

THE TRUST *for* PUBLIC LAND  
CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE



**Get Your Feet Wet...The Plan to Discover Biscayne Bay**

South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Working Group  
July 21, 2006



## Public Access Defined

- Physical
- Visual
- Socioeconomic
- Information and Education





## Study Boundaries

- North
  - Dense urban residential and commercial development
  - Limited physical or visual access to the Bay
- Central
  - Working waterfronts
  - Signature landscapes
  - Prime access
  - Limited connectivity
- South
  - Residential, gated communities
  - Some industrial, utility
  - Resource-based access
  - National Park





## Elements of the Biscayne Bay Access Plan

- Phase I – Inventory
- Phase II – Opportunity Analysis
- Phase III – Final Plan
  - Plan
  - Executive Summary
  - Brochure
  - Web Site





## Phase I Summary

### – Public Awareness Study

- Level of Awareness and Interest in Bay
- Attitudes Toward Bay and Access Points
- Level of Use
- Concerns for Bay's Future

### – Existing Conditions

- Visual Access Sites
- Existing Physical Access
  - More than 6,300 acres of coastal land in public ownership (excluding Biscayne National Park)
  - Less than 50 percent physically accessible
  - 95 percent of Biscayne National Park is accessible only by boat
  - Facility Provisions/Conditions



# Phase I Summary

## – Existing Conditions (continued)

- Transportation/Public Transit
- Environmental Education and Public Information
- Recreational Opportunities
  - Swimming
  - Fishing
  - Diving
  - Dining/Retail/Entertainment
  - Paddling
  - Passive Pursuits (Picnicking, Greenways and Trails)



## Phase II Summary

- Access Advisory Team
  - More than 30 stakeholders, representing recreational and commercial user groups, public agencies and municipalities, civic and business organizations, and environmental educators
  - Deliberated using collaboration and facilitation
  - Assisted with identifying:
    - SWOT
    - A Vision for Public Access
    - Issues, Goals and Objectives
    - Action Steps Toward Improvement



## Values

- Environmental Sustainability
- Wildlife Appreciation
- Equity and Diversity
- Quality of Life
- Visually Aesthetic
- Economic Sustainability
- Un-impacted Viewsheds



## Vision

Biscayne Bay shines as Miami-Dade County's crown jewel. Its crystal waters flow from a vibrant urban area to pristine, natural settings reminiscent of early Florida when unencumbered vistas blurred the line between sky and sea. We continually return to these shores and waters to see, feel and experience their magic by means of a well-defined and integrated system of trails and water-borne routes. No matter where we live, how old we are or what our abilities may be, we enjoy safe physical and visual access to a diversity of recreational, commercial, cultural and natural experiences that entertain and challenge us and restore our souls. We celebrate the Bay's inherent beauty and respect the wildlife living there. We use the Bay responsibly, ensuring its health and knowing that it is the key to the quality and vitality of our community.



## Goals

- Develop a Comprehensive Environmental Education and Public Awareness Program
- Create an Ethic of Respect for Wildlife and Environmental Responsibility
- Ensure Responsible, Balanced and Equitable Access to the Bay
- Promote Economic Vitality and Balanced Growth
- Establish a System for Coordinated Governance and Sound Public Policy
- Develop an Integrated System of Transportation Alternatives
- Ensure Safety and Preservation by Consistent Enforcement of Protective Measures



## Key Recommendations

- Empower a countywide Biscayne Bay organization to sustain the ongoing effort of protecting and enhancing Bay resources, and advocating for responsible Bay stewardship
- Strengthen measures to safeguard physical and visual access to the Bay, including consistent enforcement of existing laws and regulations
- Promoting public communication programs to build appreciation of the Bay, including publications, media coverage, online resources
- Protecting critical lands and water areas for public access in perpetuity, including public acquisition of key sites and through other measures



## Key Recommendations

- Create a shoreline walking/biking trail to provide an interconnected greenway along the waterfront
- Implement a waterway trail for canoes and kayaks
- Improve Miami-Dade’s boating infrastructure to enable residents and visitors to enjoy Bay waters more easily, affordably and safely
- Step-up efforts to educate boaters in safety as well as environmental responsibility
- Improve coordination among marine patrol agencies



# Deliverables, Purpose and Audiences

- Get Your Feet Wet ... The Plan to Discover Biscayne Bay
  - Engagement – pick it up
  - Inform and Educate – visually and textually
  - Clarify – issues affecting access
  - Call to Action – what you can do
- Executive Summary
  - Leave-behind piece
- Consumer Brochure
  - General distribution
- Internet component - [www.discoverbiscaynebay.org](http://www.discoverbiscaynebay.org) interactive access web site
  - Plan a day on the Bay

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