Biscayne Coastal Wetlands

"When the well's dry, we know the worth of water."

- Benjamin Franklin

Coastal Wetlands

Coastal, or saltwater, wetlands consist of salt marshes and mangrove swamps. These habitats fuel both terrestrial and aquatic food chains. Wetlands contribute to water quality by removing excess nutrients and pollutants that originated in the uplands before they reach the estuary. Wetlands also offer important habitat for a wide variety of organisms that rely on the area as a nursery ground, and provide protection against coastal erosion.

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)

The Everglades Restoration Project has been developed with the efforts of the State of Florida and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The plan was approved to restore the original "river of grass." It will capture water that would otherwise make its way to the ocean and direct it back into the marshland. This is the nation's largest such project, costing $7.8 billion and about 20 years to develop. One of the CERP Projects is located in the Biscayne Coastal Wetlands.

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The Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, in partnership with Florida Communities Trust, acquired portions of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands to preserve the natural mangrove coast, provide hazard mitigation, and to protect the County's water resources. These lands are part of a national and state effort to restore America's Everglades.

Biscayne Bay is a shallow, subtropical lagoon along the southeastern coast of Florida. The Bay is a fairly recent geological formation and the average natural depth was historically three to nine feet. Today, much of this area has been modified and dredged and average depths now range from six feet to ten feet. The shoreline is primarily undeveloped and is lined with mangroves and tidal inlets. The rich fauna found in Biscayne Bay results from the diverse habitats found in the bay. Extensive seagrass beds, mangrove forests, estuarine, and hard-bottom communities are found here. In addition to fish directly important to man, such as snook and red drum, the mangrove and estuarine areas support a diverse collection of other fishes and waterfowl which are links in a food web which carries the rich productivity of the mangrove forests and estuarine zone out to benefit the entire Biscayne Bay ecosystem.