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(with apologies to Ms. Douglas)

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THE EVERGLADES:
River of Grass

I. THE NAME

"There are no other Everglades in the world.

"They are, they have always been, one of the unique regions of the earth, remote, never wholly known. Nothing anywhere else is like them: their vast glittering openness, wider than the enormous visible round of the horizon, the racing free saltiness and sweetness of their massive winds, under the dazzling blue heights of space. They are unique also in the simplicity, the diversity, the related harmony of the forms of life they enclose. The miracle of the light pours over the green and brown expanse of saw grass and of water, shining and slow-moving below, the grass and water that is the meaning and the central fact of the Everglades of Florida. It is a river of grass."

Marjory Stoneman Douglas
COURSE OBJECTIVE

Participants will have the opportunity to:

-- identify unconventional avenues of interpretive expression;

-- intensify their perception of the nature of interpretation as a communications process;

-- diversify their inventory of personal interpretive skills.

Participation in this training activity will generally enhance their abilities to more substantially effect positive attitudinal responses in park visitors.
III. THE BASICS

Monday thru Wednesday, November 7-9

Almost without exception, Everglades is a long way from where you started. Everyone knows it takes forever to drive across Texas, but driving the length of Florida is no casual Sunday afternoon ride, either! Since you are here, you might as well get involved in what it's all about.

The entire Interpretive Division at Everglades staffed for the winter season can be almost overwhelming, so it seems only fair to give you the first three days in the shelter of your district under the watchful eye of your supervisor.

Those of you at Shark Valley who have driven umpteen hundred miles just to arrive will be delighted to find that you are going to learn to drive a tram. At least you will be beginning in a familiar posture. Flamingoites will most probably learn about canoeing in shallow water (it's easier to find the gear when the canoe tips over), Everglades City folks will renew their bicycling skills (we don't have any three-wheelers up there), and The Royal Palm family (which has the most returnees percentage-wise) will practice what they do best...talk!

Interpreters at Everglades are called Fern Feelers. We realize that isn't terribly original, but it is a point of pride with us. You can readily identify with a group referred to as "THE Fern Feelers". We must admit, however, that on occasions, uttered with a somewhat different inflection, the reference has been, "THOSE Fern Feelers!" Regardless, we remain a group!

The first three days are also filled with fun activities like filling out personnel papers, getting your keys and figuring out what they open, and best of all...getting your badges. Surprised?

During training itself, we practice the custom of brown-bagging for lunch (unless you prefer to fast). Other than junkfood machines at headquarters and Royal Palm, the nearest food source is in Florida City (10 miles away). There will, occasionally, be coffee and donuts provided, so an ecologically sound sierra cup makes sense.

Clothing will be worn during training sessions—however, comfort is the key word. Although we tend to take a casual, light-hearted approach to training, we are extremely serious about its importance. We hope you will enter into the program with the same attitude.
IV. THE DECISIONS

1. First Aid -- We will offer a 15-hour First Aid course, in 3 1/2 hour evening sessions on Monday and Tuesday, November 14 and 15, and a full 8 hours on Monday, November 21. Len McNabb of our Research staff will be the instructor. Successful completion will qualify participants for the standard First Aid card. We urge all of you, permanent and seasonal alike, to take advantage of this training, either for the first time or as a refresher. We will plan to offer the CPR course (which is only 4 hours and can be done in an evening session) later in the season. See Fern Feeler #1 (Patricia) to sign up.

2. Orientation Flights -- Everglades National Park Air Corps is staffed by Ralph "Airplane-in-a-Rainbow" Miele, and Art "Ace" Lussier, and equipped with two amphibian aircraft—the 3-passenger Lake and the 5-passerger Widgeon. The Widgeon is in for a scheduled engine change and so the Lake will be limited in the number of orientation flights it can handle during the training period. Fledgeling (first-season) Fern Feelers will have first priority in flight assignments. Again, see FF #1 to sign up.

3. Field trips to Flamingo/Key Largo. Obviously, if you are in the Flamingo District, that won't be your first choice for the afternoon trip on Tuesday, November 15. We will be carpooling, and the Key Largo group will visit with the staff there (District Ranger Hank Blatt heard we were coming and scheduled a trip to Fort Jefferson), but we can probably convince the Whitehead's to talk to us. The trip to Flamingo will include an opportunity to hear Bill Gaylord's eloquent prose on his favorite subject—sewage—and tour the treatment plant in addition to the other tourist attractions there. Again, sign up early.

4. A decision you DON'T have to make is which group to join for the overnight campout. We've done it for you. It won't do any good to appeal, either. Your intrepid leader (Fern Feeler #2), upon the advice of his lovely assistant (Fern Feeler #3), engaged the group leaders in a game of chance with a deck of marked cards, and thereby determined your fate. Perhaps they will explain. Perhaps not.
V. GETTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Thursday, November 10 -- Main Visitor Center Auditorium

8:15 am  "Who's Here?" I'm here, and you're here, but who are all the rest of these people? The only way to find out is to be ready to start promptly at 8:15 am. Why not plan to be here by 8:00 am?

9:15 am  Now that we are all acquainted, let's meet the man responsible for the previous hour's confusion--Intrepid Leader, Fern Feeler #2, or just plain George!

10:00 am  According to Webster, "good" can be an adjective--"of a favorable character or tendency"; an adverb--"well"; or a noun--"praiseworthy character." "Good" is also a Superintendent, as in John.

10:45 am  Break -- Did you bring your sierra cup?

11:00 am  Film: "Everglades: Seeking a Balance"
Discussion led by John. Good! (also an exclamation)

11:45 am  Other folks you will want to get to know better...
--Our Librarian, Alcyone Bradley, makes a brief appearance before disappearing from the Headquarters area to the Research Center.
--Everglades Natural History Association Business Manager (and leading male model) Dick "Colonel" Martin, and his sidekick Clyde (Smiley) Walker.
--Fred Cochran, Concessions Management Specialist, is the liaison man between "us" and "them". Fred is happy to see the seasonals arrive...he's no longer "the new guy."
--Glenn Farrar, Chief of Maintenance--the division that fixes everything from leaking faucets to balky trams, to broken hearts.
--It's almost lunchtime--look out for a Big Mack Attack!

Assistant Superintendent McClain closes the morning session.

12:15 pm  Fast lunch - or lunch fast -- whatever.
**Thursday, November 10 (continued)**

1:00 pm  
First orientation flight.

1:00 pm  
Shark Valley personnel will recognize a tram immediately. The remainder of the staff may need a little coaching. Resource Management has recently come into its own... own building, own personnel, own equipment. If we can divert Jim Olson's attention for awhile from his impending move to Denver, he will talk about the program here at Everglades, and we will ride the tram through the Hole-in-the-Donut. We know that normally the hole in a donut is nothing, but that's not true in this case.

2:45 pm  
Second orientation flight (if the first one gets back).

3:30 pm  
We go from the 'hole' to the newest jewel in the crown of Everglades achievement--the Research Center. Gary Hendrix and his staff will conduct us on a tour of the Center and try to explain to us why they are there.

7:30 pm  
"Interpreters interpreting interpretation to interpreters." Guinea pigs welcome for interpretive training experiment. Join Jack de Golia--if you can--for a workshop on impromptu interpretation of complicated topics. Test, refresh, awaken, and exercise your speaking, standing, imagining, and critiquing skills. Begins promptly at 7:30 pm in the Visitor Center auditorium. Please sign up with Jack during the day on Thursday. Limited enrollment. Unlimited opportunity. May be repeated if demand demands (another time, another place).

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**Friday, November 11**

**VI. THE EVERGLADES' LOST**

8:30 - 12:00  
Everyone knows what a compass is. It's round, slightly resembling a pocket watch with nonconforming face and hands, and when worn on a chain or thong around the neck will knock out your two front teeth when you bend over to tie your shoe. Right? So why devote all this time to it? After all, who could get lost in Everglades National Park if you stay on the Main Park Road?
Friday, November 11 (continued)

This orienteering field activity, led by the rugged and wiley pathfinders of the Environmental Education Group is guaranteed to put you at ease as you set off on the overnight activity next week, armed with your uncanny ability to plot a course.

Meet at Headquarters. Bring brown bag.

12:00
Open brown bag--dispatch contents.

VII. A PIECE OF THE ROCK

1:00 pm
Orientation flight #1.

1:30
Superintendent now, but not forever. Interpreter now, interpreter forever. John Good reverts! Geology is the topic. Participation in mountain climbing demonstration is optional. Bring your own pitons.

2:45 pm
1:00 pm Orientation flight repeated.

DON'T FORGET JIM OLSON'S PARTY AT THE HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE OFFICER'S CLUB TONIGHT.

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Saturday and Sunday, November 12 & 13

VIII. RESPITE

No scheduled activities. We suggest long periods of rest and relaxation, interspersed with progressive aerobics conditioning to prepare you for the week ahead. Put in a supply of brown bags and high energy foods.

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Monday, November 14 -- Visitor Center Auditorium

IX. EVERGLADES TRILOGY

8:30
BOOK I -- FIGURES
Ed Counihan, the man who can add 2 and 2 and get 4 9 times out of 10, along with Barbara Gray, the new Personnel Officer, who is learning that all the swingers aren't back in Washington, fill us in on topics like paychecks, seasonal hiring, getting a permanent job, etc. Brown bags will be checked at the door to insure that no rotten eggs or tomatoes enter the meeting room.
Monday, November 14 (continued)

9:30 am  BOOK II--FANTASY
Jim Hall, a member of the English Department staff at Florida International University (let's hear it for old F.I.U.) is a poet, and we know it, so let him show it!

10:30 am  Break

10:45 am  BOOK III -- FACTS
Most of us acknowledge the value of water in one form or another--you swim in it, ski on it, do the laundry and wash the car with it, bathe in it occasionally, it's difficult to brush your teeth without it, and there's really no substitute for it when making ice cubes. Frank Nix sees water in a different way--especially the problems and dangers involved in water management and/or the lack of it, and how all of this affects not only the Everglades, but all of south Florida.

12:15 pm  Lunch at Pine Island Chickee (tomatoes and questionable eggs will be returned upon request. However, in view of the next item on the agenda, we will be checking to see that subject foods are consumed on the premises.)

X. THE ENFORCERS

1:15 pm  Rangers vs. Interpreters. Only on the volleyball court, Fern Feelers! It is a known fact that in order to do their job, the Rangers feel impelled to maintain the "image", but basically they are lovable human beings. Rumor has it that our Chief Ranger, Jerry Hammond is occasionally bothered by a troublesome bunion! Let's rap!

XI. ROOTS: EVERGLADES

2:30 pm  An honor to welcome a really dynamic lady--Marjorie Stoneman Douglas, author of EVERGLADES: RIVER OF GRASS

3:30 pm  DO YOU REMEMBER?
YES, I REMEMBER!
WELL, DEARIE, YOU'RE MUCH OLDER THAN I!!
A rare opportunity to meet and talk with some of the early residents of Flamingo and south Florida. The Roberts family can tell first-hand about hurricanes and mosquitoes, and Bob Knight knows how the present Flamingo complex came to be---he built it!
**Monday, November 14 (continued)**

7:00 pm  FIRST AID COURSE (Visitor Center Auditorium).

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**Tuesday, November 15**

**XII. FIRE IN THE GLADES**

ALL RIGHT, FERN FEELERS. NOW HEAR THIS!
This is serious business, so we'll dispense with the levity. Please try to arrive as early as possible. It's going to be busy.

8:00 - 9:00 am  Resource Cache, Pine Island -- **STEP TEST**
You must successfully complete this 5-minute physical fitness test to work on any fires in the park. We suggest eating a light breakfast before the test and **NO COFFEE**. You may wish to bring a pair of shorts or loose-fitting pants to take the test in.

9:00 - 9:30 am  (Break--coffee & donuts--transportation to Hole-in-the-Donut).

9:30 - 10:00 am  Fire Management & Organization

10:00 - 11:00 am  Working as a crew--tools, "the bump".

11:00 - 12:15  Practice Fires

12:15 - 12:30  Wrap-up.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You will be getting dirty, so dress in grubbies. Wear cotton clothing (long pants) and heavy boots. Polyester-type pants and tennis shoes will burn. Persons wearing these items will not be permitted on the fire line. Bring gloves if you have them.

12:30  Instead of peanut butter and jelly, why not jelly and peanut butter today?

1:30  Field trips, Key Largo & Flamingo. Time constraints dictate that the group that goes to Key Largo will not go to Flamingo and vice versa, regardless of what visitors will tell you they can do in a two hour visit to the park! Check with Patricia for vehicle arrangements, carsick pills, etc.

7:00 pm  FIRST AID, 2nd session. (Visitor Center Auditorium).
XIII. JOURNEY TO A FAR CITY

8:00 am  BE ON TIME! EARLY IS ON TIME--ON TIME IS LATE.
This bus costs $22.00 an hour, so enjoy it! Guru Bill
Robertson (scientist, author, and Honorary Fern Feeler)
joins his assembled subjects to travel to the Far City of
Everglades. Staff from Flamingo, Royal Palm, Key Largo,
and Headquarters/Environmental Ed Group will board here
(not necessarily in that order). Travel to Shark Valley
while Dr. Bill enlightens you on facts heretofore unknown.

9:30 am  Shark Valley presents: "THE TRAM TOUR"--original and
uncut version. Nothing left out. Rating: 'Q' (for
questionable).

11:15 am  Again on the bus, we are joined by a visitor from Another
Far Country, Big Cypress. Irv Mortenson will explain
to us why the government is buying up all that acreage and
why the owners are so anxious to sell it! (NOTE: The
original location for the overnight activity was in a lovely,
remote section of the Big Cypress National Preserve,
providing an excellent opportunity for orienteering,
wildlife viewing, biological observations, and a memorable
wilderness experience. Unfortunately, it is also the
middle of hunting season, and 40+ Everglades turkeys
would be quite a temptation for any dedicated hunter.)

Lunch  If you bring a big enough brown bag today, we can all
fashion them into masks to place over our heads and watch
the surprised look on Sammy Hamilton's face when we get
on the boat!

After lunch  Schedule depends on our genial hosts, Sammy & Paula.
It will include boat tour and beach walk, an optional bike
tour of the E.G. City metropolitan area, and seafood
supper. Please do not try to bring fish in a brown bag!
Have faith that it will be provided.

6:30 pm  AND NO LATER! Leave Everglades City. Shark Valley
troops disembark at appropriate location, preferably with
bus stopped.

9:00 pm  Arrive at Headquarters and turn loose the rest of the bunch.
Thursday, November 17 - Visitor Center Auditorium

**IX. WHY CAN'T WE COMMUNICATE?**

8:30

**COMMUNICATIONS -- David Whitman**

When we set up this block of time, we weren't sure what David had in mind, so he sent the following explanation:

QUOTE: You tried to tell them what they thought they knew, but now know differently, even though you are sure they understand. But why are they still confused? Because what you thought you said they think is something else and they do not understand why you do not know what it is they think you said. UNQUOTE.

12:30

Rendezvous a la Brown Bag

**XV. ONE WAY, ANOTHER WAY**

1:30 - 3:30 pm

Long Pine Key Picnic Area (last group of tables)

The staff at Everglades National Park Training Center is proud to present, now, bigger and better than ever before:

THE FIRST ANNUAL FOLK ART/CRAFT FESTIVAL!

We suggest that you separate into small groups and plan to spend some time during the next two hours with each of the demonstrations. Try a little sketching, hum along with the music, taste the foods, get your picture taken, and if you catch a fish, you have to clean it! Any offers to help clear the area at the close of the festival will be gratefully accepted.

4:30 pm

Visitor Center Auditorium. A rare treat and we've asked the rest of the park staff to join us. Dale Crider and Dr. Bittner are from Gainesville where they have developed a unique communications presentation using slides and original music.

**XVI. FEASTING & FRIVOLITY**

6:00 pm

or whenever the fire is hot and the hamburger chef (FF #2) gets his act together at the Pine Island Chickee. The monied permanent staff is happy to host this lavish spread, and invited guests need bring only themselves, and a musical instrument as appropriate. Diversity and participation are the ingredients for a successful musicale, and we hope to instruct the group in the native dance called "Fern Feeler's Fling", best described as a cross between belly dancing and an incurable twitch, performed tastefully, of course.
Friday, November 18

XVII. CEREMONIAL RITES

8:30 am
Meet at Headquarters to board tram for the jumping-off places. Contact group leader in advance to make arrangements for food, gear, beneficiaries, etc. Overnight camping activity is also traditional during seasonal training, and only those with serious medical problems will be excused. Those dismissed automatically become the study victims during Monday's First Aid course which covers practical demonstrations of amputations, tooth extractions, and open heart surgery. Initiation rites exercised on Fledgeling Fern Feelers at the stroke of midnight have been approved by the Regional Safety Officer.

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Saturday, November 19

XVIII. RETURN OF THE FERNS

Ful!-Fledged Fern Feelers will be picked up by tram and ready to go home about noon.

Sunday, November 20.

XIX. DAY OF REST

Do just that!

Monday, November 21.

XX. BIND UP MY WOUNDS, OH GREAT SPIRIT

8:00 - 4:30
FIRST AID -- Hang in there, you can do it!

8:30 am
Orientation Flight #1.

10:30 am
Orientation Flight #2.

Tuesday, November 22

8:30 am
Orientation Flight #1.

10:30 am
Orientation Flight #2.

1:30 pm
Orientation Flight #3.
Tuesday, November 22 (continued)

**XXI. HOME**

The Full Fledged Ferns now return to their homes, armed with knowledge, inspired by leadership, and eager to join with the Lorax in proclaiming to the world, "We Speak For The Trees!"

Wednesday, November 23

**XXII. THE ELEVENTH HOUR**

An ending is a beginning--training is completed and tomorrow heralds the beginning of the 1977/78 season.

Thursday, November 24

**XXIII. DAY OF RECKONING**

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** Pause a moment to reflect on all we have to be thankful for--but only a moment--for today you begin to put into practice the precepts we have explored together during the past 2½ weeks. We are happy to have you with us in a program we call the Fern Feelers Finest. Have a good season!