WERP: How an Obsolete Levee and an Abandoned Jetport Hold the Key to a Rain-Driven Swamp



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WERP: How an Obsolete Levee and an Abandoned Jetport Opened the **Door**



WERP: How an Obsolete Levee and an Abandoned Jetport Opened the **Door**



WERP: How an Obsolete Levee and an Abandoned Jetport Opened the Door to a **Pre-Drainage** Swamp

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About the authors













What do we mean **Pre-drainage?**



What do we mean **Pre-drainage?**



Answer:



Answer: Prior to Post-Drainage



Answer: Prior to Post-Drainage









watershed

An area of land that drains to a particular point











The preserve is a **self-contained** rain driven **watershed** that flows unfettered as **sheetflow**

mangrove coast



The preserve is a **self-contained** rain driven **watershed** that flows unfettered as **sheetflow** to the mangrove **coast**

Sky view of watershed



sole input: rainfall

Sky view of watershed





sole output: estuarine coast

sole input: rainfall

Sky view of watershed





Rain-driven swamp







Natural flow ways called **strands** and sloughs






Where did we get this story?

1074

Origin myth

Everglades Jetport



Illustration by Patrick Faricy

From Miami Times: Fiery Debate Over Miami Air Show in Everglades, by Jessica Weiss, 2015

Everglades Jetport



From Miami Times: Fiery Debate Over Miami Air Show in Everglades, by Jessica Weiss, 2015

Everglades Jetport



From Miami Times: Fiery Debate Over Miami Air Show in Everglades, by Jessica Weiss, 2015



















Intervention by Conservationists

Intervention by Conservationists



Joe Browder

Intervention by Conservationists



Marjory Stoneham Douglas Joe Browder

Carved out as **watershed** that feeds downstream estuarine arm of Everglades National Park

















×























Big Cypress **Swamp**



Big Cypress **Swamp**



Big Cypress Swamp



Success, right?



Factors that **fed** the myth
The top of the Big Cypress Swamp's historic watershed was the southern toe of the **Immokalee Rise**



Base from U.S. Geological Survey digital data, 1:2,000,000, 1972 Albers Equal-Area Conic projection Standard Parallels 29°30' and 45°30', central meridian -83°00'



Geographically separate from highly-managed Everglades to the east





Swamp mosaic contains smaller and less connected flow systems than the river of grass



Hydrologically much less impacted that Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades (KOE) ecosystem



Lies outside the USACE/SFWMD Central and Southern (C&SF) project area



Features of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project. (South Florida Water Management District)



Features of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project. (South Florida Water Management District)

Swamp is as close as you get to a pre-drainage condition in south Florida



Psychologically the myth worked

It made us feel good



It was expedient

Sometimes we must choose between what is RIGHT and what is easy

{Albus Dumbledore}

It was expedient

Sometimes we must choose between what is RIGHT and what is easy

{Albus Dumbledore}

ex∙pe∙di∙ent

/ik'spēdēənt/ 🐠

adjective

 (of an action) convenient and practical, although possibly improper or immoral. "either side could break the agreement if it were expedient to do so" synonyms: convenient, advantageous, in one's own interests, useful, of use, beneficial, of benefit, helpful; More

It was what we were told



Who told us this story?





US Congress



Klein Report, 1970



Klein Report, 1970





Boundaries and Drainage Patterns

The Big Cypress Swamp is a loosely defined but recognized physiographic province (Davis, 1943, fig. 1) southwest of lake Okeechobee. Some generalized flow patterns through the area were shown by Parker (1955, plate 11). Neither the physiographic boundaries nor the generalized flow patterns, however, are sufficient for the hydrologic interpretations required for this report.

Boundaries and Drainage Patterns

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Davis, 1943



Parker, 1955

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY



WATER-SUPPLY PAPER 1255 PLATE 12

TOPOGRAPHIC-ECOLOGIC MAP OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA 146881 0 - 55 (In proceed No. 12

Parker, 1955



MAP OF SOUTHEASTERN FLORIDA, SHOWING DIRECTIONS OF SURFICIAL DRAINAGE AND TRENDS OF BAR-AND-SWALE TOPOGRAPHY



Subarea C occupies the central part of the Big Cypress and drains toward the Park. It constitutes about three-fifths of the Big Cypress-1,450 square miles. At present, subarea C is drained naturally except for two canals in the western part, the Barron River and Turner River Canals. Subarea C occupies the central part of the Big Cypress and drains toward the Park. It constitutes about three-fifths of the Big Cypress--1,450 square miles. At present, subarea C is drained naturally except for two canals in the western part, the Barron River and Turner River Canals.

> Myth of rain driven swamp is born






Jetport Advisory Board Report, 1971









Tamiami Trail National Parkway



Everglades-Big Cypress Recreation Area



Big Cypress National **Freshwater** Reserve



Big Cypress Conservation Act, 1973



Big Cypress Area of Critical Concern (state law)



Public Law 93-440, 1974



Big Cypress Area of Critical Concern (state law)

Big Cypress National Preserve (federal law)



Big Cypress Area of Critical Concern (state law)

Big Cypress National Preserve (federal law)

Enabling Legislation

An Act to establish the Big Cypress National Preserve in the State of Florida, and for other purposes. (88 Stat. 1255) (P.L. 93-440)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That (a) in order to assure the preservation, conservation, and protection of the natural, scenic, hydrologic, floral and faunal, and recreational values of the Big Cypress Watershed in the State of Florida and to provide for the enhancement and public enjoyment thereof, the Big Cypress National Preserve is hereby established.

Legislative History of Public Law 93-440

or manu.

Basically, the watershed can be divided into three subbasins. The central subbasin, however, remains relatively undisturbed by man. Here, except for two canals, water feeds naturally from the Big Cypress Swamp through the western portion of the Everglades National Park. It is in this subbasin that the entire Big Cypress National Preserve will be located if authorized as recommended by the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

More Legislative History

P.L. 93-440

C. The Big Cypress National Preserve

The proposed Big Cypress National Preserve is a large, complex, mostly undeveloped portion of the original watershed. Coupled with the contiguous northwestern portion of the Everglades National Park and its estuary, it is said to form a nearly complete hydrologic unit. Although the preserve is characteristic of the optime material of the



Reality

What actually happened












































1968

































Not a selfcontained rain-driven watershed



Truncated and canal-drained watershed

But that's not what's surprising!



Crisscrossed with canals

Point discharging to tide

Point discharging to tide





Exacerabates saltwater intrusion



Headwater flows have been severed



Headwater flows have been severed



West Feeder Diversions



Including OK Slough










Again, not surprising!

THE ENVIRONMENT OF SOUTH FLORIDA, A SUMMARY REPORT

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY PROFESSIONAL PAPER 1011



U.5. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Resource and Land Investigations (RALI) Program



McPherson et al, 1976

Vegetation Map from Davis, 1940



Vegetation Map from Davis, 1940

Hydrographic Interpretation of 1940 map





Dragon's den of self-contained watershed















The Jelly Bean Big Cypress watershed Klein, 1970

watershed to ENP's estuarine arm, 1974



The Jelly Bean Post-drainage Big Cypress watershed Klein, 1970

Post-drainage watershed to ENP's estuarine arm, 1974



The Jelly Bean Post-drainage Big Cypress watershed Klein, 1970

Post-drainage watershed to ENP's estuarine arm, 1974



Pre-drainage?

The Jelly Bean Post-drainage Big Cypress watershed Klein, 1970 Post-drainage watershed to

ENP's estuarine arm, 1974



Pre-drainage?

The Jelly Bean Post-drainage Big Cypress watershed Klein, 1970 Post-drainage watershed to

ENP's estuarine arm, 1974



Kelly's assignment to WERP class:

Write an essay on the swamp's connection Lake O?

> Dragon's den of self-contained watershed



> Dragon's den of self-contained watershed

Dragon's den of ^{1f}-contained ershed



Loss of **headwaters** to north



Loss of **headwaters** to north



Not just Okeechobee



10 ft

Not just Okeechobee



10 ft

Ft Thomson Falls



Ft Thomson Falls



Lake Flirt



Go Hydrology!









Usually think of **just** EAA



Lake O

Everglades







South
















East





East

And **not** just EAA



In the Everglades too









The Reality



Klein Report, 1970



Klein Report, 1970



Klein Report, 1970
















































Pre-drainage swamp was **much bigger** than today's truncated watershed









Pre-drainage swamp was **much bigger** than today's truncated watershed



Pre-drainage swamp was **groundwater** fed by Immokalee Rise







Pre-drainage swamp was **much bigger** than today's truncated watershed



Pre-drainage swamp was **groundwater** fed by Immokalee Rise, not just rain



Pre-drainage swamp water **Everglades fed**, today it is drained into the Everglades





Pre-drainage swamp was **much bigger** than today's truncated watershed



Pre-drainage swamp was **groundwater** fed by Immokalee Rise, not just rain



Pre-drainage swamp water **Everglades fed**, today it is drained into the Everglades



Pre-drainage **flow budget** was profoundly larger than today

Dredging of and draining into the Caloosahatchee was first and biggest impact



Dredging of and draining into the **Caloosahatchee** was first and biggest impact



Pre-drainage swamp was ground-water fed, today it is **ground-water drained**



Dredging of and draining into the **Caloosahatchee** was first and biggest impact



Pre-drainage swamp was ground-water fed, today it is **ground-water drained**



OK Slough sadly does not flow into Fakahatchee Strand



Dredging of and draining into the **Caloosahatchee** was first and biggest impact



Pre-drainage swamp was ground-water fed, today it is **ground-water drained**



OK Slough sadly does not flow into Fakahatchee Strand



The swamp is managed as a fireshed, not as a watershed as envisioned by founders

Today's conservation lands are a **derelict ruins** of pre-drainage past



What do we mean by **"derelict ruins?"**



Think of pre-drainage swamp as a hydrologic cathedral

































OK Slough Status Quo

Inadequate upstream flood control

Polluted water

No flow of OK Slough into Panther Refuge or Fakahatchee Canal diverts flow from natural flow paths

Point discharge to coast Polluted water

With Keystone in Place



Closer look



Halfway Creek - Status Quo



With Keystone in Place



Proposed Condition

Recommendations



(1) Rain-driven self-contained swamp mentality has **imperiled** Everglades Restoration

Recommendations



(1) Rain-driven self-contained swamp mentality has **imperiled** Everglades Restoration



(2) We can rebuild the BigCypress Swamp ruins bystrategic restoration at criticalkeystone spots

Status Quo isn't free

Status Quo isn't free



Status Quo isn't free






\$0



for increasing swamp's long-term **natural resilience** to fight **drought**

Drought vulnerable



Drought vulnerable



Drought resistant



Questions