

For many years now, the Tropical Audubon Society has been tracking the progress of ecosystem restoration projects in Miami-Dade County. Following is an overview of some of what is planned near your neighborhood. We welcome your interest and would be happy to answer questions. Please e-mail us at director@tropicalaudubon.org , call us at 305-667-7337 and check our webpage at www.tropicalaudubon.org . As advocates for the environment, we fight to protect and restore the natural world and your quality of life.

We could always the support of caring residents and businesses. Visit our webpage to find out more about what we do and how you can help!

The Deering Estate flowway is part of the Acceler8 portion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). This project is one of 8 CERP projects that was chosen to be 'accelerated' for partial or full completion before the timeline that was originally projected in the full restoration plan. The Deering Estate flowway is a component of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project (BBCWP) - which is one of two Dade County CERP projects that became part of Acceler8. The flowway is intended to take water from the canal that is adjacent to the Deering property west of Old Cutler, and divert that water to a natural flowway on the Deering Estate property. This water diversion will accomplish important hydrologic and ecologic restoration to the Deering Estate wetlands, shoreline, and the associated near shore waters of Biscayne Bay.

Other components of the BBCWP, while not part of Acceler8, are moving forward as well. One of those is another flowway that will take water from the C-100 canal and divert it to a spreader canal that passes through Coastal Wetlands running south of the old Burger King property towards Black Point. Again, the diversion of water is important to the long-term ecological health and sustainability of Biscayne Bay, Biscayne National Park and the coastal wetlands. Canal discharges are very damaging to the bay, causing drastic fluctuations in salinity that can have devastating impacts on water quality and wildlife. Canal discharges also often transport damaging excess nutrients and other pollutants directly to the bay. Historically, the water that now flows through canals used to get to the bay by flowing over land - across wetlands. This 'sheet flow' provided the water needed for the wetlands to be healthy, and the wetlands acted as water treatment - taking out any excess nutrients or pollutants before the water made it to the bay.

Right now, the US Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District are trying to finalize the design of BBCWP components. To get the most hydrologic and ecological benefit, the spreader canal needs to be built as far west as possible. Unfortunately, land is being developed faster than the CERP projects are being built, and once land is converted to development, it is no longer usable for CERP. The Tropical Audubon Society is urging regulatory agencies to consider the needs of CERP as they consider any applications for development. We are also urging the Army Corps and the District to acquire those lands (at fair market value from willing sellers) in order to protect the opportunity to fully implement CERP and realize the best benefits for Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park.

Currently, **the Tropical Audubon Society is aware of two new developments being considered on lands east of Old Cutler and north of Black Point.** (Note: there may be more that we haven't yet discovered). The first, called Cutler Properties, is the parcel that is between the old Burger King property and Shoma Homes. The second, called Cutler Bay

Village, is east of SW 87 Ave between theoretical SW 224 Street and 232 Street. Both of the projects include lands that could be used by CERP if they were available.

Cutler Properties is proposing to fill over 30 acres of wetlands - wetlands that we feel could be restored, or best used for the spreader canal. If permitted to fill the 30+ acres, the developer will add that to 9 acres of uplands along Old Cutler and build residential units on over 40 acres. While they have not committed to a final site plan, they have talked about building 341 residential units. The application is currently in process at Miami-Dade's Department of Environmental Resources Management for the wetlands fill permit (305-372-6575, 33 SW 2nd Ave, Suite 400, Miami, FL 33130). To get the permit, the developer needs a variance from the County's environmental regulations, and they have requested that variance from the County's Environmental Quality Control Board (EQCB). The Tropical Audubon Society is opposed to the issuance of the variance and stated so at the October EQCB hearing. It is our understanding that the applicant will next appear before the EQCB on November 10 - although that agenda is not yet posted on-line (see http://www.miamidade.gov/derm/code_eqcb.asp). The EQCB hearing is public and anyone can make comment to the board - check the webpage for details. The EQCB is interested in hearing from residents in the area. The consultant for the residential development is Ed Swakon, he can be reached at 305-445-5553 or ESwakon@eas-eng.com.

Cutler Bay Village is proposing to fill over 165 acres of similarly restorable or usable wetlands of CERP. The total development is proposed to cover 175 acres and no information has been provided about the type of development that is being proposed. This development is currently in process at the US Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office for the wetlands fill permit (561-472-3504, 4400 PGA Blvd, Suite 500, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410). The consultant for the development is Rainer Schael, he can be reached at 305-383-3404 or rainer@rs-env.com.

CERP is envisioned to provide associated benefits to the built environment (like existing neighborhoods). By building features that allow water managers alternatives for how and where canal water is moved, we move towards a future water management system that better provides for our urban drinking water supply and flood control, as well as the tremendous environmental benefits we know can be achieved. Tropical Audubon remains committed to advocating for the full implementation of CERP. Please lend your voice to the effort.

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