The Museum of Discovery and Science and the
South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Collaboration Committee

OUTREACH PLAN FOR GREATER EVERGLADES ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

Executive Summary

Purpose and Background

The purpose of this three-phase Outreach Plan is to implement the public-private partnership between the Task Force and the Museum of Discovery and Science.

Involving the general public in the projects and progress of the Everglades Restoration will be one of the most important challenges of the government agencies charged with completing the restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem, including the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force recognized the Museum of Discovery and Science's history of 25-years of demonstrated success in providing effective environmental education both on and off-site to a wide range of people including urban, minority and underserved communities throughout South Florida. As a result, a partnership between the Task Force and the Museum was formalized in 1999 to create an ongoing dialog about Everglades restoration and to explore ways in which the groups could work together on outreach programming. The primary intent of this effort is to assist in providing useful and engaging public information about the restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem to the more than 500,000 visitors who come to the Museum annually. To do this, the partnership must draw on the Museum facility and its staff of program coordinators, educators, designers and community-relations professionals as well as representatives from the Task Force.

Recognizing the limited budgets afforded for outreach by government entities, and the Museum's plans for the future, the Museum/Task Force Collaboration Committee has developed a Multi-Year Phased Outreach Plan. This Plan will draw upon the strengths of all members of the partnership agreement and will communicate important ideas and information to the Museum's annual visitors and its own outreach efforts. Designed as a "living document," this phased Plan also allows for additions and enhancements as new initiatives and opportunities arise. This Outreach Plan includes three phases. Phase I is achievable within existing budgets. Phases II and III address budget requests for future years.

Phase I: 2001-2002

The primary intent of Phase I is to update the Museum's existing environmental education efforts and build the foundation for implementing phases II and III of the Outreach Plan. They represent a full range of programmatic offerings and will serve as the key aspects for future activities of the partnership.

Components Identified to Date

- Information dissemination
- Electronic outreach
- School-based education
- Museum-based education
- Retrofit displays and exhibits
- Outdoor exhibitry
- South Florida Restoration Science Forum
- "Fun" childrens' educational piece

Funding Requirements

- Secure in-kind contributions for information dissemination, electronic outreach, school and Museum based education initiatives *(ongoing)*
- Secure $76,500 total combined from members of the partnership for retrofit of displays and exhibits, Outdoor Exhibitry and public outreach related to the Science Forums *(complete)*
- Seek grant for activity based educational piece *(pending)*

Phase II: 2002-2003

The primary intent of Phase II is to extend the reach and impact of the partnership by building upon both the activities undertaken in Phase I and the Museum's efforts to revitalize and enhance its existing facility. Specifically, we seek to undertake activities that will allow the Museum to increase its programmatic offerings, serve as a community resource and provide new and/or improved interpretive exhibits.

Components

- Museum-based education
- School-based education
- "Fun" children's educational piece
- Information dissemination
- Resource center
- Planning for renovation and enhancement of existing exhibits

Funding Strategy

- Secure in-kind contributions for information dissemination and other projects as appropriate *(ongoing)*
- Secure allocations from local, regional, state and federal government.
- Seek grants from public and private sources as appropriate.

Phase III: Beyond 2003

The intent of phase III is to complete the Florida Environmental Education Center. The Museum has been awarded a Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) grant in the amount of $4.4 million that will allow for the creation of the Florida Environmental Education Center (FEEC), an expansion of the renovated Museum estimated to cost $10.4 million. In order to qualify for the PECO grant, the Museum is required to generate an equal match.

Components

- Educational Spaces
- Resource Center
- Interpretive Exhibits
- Outdoor Exhibitry
- Program Offerings

Funding Strategy

- Awarded $4.4 million PECO Grant
- Seek allocations through Congressional Delegation
- Seek allocations through the State of Florida
- Apply for grant funding from government programs
- Apply for funding through private foundations, corporations and individuals