies: Minnie Moore-Willson," in the Reclaiming the Everglades: South Florida's Natural History 1884-1934, http://www2.fiu.edu/~glades/reclaim/bios/willsonmm.htm (accessed April 1, 2011).
[105] R. Braden Moore, preface to *The Seminoles of Florida*, by Minnie Moore-Willson (Philadelphia: American Printing House, 1896).

extermination."[106] Because the Seminoles were technically an unconquered people with no legal existence or allegiance to the United States, Moore-Willson believed the policies of the federal government indicated a stance centered on the premise that there were theoretically no Indians living in the state of Florida. This precarious position opened the way for land speculators and private businesses to push out the Seminoles and transform Florida into a wealthier and more progressive state. Moore-Willson viewed the potential battle with development and land speculation, as another example in a long list of interactions in which American Indians were victimized despite demonstrating an "earnest desire to make just terms" throughout American history.[107] Because of their treatment, Moore-Willson described the Seminoles as embittered people who limited their contact with outsiders and were unwilling to take any form of assistance or payment if it meant moving from their lands in order appease incoming private interests.

To safeguard and guarantee a positive future for the Seminole people, Moore-Willson believed that it was the duty of the United States government and people of Christian faith to provide protection from the advancement of Euro-American civilization.[108] For Moore-Willson, the success of this endeavor would take some time and patience. However, treating the Seminole people as American citizens, educating their youth, exhibiting honesty in dealing with their problems, and setting a positive "Christian and American" example, were goals she believed whites should adopt. She assured her readers that if they carried out their part, the Seminoles

[106] Moore-Willson, *The Seminoles of Florida*, 55.
[107] *Ibid*, 58.
[108] *Ibid*, 76.

would become "worthy representatives," and would also "help white man fight" should Spain or any other nation decide engage in a conflict with the United States.[109]

*Efforts to "Provide" a Reservation*

Long before the federal government fulfilled Moore-Willson's dream of providing the Seminoles with their own designated land, the missionaries of the Episcopal and Baptist denominations began to establish missions throughout South Florida. However, because of the distance between the Seminole camps deep in the Everglades, very few Seminoles visited these missions. In order to combat this problem and attract a greater number of Seminoles, a mission was created in 1896 at the site of a fairly popular store in the area known as Big Cypress. A second mission two years later and three miles away was named Everglades Cross. While the Seminoles did not request or clamor for these missions, each mission came with a housing unit for the missionaries, a general store to foster trade, a hospital, and cleared land for farming corn, potatoes, bananas, and citrus. Helping the Seminoles to trade and farm enabled and allowed for those responsible for the missions, to perform religious ceremonies such as baptisms in order to convert the Seminoles to Christianity.[110]

Simultaneous with the attempts of the missionaries to house and convert the Florida Seminoles, the federal government yielded to the pressure placed on their agencies by advocates for the advancement and assimilation of the Seminole people. Beginning in 1894, the search to find a large tract of land suitable for a Seminole reservation became the primary directive of the

[109] *Ibid*, 77-78, at the time of Bowlegs' quote, the political culture and foreign policy of the United States was centered on the growing tension between the United States and Spain. The quotes in the book can certainly be seen as a deliberate attempt of Willson to adhere to the growing concerns of war with Spain at the time of publication.
[110] Covington, 166.

agents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.[111] However, because of the amount of land already under private and corporate ownership, acquiring a block of land conducive to the recommendations of Moore-Willson and others proved to be just as difficult. The pressure on Seminole camps near established settlements or tracts of land desired by whites constrained both the hunting and farming of the Seminole people. In an executive order dated June 28, 1911, President William H. Taft set aside lands in the present-day counties of Collier, Martin and Broward that would form the core of Indian reservations in South Florida. Despite the fact that this land was beneficial for the Seminoles because of its proximity to Seminole camps already established, proponents of a Seminole reservation believed that the federal government should still acquire more land.[112] However, Seminole antagonists including Governor Park Trammell, claimed that it was unfair for a group of 400 Seminoles to receive that much land.[113] These setbacks fueled the fire of organizations such as Moore-Willson's FSI, and the newly allied Indian Rights Association (IRA) in an effort to create reservations instead of destroying them.[114]

With this new ally lobbying in Washington and Tallahassee, Moore-Willson increased her criticism through various journal articles and publications. These writings attracted adversaries within the political and social circles of Florida including the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs (FFWC). However, her alliance with then Governor-elect Sidney J. Catts overwhelmed the criticism leveled against her goals of obtaining a reservation. Because of Catts' desire to help those who helped in his election, Catts decided to take Moore-Willson's

[111] West, 7.
[112] Covington, 175.
[113] *Ibid*, 176; Minnie Moore-Willson, "Why Have The Seminoles Been Continually Denied Lands In The Everglades?," *The Red Man* 8, no. 8 (April, 1916): 272.
[114] Matthew K. Sniffen, "Florida's Obligation to the Seminole Indians: A Plea for Justice," (*Indian Rights Association,* 2d series, Feb,1917, no.111), 4.

recommendations and push through a law to transfer 99,200 acres of land in Monroe County for the perpetual use and benefit of the Seminole people.[115]

## "Florida Seminoles" and White Invasion

With the realization of Moore-Willson's dream, the Seminoles of Florida were now able and ready to move onto a sizable tract of land to hunt, farm, and trade under the protection of the state and federal government. However, in order for the reservation to fall in line with the religious and economic vision set forth by the FSI and the state government of Florida, Seminole families still needed to consent to this offering and accept the land on the reservation as their own. Following the establishment of the Seminole reservation in Monroe County, many of the Seminole people did not want to move to a tract of land that in their minds restricted their hunting and trading opportunities. Whether in response to contemporary religious pressure from missionaries, or as a result of past violent interactions, the Seminoles were still unwilling to move onto reservations throughout South Florida. After decades of violence and disillusion, the Seminoles were still inclined to practice their traditional form of religion while freely migrating throughout the region during the seasons to hunt, trade, and plant.

To further compound the difficulty in attracting the remaining Seminoles to the reservations, language varied by geography and family. Adapted from the Spanish word *cimarron* which means "wild" or "runaway," the term Seminole was commonly given to all Indians living throughout the Florida peninsula during their colonization of the peninsula. However, during the establishment of reservations in the twentieth century, the anthropological

[115] Covington, 184-185.

community began to recognize two different languages spoken among the Seminoles living in South Florida. One group would call themselves Miccosukee, a reference to the once large Seminole community located in their traditional lands in the northwest portion of the Florida peninsula. This group constituted about two-thirds of the population of Seminoles after the three conflicts with the United States. Because of their escape into the peninsula following the Red Stick War of 1813-1814, the Muscogee (or Muskogee) comprised the remaining third of the Florida Seminoles. The Muscogee Seminoles were actually closer in both language and traditions to the Creeks who lived throughout northern Georgia and southern Florida prior to their forced relocation during the eighteenth century. In a sense the differences in language, traditions, and religion, remained secondary to the general region.[116] Although the Seminole Tribe of Florida today recognizes that there are two languages spoken among their constituents, the decision to group all of the Indians within the peninsula without recognizing the cultural variation between the two groups, demonstrates the indifference and disrespect shown historically by whites in South Florida.

The identity of the Florida Seminoles became even more important during the reclamation of the Everglades and establishment of Indian reservations. As discussed earlier, many of the Seminole people were against moving onto reservations during the early twentieth century. In fact, the Miccosukee themselves had or wanted no official contact with the federal or state government.[117] Despite the decision to live in relative isolation, the effects of drainage would bring them closer to a life on the reservation. Without the abundance of alligators, plume

[116] West, 2.
[117] *Ibid*, 3.

birds, otters, and deer, it was becoming increasingly difficult to provide food for their families, or even enter the environmental destructive hide market.[118]

Due to an increase in development and private water reclamation projects at the turn of the twentieth century, Seminole life became more demanding with the decrease in water and wildlife and collapse of the Florida land boom in 1926. Florida became the first state in the nation to feel the effects of a post-World War I recession. The value of land throughout the state dropped dramatically, people lost large and small fortunes, and unemployment rose significantly among the whites living in Florida. However, because of the diverse yet dwindling wildlife of South Florida, whites were able to use the land and obtain some relief in the form of the hide trade. This came at a cost for the Seminoles, who began to find it even more difficult to live off the land with whites competing for hunting areas in order to capture alligator, raccoons, and otters. Whites were able to use the electric battery light, reflectors, and motor boats to obtain an advantage, take control of the pelt trade, and compete for food in the form of cabbage palm hearts, coontie (an edible starch), and bullfrogs.[119]

However, of all the pressures exerted on the Seminole people, the construction and opening of the Tamiami Trail in April of 1928 produced the greatest change and impact on Seminole life. With a road in place that both bisected the Everglades and connected each coast to the other, white hunters, traders, and farmers now acquired lands deep within the Everglades. The Trail impeded travel by directly cutting the canoe trails used by the Seminoles. From an environmental standpoint, this barrier against the flow of water to replenish the environment of

[118] For further reading regarding the depletion of plume birds in particular, see, Stuart B. McIver, *Death In The Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2003).
[119] Covington, 201.

the Everglades produced immediate and sustained damage. Water was the lifeblood of the Seminole people and the South Florida environment. Without the presence of water for travel, and the sustainability of the flora and fauna on which the Seminoles relied for food and a source of income, the traditions and culture of their ancestors could not be sustained.

The construction of the Tamiami Trail from a psychological and cultural standpoint served as a tipping point for the Seminole community. With their fortress of isolation no longer sustainable, and the environmental health of their surroundings diminishing, the Seminoles were forced to confront a future characterized by technology, development, and "progress." By 1931, a mere three years after the completion of the Trail, the economic conditions of the Seminole people mirrored the dire conditions of the surrounding environment. Sent by the federal government in 1930 to survey the conditions, Indian Agent Roy Nash returned with a detailed account of Seminole life, albeit through a Euro-American perspective. In the opinion of Nash, Seminole life was difficult not only for the adults, but for the "advancement" of future generations. Scientists and those who concentrated their studies on the environmental health of the Everglades recognized that "drainage," "development" and "farming" throughout South Florida were transforming normally saturated landscape into a smoky and ashy desert.[120] Nash dismissed the claims of the scientists by noting that the Seminoles were the only people in Florida who could wrest a living from it.[121] For Nash, the major concern moving forward was with the lack of education prevalent among Seminole adults and teenagers. Of the 600 Seminoles living in South Florida, Nash claimed that only 4 individuals were able to speak

[120] Dr. John K. Small, "The Everglades," *The Scientific Monthly* 28, no. 1 (January 1929): 86-87, quoted in U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. *A Survey of the Seminole Indians of Florida*, by Roy Nash, 71st Cong., 3d sess., 1931, S. Doc. 314, 14.
[121] Bureau of Indian Affairs. *A Survey of the Seminole Indians of Florida*, by Roy Nash, 71st Cong., 3d sess., 1931, S. Doc. 314, 19.

"acceptable" English, an assertion clearly meant to conjure up thoughts, whether true or false, of despair, isolation, and needed assistance. Without the ability to converse in English and the ownership of the land on which they resided, the Seminoles would be unable to sustain themselves in the future. While these sentiments are were based on racist, uninformed, and dogmatic thought, Nash submitted the following recommendations to the commissioner of Indian Affairs, Charles J. Rhoads: (1) Land for reservations should be retained and promoted in order to guarantee property ownership, help Seminole men find markets, and encourage cattle development; (2) Education and public health services should be increased and emphasized at these reservations; and (3) the Seminole people should be protected against bootleggers and those who sell alcohol.[122]

Eventually, the outside pressures exerted by white businesses and settlers became too much to bear, and the Seminoles would soon realize that they needed land, whether reserved or not for their own use in order to provide hunting and grazing lands, and enough fertile soil to produce a sufficient yield. The decision to live on reservations or not became the primary line of division between the Miccosukee and Muscogee Seminoles, and the introduction of the Trail only served to expedite this decision. For both the Muscogee willing to live on reservations, and the Miccosukee who were not, the Trail both fostered Seminole culture and developed new economic opportunities, while destroying the very environment that sustained traditional Seminole society and culture for centuries.

[122] *Ibid*, 83-86.

*Providing Opportunity?*

As the number of whites moving onto their lands increased, and the conditions of their surrounding environment deteriorated, the question facing the Seminoles became whether to move onto government funded and operated reservations, or to remain near their traditional lands to carve out new economic opportunities. The Trail had altered the flow of water and destroying the environment that sustained flora and fauna integral to Seminole life. However, the Trail also did what nothing else could have done for the economy of those who decided to live outside of the government-sponsored reservations. Even as construction began on the Trail, some Seminoles built camps along the roadside in order to attract potential travelers passing en route to or from Miami.[123] Although largely unsuccessful from an economic standpoint, the actions of these Seminoles would serve as a precursor to an emerging tourist market, and as an opportunity to mold their identity in the minds of visitors as a people unconquered. Eventually the economic independence produced by these ventures, would prove to be an example for all Seminoles, and produce one of the great paradoxes within this particular "paradox of progress."

Immediately after the Trail opened, a steady stream of automobile traffic traveled from one side of Florida to the other. In addition to the goal of attracting developers and agricultural businesses to build new commerce, the planners and proponents of the Trail also believed that the new road would facilitate the travel of tourists to experience the mysterious and visually stimulating environment of South Florida. Born out of the Good Roads movement and the conscious effort to leave growing urban environments of the United States, tourists began to visit the ecological and environmental wonders of North America. With the Trail now in place,

[123] West, 84.

tourists from around the nation flocked to the Everglades and consequently into the environs of the Seminole people.

In order to relieve themselves of the mounting economic and cultural pressures, some Seminoles moved out of the Everglades and onto white-owned Seminole camps designed to accommodate the tourism boom.[124] In order to capitalize from the disposable income of inquisitive white tourists, Miccosukee Indians such as William McKinley Osceola, Josie Billie, Corey Osceola, and Robert Billie operated stores and camps designed to replicate the authenticity of a Seminole village deep within the South Florida environment. During the winter months, or traveling season for whites from northern states, the camps served simultaneously as a home and place of business. Each village beside the Trail followed a similar pattern for its construction, and once inside the camp, a tourist could observe Seminole culture and cuisine. The camps differed in their specialized crafts, goods, clothing for sale, as well as the attractions and atmosphere. One camp might have a large camp and store, whereas another specialized in showcasing a vast collection of Florida's flora and fauna.[125]

In concert with their reputations as excellent hunters and gatherers, the Trail Seminoles developed another economic opportunity. With the Trail opening up environments once thought to be mysterious and dangerous, hunters flocked to South Florida in order to bag exotic, albeit diminishing, wildlife. Because of their hunting abilities and vast understanding of the surrounding landscape, the Seminoles established hunting camps where touring whites hired guides to lead a hunt, or to provide the game themselves. These hunting camps along the Trail became viable business opportunities due to expanding interest from tourists, and the established

[124] *Ibid*.,
[125] *Ibid*, 87.

knowledge and importance of hunting exhibited throughout the history of Seminole life in South Florida.

As with most business ventures that employ the wildlife and environment as its primary method of earning a profit, negative repercussions soon developed. With the growing popularity of South Florida hunting, and the environmental effects of projects ranging from the Trail to drainage canals, the wildlife available for both subsidence and business diminished to frighteningly small numbers. In fact, the lack of wildlife forced some Miccosukee Indians onto reservations and the aid provided by the federal government.[126] Closed since 1926, the Big Cypress Reservation reopened in southwest Florida during the early 1930s to once again become a place of refuge for those affected by the demise of the environment. It was during this time on the reservation that the schism between reservation residents and the antigovernment Miccosukee widened.

As one of the many directors of the Seminole Indian Association of Florida, and the liaison between the federal government and the Miccosukee Indians, W. Stanley Hanson believed in calling national attention to the cause of these "neglected Indians."[127] Placed in charge of Big Cypress in 1937, Hanson preformed his task with the belief that he was more familiar and knowledgeable to the needs of the Miccosukee Indians than any previous Indian agent. It was during his tenure as caretaker of the reservation, that the Miccosukee people gained the economic confidence to maintain their polity and tap into larger and more valuable economic ventures. Like other Indian agents, Hanson's main concern centered on the long term economic

[126] *Ibid*, 89.
[127] W. Stanley Hanson to Minnie Moore-Willson, July 14, 1934, Minnie Moore-Willson Papers, in the Reclaiming the Everglades: South Florida's Natural History, 1884-1934, http://digitool.fclu.edu/view/action/nmets.do?DOCCHOICE=145188.xml&dvs=1303073213945~318&locale=en_US&search_terms=Hanson,%20W.%20Stanley.&view_profile=staff&adjacency=N&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/nmets.do?&DELIVERY_RULE_ID=2&usePid1=true&usePid2=true(accessed April 16, 2011).

and cultural condition of the Miccosukee Indians, and the need for a sound and stable reservation to provide a more sustainable economic opportunity rather than the seasonal tourism and crop production.[128]

Through the assistance of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, Hanson realized his goal of providing new economic opportunities to those living on the reservation. In order to bring the country out a deep economic depression, Roosevelt believed that the rebuilding and improvement of America's infrastructure would revitalize the nation and provide jobs to Americans searching for work and economic stability. However, Roosevelt differed from earlier presidents in his commitment to provide for the economic and social rehabilitation of Native Americans as well. In order to assure that the benefits of the New Deal would extend to all American Indians, the Roosevelt administration conducted a meticulous refurbishing of the federal Indian policy and provided new leadership for the Office of Indian Affairs. Among the changes, Roosevelt appointed John Collier as the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933. With Hanson, the two formed a partnership that secured the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act and paved the way through their reservation policies for Seminole economic and political independence.[129]

During Hanson's tenure as caretaker, the Miccosukee often used Big Cypress as a place to gather and regroup when the tourist and hunting villages were out of season. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a work relief program designed to hire unemployed men in order to advance conservation and development of natural resources, became instrumental in rebuilding state parks, revising outdated forest fire methods, and building a network of roads and bridges.

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[128]West, 90.

[129] Harry A. Kersey, Jr., *The Florida Seminoles and the New Deal: 1933-1942* (Boca Raton, FL.: Florida Atlantic University Press, 1989), 48.

However, the advent of the Indian Division of the CCC (CCC-ID) marked the clear delineation between two groups of Seminoles: those who were willing to resettle on federal lands and engage in a variety of government programs, and those who would not resettle on government land under any circumstance or tolerate government intrusion into their affairs.[130] Between June of 1933 and June of 1942, there were ninety-two Indians employed by the CCC-ID. For thirty dollars a month, plus food, lodging, and medical attention, the Seminoles on Big Cypress improved the roads, bridges, and buildings located throughout the reservation.[131]

*Industries of the Trail*

Over the course of the twentieth century, life on the reservation reshaped Seminole society, and facilitated the emergence of a new economic and political faction. Whether due to the lack of natural resources, or inability to find constant economic stimulus, the Seminoles did leave their villages to live and remain on the reservation.[132] However, there were others who still preferred to live in their camps and villages either alongside the Trail, or deep within the Everglades in order to keep their traditions and culture alive. Once again, many of these Seminoles were Miccosukee and their reluctance to move into reservations such as Big Cypress would earn them the label as being Trail Indians. Both during and following the New Deal, the Trail would come to serve either as a place to reaffirm Seminole identity or as a place of refuge for those Seminoles who did not agree with a government-initiated policy once on the reservation. In fact, once involvement in World War II started to absorb federal resources and draft registration began to force itself upon those on the reservation, many Miccosukee Indians

[130] *Ibid*, 172.
[131] *Ibid*, 53.
[132] James W. Covington, "Trail Indians of Florida," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 58, no.1 (Jul., 1979): 40-41.

fled Big Cypress to either go into wild or back to camps along the Tamiami Trail for the fear of signing their names or making their mark on government forms.[133] It was during the pivotal period following the New Deal on the Trail that the Seminole people had to choose between problematic dichotomies that would come to frame the American Indian experience throughout the twentieth century; modernity and economic development, or tradition and cultural survival.

Due to the opportunities presented by tourism in South Florida, the prospects of living along the Trail in order to sell one's culture became both a feasible and viable option. A combination of a burgeoning economy, the increased availability of vacation time for middle and lower class whites, the advent of the National Highway System, and an increase in automobile ownership, allowed those on the Trail selling products to come into contract with a greater number of customers. As mentioned before, since the Trail's introduction in 1928, cultural tourism and commercial craft production have become important forms of economic development for Seminoles living beside the Trail. According to ethno-historian Patty West, these tourist villages offered Seminoles a space where one could craft baskets, clothing, or jewelry as an extension of sustaining one's traditional way of life.[134] Constructing crafts indigenous to Seminole culture, and selling them within villages along the Tamiami Trail, quickly became a way of forming and utilizing the value of culture itself. For many women living adjacent to the Trail, the sale of beadwork, clothing, and baskets became more than just a cultural expression. Although many government officials and scholars viewed craft production as a supplementary income for Seminole families, the income produced by craft production was

[133] West, 90.
[134] *Ibid*, 9.

especially important for single women who could not rely on the income of a husband to feed their family. [135]

More prosperous industries have taken the place of craft production, but the Seminoles of today still remember the significance of craft production with fondness. Ironically, the dolls, beadwork, and baskets created for an economy that tapped into the prospects of tourism along the Trail, have now become important symbols of Seminole tradition, identity, and community. In fact, the importance of these crafts cannot be underestimated, with Seminole artists using tribal festivals to display their clothes, or as gifts to visiting dignitaries from other countries or tribes as a depiction of Seminole polity.[136] Through these actions, the crafts and clothing once made along the Trail are now representations of diplomacy, measures of honor and status, and evidence of tribal sovereignty.

Whereas the construction of crafts and clothing became a cultural representation for Seminole women, the act of wrestling alligators became an exercise of the same ilk for Seminole men living alongside the Trail. Prior to the completion of the Trail, white- and Seminole-owned tourist attractions around Miami featured Seminole men who would climb into a pool with at least one alligator, and either catch or "wrestle" it out of the water. While some critics condemned alligator wrestling as fake or exploitative, wrestlers within the Seminole community gained notoriety and stature as practitioners of a tradition. Due to the number of Seminole men willing to wrestle, many developed their own routine or style as a measure of distinguishing one from another. During shows some wrestlers used the occasion to educate tourists by describing the symbiotic relationship between the alligator and Seminoles in the swamp, or detailing the

[135] Jessica R. Cattelino, "Casino Roots: The Cultural Production of Twentieth-Century Seminole Economic Development," in *Native Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Brian Hosmer and Colleen O'Neill (Boulder, CO.: University Press of Colorado, 2004), 76.
[136] *Ibid*, 77.

anatomy and behavior, all while attempting to thrill the crowds with maneuvers that included placing either their head or hand into the alligator's mouth and removing them before the jaws of the alligator could come crashing down. Today, the act of alligator wrestling carries the same connotation of reverence and esteem as craft production. For many Seminoles, alligator wrestling serves as a reminder of their connection with the Everglades and as expression of Seminole masculinity and valor. Old wrestlers will often display physical scars and missing fingers much in the same fashion that a veteran of a war might display his or her wounds. In fact, often the leaders of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida will jump into an alligator pit as a gesture of bravery, solidarity, and control.[137]

However as with craft production, the opportunities presented through new economic practices have made the prospects of becoming an alligator wrestler seem less attractive to young Seminoles as once previously. There are individuals within each tribal organization who still wish to preserve interest in the act through recreational programs designed to inform young Seminoles on the cultural merits of alligator wrestling. Yet, with new industries such as gambling or tobacco, young Seminoles of today often choose to pursue the economic opportunities offered by these safer and more profitable careers. In the cases of craft production and alligator wrestling, both economic pursuits eventually became expressions of Seminole heritage, cultural celebration, and cultural production. Only later to have industries presented through tourism and travel, provide greater economic opportunity to the Seminole people. It is in this dilemma of obtaining economic prosperity at the risk of diminishing Seminole identity that the impact of the Tamiami Trail once again rears itself in the history of the Florida Seminoles.

[137] *Ibid*, 80.

## A Possible Paradox

Following the federal recognition of the Seminole Tribe of Florida in 1957, the formal recognition of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida in 1962, and the passage of the Indian Self-Determination Act of 1975, the Seminoles of South Florida could determine and implement Indian policy without state or federal interference. Bolstered by the travel of tourists along the Tamiami Trail, new political factions within each tribe began to see tourism and the sale of goods as the primary measure of leading the Seminoles out of poverty. In 1976, the Seminole Tribe of Florida became the first Indian tribe or organization in the United States to open tax-free cigarette shops, or "smoke shops" on reservations. Through a litany of legal complaints and threats from state and county officials located throughout South Florida, the tribal assertion of its own status as a government and implementation of its own taxation would eventually be upheld in courts throughout the state of Florida.[138] For the first time since the reestablishment of the cattle business during Roosevelt's New Deal, the Seminoles of South Florida were presented with the opportunity to obtain significant income in an industry that did not adhere to the traditions and environment of the Seminole people. Strengthened by the experience gained through hiring lobbyists, working with lawyers to avoid litigation, constructing public relation strategies, and organizing theories of tribal sovereignty, the Seminoles began to search for new economic opportunities leading eventually to the gambling business.

Three years after opening the first tax-free "smoke shop" on an Indian reservation, the Seminoles opened Hollywood Bingo, the first high-stakes tribal gaming enterprise in the country.

[138] Jessica R. Cattelino, *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC.: Duke University Press, 2008), 54.

Once again, the tribe faced litigation with this battle reaching a federal court decision in the case titled *Seminole Tribe of Florida v. Butterworth* in 1981.[139] According to the Fifth District Court of Appeals, the efforts of the Seminole people to operate a bingo, casino, or any other gambling facility was not subject to state regulation and fell under tribal sovereignty. Following the introduction of electronic gaming in the 1990's, the impact of gambling on the economy of both tribes in South Florida is staggering. By 2006, the Seminole Tribe of Florida alone operated six casinos, with gaming revenue reportedly reaching $1 billion dollars. Just one year later, the Seminoles became a major participant in the worldwide gambling market when they purchased the hotel and entertainment conglomerate Hard Rock International for $965 million dollars. Located directly adjacent to the Tamiami Trail, the Miccosukee Indians followed suit and opened their own hotel and casino named Miccosukee Resort and Gaming.

The revenue obtained from these gambling ventures have greatly improved and transformed the lives of those within the both tribes. Since the Indian Self-Determination Act and the legal status to conduct tobacco and gaming business ventures, the education, homes, medicine, and incomes of the Seminoles living on reservations have improved to levels unthinkable to their ancestors who struggled throughout the earlier half of the twentieth century. The revenue collected through the efforts of tobacco and gaming has provided each tribe with the ability to upgrade the educational opportunities for the youth living on the reservation. Today there are state-of-the-art schools, a tribal education department, and scholarships available for those who decide to attend private K-12 schools or higher education. The Seminoles of today are no longer living in the thatched-roof structures known as chickees, or the simplistic concrete

[139] Julian M. Pleasants and Harry A. Kersey Jr., *Seminole Voices: Reflections on Their Changing Society, 1970-2000* (Lincoln, NE.: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), 2.

housing constructed by the federal government in the 1960's. Instead, the Seminole people live in houses designed to adhere to their own sensibilities and affordability. In fact, some of the new homes on the reservations that belong to those individuals responsible for the operations of the tribes and their business venture reach levels of being ornate and extravagant.[140]

In concurrence with the distribution of Seminole gaming revenue in per capita dividend checks, the Seminoles of today are experiencing an economic boom of historic proportions. The seemingly endless stream of gambling revenue allows the leaders of each tribe to allocate large sums of money to families in order to promote individual and household autonomy, operate schools, and provide numerous social services. Although many Seminoles believe that the success and allocation of revenue is consistent with the traditions of a hunting-gathering society, there are still those within the Seminole community who are afraid of what the economic success will mean for future generation of Seminoles. Because of the economic success and interactions brought by the Trail, many Seminoles today live modern lives with the desires and aspirations of a non-Seminole world. For the Seminole people, the political, social, and economic security brought by tourism, travel, and entertainment have challenged, or completely eliminated the traditions and values of yesteryear. The ability to hold on to traditional languages, the telling and understanding of Seminole stories, preservation of Seminole art, and the role of communal housing, are just some of the issues debated within Seminole society during this pivotal period of progress.

The Seminoles of Florida have survived numerous obstacles throughout their time in the region; adapting in the face of war, the development and destruction of their environment, as well as with economic opportunity. As unconquered tribes, the Seminoles of Florida have turned

[140] *Ibid*, 5.

adversity into an advantage to become the leaders in cultural tourism among Native Americans. Due to the revenue of casinos and entertainment, the Seminole leadership of the present and the future will have to address their success and establish whether the traditions of the past are succumbing to their own 'paradox of progress', or adhering to the cultural and social practices determined at the boundary between economy and cultural production. Perhaps the Miccosukee and Muscogee Seminoles of Florida will hold on to the traditions of the past, or forge new customs through their interpretation of cultural economics. Either way, the Tamiami Trail will be at the center of this deliberation, once again forming a stage in the long and complex history of the Seminoles' economic, political, and cultural struggles.

# CHAPTER THREE: RECOGNIZING A PARADOX

As evident throughout the historiography of transportation in the United States, the pursuit of obtaining unrelenting growth and unrestrained movement can produce negative, sometimes unforeseen consequences on the surrounding environment and society that the very transportation system attends to assist. With the completion of the Tamiami Trail in 1928, the diversion and obstruction of the natural flow of water within the Everglades increased dramatically. While those in charge of molding the Everglades into a "second nature" welcomed and celebrated the immediate effects of reclamation, over time the full ramifications of environmental destruction revealed themselves and a campaign began to halt the destruction of the Everglades.

Throughout South Florida the encounter between economic developers and environmentalists manifested itself in the marshlands and suburban landscapes of the region. Although those in charge of enticing individuals to move to Florida still portrayed the state as a natural nirvana, the politicians believed that urban planning was in many ways akin to tenets of democracy. In the minds of many of the legislators in Tallahassee, water alteration projects such as the Tamiami Trail represented freedom and prosperity as much as ingenuity or engineering expertise. However, as the environment of South Florida underwent periods of seemingly unrelenting torment, an environmental movement forming within the state grew more resilient. Activists such as the writer Marjory Stoneman Douglas, United States Fish and Wildlife Service marine biologist Arthur R. Marshall, Jr., and National Audubon Society member Joe Browder lobbied politicians and protested egregious development in an effort to save the waterlogged environment of the Everglades.

After years of protests and lobbying, politicians and development interests finally joined with the environmentalists to view the ecosystem of South Florida though a different lens. Due to the combination of constant population growth and a lack of natural water, city planners and government officials realized that drastic changes needed to occur. Culminating with the recommendations of the Army Corps of Engineers in 1992, this new policy centered on a commitment to rebuild the ecological health of South Florida. This commitment to achieve ecological restoration revealed the changing sentiment behind what the Tamiami Trail represented and its purpose within South Florida. Through an examination of the development boom, the emerging environmental movement, and the studies conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers, it becomes evident that the role of the Tamiami Trail shifted from the intentions and objectives of those responsible for its construction to embrace a new policy of ecological health.

## The Great Florida Boom

Immediately following the completion of the Tamiami Trail in 1928, publications catering to those interested in road construction, hailed the Trail as one of the most significant and impressive engineering feats in the history of mankind. Publications such as the *South Florida Developer* described the completion of the Trail, as the completion of the "Ninth Wonder of the World," while others believed the road to be the greatest road built in the 20th century.[141] Influential men such as Henry Ford, William Jennings Bryan, and Thomas Edison believed the completion of the Trail to be proof that America was moving towards a future that utilized the strengths and power of the natural environment for its own good. Even a columnist

[151] James Lorenzo Walker, "Dedication of the Tamiami Trail Marker," *Tequesta* 19 (1959), pg. 28.

for the *Miami Herald* named Marjory Stoneman Douglas, viewed the completion of the Trail as an answer to the justified calls of increasing tourist opportunities by connecting the coasts of Florida.[142] With this monument to modernity now in place, developers, farmers, and tourists were able to travel throughout the hinterland of region and realize the dream of transforming Florida from an unpopulated, uninspired state, into one synonymous with unrelenting growth. The people of South Florida could now legitimately ask; "What could be done with South Florida?"[143]

The answer of what exactly became of South Florida far exceeded the expectations of those who committed their time, money, and crafts to tame the Everglades and connect the coasts of the lower half of the state. In the drive to realize their version of the "Florida Dream," the South Florida landscape began to change drastically. With inexpensive land now at the disposal of the public, South Florida became a region promoted as place to realize great wealth and prosperity. In a region where the distance and environment once isolated people both socially and economically, the automobile provided a mode of transportation that invigorated tourism and promote agricultural advancement throughout South Florida even in the face of devastating hurricanes or stock market collapses.[144] For a nation that always seemed on the move, Florida became an exceptional and attractive destination for both migrants and immigrants. Behind infrastructure projects such as the Tamiami Trail, Florida embarked on one of the greatest population shifts in American history.

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[142] Jack E. Davis, *An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century* (Athens, GA.: The University Georgia Press, 2009), 291-292.
[143] E. W. Creyton, "What Can Be Done Agriculturally In Collier County," *Collier County News*, April 26, 1928, pg. 9.
[144] Garrett, 272. For further information regarding the devastating effects of the Great Hurricane of 1928 to the people and environment of South Florida, see Robert Mykle, *Killer 'cane: The Deadly Hurricane of 1928* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002).

Whether from the "Rust Belt" of the northern and Midwestern United States, or from nations found throughout the world seeking social or political freedom, southern states such as California, Texas, and Florida became the new homes for millions of people. This region commonly referred to now as the "Sunbelt," was born from this phenomenal shift. According to political commentator Kevin Phillips, the person drawn to this sun-filled lifestyle were "the pleasure seekers, the bored, the ambitious, the space-age technicians and the retired—a super-slice of the rootless, socially mobile group known as the American middle class."[145] For South Florida in particular, this period of population growth following World War II marked a transition from a region that was rural and backwater, to a region both vibrant and unknowingly on the verge of environmental collapse.

The speed and intensity with which Florida's population increased following World War II is staggering when compared to states such as Texas or California with much larger land area. In the census completed just two year prior to the completion of the Trail in 1928, the total population of Florida was just under 1.5 million people. At the start of the postwar population boom that would occur throughout the country in 1950, Florida's population was just under 2.8 million people making it the twentieth-most populous state at the time. By the 1970's, the population of Florida had exploded to just over 6.7 million people, The population growth did not relent and by the 1990's, Florida slotted itself past Pennsylvania into its semi-permanent spot as the fourth-most populous state. To put the growth of Florida into some more perspective, from 1950 the state would welcome about seven hundred new people each day through either interstate migration or immigration.[146]

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[145] Kevin Phillips, *The Emerging Republican Majority* (New York: Arlington Place, 1969), 437.
[146] Gary R. Mormino, *Land of Sunshine, State of Dreams: A Social History of Modern Florida* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2005), 12-14, and U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Population:1790-1990," under

*The Invasion of Immigrants and Migrants*

Throughout the nation following the construction of the Trail, there was a growing subculture centered on leisure, tourism, and the ability to be seen while doing both.[147] Through the influential promotion and development of entrepreneur Carl Fisher, prosperous northerners began to flock to South Florida and Miami in particular. An inundation of people traveled to Miami in order stay at the imposing Biltmore Hotel, live in new suburban towns such as Coral Gables, or drive across the newly constructed Venetian Causeway to visit Miami Beach. By 1925, the boom in popularity for South Florida triggered the failure of several banks in northern states because of the amount of money invested into the region, and the inability of those banks to keep up. The price of land in Miami Beach from 1917 to 1925 rose almost 1,800 percent.[148] Yet because many of these investments were speculative with land often times begin exchanged daily, the bubble for this boom eventually burst. Due to the devastating damage of a catergory-4 hurricanes that hit the city head on in 1926, and the collapse of the stock market just three years later, thousands of investors pulled out of the region. Nevertheless, even with this period of setbacks and series of unforeseeable events, the push to continue the development remained persistent.

The entry of the United States into World War II started Miami on the process that transformed the city into what it is today. In the immediate aftermath of Pearl Harbor, the military and political leaders of the country scrambled to organize, house, and train a competent

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"Population and Housing Unit Counts," http://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/files/table-16.pdf (accessed August 2, 2011).

[147] For information regarding the tourist subculture of the early 20th century, see Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1999).

[148] Jan Nijman, *Miami: Mistress of the Americas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 28.

fighting force. Men and women from diverse backgrounds and hometowns moved to Florida to train and subsequently acquire "sand in their shoes" at bases and stations such as Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station or the submarine chaser school in Miami. Upon returning from service either during or after the war, many of these military personnel moved their families to South Florida to start a new life.[149] The federal government facilitated and encouraged this craving by passing an important piece of legislation. Passed as a measure to reward the sacrifice of men and women who served during World War II, The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 or GI Bill of Rights provided guaranteed low-interest loans to those wishing to purchase a home. With this financial assistance in place, young men, including those from different racial and ethnic backgrounds, were able to purchase their own version of the American dream. For many of the GIs wanting to purchase a house, the suburban landscape provided the greatest opportunity to raise a family far from the diseased, congested cities of their youth.[150]

While citizens from around the United States were moving to South Florida to start a new life, the political and social upheavals occurring in countries throughout the Western Hemisphere was also adding to the expansion and development of South Florida. None more so, than the Fidel Castro-led revolt against the US-backed Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in Cuba from 1953-1959. As someone who once said "Revolutions first, elections later," Castro believed that violence was the only measure available to depose the elitism that had plagued his home country for far too long.[151] After defeating the Batista regime using guerrilla tactics and propaganda,

[149] Paul S. George, "Miami: One Hundred Years of History," in *South Florida History*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 1996), http://www.historymiami.org/research-miami/topics/history-of-miami/ (accessed June 10, 2011), For information concerning the impact of the Air Conditioner on Florida, see. Mormino, *Land of* Sunshine, 234-241.
[150] Lewis, 74.
[151] For information regarding the political, social, and economic acumen and ideology of Fidel Castro, see Thomas C. Wright, *Latin America in the Era of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1991), and for information

Castro consolidated his power and excluded the social and political elites. Fearing the loss of their freedom and livelihoods, about 50,000 exiles, many members of the Cuban social and economic elite, traversed the Straits of Florida to reach Miami and South Florida between 1959 and 1961.[152] By 1962, the number of individuals leaving Cuba for Florida expanded to an estimated 1,800 Cubans every week. Although the Bay of Pigs incident curtailed the future efforts of those wishing to leave Cuba, there were 210,000 refugees now living in South Florida either around the Spanish-speaking enclave known as "Little Havana," or in suburban communities located outside of Miami proper. With the combination of tourists, veterans, and Cuban refugees flocking to burgeoning South Florida, city planners recognized the need for more housing, more roads, and further expansion into the South Florida environment.[153]

*Go West, Through Water Drainage*

In the 1960s the Miami metropolitan area was now an epicenter for the "democratization of leisure."[154] However, if not for the actions of the Army Corps of Engineers following World War II, obstacles of water shortages and surpluses might have limited subsequent explosion of tourism, migration, and immigration. During the population boom following World War II, a series of hurricanes, droughts, and summers full of torrential downpours reminded South Floridians of the vagaries of nature. Canals and dikes built after the devastating hurricanes of the 1920s were able to limit the amount of human casualties should a natural disaster strike. Yet the damage inflicted on farms, livestock, or septic tanks still led many to clamor for something more

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regarding the mass exodus of Cubans refugees, see Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[152] Nijman, 46-47.
[153] *Ibid*, 47.
[154] Grunwald, 231.

to be done in order to alleviate the economic and environmental harm caused by the elements.[155] For instance, the effects of the hurricane of 1947 were so taxing and frustrating for the people living in South Florida, that many began to blame their difficulties and lack of protection on the water managers supervising the canals and dikes.[156] After just about a year of planning and bureaucratic wrangling from Senators Spessard Holland and Claude Pepper, President Harry S. Truman signed the Flood Control Act of 1948 into law, thereby authorizing $70 million to complete the first phase of the Central and Southern Florida Project for Flood Control and Other Purposes (C&SF).

With this plan in place, the citizens and developers of South Florida believed that development, expansion, farming, and ranching could occur without unwanted water.[157] However, cries for proper flood protection and water reserves also placed the ecological health of the surrounding flora and fauna in great danger. As with the completion of the Tamiami Trail, even columnist and author Marjory Stoneman Douglas just a year removed from writing her seminal work titled *The River of Grass*, believed that the philosophy behind the C&SF project was sound and surpassed only by the Panama Canal in terms of importance for the nation.[158] Douglas believed that the project would save the rich earth located throughout South Florida, and control the water to be used for the "utmost needs by the people of Florida and their unborn generations to come."[159] In the subsequent decades, the implementation of the C&SF resulted in the complete control and manipulation of the water within South Florida. However, as the

[155] *Ibid*, 218-219.
[156] *Ibid*, 219.
[157] Matthew C. Godfrey, *River of Interests: Water Management in South Florida and the Everglades, 1948-2000* (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Historical Research Associates, Inc., June 2006), 41-42
[158] Jack E. Davis, "'Conservation Is Now a Dead Word': Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the Transformation of American Environmentalism," *Environmental History*, Vol. 8, No.1 (Jan., 2003): 63.
[159] Marjory Stoneman Douglas, "What Are They Doing To The Everglades?," at FIU Libraries, "Reclaiming the Everglades: South Florida's Natural History, 1884-1934" http://purl.fcla.edu/fcla/dl/RTMD00350096.jpg (Accessed August 6, 2011), 12.

agricultural interests and booming population of South Florida needed more water to expand, it became evident in the eyes of a growing environmental movement that the environment of South Florida was fast becoming a "paradox of progress."

## The Emergence of the Environmentalism in South Florida

Despite the authorization of Everglades National Park in 1947, the effects of draining and diverting the water in order to accommodate an overwhelming amount of people were beginning to reveal themselves in the form of constant fires and flooding. Freshwater wells used for providing clean drinkable water were experiencing saltwater intrusion, and the methods used by the CS&F project to distribute and divert the water throughout the region seemed to not be working. In an effort to determine the problem, municipal officials throughout the region began to appeal to the United States Geological Survey for help. Through these appeals and the constant presence of fires and floods, the first scientific research regarding the Everglades and surrounding environment commenced.[160] The service placed a hydrologist named Garald Parker in charge of investigating and studying the substrata of South Florida. Through a series of experiments, Parker and others became convinced that saltwater was entering from underneath the aquifer and harming the primary supply of water for cities located along the Atlantic coast. After determining that there was no other source of water for these cities other than the aquifer located just 90 to 180 feet below the surface, Parker reach the conclusion that the freshwater table must remain at 2.5 feet above sea level in order to avoid saltwater intrusion and the

[160] *Ibid*, 203, and Godfrey, 14.

destruction of its water supply.[161] In congruence with Parker's studies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture began conducting its own study on the region's soil problems and eventually determined that only about one-eighth of the Everglades, or the upper Glades and the eastern wetlands near the coastal ridge, had deep enough soil to sustain a profitable agricultural undertaking. With these effects now acknowledged by the scientific community, the drainage and diversion of water was beginning to reveal effects beyond the deterioration of the region's flora and fauna, and gain the attention of individuals amongst the print media. For the *Miami Herald* columnist Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the science discovered in these experiments began a conversion from someone who once was a proponent of farms, development, and the Tamiami Trail.

At the time of Parker's studies, the editor of the popular *Rivers of America* series approached Douglas and asked her to write a book about the Miami River. Believing that the topic was small in its scope, Douglas eventually convinced those in charge to allow for the opportunity to connect the ecological functioning of the river to the much larger environment of the Everglades. With scientists beginning to decipher the ecological complexities of the Everglades at the time of her research, the scientific milieu presented Douglas with an advantageous opportunity to learn more about the environment beyond the birds, sawgrass, and numerous species of flora and fauna. After visiting with Parker, and accompanying him on numerous trips into the environment, Douglas began to view the environment outside of its traditional context of being a swamp. After learning about Parker's insistence that the Everglades was in fact not a stagnant swamp, but rather a sheet flow of water, Douglas began to compare Parker's idea to the ecological function of a river. If a river transported a body of

[161] McCally, *The Everglades,* 146.

freshwater from one direction to the other, why did the Everglades not attract the same connotation? After asking and also receiving confirmation from Parker that she could in theory refer to the ecosystem of South Florida as a 'river of grass,' Douglas received even further affirmation through the completion of Parker's principal study on the region's groundwater and with her decision to focus her energy and writing on the Everglades rather than the Miami River.[162]

Throughout her career, Douglas was characterized as being both an unrelenting reporter, and fearless advocate for the issues important to her and her readers. As a journalist for the *Herald*, Douglas championed women's suffrage and the civil rights of all members of society to the point of a nervous breakdown. She would eventually turn to writing fiction and poetry for small magazines to make a nice living, but after taking the *Rivers of America* series and meeting with Parker, Douglas once again poured herself into an issue she determined to be important. For the next five years, Douglas met with the nation's leading scientists to discuss theories detailing the region's water, rocks, birds, wildlife, and soil in an effort to detail the importance of the Everglades and give the reader a sense of the intricacy with which the region's hydrology, geology, biology, and history all came to form. Just a month prior to the formal dedication of Everglades National Park in 1947, Douglas imparted her research on the Everglades to the world through a new book titled, *The Everglades: River of Grass*. The book's principal impact on the American zeitgeist was through her attempts to have the reader view the Everglades through the context of the environment being a large, flowing river. For the first time in history, Douglas presented and conceptualized the Everglades not as a putrid and stagnant swamp, but rather as

[162] For further information regarding the role of Garald Parker in forming the basis for Douglas' subtitle 'River of Grass,' see Davis, *An Everglades Providence*, 356-359.

one large, flowing ecosystem stretching from the rim of Lake Okeechobee to the swallow waters of the Florida Bay. In the final chapter titled, "The Eleventh Hour," Douglas revealed that the Everglades were in fact dying, and would continue to suffer and forever turn into a 'river of fire" unless the "chaotic gesture of greed and ignorance and folly" continued to reign supreme.[163] However according to Douglas, the beauty, vastness, and the uniqueness of the Everglades could remain intact if the public was willing to set aside its greed and learn to work with the environment. With the research of Parker and the Soil Conservation available, and the initiative of the Army Corps of Engineers in place, the Everglades from this point forward would "depend entirely on the willingness of the public to do something intelligent for themselves."[164]

With Parker's science serving as the tenets, and Douglas' gospel propagating the call to save the 'river of grass,' the creed of the modern environmental movement within South Florida was now firmly established. Their movement to save the Everglades stood in stark contrast to Hamilton Disston, Governor Broward, Barron Collier and others who wanted to save the Everglades by extracting from the environment for its economic capabilities. For the individuals, groups, and leaders attached to this environmental movement, the clamor and protests to save the Everglades carried with it a literal connotation of preserving the landscape, flora, and fauna. The early hopes and aspirations of the movement placed in the hands of the federal government and the Army Corps of Engineers, the task of creating and maintaining a flourishing relationship between the society of South Florida and its environment. At the ceremony to dedicate Everglades National Park, President Truman explained the reasoning of the federal government behind protecting a landscape with the perception of once being a forbidden

[163] Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *The Everglades: River of Grass*, 60th Special Anniversary ed. (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, 2007), 375.
[164] *Ibid*, 385.

wasteland. With Coe and Douglas in attendance, President Truman hailed the park as a testament to the multiplicity and vagueness of God's creations, and as a source of enjoyment and enlightenment for generations thereafter. Yet, in spite of these words of affection and admiration, Truman never spoke of saving the Everglades for the sake of nature. Instead, Truman spoke of saving the Everglades for the "enjoyment of the American people," or "conservation of the human spirit," while calling for all Americans to "make full use of our resources."[165] In line with conversationalists who thought of people before nature, the Corps began to take Truman's word to task through the C&SF project. Over a half of a century later, the original plan to both conserve and preserve the environment of the Everglades for generations to come, was to be replaced with another plan. Unfortunately, the weight of migration, immigration, and development established around the Tamiami Trail became too much and placed significant strains on the relationship between society and nature.

With the environmental movement now in place, and the view of the Everglades now presented through the context of being a vast and moving ecosystem, the role of the Tamiami Trail within both the natural and fabricated world carried with it a different connotation then once intended by the planners and builders of the road. A symbol that once represented progress and expansion, morphed into a symbol of restriction and constraint for environmentalists after decades of environmental deterioration. By 1989, the destruction and damage caused by the Tamiami Trail became so daunting and distinct, that the federal government also aligned itself with these thoughts and aimed to reverse water reclamation and environmental transformation.

[165] Grunwald, 215.

After over a half century's work of blocking the flow of water into the Everglades, the Tamiami Trail had lost its suitability.[166]

*Government's Atonement*

Following the establishment of Everglades National Park, both the population and the environmental problems of South Florida expanded. While the federal government promised to provide both the flood control and preservation of the surrounding environment through a balance approach, the implementation of the C&SF project proved otherwise. Although the establishment of Everglades National Park seemed to be a step in the right direction towards preserving the environment of South Florida, the federal, state, and local governments allowed for developers, city planners, and agricultural interests to have free reign in the environments surrounding the Everglades National Park. Through the pressure caused by the increase in tourism, permanent migration, and immigration, city planners and builders throughout South Florida choose to adapt and accommodate a growth rate at four times the national average through both water reclamation and control.[167] Because of the vast oceans on either side of the peninsula, the marshlands of the Everglades had to bear the blunt of any urban development. The Trail served not only as building branch but also as a reminder of what the technologies of the day could actually accomplish. If a group of men could build a road through one of the most daunting landscapes with outdated technology and methods, why could cities such as Miami and Fort Lauderdale not divert the water to expand its periphery even further? Developers, builders, and agricultural businesses answered this question in resounded fashion through the method of

[166] Garrett, 275.
[167] Grunwald, 229.

water control first brought to the Everglades by the completion of the Tamiami Trail. If both the flood control of the region and the supply of water for the public were going to remain the highest priorities for the federal government, the distribution of water to the natural habitat of the flora and fauna found throughout region would take a backseat. Following the success of the Tamiami Trail, developers in the mid-20th century moved into the Everglades with much greater impetus. Armed with advanced methods of construction and technology and encouragement of the state's government, builders and designers took to the Everglades driven by the example set through the construction of the Trail and desire to accommodate unrelenting population growth coming from both within and beyond the United States.

While South Florida was going through a period of unrelenting physical change, the society and culture of America was also beginning to change its views on the present and future of the nation's environment. In many ways, the environmental movement that emerged from the 1960s began to parallel the other social and cultural movements occurring throughout the country. Using the same fervor and intense rhetoric associated with the protests against the Vietnam War, the push for civil rights, or the feminist movement, new organizations such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth began to emerge to form a boisterous and more confrontational bloc of environmentalists. However, where the environmental movement would differ from the other movements listed above was in the widespread acceptance, interest, and support of the public. Instead of carrying the connotation of being radical or anarchical, the Environmental movement appeal to a general public that began to care about endangered flora and fauna, or the exposure to harmful chemicals. By the presidency of Richard Nixon, the scars of unrestrained and uninhibited growth was beginning to reveal themselves through the extinction of wildlife, or the inundation of raw sewage and harmful pesticides in communities

located throughout the United States.[168] Even the highway system, which just twenty years earlier was being herald as one of the most important engineering endeavors in the nation's history, was now beginning to be viewed by its most ardent advocates of producing problems and consequences.[169] To alleviate, and to some extent appease the growing concerns of the public, the administration of President Nixon would initiate a series of measures including the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency and the formation of the Clean Air Act. With the federal government now seemingly marching in line with the environmentalists, the preservation and maintenance of the surrounding environmental was now an important issue throughout the American lexicon. With individuals such as Douglas and Rachel Carson, or events such as the Three Mile Island accident in Pennsylvania, the battle between those intent on altering the environment for economic success and those determined to improve upon the relationship between man and nature continued without reprieve throughout the natural landscapes and federal buildings of the United States.

By the 1980's, the toll of unchecked development surrounding the Everglades was transforming the "river of grass" into a bog of cattails, and leading to the collapse of the Florida Bay. Agricultural corporations armed with lobbyists in both Tallahassee and Washington, were able to reap the benefits of the C&SF project to irrigate their fields during the dry season, and drain their fields during the rainy season. In addition to their impact on the quantity of water in the region, the runoff of pesticides and fertilizers from these agricultural interests produced devastating effects on the quality of the water throughout the region. With the flow of water unable to reach its natural destination, ecosystems such as the Florida Bay suffered great

[168] *Ibid*, 242.
[169] John B. Rae, *The Road and the Car in American Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971), 367.

consequences. The estuary of the Florida Bay in particular lost a large amount of sea grasses, sponges, and mangroves, which destroyed the natural habitats for shrimp, crabs, and lobsters.[170] By the 1990's, the development and destruction occurring throughout the region was now affecting South Florida's quality of life. Through lower water tables, higher risks for floods, and daily reminders of gridlock, the region was living well beyond its means. The region's highway mileage multiplied itself to over four times its amount in a period of just two decades.[171] The area known as "Little Havana" represented this change. In this urban enclave of Downtown Miami that once represented progressive efficiency and expansion, was now an example of traffic gridlock and unmanageable urban expansion. Nevertheless, forces were in play to change the status quo and transform the Tamiami Trail.

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, Florida politicians from both houses of Congress began to realize the threats posited by the weaken environment on their constituents. Through years of unrestrained growth and water control, the supply of water was becoming dangerously low to sustain the surrounding citizens and environment. Politicians such as Senator Bob Graham, Senator Lawton Chiles, and Congressmen Tom Lewis implored Congress and the President of the United State to assist and pay for environmental projects that would reverse the control and distribution of water by the CS&F project, and enable new and experimental deliverers of water to the region. For these members of Congress, the legislative activity was already behind both the burgeoning growth and resulting ecological decline evident throughout the region.[172] Yet even with evidence in hand, some members of Congress did not believe that

[170] Grunwald, 294.
[171] *Ibid*, 305.
[172] House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation, Additions to the National Park System in the State of Florida: Hearings Before the Subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, 99th Congress, 1986, 142.

the responsibility of fixing the environment should fall in the lap of the taxpayers living outside Florida. If the decline of the Everglades and surrounding environment transpired as result of Florida's failure to manage its population growth, development, and expansion of the suburban landscape, why then should the responsibility of managing the environment not lie at the feet of the government and resources of Florida?

While certainly these arguments were both strong and justified, they fell on deaf ears because of the investment made by the federal government in the form of land acquisitions. By the election of President Clinton in 1992, the federal government's land holdings in South Florida included Biscayne National Park (established in 1988), additions to the Big Cypress National Preserve (1988) and Everglades National Park (1989), and the designation of Dry Tortugas National Park in 1992. With these landholdings in place, the politicians of Florida presented their argument with much greater ease when calling for the appropriations necessary for the proper distribution of water to South Florida. Furthermore, the new land acquisitions also shifted the issue from whether the efforts of the federal government were in the best interests of the nation, to whether the efforts for saving the environment of South Florida was now a national priority. Questioning whether the federal government should provide resources and appropriations to restore the environment of South Florida was no longer pertinent due to other environmental disasters occurring throughout the country, and the subsequent negative reaction of the public. For those politicians representing their constituents outside South Florida, the efforts to endorse federal involvement in the conservation, preservation, and restoration in the Everglades was not only about aligning themselves on what they perceived to be the right side of

the debate, but also about determining whether an increase in federal contribution could translate to other threatened environments located in their districts.[173]

Because of this determination to bring about a comprehensive plan of preserving the flow of water in South Florida, Congress would sign into law the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989. In addition to authorizing the purchase of 107,600 acres of land, the federal government would recognize Everglades National Park as a national treasure and hope to "enhance and restore the ecological values, natural hydrologic conditions, and public enjoyment of such area".[174] However in terms of the narrative of the Tamiami Trail, the most important aspect of the act would come in the form of the federal government recognizing the need to modify the flow of water in the region through a series of projects illustrated in the section titled "Modification of Certain Water Projects." Under Section 104, the federal government would call for the Army Corps of Engineers to both complete a report detailing the necessary changes needed to modify the damages wrought by the C&SF project, and to subsequently implement these recommendations to achieve "their design objectives." This section marked the beginnings of a complete shift from the ecological philosophy and policy implemented by the federal government in South Florida fundamentally since the Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819. As the ecological information surrounding the placement and effectiveness of the Tamiami Trail of preventing water from reaching the Everglades would become evident, the agencies and individuals deemed responsible in restoring the environment of South Florida would begin to view the Trail as a modification necessary for this shift in ecological policy to succeed. In just three short years, this shift would come to a head.

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[173] Godfrey, 293.
[174] *Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989*. Public Law 229. 101th Cong., 1st sess. December 13, 1989.

*A Shift to Admission*

Within a five-month period stretching from June to November of1992, both the political and ecological environment of South Florida received the leadership and methods necessary for providing tangible results. In June, the Jacksonville District of the Army Corps of Engineers finished a general design review authorized under the Everglades National Park Protection and Expansion Act of 1989 and presented the results in a memorandum titled *Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park*. With the help of several other federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Transportation, and Florida Wildlife Federation, the Corps of Engineers sifted through a series of alternatives and plans to call for a full structured plan to meet the spatial requirements of water delivery to the region.[175] In order to achieve this goal, the Corps modified the structures of the C&SF project by returning a more natural flow of water to the region, as well as providing flood mitigation to both agricultural and residential interests in what was at the time being termed the 8.5 Square Mile Area. To modify the structures of the C&SF project, the Corps needed to remove, degrade, or raise a series of canals and levees to obtain not only a desirable flow of water, but to also direct the water of the region in an effective, substantial, and timely manner.

For this plan to have its desired effect, the Corps recommended a three-pronged construction and development venture to direct water through the region to replenish and improve the hydrology of the Everglades. First, the Corps needed to revamp the flow of water that was previously designed to flow through and around canals and levees built the past eighty

[175] U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Jacksonville District. 1992. *General Design Memorandum-Modified Water Deliveries To Everglades National Park* (June 1992), by Dr. Jonathan D. Moulding.

years. This portion of the recommendation was identified as the Conveyance and Seepage Control Features (CSCF) and its application focused on building two gated structures in the L-29 levee, and degrading five miles of the L-67 Extension Canal. By refurbishing these fabricated structures and allowing the water of the region to easily flow southward, the proverbial opening to the Everglades required that both human and structural barriers be limited. For this door to open, the Corps recommended the purchasing and flooding of an area of land known as the "8.5 Square-Mile Area", as well as renovating roughly 10 miles of the Tamiami Trail.

At the time of the Corps' plan in 1992, the Tamiami Trail was not the only major highway to connect the western and eastern coast of Florida. Built in 1969 as part of Interstate-75 and later expanded in 1986 and 1992, a highway nicknamed "Alligator Alley" now provided automobilists of South Florida with another option to cross the state. While the decision to build the road created more controversy at the time of its construction then the Tamiami Trail among city governments, environmentalists, and even automobile advocates and agencies such as AAA, this highway proved a more preferable mode of traversing the state. Due to the wider lanes, higher speed limits, new pavement and general location of the Alley, the growing population of South Florida started to ignore the slower and older road to the south. The general design of the Alley also proved to be a precursor to the recommended renovations of the Corps in 1992.

Throughout the route of this new highway, engineers and builders intentionally considered the hydrology and general environmental patterns of the region by constructing bridges and elevated roads. Contrary to the original designs and demands behind the construction of the Tamiami Trail, these multiple openings throughout the new route would allow for both the water and wildlife of the region the ability to traverse south into the

Everglades.[176] With a new faster highway in place, one might imagine that entirely removing the Trail might be the best option in saving or limiting the surrounding environment from further damage. However, a decision to remove the Trail was probably unfeasible in the opinions of the Corps, and municipal officials in South Florida for two main reasons; the time and cost of complete removal, and the role of the Trail in effectively evacuating citizens of the Miami Metropolitan Area in the event of a hurricane. The latter reasoning proved to be the most crucial basis for not employing a complete overhaul of the Trail. Without the Tamiami Trail in place, city and county officials of Miami would feverishly be considering another road that could efficiently evacuate one of the largest metropolitan areas in the nation. The damage and danger caused by Hurricane Andrew in August of 1992 reinforce this sentiment further. Producing wind gusts of up to 175 miles per hour, driving more than 250,000 people from homes, and up to $25 billion to $35 billion dollars, Hurricane Andrew became one of the most costly natural disasters in America's history.[177] As described by author Raymond Arsenault, Hurricane Andrew fundamentally altered the way both the public and government sectors of the United States viewed hurricanes and their propensity to cause both death and destruction. Due to the innovation of technology, bureaucratic development, and the amount of updates disseminated across various forms of media, Hurricane Andrew developed a "public personality and a personal history" far beyond the measurements and data.[178] As evident from the coverage and public reaction of Hurricane Andrew's destruction, the growing bureaucracy in the southern region of the United States transformed hurricanes into an important public event, leading to expectations

[176] August Burghard, *Alligator Alley: Florida's Most Controversial Highway*, (Washington D.C.: The Lanman Company, 1969), 3-29.
[177] Mormino, *Land of Sunshine*, 352.
[178] Raymond Arsenault, "The Public Storm: Hurricanes and the State in Twentieth-Century America," in *Paradise Lost?: The Environmental History of Florida*, eds. Jack E. Davis and Raymond Arsenault (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2005), 203.

and assurance that government agencies would do everything in their power to ensure the safety of their citizens and property.[179] This included providing proper and efficient routes for those needing to evacuate their homes with an automobile. For Miami and the surrounding region, the Tamiami Trail needed to be included in the event of a hurricane. Within this new bureaucratic and social climate, removing the Trail proved to be as much a societal implausibility as a financial implausibility. With the idea of removing the Trail completely off the table, the Corps studied several different options to arrive at the most cost-effective in terms of dollars, loss of private property, and environmental efficiency. The flooding of "8.5-Square Mile Area" and the renovation of a ten-mile stretch of the Trail became their prevailing recommendation.[180] The implementation of these recommendations underlined the differences in environmental and economic thought from those who dreamt of and built the Trail some seventy years before, and illustrate how the paradox of progress revealed itself to the surrounding environment and society.

In order to implement and complete the recommendations of the Corps, the land in the "8.5 Square-Mile Area" needed to return to an environment characterized by the hydrologic conditions in the Everglades before the construction of the Trail. To do this, the Army Corps of Engineers needed to raise a ten-mile section of the Tamiami Trail, and in the opinion of some agencies including the National Park Service, flood the adjacent "8.5 Square-Mile Area" lands instead of constructing flood mitigating works. The question of whether to flood or not flood became a controversial issue and eventually bogged down the implementation of the project through years of litigation and bureaucratic bickering. By 1992, the visions of those who first

[179] *Ibid*, 204.
[180] U.S. Department of Defense, *Final Environmental Impact Statement: General Design Memorandum-Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL, 1992, viii-xii.

planned and built the Trail were nearly coming to fruition through the numerous public and private ventures ranging from small housing developments, to large agricultural complexes designed to produce much of the country's sugar, bananas, and other produce. While these established businesses brought economic prosperity to the region once thought to be void of any opportunity, the sustainability of the environment and its resources in South Florida was now the most important objective for both the federal and state government. In effect this meant that if government needed to repossess, acquire, or even flood surrounding lands in the name of improving or maintaining the environment for the future benefit of South Florida, developers, farmers, or citizens would have to either fight in court to preserve their interests, or succumb to the demands of the federal government. The willingness of the federal government to fight for and acquire private property, lands that were once promoted as being places to establish oneself or bolster the economy of South Florida, stood in stark contrast with the environmental policies of the federal government in South Florida for much of the twentieth century. Not only did this switch in policy illustrate the errors of an extensive strategy saturated with tactics of water diversion and manipulation, but it also revealed an awareness of the status quo being more detrimental then beneficial for the people of South Florida.

# CONCLUSION

## Questions Abound

By the July/August issue of the Corps' journal *Everglades Report* in 2010, Kiewit Infrastructure was continuing its construction of the one-mile bridge established by the 2008 LRR. Using local workers whenever possible, Kiewit was in the process of driving test piles (or large beams) at 160-foot intervals along the length of the bridge by October 2011, and working at a pace to finish the entire project by the projected year of 2013. With the renovation of the Trail finally coming to fruition, a new era seemed to be the start of reversing a vast period of time characterized by environmental destruction. Located in the same very issue, two articles titled "Another 5.5 miles in Bridging Proposed for Tamiami Trail", and "Everglades Returns to World Heritage 'Danger' List" seemed to tell a much different story. Even as the one-mile bridge was being constructed, the Department of the Interior (DOI) with other Federal, state, and local government agencies were proposing a 5.5-mile bridge in a document titled the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. According to the document, this new plan would cost $324 million dollars, while taking about three and a half years to complete if started by 2013. While this article illustrated a proposal that would cost four times as much as the one-mile bridge under construction, another article within the same issue was reporting that President Barack Obama was now placing Everglades National Park back on the Danger List of World Heritage Sites established by the United Nations.[181]

[181] "Another 5.5 miles in Bridging Proposed for Tamiami Trail" and "Everglades Returns to World Heritage 'Danger' List," *Everglades Report*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, July/August 2010, pg. 1-3.

When reading this journal in its entirety, questions come to mind that surrounds both the present and future narrative of the Tamiami Trail. If government agencies, not just environmental organizations are proposing that more should be done with regards to the Trail, then what actually is the current ecological state of the Everglades and surrounding environment? What was the purpose of bureaucratically delaying the renovation of the Trail in both 2003 and 2005, if there is now a plan being discussed within the Federal Government to build a longer and more expensive bridge than even some of the other alternatives proposed in the 2008 LRR? Did this delay affect any further environmental destruction? With the population of South Florida only increasing to a projected population of over 3 million people by 2025, the subsequent development seems to only exacerbate a problem evident throughout the narrative of the Tamiami Trail.[182] Would one more bridge even be enough to restore an environment already in 'danger'?

If further questioning continues to arise among government officials, environmental activists, and ecological analysts, what role will the Seminole people have in this discussion? After three destructive wars, two centuries of harsh government policy, and a period of time of resolute seclusion, the Everglades became an environment useful for isolating the Seminole people from outside intrusion. With the introduction of the Tamiami Trail in 1928, this remote group of people immediately assimilated itself into society characterized by agricultural expansion, tourism, and additional government supervision. Although this change was due to technological forces outside of their control, this shift also ironically presented the Seminoles with opportunities to maintain their cultural tradition, while obtaining vast amount of financial

[182] U.S. Bureau of the Census, Post-2000 figures, Miami-Dade Planning & Zoning Department, Research Section, 2001.

gain. Due to their utilization of the Trail in recent years, the Seminoles are presently one of the most economically successful and powerful factions in all of South Florida. It remains whether this power is enough to include the Seminoles in the discussion of the Trail's future. Will their economic strength persuade government officials, environmental activists, and ecological analysts to consider their opinions? If the Seminoles are allowed to the discussion table, will their opinions side with maintaining economic strength, preserving ecological health, or trying to achieve both? As evident by the recent legal battles between the Miccosukee Tribe and the Federal Government in recent years, their initial involvement in determining the future of the Tamiami Trail seems either ignored or disregarded to this point in the conversation.[183]

While questions remain regarding what will happen to the Trail and who will come to that decision, the role of the land in this historiography, and its ability thus far to adapt to change is unambiguous. As evident through the environment's ecological construction, the introduction of the Trail and the transformations that occurred thereafter, the environment of South Florida is an environment that is both intricate and resolute. For those aiming to connect and transform South Florida almost a century ago, the ecological strength of the surrounding environment reared itself and shaped the methods of construction. Through advancements in technology and years of grueling work, the planners, developers, and government officials of South Florida were finally able to obtain their dream of traveling down a road lined with the hopes of prosperity. Certainly that growth has arrived, and the region is now one of the largest economic zones in the United States. However, the very idea that the land of the region would adhere to the vision of

[183] For further discussion of the involvement of the Miccosukee Tribe within the process of renovating the Tamiami Trail see Jeffrey A. Hegewald, "Miccosukees and the Tamiami Trail Bridge: Examining the Tribe's Attempts to Sink the Modified Waters Delivery Project" (Independent Study, University of Miami School of Law, 2009).

those earlier planners all in the name of progress, is no longer a reality. Through water shortages, swamp fires, and floods, the Everglades have resoundingly rejected that dream. Just as the land once formed the construction of the Trail in the early portion of the twentieth century, the land is now dictating what will happen in the renovation process of the Trail during this new century.

There is no denying that the Tamiami Trail is in the midst of a transitional period in its ever-shifting narrative. It is obvious that there are still questions that need to be answered if South Florida's 'paradox of progress' is going to eventually recede. Only time will determine whether the one-mile bridge proposed in the 2008 LRR is enough in rejuvenating the environment of South Florida, or whether further renovations will be necessary. However, if further renovations are necessary, it is important that those in charge of determining what those renovations may be take the importance of time into consideration. Yes, taking time can present its advantages in determining what might be the greatest cost-effective renovation available, but time can also provide great degrees of difficulty with a population growth that shows no signs of relenting. We may never fully answer these questions surrounding the Trail, but what is true is this. The battle between restoration or development, environmental health or growth, and renovation or expansion, is a battle being fought by the people of South Florida, an a battle that will determine the fate of an environment still on the precipice.

## Epilogue

On December 4, 2009, several hundred Everglades renewal supporters joined federal and state officials at the Tamiami Trail in Miami-Dade County to mark a new era in both the modification and restoration of the surrounding ecosystem of South Florida. Renovations to the

Tamiami Trail were finally coming to fruition with a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the construction of a new one-mile bridge recommended, designed, managed, and operated by the Army Corps of Engineers to allow freshwater to flow southward into the Everglades. Attendees at this ceremony praised local and state politicians, Army Corps officials, and community supporters "who led the quest to remove one of the most damaging barriers to freshwater flow in the parched northwestern area of Everglades National Park." Bi-partisan politicians such as U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, and U.S. Representative Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL 25) joined the chairman of the South Florida Water Management District, and master of ceremonies Colonel Al Pantano applauded the efforts to arrive at this milestone to bring ecosystem restoration and make a "tremendous difference for future generations" to come.[184] For the Jacksonville District's program manager and deputy chief of Restoration, Stuart Applebaum, this ceremony marked the "first-step forward" of a project designed to bring about "fresh hope."[185]

While the optimistic rhetoric surrounding this event may have been both palpable and rousing, the construction for this one-mile bridge did not occur until nineteen years after the Corps recommendations in June of 1992. What were the reasons for this, and did the Corps have any other alternatives in mind for the scope of the project? Prior to the groundbreaking ceremony, the Corps attempted to provide the answers for these questions in their 2008 Final Limited Reevaluation Report and Environmental Assessment of the Tamiami Trail (LRR). After considering and reviewing Congressional directives, previous reports, and previous alternatives and costs, the Corps, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and

[184] Susan Jackson, "Everglades Supporters Celebrate Tamiami Trail Groundbreaking," *Jax Strong Jacksonville*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Vol. 1, Issue 4 (December 2009): 3.
[185] Ibid,.

Wildlife Service not only illustrated the recommendations for the one-mile bridge, but also outlined other construction efforts such as raising the adjacent L-29 canal and engaging in road mitigation efforts, explained the updated cost of the project from early estimates, and presented both the existing and future conditions of the surrounding environment. While these other aspects of the report are immensely important, it is how the Corps arrived to the recommendation of a one-mile bridge that truly marks a new chapter in the narrative of the road.

Although the Corps in June of 1992 recommended that over ten miles of the Trail be renovated, these recommendations did not include the drastic changes of building a bridge, or raising the road. The Corps instead at the time believed that the culverts in place and renovations to occur following their recommendations would be enough to adequately convey the flow of water to the south of the road. However, after subsequent hydrological analyses it was determined that the culverts designed to increase flow might actually cause erosion and harmful damage to the Trail in the event of abnormal or inadequate rain. To alleviate these concerns, the Corps in 2003 released a report titled the General Reevaluation Report and Supplemental Environment Impact Statement (GRR or the 2003 Preferred Plan) in which a 3,000-foot elevated bridge was recommended with an agreement to pay the Florida Department of Transportation for the easement of water flowage at the un-bridged portions of the Trail. However, the state of Florida had its concerns prior, during, and following the 2003 plan, causing the plan to be revamped and withdrawn without being signed into the record.[186]

Two years later, the Corps revised the GRR and introduced several new alternatives to the earlier proposed 3,000-foot bridge in a report titled the Revised General Reevaluation Report

[186] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Final Limited Reevaluation Report and Environmental Assessment: Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park-Tamiami Trail Modifications*, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL, June 2008, i-iii.

(RGRR). The alternatives included two different options of building a four-mile bridge, several options for a two to three-mile bridge, three 3,000-foot bridges placed in different areas of the Trail, or one large 10.7-mile long elevated road within the existing right-of-way. Instead, the Corps determined that the best option would be to build two bridges, one in the western region of the project area that would be two miles, and another at the eastern end that would be one mile in length. The cost of the project was approximated to be $144 million dollars, and included as part of the 2007 Water Resources Development Act and budget in the 2007 Fiscal Year. However, by the time Congress included the plan, a more detailed cost analysis conducted by Congress placed the cost of the project at an astounding $305 million dollars. This increase in cost pushed Congressional leaders and managers to request that the Corps revise their 2005 RGRR in order to have a more "cost-effective" alternative.[187] It is through this congressional directive that the Corps formed the basis of the 2008 LRR.

Within the 2008 LRR, the Corps reevaluated the most likely cost of the two-bridge plan, and determined the cost would be $430 million dollars by their own cost-risk calculations. In order to be especially meticulous and ensure that this plan would work, the Corps evaluated another twenty-seven options through the lens of hydrological performance (as the report would refer to as flow volume and flow velocity) and ecologic performance.[188] After a thorough process of evaluating all the options available, the Corps determined that the one-mile bridge was the most "cost-effective" alternative. In the opinion of the Corps, this plan titled Alternative 3.2.2a nearly doubled the ecological output as opposed to doing nothing, and was also compatible with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) signed by Congress in

[187] *Ibid*, iv.
[188] *Ibid*,.

2000. Within the report, the Corps also stated with 90 percent confidence that if Congress approved this alternative immediately, the cost of this project would only be $212 million and completion of the bridge could occur in late 2011. Congress this time authorized the cost-cutting plan, and construction commenced once the Corps found a company capable of completing the project. By the time the Corps contracted the project to a construction company based out of Sunrise, Florida named Kiewit Infrastructure Southern Company in 2009, the economy of the country was in the midst of a major recession. Construction companies throughout the country were reducing the costs of their contracts just to receive work. These outside factors reduced the estimated cost by almost 50 percent, and Kiewit Infrastructure only received $81 million dollars from the U.S. Government for building the bridge and completing the other modifications detailed in the plan by the projected date of completion in 2013.[189]

[189] "Construction to Begin on Tamiami Trail," *South Florida Business Journal*, September 28, 2009, http:// http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2009/09/28/daily12.html?page=all (accessed March 12, 2012).

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