

VI. GLADESMEN PERSPECTIVES

In order to study the Gladesmen Culture and determine if TCPs were present that could be affected by CERP, it was necessary to interview people who identified themselves and others as members of that group. This chapter begins with a discussion of what “Culture” is and then provides a sense of historical and contemporary Gladesmen Culture as seen through the personal histories of its members. These accounts also aided in identifying Gladesmen-related properties, establishing periods of use, and evaluating properties as potential TCPs. All of the people interviewed identified themselves as members of the Gladesmen Folk Culture who felt that they had associations with properties that could be affected by CERP.

The interview excerpts that comprise the majority of this chapter are drawn from the 34 interviews conducted with self-defined Gladesmen as part of this study. An interview involves questioning an individual to obtain an oral history and allows members of a group to discuss their ancestry, childhood memories, personal experiences, and present-day perceptions as a member of a given culture. In conducting interviews, the ethnographer asks questions designed to determine what members of the culture do and what reasons they give for doing so. Interviews also seek to determine what, if any, changes have occurred within a culture through time. Interviews are the established method for eliciting the type of information needed for an ethnographic study of the Gladesmen, as the data gathered provide a unique historical narrative about a group of people, as taken from group members themselves (LeCompte and Schensul 1999:1-3).

Quotes included herein were drawn from much longer interview transcripts; excerpts have been edited slightly to eliminate wordiness and repetition without changing or influencing meaning. Oral interviews were reviewed to draw out statements touching on common topical themes that were evident among those interviewed, and excerpts were drawn (from approximately 550 pages of transcriptions) to provide a representative cross section of the verbal responses. The complete interview transcriptions are included in a separate volume on file with the Division of Historical Resources and USACE, Jacksonville District. Additional written accounts were obtained during a period of public comment that represented a larger segment of the Gladesmen population (Chapter VIII).

DEFINING HUMAN CULTURE

There are many anthropological definitions of human “culture” and its meaning is fundamental to this study. The definition of culture used by the National Park Service in their cultural resource management guidelines is preferred. Culture is considered:

a system of behaviors, values, ideologies, and social arrangements. These features, in addition to tools and expressive elements such as graphic arts, help humans interpret their universe as well as deal with features of their environments, natural and social. Culture is learned, transmitted in a social context, and modifiable (NPS 2000:28).

Further, the Gladesmen Folk Culture can be defined as representing a unique adaptation to the environment of southern Florida. According to E. B. Tylor, the term "culture" was used to denote the totality of the humanly created world, from material culture and cultivated landscapes, to social institutions (political, religious, economic, etc.), to knowledge and meaning. Tylor's (1958 [1871]:1) still widely cited definition states, "Culture (or civilization), taken in its broad, ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."

Ecological anthropology, the study of the complex relationships between people and the environment, offers a means of refining that "complex whole." Within ecological anthropology, there is a tendency to describe culture as a "tool" used by society to maintain its adaptation to nature. This "tool" comprises concrete, physical tools, but also knowledge, skills, and forms of organization. Rappaport (1968:233), offered the following definition of culture, suggesting that it is "...a part of the distinctive means by which a local population maintains itself in an ecosystem and by which a regional population maintains and coordinates its groups and distributes them over the available land."

That definition, which focuses on people and the environment, has a lot of interpretive power in understanding the Gladesmen Culture, its beginnings, and change over time. As the previous chapter has established, the earliest Gladesmen developed a common identity based upon subsistence and commercial strategies involving hunting, fishing, etc., but also that drew upon its host environment for cultural and spiritual nourishment. This chapter establishes through oral history that the once essential survival strategies based on resource procurement have become ritualized and that the identity and social organization of Gladesmen Culture remains alive and still uniquely tied to the environment that gave rise to it.

Traditional cultural properties are symbolic of cultural continuity, providing cultural information about the physical context where the Everglades and Gladesmen connect either through hunting, fishing, experiencing nature, or other pursuits. Adaptation has occurred over time, particularly in how both men and women of this culture access the Everglades and use its resources, but contemporary Gladesmen Culture follows the same cultural continuum set by its earlier members in adapting to nature. The tools may have changed but a cultural continuity remains.

While "culture as a tool" offers strong explanatory power, another way to understand Gladesmen Culture is to examine the Everglades as a folk region within Southern culture. This line of analysis follows the work of Hill and McCall (1950) on the Cracker Culture. Hill and McCall (1950: 223) considered Cracker Culture to be a sub-type within the larger culture denoted as "Southern." They distinguish this culture by three characteristics: geographic features, social organization, and the rationale that supports and gives meaning to the culture. As discussed below, these three factors can also be seen in the Gladesmen Culture.

DEFINING THE EVERGLADES AS A FOLK REGION

The definition of two terms related to culture, "folk culture" and "folklife," is also helpful in understanding the Gladesmen relationship with their environment. Each of these terms can be defined as describing aspects of a culture that are unwritten, that are learned without formal

instruction, and that deal with expressive elements such as dance, song, traditional practice, etc. Folklife, folk culture, and folk region are useful terms for understanding the Gladesmen Culture of southern Florida and the places that have cultural meaning within it.

Richard M. Dorson (1961) defined a folk region as a place where the people are wedded to the land, and the land holds memories. The people of such a region share identity, ancestry, and close family ties through continuous occupation of the same soil. A folk region is one that lies in the mind and spirit as much as in physical boundaries; the Gladesmen interview excerpts that follow illustrate these characteristics.

For purposes of this study, the Gladesmen folk region of southern Florida is defined as the tropical portion of the Florida peninsula that extends from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes area and Lake Okeechobee south to the Florida Keys. Most travel guides, memoirs, and other Floridiana give a portrait of southern Florida that all but ignores the complex social and cultural features that define this unique place on the American landscape (Bucvalas 1994:xiii). The Gladesmen folk region represents a dynamic system that is defined and driven by the interaction of people within the southern Florida environment.

Geographically, the Gladesmen Culture and the lands of southern Florida are intertwined. This interaction is why the Gladesmen Culture came into being and is the reason for its continuance today: modern Gladesmen desire to co-exist with and utilize the vast resources of the southern Florida environment. The geographic feature that defines their culture area, or folk region, is the Everglades ecosystem. Southern Florida is large and diverse, and Gladesmen respond to this diversity, as seen in regional variations in use relative to the transportation employed. Whether it is a pole-driven glade skiff, a canoe, an airboat, or a swamp buggy, Gladesmen know how to use, and/or make and adapt, the best tool for the situation at hand.

Social organization refers to how people of a group interact, and how they divide up various tasks to get things accomplished. Though sportsmen and conservation groups are relatively new organizations in the history of the Gladesmen, they are one of the main threads that unite the group today. Not only do these organizations provide a voice of advocacy to Gladesmen causes, they also serve as a social network linking other club members and other organizations. Early Cracker culture consisted of a close kinship system; today that can also be seen in similar kinship with other members of Gladesmen club organizations. Throughout Florida, there are airboat, swamp buggy, sportsmen, and conservation clubs that are organized on a regional basis. These clubs not only provide advocacy and camaraderie, they also play important roles in search and rescue operations and environmental conservation efforts. Members of the Airboat Association of Florida, for example, have participated in several search and rescue efforts to locate downed airliners. Club members are called out when people become lost in the backcountry. Many of these clubs and organizations participate in annual exotic plant removal days and trash cleanup efforts. These clubs engender a sense of cultural stewardship and act to keep the Gladesmen Culture alive.

The rationale that gives meaning to the Gladesmen Culture is visceral and complex. Many contemporary Gladesmen share the characteristics and attitudes of early Gladesmen. They are independent, self-sufficient outdoorsmen who are very proficient in surviving in the wilderness. The main difference is that modern Gladesmen do not depend on the wilderness for survival like the early Gladesmen did. Ogden (2005:7) stated:

The swamp culture of the Everglades people suggests...interdependence with the "natural" system. As their livelihoods depend upon the rich bounty of the Everglades...Their material culture...reflect(s) this relationship to the swamp environments. Local dependence upon these environments grants cultural significance to local practices, while at the same time local people construct the swamps as places of cultural meaning.

During an interview, Bergeron (2008) also stated:

"...these people [the early Gladesmen] were completely independent. They grew their own vegetables...If they wanted a turkey for Thanksgiving, they just went down the ridge and hunted turkey. They repaired everything themselves and they built everything themselves. It's not like today where we have our profession and we hire everybody else to do multiple things for us—repair our vehicles and give us a haircut and mow our lawns. They did everything themselves. And I was very fortunate—very close to my grandfather, to be able to see that culture before it disappeared."

Ogden and Simmons (1998:xxii) stated that traditional Glades culture ended with the establishment of Everglades National Park in 1947. But the Everglades ecosystem of southern Florida, as well as Gladesmen Culture itself, is much larger than the national park boundaries and what the ecosystem provides has more cultural meaning than just its natural bounty. Reflecting this, Ogden (2005) later formally identified Gladesmen Culture as a regional folk culture. Gladesmen men, women, and children of today may no longer depend on the natural resources of the southern Florida ecosystem for subsistence, but, as the following oral history excerpts show, they still depend on it in fulfilling a variety of human needs through practices that include hunting, fishing, recreation, contemplation, family time, camaraderie, search and rescue, philanthropy, and personal serenity. There is strong evidence of continuity in Gladesmen Culture.

During the informant interviews, the ethnographer asked what the Everglades meant to each person. She received several similar answers to this broad question. To the majority of the Gladesmen interviewed, the Everglades ecosystem and their experiences there represent a way of life that they have tried to pass on to their children. But the most common answer given was that the Everglades ecosystem of southern Florida meant "everything" to them.

The Gladesmen Culture has always had an interdependent relationship with the wetlands environment of southern Florida. It is inextricably related to the wetland environment and is embedded in multiple shared aspects of it: language (terminology), practices, and worldview. A Gladesmen has extensive knowledge of numerous facets of the ecosystem, and their practices require an awareness of and adaptation to the nuances of the seasons, weather, and human alteration of the landscape. While the weather-related adaptations are common to all Gladesmen, technological adaptations and those responding to landscape alteration and backcountry access serve to distinguish modern Gladesmen.

The Gladesmen Culture has never existed in a vacuum; it is composed of pockets of Gladesmen whose activities may vary somewhat according to geographic region but who share the same desire to engage in traditional cultural activities in traditional use areas. The contemporary Gladesmen has evolved from the first Cracker settlers and the early Gladesmen who survived by

hunting, fishing, and largely living off the land. The modern Gladesmen Culture reflects a wide range of ethnic heritage and background. Through changing economies, land alteration, and technological advances, many of their traditional practices have changed or become more productive/efficient, but the attitudes and purpose of the Gladesmen Culture has remained constant: to continue to engage in traditional activities that reflect a shared culture within southern Florida.

The previous chapter provided historical background on increased settlement in southern Florida and the development of a culture from Crackers, to early Gladesmen, to modern Gladesmen. This remainder of this chapter explores the living culture, providing excerpts from the oral history interviews that speak of modern Gladesmen lifeways and identify the places and activities that are important in maintaining their cultural identity. Various cultural themes are repeated in these biographies, as interviewees share their personal stories and describe the mindset and practices of the Gladesmen Culture. The Gladesmen of yesterday and today are self-sufficient, independent individuals who have a highly developed knowledge of their culture area. Members of the contemporary Gladesmen Culture speak candidly about Gladesmen history and resource use areas within southern Florida and how their usage of certain areas has changed and been adapted in response to technological advances, backcountry access, and land management.

The interview data do not represent an absolute history of the Gladesmen; rather, the oral histories contain personal opinions that reflect the perspectives and memories of the individuals interviewed. Some of the interview excerpts below have been edited only slightly to improve readability. The reader is reminded that the interviews contain memories and recollections that may be in conflict with other recollections or with recorded history. Oral histories and traditions are based on such recollections, which are shared by the community or culture within a folk region.

GLADESMEN INTERVIEW PERSPECTIVES

The 34 self-described Gladesmen that provided information during interviews represent variations in age, place of origin, and occupation, but their responses to the ethnographer's questions reflect more similarities than differences. Following a brief description of the interviewees' collective backgrounds, the grouped quotes below highlight dominant themes common among the respondents, as drawn from careful reading of the interviews taken as a whole. These themes include personal history and early Gladesmen memories, as well as experiences with hunting and fishing, backcountry camps, and club/group membership. Unique perspectives are presented in two cases, one regarding alligator hunting, and another related to one of the TCPs identified as part of this study, Mack's Fish Camp (Chapters IX and X). Responses to two questions – What is a Gladesmen? and What do the Everglades mean to you? – are captured. The final themes include observations on changes to Modern Gladesmen Culture and a collection of thoughts that relate to the future of Gladesmen Culture.

The age of respondents ranged from 22 to 83 years; of these, 20 (or 60%) were 60 years old or older. Of those, four were in their eighties, six were between 70 and 80 years old, and 10 were between 60 and 70. Five interviewees were between 50 and 60 years, four were between 40 and 50, two were between 30 and 40, and two were in their twenties. Twenty-seven of the Gladesmen

interviewed were men (79.5%) and seven were women (20.5%). In terms of place of origin, 29 respondents were born in Florida (85%), four came here as children, and one is a native of Greece. An alphabetical list of occupations named by those interviewed is as follows:

- Agricultural Business/Cattle/Real Estate
- Campground Owner
- Commercial Fisherman
- Electrical Contractor (n=2)
- Engineer (n=2)
- Fire Department (n=2)
- Fish Camp Owner (n=2)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Commissioner
- Game Warden
- Housepainter
- Housewife
- Hunting and Fishing Business/Property Investor/CPA
- Insurance Agent
- Land Clearing
- Land Surveyor
- Law School Student Working On Masters Degree
- Meat Cutter
- Mechanic (n=2)
- Plasterer
- Post Office Employee
- Property Appraiser
- President of a Petroleum Company
- Swamp Buggy Guide

PERSONAL HISTORIES AND EARLY MEMORIES

This theme touches on family histories and makes clear that many of today's Gladesmen developed from a multi-generational cultural tradition passed on to them by family elders. Aspects of early Gladesmen activity are recalled and a direct relationship to Florida Cracker Culture is mentioned with pride. Interactions with the Seminole and Miccosukee Indians of Florida are discussed, as is the cultural continuity that has characterized the southern Florida way of life for centuries. Most common are memories of learning to enjoy and respect the wetlands of the region through exposure at an early age.

"I was born in Miami, Florida, Dade County. The family didn't start out in Florida, but came here after the Civil War. So we've had a long love of Florida. Most [of my family] were farmers and fishermen but it was my father that introduced me to the Glades, and his friends. We lived on the Miami River, right near the Moose Isle Indian Village, and I grew up playing with the Indians there at Moose Isle and swimming in the river. And jumping on manatees and trying to ride them. And when the Seminole Queen [boat] would come up from Bayfront Park with the tourists, they would throw nickels and dimes in the water and we both were pretty tan then, had dark hair, and so we hung out with Indians. We'd dive for nickels and dimes in the river that the tourists threw in there. I would go with my father on surveying trips. [Prior to 1946] he actually surveyed in what was [to

become] Everglades National Park and in Big Cypress and some of the coastal islands, and so I had that opportunity to get out at an early age and see those areas with him, and of course that influenced me a lot to go hunting with him and his friends in the Big Cypress" (Adams 2008).

"The cracker culture really developed when the families moved in to Florida to round up all the cattle that had multiplied that was turned loose by the Spaniards back in the 1500s. And they turned loose cattle, they turned loose horses, and the cattle adapted to the environment and multiplied by the millions. So people migrated into Florida and they were cow hunters. And they would go out and round up all these wild cattle. And as they would come into the different little ports and into the—through the little towns, they all had whips and—that cracked so they developed the name of cracker. That's how it started. And as time went on, of course there was a lot of timber cut in Florida, which was another economy. And that's how a lot of the large landowners in Florida ended up owning large pieces of property by virtue of coming down and cutting the virgin timber. And that started in probably the 1830s right through the 1800s, up to the turn of the century. So after the timber was cut, all these families were here, and they more or less developed what I would call the Gladesmen's culture, where all of these families, some of them made a living off of the commercial hunting and furs and alligator hides and frog hunting. And that's what developed the Gladesmen Culture. So you actually went from the cattle originally that brought people down here to the timber. And with all these families here into commercial fishing and trapping and frog hunting and gator hides—that was the beginning of the Gladesmen's culture, and—which still exists today, not as much as commercial but a way of life, a traditional culture of a way of life probably more into the recreational enjoyment of their past and their history of being a part of the environment, more today in recreation than commercial. There is some commercial still on the fishing side" (Bergeron 2008).

"My grandmother, from what I was told, was a Huron Indian and she rode a horse from Lake Michigan to Miami when she was 14 or 15 years old...And my parents had a sawmill in the Everglades all them years, even through World War II, and my daddy grew up out here" (Balman 2008).

"My family has been in Florida all the way back to about 1875...Most of my relatives come out of Georgia to Florida. My great-grandmother was born in Florida in 1882. And my grandfather was born in Florida in 1901. They lived on the rim of the lake [Okeechobee] prior to any levees or any restriction of any natural [water] flow. They made their own boats, they made their own traps, they made their own bait, and they fished for catfish in the lake...And they actually lived off the land, traditional cracker culture, very few people lived here back in those days. I spent a lot of time with my grandfather. He used to run the little railroad that went to Okeechobee to Palm Beach for a short period. And then he became a game warden, back in the forties. And when I was about three years old, I asked him to take me in the airboat. And fortunately, he took me...I used to mow his lawn, a 10-acre lawn with a push mower. And he wanted to pay me, but

I said, Well you don't need to pay me, just make sure I go in the airboat. And the fortunate thing about that is if he would have turned around to me and said, Well son that's a wilderness area and nobody can go in there but me, I would have never fallen in love with the Everglades and I would have never developed the culture, the Gladesmen's culture, and I wouldn't be spending half my time today to try to save the Everglades and the environment" (Bergeron 2008).

"Well, my father used to go out there [to the Everglades] to practice shooting with his gun and I'd see snakes and alligators and they'd scare you to death. I didn't start going out there until I was about eleven. And a friend of mine, his father went out. We'd go out there fishing. It's like going out in the prehistoric days, you know, everything was like prehistoric, hadn't changed in billions of years. And it was kind of scary, for a kid anyway...and there was always fishing" (Switzer 2008).

"Before my grandmother died, we had five generations [of Floridians]. My grandmother was a hunter and a fisherman, and my granddaddy actually all he ever got to do was row the boat so she could fish" (Brantley 2008).

"I was born here [Florida]. My grandfather was an early settler back in about 1901; he came down [from] Georgia. He was one of the first white settlers in what's now the City of South Miami. It was called Larkins at the time. And the Larkins family is a Gladesmen family. He [the grandfather] came down with Flagler's Railroad...He traded with the early settlers, the Indians. When I was very young, daddy and I fished. And then my uncle, who was a Gladesman from my mother's side of the family, Uncle Jimmy, he had been bugging us to go out and fish with him. So finally one day to shut him up daddy said, Yeh we'll go, and we never stopped going. I love to see the Glades for the first time again through other people's eyes - being very young and seeing the water and the woods is just magical" (Powell 2008).

"I was born in Okeechobee County in 1927. About six or seven generations [of her family have lived in Florida]. My grandparents and my mother and her brothers and sisters came down from up near Pensacola on the covered wagon. Granddaddy would have the beds all set up and he would build a campfire and grandmother would cook and they would get out and sing around the fire, and they just enjoyed it" (A. Wilson 2008).

"Lots of memories of old friends that are gone now, growing up out there, going with your daddy and your granddaddy and your family and getting on a buggy or an airboat and going to the woods. I think probably [for] a majority of people, while hunting's part of our life, we like that tradition and we like the fresh venison, the sharing with our family and friends. Just being out there is—that's kind of my—that's my cultural foundation. It's—my experiences out there growing up; it taught me self-reliance. When I was 16 or 17, I was going to the woods without any adult supervision and I built my own little swamp buggy in my backyard of my parents'

home in Miami near the River. And we just had such total freedom. And it teaches you lots of self-reliance I think, to be on your own and be in the woods" (Adams 2008).

"Whenever I used to go, I'd take him [son Chuck] and his younger brother – and his younger brother was still sucking the bottle. And I told his mother, I said well I can't take a boy down there [to the backcountry] sucking his bottle. He turned around and gave the bottle back to his mama, and he said, Let's go papa" (H. Hampton 2008).

HUNTING AND FISHING

For the early Gladesmen, hunting and fishing were an indispensable part of making a living; today, these activities represent a continuation of that tradition for purposes that are largely recreational. While modern Gladesmen speak of the use of different methods and technology, many have continued to find enjoyment by hunting and fishing using simple means, in the old fashioned way, or by going out to the backcountry to merely sit and marvel at their surroundings. The perspectives given with regard to resource collection reflect a similar reverent appreciation and conservation of local wildlife. Many Gladesmen return continually to favored spots, while others cover a wide geographical range, utilizing the vast system of interconnected waterways. A strong desire to experience being out in the wilderness remains constant, whether any meat or fish is actually bagged or not.

"[We hunted] white-tailed deer and wild turkey and hogs, yeah. The favorite fish in our family was mangrove snapper. My dad loved mangrove snapper. We didn't eat redfish or sheepshead. We threw them back. Nowadays, we're not so picky. But mostly it was mangrove snapper and trout specks, and that was my dad's favorite fish so that's what we went after" (Adams 2008).

"You only took what you ate. If you wasn't going to eat it, you wouldn't take it. And a sportsman has to be like a farmer. First, you have to take care of the land. And you only take what's abundant" (Switzer 2008).

"I don't hunt that much. And it's a little rough country. Because people ask me, Why do you hunt where you hunt? I say – I hunt where I like the scenery. I don't hunt to get the deer necessarily. I mean, I'm going to get the deer; I'm not worried about that, but I like to go to places I like to see. It's a lot about visual to me" (Denninger 2008).

"We'd walk with no camping gear. We'd just crawl up under some palmettos and keep the dew off of us for the night, hope the red bugs didn't get us. And start walking next day. If we ever [did] kill a deer, we'd have to be able to haul him out" (Switzer 2008).

"I'll tell you now straight up, do not mistake, and this you can quote me on – I don't know any hunter that isn't a bird watcher. I don't know any hunter that isn't a snake watcher, an otter watcher, a fish watcher—for we all want to conserve for consumption and for beauty all these things, to manage the habitat so it's sustainable for man and animal" (Marco 2008).

"My grandfather taught me how to hunt, how to frog hunt, gator hunt, deer, hogs, turkey. And he taught me to be respectful about it, that when you hunt, you only hunt what you can eat. He loved the environment and he, as all Gladesmen that I know, wanted to protect the environment and protect the resource that lives in it. Taught me how to wrestle alligators, which is a cracker culture [trait] and similar to running with the bulls in Spain or fighting bulls in Mexico. It was a Florida culture, and at the turn of the century there was an alligator wrestling team in every little town in Florida, not a football team" (Bergeron 2008).

"We used small wooden boats. In the coastal area and down the Keys then you didn't have fiberglass or aluminum boats. And out in the Big Cypress we had a big what they call recon car, [it] was kind of a swamp buggy type thing that we'd use to get into some areas and then we would just park and we'd walk. We did a lot of walking back in those days. We didn't hunt out of tree stands, and we did what they called still hunting and stalking. And so it was mostly walking" (Adams 2008).

"I grew up out here and in town and hunting and fishing and frogging and airboating and swamp buggying. It's part of my culture, my son's culture. It's a lot of people's culture that have moved out, but they still come down here and ride their airboats when they can and visit people" (Balman 2008).

"I spend a lot of time on my boat. And I use the entire Everglades system from as far south as you can see water almost down to Florida City. I go all the way up north to Orlando...Not only do I use the entire river—the Everglades system, everything, at times I'll even go up on the Saint Johns River and go from the Saint Johns all the way up into the Daytona, so I use both [the] east and west coasts of Florida on my boat. And quite honestly, I don't think there's any other vehicle ever designed that does less destruction to the property and allows you to have so much enjoyment and see the property the way an airboat can allow...Airboats can take you to the area that you want to go to. You can stop on the airboat and if you wanted to hike you could hike. Fishing – there's no other boat ever designed like an airboat that would help out for fishing. You can fish either the flats. You can go into the canals, float down the canals. You can put a trolling motor on your airboat. You can do just about anything you want to do" (Dombrosky 2008).

"Like you'd be waiting for every Friday so you could load up your gear and get your butt out there [the backcountry] to hunt because you had to work all week, and you wouldn't if you didn't have to but you had to. You couldn't live out there because things were changing. You had rules and stuff like that. I mean there was times I'd loved to have just built a shack and just moved out there, but you just—you couldn't do it. And so you just went every chance you got...And this is kind of still that way for me, especially since when you're married you kind of got to back off for a while, stay around the house, taking care of things...But you might slack off for a month, not go out for a month after hunting season because you been out there every weekend or some days during the week, trying and get two- or three- four- or five-day weekends during hunting season. And then after that, you take

that little break. And within three or four weeks, don't ask me why, but you got to go. You just want to get back. I haven't been out there in two weeks and I'm itching to go now" (Denninger 2008).

"We had deer come around. Every time they got hungry they'd come up and get corn. We had one of them named Brownie. She was a doe [that] for years would come up around the camp and we watched her and watched her with her young. And when the deer started coming the bear would start coming. And we had video of the black bear [who] would come up and actually lay down right beside the pile of corn and lay there and just take his paw and rake the corn into his mouth. It was something you wouldn't think. You'd think a bear would be standing on all fours and bend down and eat. But he was in such a pile of corn; he would just sit there and rake it right into his mouth" (Jenkins 2008).

ALLIGATOR HUNTING

Alligator hunting has characterized Gladesmen economic endeavors since the early days, as described in detail by Glen Simmons, perhaps the best remembered of the southern Florida wetland pioneers (Simmons and Ogden 1998). Following bans on such hunting, modern Gladesmen have had the opportunity to resume that activity, and a number of interviewees mentioned that alligator hunting was one of their activities. The following quotes, all from Frank Denninger (2008) provide the most complete description of how these large and formidable reptiles have been sought out, dispatched, and sold in recent times.

"For me, the state legalized, I think, alligator hunting in '88...And after four alligator hunts, I had just about all the alligator hunting I wanted...Because it's very, very hard to do. It takes place at night. It's not real dangerous but still you're playing around with deadly animals in the dark floating around, bouncing on a lake. Sometimes the waves are pretty high. And it's just fatigue. Because we would be working down here [Hialeah] and we hunt at Lake Okeechobee a hundred miles away. So we would be working all week, going up to Lake Okeechobee on the weekend, hunting all night every night—Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night, then you come home and try and work during the day and I mean it gets very old very fast. Plus, it became a lot less economically rewarding.

The way we handled [selling alligator hides] we all formed a little partnership and we saved every single receipt, whether it was my cigarettes or somebody else's candy bars and all the gas receipts and all this stuff, everything, down to toothpaste. And the first year we were allowed to get 15 alligators. And eventually when we figured it all out after we were done paying all the expenses and splitting up what's left between three people, I think we had about two, three thousand dollars apiece from that hunt. That's a month-long hunt.

They had buyers that were around the lake. If you wanted to, they would pay you cash greenbacks at the boat dock when you came in. They'd measure the alligator. You can sell them per foot, 55 dollars a foot, 65 dollars a foot, 35 dollars a foot. There was some breakpoints on size as far as the price per foot.

Under eight foot you got less money than if it was over eight feet, per foot. But we had a little deal with the fish house and we would just take our alligators and drop them off.

I used a Cadillac-powered airboat [to hunt alligators], powered by a 500 cubic inch 1973 Cadillac engine with a direct drive wooden prop, and the boat was 8 by 14 feet long. My driver's seat was 8 foot 6 off the bottom of the hull, vertically up. And I had two seats in front of there. And I would be driving, there'd be one assistant on the left side of the boat and the harpoon man would be on the right side of the boat up in the front. And we would see the alligator's eyes a long way off at night. We'd be running inside Lake Okeechobee and around the edge marshes. And you would just approach the alligator... And you hook him up and then they take off with a float tied to the rope on the end of the harpoon tip. Then you had to chase the float and when he slowed down and stopped, you—we used to tie it to the boat. And then we would turn the boat around and put pressure on the gator to pull it. And then he would pull back. And you keep pressure on him, and believe it or not in the driver's seat of an airboat, I could tell when the gator gave up. You would feel the boat just move more for the same amount of gas pedal. And then you'd drag him in beside the boat. And then you had a scuba diving tool called a bang stick. And the bang stick is a pole with a fixture on the end of it that will hold a bullet, a cartridge. And then you bang it into the animal's neck or head, and that causes the bullet to be fired into the—where it's pushing against. And that's the way you do it. And sometimes you've got to do it more than once."

BACKCOUNTRY CAMPS

Gladesmen backcountry camps, both historical and modern, are discussed in an analytical way in Chapter VII. Here, interviewees comment on their personal and practical history with camps. Many Gladesmen have maintained a long-standing continuity with one location; others note a hesitancy to establish or make financial investments to improve a camp because of uncertainty about being able to retain their access to it. Basic camp layout, construction techniques, and modern adaptations are discussed, as are the necessary means for getting to and from the camps and associated backcountry areas. Provisioning oneself is an important consideration, and many Gladesmen speak of extensive wilderness forays with no established camp at all, choosing instead to use random locations as a temporary base for primitive camping and hunting on foot. Finally, the unique opportunities that an established camp provides for personal reflection on nature and close up appreciation of wildlife are made clear.

"It's basically one building, but it started out as—as just a little area, cook shack and then they just kept adding on to it —added like a basic commons area for eating and dining and then added the bedrooms on and then the bathroom" (Hauser 2008).

"Yes, he [grandfather] had a camp south of Alligator Alley that he built in 1946. I was three years old, and I've been camping on that island for sixty years. And the old original camp burned down, I think, in the early seventies, and then of course I rebuilt it. But that camp has been there since 1946" (Bergeron 2008).

"Oh yeah, there was a lot of them [camps] back then. There was a lot of backcountry hunting camps. Everybody had one. I've had several. If you went buggy riding, you'd end up in somebody's front yard, somebody's camp. And people back then, nobody locked anything. If it started raining or something and you ended up at a cabin, you just spent the night there. And if you ate some food, you'd leave them five dollars or something" (Spaulding 2008).

"[My camp] in the Big Cypress [is accessed] by swamp buggies, the ORV—You can drive to my property on a rock road to the campsite, but I left my whole place natural, totally natural. I built a cookhouse, and I built some little cabins that are all Florida cracker architecture – cedar with tin roofs. It's beautiful. I took three acres out of the 5,000 acres, and I didn't touch one tree. I fit the little cabins for my guests and my family without touching one tree. I fit them into the environment, built a little cookhouse for my family and my friends to come for dinner, and I built a cracker house" (Bergeron 2008).

"The hunting camp at Gulf Hammock you either came in by boat or Willys jeep...we used those motorboats, little 12- and 14-foot wooden hull boats and jon boats. I'm talking about old school boats that you could pick up and tote with your hands. We put all of our gear in there and we'd come into the hunting camp" (Brantley 2008).

"Well most of the time they were like 20 x 20 wood structures sitting on concrete blocks. They were very primitive, and they had old furniture in them for beds and couches and chairs. They were always open. If anybody broke down, they could always go to a camp, spend the night out of the way of mosquitoes, and there was always food in there. The law of the land was camps were never locked. They were open for everybody" (Switzer 2008).

"Some camps are very elaborate with generators and stuff like that. And ours, we have pitcher pumps. And it's quite an elaborate setup because we have a pitcher pump outside and a pitcher pump in the kitchen, which is convenient. So, it's just a simpler time, and it's just neat seeing all the wildlife" (Powell 2008).

"...most everything we do [when we go to the woods] is fly by night. You load up what you need...food, groceries, your guns, your dogs, your boat, and you go. When you get tired or run out of food, if you're any type of outdoorsman you don't run out of food [because there are so many available resources]. And you're not going to run out of things. You're going to carry our staples like your salt and your pepper and your sugar and that kind of stuff and your drinks. I don't need anybody with me, I don't. Matter of fact, lots of times I enjoy going by myself so you don't have to worry about taking care of anybody else" (Brantley 2008).

"[Camp buildings are usually] wooden structures. I guess you have like a screen porch then a main building that sometimes houses your bunk beds and cooking area; probably have a barbeque grill out on the deck, out to the side. You do a lot of outdoor cooking—hamburgers, hot dogs, whatever. And you got a roof to keep you dry and then a lot of times out back a ways from the building, you have a generator shack where you'll have a gas- or diesel-powered generator" (Denninger 2008).

"[The camps are] typically....as far as inside square footage, between 300 and 800 square feet at best. They're not big Taj Mahal's. They're well made. They've held up a long time through all these storms and hurricanes. They're very rustic. And the means of building these camps when it's dry, we would load materials on tracks and buggies, wheeled tracks and buggies. That was the best time to bring out. It wasn't wise to bring out concrete and lumber on an airboat, which only should take a couple people. It just wasn't logical or feasible. So to support these camps and construction and maintenance, that's when we would do it, but we're restricted now to bring these things out by the airboats. That's a problem. We have a problem also with the park [Everglades National Park] isn't willing to commit to the camp staying...Who in their right mind would pour two or three thousand dollars a year into a camp when you don't know if the next day they're going to come out and light a match on it?" (Marco 2008)

"We never had a permanent camp. Well we found a camp south of the [Alligator] Alley one time, didn't look like it was being used. And we talked to a few people that came into the camp. We started sprucing it up. We just took over a camp. Sometimes you can take them over...But if you do that, you've got to understand if the guy that owns it comes back, or the guy that built it—because these are squatter camps I'm talking about. You had to respect the guy that built it. If he came back and says, Oh well I took a couple of years off, I'm coming back, you got to get out—you get out. But like this one bigger camp we took over, we found out who owned it and called the guy and he was old and didn't go no more so he said, No y'all can have it" (Denninger 2008).

"[At my camp I] reflect on nature I reckon the most, just to be there and reflect. I've got pileated woodpeckers; I'm surprised they're this far south. But to reflect and kick back and drink a coffee in the morning and sit out there with nature, and every now and then I get an otter on the island that'll come slithering by and a deer here and there. I'll stick a frog or two maybe, for a dinner. I go out, get twenty-five frog legs; that's all you need to eat. On my island I have two different kinds of turtles. The box turtles come in there occasionally. But [also] those big soft shells that lay their eggs...They'll let you crawl right up and watch them drop their eggs right in the holes they just dug, cover it all back up. Then you're looking at about sixty days or so – not much more than that – and all of a sudden thirty-five little turtles pop up out of the ground. [My wife] always goes over and helps them get in the water so the birds don't get them. So its pretty much just being one with nature, just cook your hamburgers and sit out there and watch the sun go down" (Onstad 2008).

CLUB/GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Gladesmen groups and clubs is important in maintaining cultural transmission, promoting solidarity, and contributing to environmental preservation, volunteer programs, and public education. An important example that illustrates those functions is the Airboat Association of Florida, one of the two TCPs identified as a result of this study (Chapters IX and X). Additionally, interviewees claimed membership in the Broward County Airboat Association, Collier Sportsmen and Conservation Club, Everglades Coalition, Everglades Conservation and Sportsmen's Club, Everglades Protection Society, Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association, Halftrack Club, Jetport Conservation and Recreation Club, National Audubon Society, National Isaak Walton League, and the National Wildlife Federation. The quotes included here document the history of Gladesmen clubs, their areas of interest, and a prevailing willingness to provide assistance to those who may be in need or stranded in remote, hard to reach locations. The statements reflect diversity in membership but a shared interest in maintaining, enjoying, and protecting the environment of southern Florida, in addition to increasing public awareness through education.

"They've had organizations way, way back into the sixties, probably the fifties. Airboat associations, halftrack associations, different things from Palm Beach that I know of on down to Hialeah. The Airboat Association is out on the Tamiami Trail [in Miami]. They've been around since 1950 or somewhere around there...We've got groups like the Big Cypress Sportsman's Alliance, the Everglades Conservation and Recreation Club, the Airboat Association of Florida, Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association. There's a lot of them" (Denninger 2008).

"And I would do it [help people] and not because they helped me but I've gone and done it to help others like them at any hour of the night. If something happened to them right now and they needed help, I mean I would go...Because, you know, there's nobody else. You can't call AAA, you can't call the wrecker. There's no one else out there that's going to come get you. So I guess that's why we're such a knit tight group for that reason. We'd help anybody. We would help a canoeist that was stranded...Someone called and said, Look we got a canoeist that got lost, could you help? There'd be five airboaters or five Gladesmen show up right now, whatever it would take to help that person. And I guess that's just the way we are because we all know one day that'll happen. One day we'll be in that predicament and we'll need help too and there's no one else come get [you]" (Wright 2008).

"Oh the clubs, they look to protect people's interest, and at the same time work with the government to stay engaged with the government as much as you can to get everybody to do the right thing for our benefit, for their benefit, for the animal's benefit. I think two or three weeks ago I was out at the Jetport with the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Their people from Naples came out and joined us and we had about thirty or forty people go back in the Everglades in that area to cut down [invasive] Melaleuca trees. We do that once a year. And then the week after that, we had a youth outing for kids, to take them out in that area, let them throw a fishing line in the water, experience fishing, and [have] discussions about the Everglades and things like that" (Denninger 2008).

"There's a lot of plants you can eat. I learned what plants you can eat, what plants you can't eat, what plants are poisonous. The best thing to do is join a conservation club, and they've accumulated all this information. [It's an] easy way to learn it, what plants you stay away from and what plants you can eat and what animals you stay away from and what animals you can eat. And you learn all the game laws so you don't break the laws, and you enjoy it" (Switzer 2008).

"We [the Florida Sportsmen's Conservation Association] are a diverse group of users. And one of the things that we do—Our mission statement says that we're going to work with all of the different state and federal agencies to try and get property secure for public recreation. And in that group of people we have fishermen, both offshore and inshore. We have hunters. We have all the different types of hunting, from archery enthusiasts to muzzle-loading, regular gun. We have all of that from deer hunting to hog and all the different game birds. We also have the duck hunters in our group. We have horseback people. There are hikers in our group that spend a lot of time hiking. So, we're a very diverse group that does a lot of different things" (Dombrosky 2008).

MACK'S FISH CAMP

Below is a personal account of the origins, development, and cultural continuity of an historic property that has served to transmit and maintain Gladesmen Culture for many decades. As such, it is one of the two TCPs identified as a result of this study (Chapters IX and X). Mack's Fish Camp has been in the same family since its inception, and is a South Florida landmark that represents one of the few original fish camps that still function in the Miami-Dade County area. While the best description of Mack's is included below from the family, other interviewees mentioned Mack's Fish Camp in their responses. The property has long been significant to Gladesmen in facilitating and maintaining their traditional beliefs and practices and in recruiting new members. For many, Mack's Fish Camp provided a first introduction and entry point to the Gladesmen environment of southern Florida. The quotes below all come from current co-owner/operator Marshall Jones (2008), whose ancestors first settled on the property and established the camp.

"My grandmother, her family was from Screven County, Georgia. She was born in 1920. And in 1933 at 13 years of age, her family moved down here to Miami, to roughly near the same area as my grandfather's family. And she worked at Blue Ribbon Laundry for numerous years and then met my grandfather and they were married in 1950, August of 1950, and then she—that's when she came into the picture.

...from 1939 [for] about 10 years, roughly about a decade, he [grandfather] continued farming the land here. He was farming collard greens, pole beans, and tomatoes. That was the main crop they farmed here...there were dwellings here...What happened was, there were people that would come and go, fishing on the levee. And the place was originally started as a farm back in 1939, and the business started producing more money as a general store/fish camp because there were just people coming and going, they needed supplies and they needed fishing poles or bait or things of that nature. And so around 1945 is when he actually opened the shop up to customers or fisherman. That's when the original

shop was actually built in 1944 or so, as far as the bait shop and general store...He still grew produce for around a decade until the fishing became the means—the main means of the business, then in 1945 my grandfather, Mack Charles Jones, Jr., went to the army. He was honorably discharged in October of 1949. He maintained active duty as a reservist, however, until 1952. During that time, the Jones family stayed here and worked the land, helping one another out through these years until which time my grandfather returned from the service to aid the family business.

Okay the draw [to Mack's Fish Camp] was fishing...That's a given. You're in the Everglades of South Florida in mid-century. The land was still semi-virgin, and the natural beauty here was a draw on its own. As well as back then just after World War II, the economy was still fairly poor and a lot of people were as well. And a lot of people didn't have the money to go out and go to the market and buy fish and things of that nature. And a lot of them just liked to get away. So, this place was iconic in the way that they were able to leave the city behind. Most people had grass roots that lived down here back then. And they were able to make their way out here, which was near the city but yet an entirely different place. It was still untouched land. It was Old Florida and it still is Old Florida 'til this day. And my grandmother was—She stayed here as my grandfather went to work as a plasterer throughout the days. And she was very warm and inviting. She would offer people coffee or drinks and good conversation. And that was one thing that brought a lot of people back and created a lot of patrons to the business was that she was such a great matriarch. She was known as the Queen of the Everglades.

In the fifties...they had, I believe 52 boats and motors and they used to rent on the weekends and certain weekdays. They would rent every single boat and motor, and they'd have people waiting to take them out in the afternoons. My grandmother said they used to rent between 80 and 90 boats a day on a good day...they're jon boats. And they were left over surplus aircraft aluminum from the war. And then they used aluminum to make these boats. Still have over a dozen of them, the ones we still rent to this day. They're 40 to 45 years old and still in great shape – it's a testament to the way they used to build things.

And in the timeframe from 1964 to 1966 that's when the first RVs became permanent residents here, people with RVs, recreational vehicle, mobile home, or what have you. The first telephone and electric were brought in at that point in time. The first phone—the first phone line from Bell South was brought here and contracted in 1966.

[What does Mack's Fish Camp mean to me?] Everything. Everything. Like I was explaining earlier, this is all I've ever known, and I couldn't imagine life without it. Life without this camp would—I just can't even fathom it. Now I'm not a materialistic person. It's not about any material possession here. This camp is my life, this camp is my heritage. My family came here and they toiled to get to this point here. And when they got here, they tilled the earth. And let me tell you, back in those days everybody thought because there was so much grass that the Everglades were fertile. The Everglades was almost a wasteland. That's why the

only thing that grows out here they make money on is sugar. But back to the moral of the story, they toiled on this land to grow the crops they grew—the pole beans and the collard greens, the tomatoes, and the other items. My grandmother and grandfather gave up a lot for their own personal lives to be here. But this was all my grandfather had as a heritage, because his father came here and worked the land and he chose to do the same. My grandmother gave up her retirement after my grandfather passed away and took in my brother and I, two little heathen twins. She was in her late 60s and took on a pair of twins. How hard could that—twin boys nonetheless that were hell on wheels. She gave up her life. She was a martyr for my brother and I. And I owe it to myself, as well as her, and all my family to be here. And it's not about feeling indebted, it's just—it's who I am. This is my makeup. This is my life. The Everglades and me live as one. We try our best to live in harmony with the environment around us. We don't harm the animals...If I go out and fish, I catch and release only, even when I'm doing guide service. We'll keep pictures. Unless the fish is hooked in a manner that it's going to die, then we'll keep the fish to eat, never waste. My grandmother always taught us, Waste not, want not. And that's very, very true...”

WHAT IS A GLADESMEN?

Each interviewee was asked to give their definition of a Gladesmen, and the responses were very similar. The most common of these self-descriptive replies were related to having a love for the Everglades region of southern Florida, wanting to see it preserved, and teaching others to respect, enjoy, and utilize it to the fullest. Others went on to say that to be a Gladesmen was to be part of a regional culture characterized by a shared mindset and heritage. A few of the most eloquent responses are quoted here.

“Well the definition of a Gladesmen is a person – probably more of a conservationist and sportsman...that was raised in the traditional cracker families, that was raised by their parents and their grandparents—to enjoy the environment, protect the environment and in some cases made their living in a commercial fashion, whether it was frog hunting or alligator hunting when it was legal, a person that comes from a family that introduced him to the environment. I would say a Gladesmen is a person that loves to be in the swamps as a part of the environment and enjoys nature, enjoys the beauty of it. And it's sort of like a getaway back in time to me...It's a part of Florida that is real Florida. It's the real Florida. And you're going back in time and you're experiencing the real Florida in a natural way. And my generation saw it all before the boom. If I'd have been 10 years younger, I wouldn't have seen the turn. But at my age, I was able to see [it] before the boom, before the levees, before the restriction of natural flow. I've seen the culture of my grandparents and my parents in a traditional, let's say old Florida cracker family that being in the woods and being in the swamps and learning how to love it and enjoy it was part of making a living as well as part of entertainment—part of a way of life” (Bergeron 2008).

"Anybody that loves to be out in the woods in these areas down here. You don't have to be born here to be a Gladesman. People move here and they fall in love with the Everglades and like to go out and explore and camp and just enjoy the nature of this area and really enjoy getting out and seeing things that you won't see anywhere else" (Barton 2008).

"I think it's someone who appreciates the land, not necessarily goes to hunt it or just visit, someone who has a true appreciation for the land and understands why it's important" (S. Hampton 2008).

"I was so fortunate to be raised by a real woodsman, a real Gladesman. I mean, he [grandfather] was a true Gladesman that understood the environment and was able to teach me how important the environment is to the quality of our life and how important the resource is that lives in there and the respect – if you're going to hunt, you hunt properly. You never kill anything more than you can eat. And it's a beautiful culture because just being in the environment, just the beauty of nature, what God made, is what the Gladesmen [culture] is all about. Actually, the Gladesmen are the eyes and ears of the environment. And we enjoy being in the environment—protecting it, managing it, utilizing the resource in a very high respect, and I think it's one of the greatest things in my life, even with all my success in business. I always said I never traded my airboat in for a yacht or traded my roping horse in...for a thoroughbred racehorse. My mother was a great outdoorsman, loved to fish and loved to be in the Everglades, in the natural environment. My dad was the same way and my grandfather was a true Gladesman and a true Florida cracker [who] introduced me to the Gladesmen Culture in the Everglades" (Bergeron 2008).

"As long as I'm outdoors in the woods, in central Florida, south, from the Kissimmee Chain, which is the headwaters of the Everglades on down, I'm happy. I'm not a townsperson, I'm not a mall person. It's been years since I've been in Wal-Mart. The only thing I like is being out here in the woods with—I call it my airboating family...The airboating community, there's none of them that you can't call in the middle of the night if you need help and they'll hurt themselves trying to get to you. These are the country folks, these are the backbone of the state. These are the people that came here, fought out a living and if you need them, they'll be there if you call them, if they know you and you were their friend. And if you're not, they're still going to help you [on] the side of the road. They might not change the tire, but they'll give you the tire to put on, you know. We call ourselves country folks, and we're family. And it goes from the old timers way back when and my grandfather's age...There's very few of us. We're a dying breed, we really are" (Brantley 2008).

"[The definition of a Gladesman is] it's a part of our heritage that we grew up with, where we came from, where we go to recreate, where we go to hunt, fish, swim, you know. If we're going to plan an outing, that's where we plan it, in the woods, in the Glades, on the lakes, you know, from here to the Keys, all the way down. And it's what we're used to doing – where we're from and what we care about" (Brantley 2008).

"The Gladesmen are the eyes and ears [of the Everglades]. There's no one, no one in this whole world could care more about a piece of property than a Gladesmen. No one. I don't care who you are...It's the heart and soul. And so the little bit of impact that we may make, is a drop in the bucket to what we preserve and protect" (Wright 2008).

"There are different depths of different Gladesman. Some are just absolutely by God dyed-in-the-wool people...but down south...they probably use the Glades a little differently, because the topography's a little different down there than it is here. But my definition is— To me, it's more of a culture, it's more of a mindset than anything else. A person can be a banker or they can be a multimillionaire...and yet be just as much a Gladesman as the average Joe can be. We all look to protect because we know what we have" (Maharry 2008).

WHAT DO THE EVERGLADES MEAN TO YOU?

Another open-ended question asked during interviews was what do the Everglades mean to you? The responses to that reflect very personal feelings that overlap somewhat with what it means to be a Gladesmen. Many stated that the Everglades is part of what defines them as a person, that they spend most of their time there, and that the Everglades is their heritage and the foundation for identifying themselves as part of the Gladesmen Culture. Some respondents stated that being in the Everglades made them feel "closer to God," and others noted that despite decades of exploring, they were still discovering, still learning, and still excited by their surroundings.

"It's something we love and it's deeply ingrained in us and I wouldn't want to be around—I couldn't live anywhere else. I've traveled some and everything. This is my place, in the swamp, and that's where I'm happy and what I know – I'm a master naturalist – and I'm still learning at my age" (Adams 2008).

"Well it's still my pride and joy. I love to go there more than anyplace else. In fact, that's about the only place I did go. My vacations are in the Everglades" (P. Waggoner 2008).

"[The Everglades is] an area [that's like] nowhere else in the world, period. The restoration of the Everglades is the biggest undertaking of any restoration in the world ever. More money [than ever] is going to be spent trying to restore this sea of grass back to a sea of grass" (Brantley 2008).

"The Everglades mean home to me" (Jones 2008).

"It's part of who I am. It defines who my family is, especially my husband, and it's just who we are...My husband's late friend would call him up every once in a while and say, I've got to see a cypress tree, and they would just go to the woods. It takes you back to a more simple time" (Powell 2008).

"It's a part of our heritage that we grew up with, where we came from, where we go to recreate, where we go to hunt, fish, swim, you know. If we're going to do—plan an outing, that's where we plan it, in the woods, in the Glades, in—on the lakes, you know, from here to the Keys, all the way down. And it's what we're used to doing, it's what we're used to—where we're from and it's what we care about" (Brantley 2008).

"I feel closer to God out here in these woods...If you just sit on an airboat and watch the sun come up one morning, you'll think, My God, this is the house of God. The way the spiders make their webs on the grass and the sun comes up, it all sparkles like diamonds out there and all you see is diamonds sparkling...And you just sit there and you don't worry about hunting or nothing, you just watch the sun come up. And when it first comes up, you can look right into it and it don't hurt you until the rays get here. But by then it's just like amber waves of—you know, golden grain in the sun and the sparkles off all of them...That's one thing that you experience out here" (Balman 2008).

"The Big Cypress is not just a place that we go once or go occasionally and that's the end of it. It's really the foundation of our culture and what we enjoy. That's my church out there, Cypress Cathedral. That's where I feel closest to the creator and who I am is out there. Well its kind of why we live here. We have a little peace and quiet, little piece of the Big Cypress, but if I didn't get out there, I probably wouldn't be the person I am today if I hadn't had those experiences, and [I] want to continue to share those with younger people" (Adams 2008).

"It's important to me for a lot of reasons. It's my past, it's my present, it's my future. It's not just my future; it's the future of mankind. If we don't help maintain it at a level where we can utilize the land and not just block it off so that nobody can touch it, we're not going to have it for our future generations and it is a delicate ecosystem just like the rainforest in South America where it has to be saved for the planet. And, unfortunately, there are those that are very zealous on trying to save it in a particular way, which is not necessarily, in my opinion, the best way to save the Everglades. I think you really need to tromp in the swamp and utilize the land to understand how it can truly be saved" (Schramm 2008).

"It's like a vacuum cleaner, it keeps sucking you in, as deep, as deep, as deep as you can get. Every time I'm out there on a Sunday evening—late in the day on a Sunday if I'm on an ATV or even this weekend I was on foot in an area that was new to me, and I hated to leave. I wanted to see more. Everything was new. You didn't know what was around the next clump of trees. You never know. I mean you can be in kind of boring scenery that you've seen all your life that's not exciting in any way. You might go 20 feet and all of a sudden you'll see a prairie or a slough scene or something like that and from that day on you just want to see it every year. You just want to go back. It's hard to explain" (Denninger 2008).

"I would say we pretty much always been taught when we were kids to treat it with kind of an attitude of stewardship. So, I've always kind of looked at it as something that has to be there. It's kind of our life blood; without it we don't have the water that we need, but to me it's—as a person, it's just something that's always been a part of my life. That's all we ever did as a family when I was a kid was go down there. If we weren't on the water in the CERP region, we were in the woods somewhere in the CERP region. Yeah, you think Everglades National Park and saw grass and salt marshes and mud and alligators, but it's a lot more. It's just about every conceivable ecosystem, short of tundra and desert, all wrapped up into one relatively small area" (Hauser 2008).

"[The Everglades mean] everything. I mean aside from my wife and my home and my responsibilities, that's me, in my mind" (Denninger 2008).

"Oh my gosh...I don't even know how to say this. It's probably my whole life...I'm probably there three days out of every week. Miami disappears. I don't hear anything. It's solitude; it's charisma at its best" (Onstad 2008).

CHANGES IN MODERN GLADESMEN CULTURE

Most all of the respondents spoke of the changes that modern Gladesmen Culture has experienced since parks and water management districts were established during and since the 1940s. Unfettered access to the wetlands of southern Florida is a thing of the past – a time when the early Gladesmen came and went, whenever and wherever they chose. Access to the backcountry has always been an issue for Gladesmen, and those of today speak of increasing regulatory constraints on their ability to enter areas that they have traditionally visited for decades. Changes with regard to business opportunities are cited, as are the conflicting means by which conservationists/environmentalists and Gladesmen envision Everglades preservation being achieved. For example, Gladesmen don't endorse human exclusion and they view newly constructed rock roads as more disruptive than natural trails. One respondent spoke of how membership in the culture has broadened over the years to include a wide range of users, personalities, and backgrounds. Another pointed out what he sees as very successful changes resulting from a restoration project at the Kissimmee River, where both people and wildlife have reportedly benefited.

"Access is the major issue so far as I'm concerned. People were on this property before all these government agencies got a hold of it. People can still exist on this property with cooperation, but we have to have cooperation from the government to allow us to be able to use it. And it really hurts to know the places I used to get to go to, I can't go to anymore...Same thing in the Big Cypress where they're going to the designated trails, which means you're going to have one little road you can go on. If you have to stay on the same little road all the time, you're not going to be able to observe the variation of things – you won't be able to explore" (Jenkins 2008).

"There's a lot of nice areas out there like Gum Slough and different areas were a favorite for a lot of people. But they've ruined it as far as I'm concerned. It's not like it was when I was a kid growing up. You could go out there, go anywhere you wanted" (Switzer 2008).

"There are people that are trying to take it away from us for numerous reasons, either because they think we've polluted or we harmed the ecology in some way or another. Airboats, which are the most common mode of travel down there, really leave no footprint to speak of. Now when it's dry, you'll be able to see airboat trails because they stay in them and they wash out a little bit. But that makes puddles for wildlife, for frog eggs to hatch that wouldn't hatch otherwise because it's dry, places for the wildlife to drink. And when the water comes up and you don't stay in the same trail for a while, it goes away. You go six feet over this way or six feet over that way, tends to wash it back in. And when I say these trails, these trails are like inches deep, just inches different than the other part next to them" (Maharrey 2008).

"Well years ago they used to claim the swamp buggy trails hurt the wildlife. But every year you go over the swamp buggy trails, it's grown up with grass. It gave food for the animals. Now with these rock roads, there's no food for the animals [there] and they stop the flow of water. The rock roads are damaging the Everglades more than the swamp buggy trails did. Swamp buggies turned up the mud and cultivated the soil – new plant life will grow, and that's food for animals. And with the rock roads, there's no plant life. The swamp buggy trails used to act as firebreaks when an area caught on fire from lightning or whatever. Swamp buggy trails were firebreaks. Now the rock roads are firebreaks, but it also stops the flow of water" (Switzer 2008).

"Those [access] trails are no bigger than they were fifty years ago, because they go through the cypress. You can't penetrate none of that. You couldn't walk in there only. Our trails are almost all the same [as before]. So, as far as destroying any of that [with an airboat], you're not. You're getting to be able to see, observe, feel, and just reflect on nature" (Onstad 2008).

"I haven't thought about moving out of Florida. A lot of people do. They get fed up. They uproot themselves and go to Alabama or they get in wherever they can get where the government won't mess with them. That's the truth. Hunters down here, Gladesmen, whatever we want to call them, many of them have gotten fed up and left for the last 20 years. Not because of CERP, I mean just because of regulatory pressure that makes their life less and less worthwhile in their mind" (Denninger 2008).

"There's just different restrictions, I would say is probably a big thing that I have noticed change in my lifetime. When I was a little kid, you didn't have to register your buggies or your three-wheelers or four-wheelers or any of your vehicles and then they started making you get a free sticker and then it was a ten-dollar sticker and now it's up to a fifty-dollar sticker. It's several regulations that they impose" (Hauser 2008).

"And man, we're frustrated as can be about the district throwing up No Trespassing zones. When we've talked to them about it, a lot of them are saying it's to protect some of the species of plants, but nobody will tell us exactly what...because there's such abundance. There's something more to the madness than just that" (Marco 2008).

"The airboat businesses came under fire from the environmentalists and the Park Service, and overnight all of us that were doing business got registered letters that said cease and desist. So that was, I'll say, 1991-92 and that was the end of my airboat business. And I just continued living here; put a real strain on my relationship with my wife because we previously had been doing real well [financially] and then now it was all cut back. And it was – I don't know, I guess you could say like a culture shock or something to me" (Spaulding 2008)

"A lot of what people want to go out there for is to see things [and places] that have grown to mean a lot to them in the past when you could use the vehicles to get in and see those or hunt or [go] back to places that mean something to you. You just can't get back anymore and that's what kind of breaks your tie to the land...A lot of the impetus for people to leave this area was that bond that they had developed over the years was broken. And it has [had] a lot of effect on people. It's hard to understand the effect, but it really is serious" (Denninger 2008).

"We've lived under that constant fear of – What's next? The rules and regulations that they apply all seem to point to getting you out – making it more difficult – just on and on and on. It makes it harder on the sportsman to utilize [traditional] areas, but yet they've gone out of their way to build amenities, boardwalks, and pull-offs [from] the highway for the tourists" (C. Hampton 2008).

"We all want to get the waters right. We all want the game, the environment to thrive and survive. Not at the expense of excluding man in his method—historical method of getting in here" (Marco 2008).

"Well, we went through – I call it panther hype back in the 1970s and 80s. It seemed like everything was geared to saving the panther, which I have no problem with saving the panther, but I think they really went overboard. And the biggest thing is there was no allowance for man to coexist with the panther. Seemed like we want to take man out of the picture, and we're still fighting that problem today, even new areas that the state's acquiring, they're just restricting it to where they don't want any off-road vehicles that have been in this area traditionally. And we use more or less the same roads once you get into the interior of these places" (Jenkins 2008).

"I'll tell you a hard thing is when I went off in the service in 1970, spent four years there. And when I came home out of the service, there were fences on both sides of the road and locked gates. And I went in there and spent four years, came home and couldn't get out of my backyard. I said – Wait a minute, I've done this all my life" (Lanier 2008).

"But [Gladesmen membership has] changed a little bit because now I think a lot of other people appreciate being out here and we see so many different types of users and personalities. You...have as many, I guess, of the auto mechanics, but now you do have a lot of doctors and dentists. A good friend of mine that I spend a lot of time with on an airboat is a dentist. We spend a lot of time together on the boats and his family gets along with my family and we do a lot together. So, I don't know if there is that kind of stereotypical Gladesmen anymore" (Dombroski 2008).

"...my daughter mentioned the fact how we used to go every weekend. Well when the Park Service took over and they went to the designated trail systems and everything, they stopped us from going the way we had traditionally always went. Instead of going six miles, six-and-a-half miles from the road to camp, we now have to travel about thirteen-and-a-half. So it increased the travel time. What used to be, we could leave [home] and drive down there and be sitting in camp in about three hours, three-and-a-half maybe. It's over five hours now. Camp hasn't changed. It's still by the crow flies only about eighty-five miles to where our camp is. But the way you have to go to get to it has been changed" (C. Hampton 2008).

"You can't be on the swamp on your airboat after ten o'clock at night. You have to shut down. You can't go to camp. We never get off work until eight or you break down, what are you going to do, with this curfew? It's taken a lot of spontaneity and enjoyment away from the old timers and the crackers. The area belongs to everybody, taxpayers that bought it" (Adams 2008).

"I think that any park unit has to have tourism to have the economy to make it work, on the one hand. But on the other hand, I feel like most of us that fall under the new term Gladesmen probably suffer a little bit because of it, because any time something comes up that's considered a user conflict, we're usually the first ones to be mitigated out of that conflict" (Hauser 2008).

"Access is extremely important that the public—the people that really own the environment—should have access. Their traditional culture should be respected, and that is extremely important. That's a wonderful resource. It's a resource that should be enjoyed. And that is one of the problems. You have the environmentalists that want to preserve. And that's great. We all want to preserve. And then you have the sportsmen and the conservationists and the Gladesmen that want to preserve. So they both agree on that. But then you have the Gladesmen and the conservationist and the sportsmen want to preserve with access and enjoyment, properly respected and properly managed. A lot of the environmental organizations do not have the traditional culture. It's not a part of their life, it's not a part of their recreation, it's not a part of their culture. And it's wonderful that they want to preserve it because both sides agree on that. But a lot of times, the environmental side fights for limited access if not any access. And then that affects the Gladesmen's culture, the conservationist, the dad that wants to take his kids bass fishing or duck hunting or bird watching, or just into the Everglades" (Bergeron 2008).

"Extremely frustrated. I've actually been hospitalized a couple of times from hypertension from the stress of working on access issues. And some of my friends in the environmental community are wanting to make it a wilderness—all wilderness, and eliminate our uses. And myself and others have been really the victims of character assassination. You know, I've worked just about all my adult life to protect the resource and work on, you know, proper regulation and everything just to have myself and these fine people—we've been called Nazis by the federal government. And I don't know, people just don't understand that you're part of the Glades" (Powell 2008).

"The usage [of the Loop Road] decreased immensely when the Park Service started taking over. They just started harassing people...Hell, I've gotten seven tickets in one day myself" (Balman 2008).

"Florida's changed a lot. But the exciting thing about this here—And this is what really excites me the most about this, is there's very few places in Florida that are such a success story as this area right here. This area [the Kissimmee River], in my opinion, is one of the greatest successes of any restoration project ever designed, only because they've taken everything into consideration...This is the only area that I'm aware of in this state where we've taken a piece of property that would have been urbanized and turned it back into the way it was fifty, a hundred years ago. [Prior to restoration] you once came up here and you couldn't find a wading bird if you spent a week looking for one. As you come up here today, you may see a thousand wading birds on this property. The animals that were basically nonexistent on this property are now back in manageable [numbers]. So, everything has benefited, including people" (Dombroski 2008).

THOUGHTS ON THE FUTURE

For Gladesmen, the future holds the promise of transmitting their traditional ways to younger generations, continuing public education in order to promote preservation/conservation of the Everglades, and maintaining their cultural heritage through continued access to backcountry areas. Acknowledgment of positive strides in working with Everglades National Park is given, and it is noted that successful preservation and restoration of the Everglades depends on the involvement of people who are highly knowledgeable about that unique resource. As is evident throughout the themes in this chapter, Gladesmen have a strong bond with the wetlands environment of southern Florida and want backcountry access to continue for themselves and for future generations.

"I love the Everglades. This is something that we need to retain for the future. But it has to be done by people that know what they're talking about. You can't bring somebody in from Montana, let's say, and have them be in charge of something...if they've never lived the land, they've never utilized the land, they're not from the land. If you want a good opinion on how to save the land, talk to the Indians. Talk to the people that are five, six, seven generations from Florida. They will tell you the true way to help save the Everglades" (Schramm 2008).

"I attend a lot of meetings and events fighting for our access and our rights to our properties out here on these lakes. I'm passionate about it. I'm a native; I was born and raised here. My kids are here. I got grandkids coming up. My four-

year-old granddaughter just loves to go boating out here on these lakes. She grabbed that life preserver and said, "Let's go Papa Bear." And you know, no matter what I'm doing, we go. And that's the next generation coming up. My daughter, she's airboated and hunted and fished and swam out here in these swamps all of her life. I just can't wait 'til I get [all my children and grandchildren] here and expose them to what we have down here, while we still have it" (Brantley 2008).

"The only way you can ever protect the environment for generations to come is let all generations fall in love with it. Like my children. My children were all introduced—just like my grandfather introduced me—to the environment, to protect it, respect it and learn to love it and [the] traditional cultures. And Florida has developed on the coastlines, but fortunately our forefathers in 1949 drew a line. And they said, Inside these levees will be preserved forever. And that is the Florida Everglades. And then in 1974 the Big Cypress Preserve contiguous to the River of Grass part of the Everglades was preserved. And outside these levees will be drained for agriculture, development and safety and welfare to the general public...The Gladesmen Culture becomes [in] jeopardy when you limit reasonable access, designated trails, access to hunt and fish, bird watch, walk into a cypress head and look for a ghost orchid, and teach your children the importance of what you were taught by your parents and your grandparents. And I'm a firm believer that the Gladesmen Culture and all of the future generations have to have reasonable access to be able to enjoy the environment. And if they don't learn that by having proper access, they'll never fall in love with it and [for] the future generations, it'll be a lost culture number one, and number two, you won't have them fighting for the protection of it" (Bergeron 2008).

"And Everglades National Park is becoming knowledgeable with what we do. They haven't restricted us. They pretty much know from aerial overviews that 90 percent of all of the airboat trails have grown up, and there's just a few major trails that people go on. We don't run through the sawgrass hardly ever, some people do occasionally – getting off one trail, going to another one. But it's all coming down to designated trails, I feel, and they're going to not let me go to places I've been. And that's what I feel is kind of going to happen over on the north side, although the Miccosukees are some of our biggest fighters for keeping that all open. They [the Park] got to deal with the Miccosukees, and that's a big outfit" (Onstad 2008).

"You know, preservation is great but preservation with recreation and access and education is more important than preservation with no entry, no attachment. And the ORV access that's being proposed by the Gladesmen is [on] the same timber trails that have been there for 180 years. They're not talking about building new trails or bulldozing new trails. It's the same trails that were built when they timbered the Big Cypress, same identical trails" (Bergeron 2008).

"We never know what development's going to do. You never know what water management's going to do or FWC [Fish and wildlife Commission] or anybody to our properties, and all we can do is just keep fighting for our access rights and our hunting rights and our culture rights, our heritage period. This is our heritage. It's what we came up living and doing and it's what we want to continue to do" (Brantley 2008).

"If I couldn't have gone in there with my grandfather, I would have never developed the culture of the Gladesmen and I wouldn't be spending half my time trying to save it. You're going to find out of all these Gladesmen, they're all fighting. They're not just fighting for access, they're fighting to preserve the Big Cypress and fighting to preserve the Everglades, forever, with traditional culture... I had a little boy come in here the other day. His dad brought him in. And he wanted to meet a Florida Fish and Wildlife commissioner. So, he come in here. And his dream is to be a game warden, law enforcement officer, biologist, or anything as long as he can spend time in the Everglades. And the reason why that young man developed that love and decided what he wanted to do with his career is because his dad had an airboat and brought him out into the Everglades" (Bergeron 2008).

"...access is becoming limited more and more everyday...The problem of the general public [in thinking] the Everglades is the park [Everglades National Park] is because in some situations that's the only thing that they know [about] how to get into the Everglades. They don't know of any other access to get in, so they go where they can take their vehicle down a nice, hard road and get into the area, and they want to have pavilions and convenient areas to get to and take their families...So most people will never venture out into the real Everglades. Users of the area—actual Gladesmen—the people that have grown and are born and raised in this area see the value of [seeing the backcountry] and we're constantly taking people out there. We take children—different youth groups—out into these areas, show them—the Boy Scout groups—show them these types of areas and what's available. We have different projects out here, fun projects, family projects, to bring people out. And like I said, a lot of people don't even realize what exists outside their back door an hour from their house" (Dombroski 2008).

"To me I look at the Everglades as a whole thing, we all interconnect. And it's important that we get written into any plans in the restoration, that we [Gladesmen] are included in it" (Kimmel 2008).

SUMMARY

The oral accounts of Gladesmen life, representing a range of ages, reflect a living cultural group that shares a common history and assigns great importance to maintaining a strong connection with the natural environment. For some, the Gladesmen way of life was entered into and adopted by choice after being recruited by friends, but for many the culture represents a multi-generational tradition that was inherited. In both cases, modern Gladesmen are eager to pass on their southern Florida traditions, as well as their sense of the past and of community, to subsequent generations.

Many of the interviewees trace family history back to include cattle ranching and logging occupations that were part of the evolution of the culture from Cracker Culture to early Gladesmen to modern Gladesmen. As related by self-identified Gladesmen themselves, some of the common themes that are voiced in the transcriptions have been summarized here.

The interviews convey memories of activities – camping, hunting, fishing, being in nature, and picnicking – that were experienced with family and friends. There are many references to spending time with others, but also accounts of rewarding time spent alone. From older Gladesmen, the interviews give a sense of how the culture has evolved and changed, but also how traditions have remained constant.

Gaining access to remote locations has always been fundamental to the pursuit of Gladesmen activities. For the early Gladesmen, access depended on small craft that could get into almost any location. More recent drainage projects, however, have lowered water levels and limited access in navigating many of the creeks, rivers, and swamps of the region, and Gladesmen feel the success of many of their activities is dependent upon transportation that is more modern. In some cases, the ability to gain access to certain long-used areas has reportedly been denied, and in many locations the use of mechanized vehicles has been limited or is no longer permitted.

As the use of motorized vehicles increased, clubs and organizations developed – not only for the common enjoyment of airboats and swamp buggies, but to foster the experience of the natural setting that is unique to southern Florida. Members speak proudly of having a common purpose and a sense of connection with others within a larger community. Membership in these clubs strengthens ties to the environment and reinforces the identity of a shared Gladesmen Culture.

Hunting has always been a very important activity to Gladesmen. It remains central to contemporary Gladesmen Culture and incorporates much of the same knowledge gained during earlier times. Adaptations include the use of established camps as a base of operations for storing gear and supplies, processing game, and housing airboats, swamp buggies, and water craft. Recreational fishing is another popular activity among contemporary Gladesmen, and long fishing trips are also facilitated by the use of backcountry camps.

The interviews indicate that “activity” is not the primary fulfillment gained from being a Gladesmen. Many speak of going to the backcountry alone or with others to simply immerse themselves in the region with little or no planning or provisioning. To the Gladesmen, being in the southern Florida ecosystem is central to their lives – it is part of who they are, the focus of what they do with most of their spare time, and it establishes a strong relationship with the world around them. Some of the character traits that Gladesmen share include self identification and recognition by others as part of the culture; extensive knowledge of the glades environment; use of multiple means (especially airboats) of accessing the region; organization into specific Gladesmen clubs and organizations; and the identification of personal, social, and emotional ties to the southern Florida environment.

During interviews, Gladesmen identified locations in the culture area where traditions are maintained and information exchanges occur, e.g., access points, commercial and private fish camps, associations and clubs, family camps, etc. These places that are linked to Gladesmen heritage are central to the purpose of this study. The next chapter describes the types of locations within the study area that represent cultural continuity among the Gladesmen.

