Program Name: Operations of National Park Service
Project Name: Python and invasive species removal authorized agent program for South Florida National Parks
Project ID: 2811
Lead Agency: National Park Service

Strategy and Biennial Report Objective Addressed: 2-B.4
Invasive Species Strategic Action Framework Goal: 4

Measurable Output(s): Number of individuals removed; reduction in occurrence of invasive species over time within target areas

Project Synopsis:
Burmese pythons are currently well-established within Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve, and likely occur within Biscayne National Park to some degree. Efforts to remove pythons from NPS lands have been under way for many years to limit ecological impacts, but also to obtain individuals for scientific studies. Due to the low detection probability for pythons, efforts to increase search effort have been necessary to continue to remove pythons. Within the Parks, existing regulations prevent "hunting" and removal of wildlife from the Parks. Through the authorized agent program, members of the public are authorized to participate in python removal as "agents of the NPS."

Authorized agents are primarily interested members of the public, and we work to ensure that they are adequately trained and prepared to remove pythons. Their efforts help to generate detection probabilities, gain natural history information about invasive species, and increasingly, they serve an important role in detecting new species. In 2014, authorized agents detected a Nile crocodile in Everglades National Park that led to its eventual removal. Currently, the activities and information from the authorized agents are coordinated in conjunction with USGS to provide invasive species removal from all South Florida park units.

Current Status:
In 2014, there were just over 30 authorized agents working in the parks, and their level of effort fluctuates, but generally results in several trips per week, or 20 or more person hours of searching for pythons and other invasive species

Project Schedule:
Start Date: ~2009
Finish Date: Ongoing

Detailed Project Budget Information

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Balance to Complete	Total
Federal	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000		
SFWMD**							
Local							
Total	60000	60000	60000	60000	60000		**300,000**

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Pictures:

Photo credit – Tom Rahill and the Swamp Apes