

Florida International University Libraries
University Park
Miami, Florida 33199

Proposal

For the Development of
of a Digital Library Collection
for
The “Hole-in-the-Donut” Restoration Project
Everglades National Park

A proposed joint project between

Florida International University Libraries
and
South Florida Natural Resource Center, Everglades National Park

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Background

Among the most serious threats to long-term health and sustainability of the Everglades ecosystem is the invasion of non-indigenous, or exotic, pest plants which opportunistically move in, replace native vegetation, and thrive in response to disturbances in the original natural environment. The persistence of these exotic pest plants and their penetration into surrounding natural communities significantly disrupt ecosystem function, and cause both visible and microbial-level changes to natural systems and processes.

The Hole-in-the-Donut (HID), a 4000-hectare region within Everglades National Park, Dade County, Florida, represents one of the most disturbed environments within the greater Everglades ecosystem. The combined effects of anthropogenic (i.e, mechanized agriculture) and natural disturbances have transformed this area, formerly composed of prairie wetlands, into a major site of exotic plant invasion, characterized by relatively aerobic, nutrient-rich soil conditions that support vegetation dominated by Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*). (Doren *et. al*, 1990¹)

To prevent the further incursion of exotic pest plants, and to create the best possible conditions for natural wetland revegetation of the area, Everglades National Park has now initiated the Hole-in-the-Donut research and restoration program, involving intensive and large-scale efforts for monitoring, research, and modelling. Oversight of the program is being handled by the National Park Service, in cooperation with the Target Restoration Team, a voluntary group of experienced scientists and managers with expertise in wetland restoration and research, who represent many various institutions and agencies. The activities undertaken or overseen by the National Park Service and the Target Restoration Team are expected to result in high-quality and cooperative research; collaboration; and scientific publication that ultimately leads to the successful restoration of the Hole-in-the-Donut area, and a comprehensive understanding of the scientific questions underlying the concept(s) of wetland restoration.

Project Overview

This proposal addresses the need for an integrated and effective system for managing, organizing, preserving, and widely disseminating information relating to the Hole-in-the- Donut research and monitoring program now underway at Everglades National Park.

The objective of the proposed Digital Library project is to establish the 'Hole-in-the-Donut Digital Collection', a sub-section of the Everglades Digital Library already under development through a partnership between the FIU Libraries and Everglades National Park, South Florida Natural Resources Center. The HID Digital Collection will comprise a body of information, data and other HID materials in digital format, available for free and universal access via the Internet/World Wide Web. This collection will serve as an information management system; an electronic archive; and a single point-of-access and retrieval for workers involved or interested in the HID restoration project.

Falling within the scope of the Master Cooperative Agreement between Everglades National Park and FIU (United States Department of Interior, National Park Service, Everglades National Park, Cooperative Master Agreement CA-5280-5-9015, May 1, 1995.), the project draws on the shared expertise, resources and personnel of its sponsors to create an information

¹Doren, Robert F., Louis Whiteaker, George Molnar, and David Sylvia, 1990. "Restoration of former wetlands within the Hole-in-the-Donut in Everglades National Park." paper presented at the 17th Annual Conference on Wetlands Restoration and Creation, Tampa, FL, May 10, 1990.

system for the benefit of scientists, staff, students, and decision makers within Everglades National Park, Florida International University, and the broader community beyond. The requested funding in the amount of \$30,169. would cover the direct costs of staff time and travel to complete the project, as well as scanning equipment and software necessary to enhance the partners' existing technical capabilities for large-scale processing of documents, images, and other relevant materials.

Primary beneficiaries of the HID Digital Collection will include: the members of the HID Target Restoration Team and its coordinating committee; the HID Restoration Program Oversight Panel; scientists, staff and cooperators at Everglades National Park; and the scientists, faculty, and students at Florida International University. Secondary beneficiaries will include the wetland restoration/management community of researchers, scientists, practitioners and decision-makers, as well as the broader community of Everglades scientists, researchers, protectors, advocates, and other stakeholders.

Of secondary importance, the proposed project would also serve as a demonstration project for a large-scale, extensible, and comprehensive Everglades Digital Library. At the successful completion of the proposed project, it is anticipated that the project partners will have established the technical and management infrastructure to fully develop a comprehensive and highly useful Everglades Digital Library, the scope of which would effectively reflect and support the diversity, complexity, breadth and depth of Everglades-related research, restoration, and management efforts.

Scope of Work

The FIU Libraries will complete the following activities between the six-month period from September 1, 1996 to March 1, 1997.

1. Develop and maintain HID Web site (as a sub-section of the existing Everglades Digital Library site at FIU).
2. In the event a dedicated Web service is established at Everglades National Park, work with ENP staff to set up the EDI and HID Web directories, files and related pages.
3. In coordination with Everglades SFNRC staff, identify, collect, process, and upload materials for inclusion on the HID Web site
- 4 Train and supervise one technical assistant (AmeriCorps volunteer to be provided by ENP - SFNRC); one Biological technician (to be provided by ENP-SFNRC); and one student worker (hired by FIU Libraries) for digital scanning, file editing and transfer, and other technical duties as assigned.
5. Investigate options for user interface/search and retrieval system for the HID Digital Library Collection, and submit a written report with recommended technical specifications and implementation plan.