

AnEta Sewell
Director, Office of Media Relations
Contact: **Randy Smith**
Voice: (561) 682-6197
Pager: (561) 607-3166

April 23, 2002

PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BRINGS THE EVERGLADES INTO THE CLASSROOM

Thanks to a joint education venture, students can now journey through the Everglades ecosystem without leaving the classroom.

This week, middle schools throughout the South Florida Water Management District's 16-county jurisdiction will receive copies of a new resource guide designed to increase awareness and understanding of the Everglades. Developed in conjunction with the Newspapers In Education program, "*Everglades – An American Treasure*" will bring to life the interconnected Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades watershed and the unprecedented state/federal efforts now under way to restore and revitalize this extraordinary ecosystem.

The South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) – along with the School District of Palm Beach County, Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc, the Philippe Cousteau Foundation, and others – partnered together to develop the new and exciting educational resource for educators and students alike.

"Everglades restoration is a complex and long-term endeavor. Because today's students are tomorrow's decision-makers and natural resource stewards, classroom education is an important component of our overall public outreach activities," said SFWMD Executive Director Henry Dean.

Colonel Greg May, Commander of the COE Jacksonville District, said his agency is making Everglades education a public outreach priority. "Partnerships such as this allow us to get accurate and interesting information into the classrooms via the most effective means," said Colonel May.

– more –

In Palm Beach County, the Everglades lesson will be delivered to and taught in every public middle school. Through the Newspaper In Education program network, other South Florida newspapers are supporting this effort by delivering the Everglades material to additional local classrooms. These include: the Orlando Sentinel, the Fort Myers News Press, the Naples Daily News, the Miami Herald, Scripps Publications (Martin/St. Lucie) and the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel.

Combined with proposed distribution to other youth and adult education outlets, this collaborative effort will yield almost 200,000 copies of the Everglades material for public education purposes. A high-school level version and a companion video production are slated for the fall.

For more information or to receive a copy of *Everglades -- An American Treasure*, contact Sandra Jurban via e-mail sjurban@sfwmd.gov or call 1-800-432-2045 ext. 6204.

###