

**Arthur R. Marshall Foundation to  
Host 25th Annual Everglades  
Coalition Conference January 7-10 in  
Palm Beach Gardens Conference  
Highlights Will Include: \* River of Grass Canoe  
Expedition – Jan 2-7 \* The Everglades: Nature’s  
Classroom at Pine Jog – Jan 7 \* Conference  
Finale at Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife  
Refuge – Jan 10**

(West Palm Beach, FL – December 22, 2009) **Nancy Marshall**, President of the **Arthur R. Marshall Foundation**, which champions the restoration and preservation of the greater Everglades ecosystem, today announced that the nonprofit organization will be hosting the 25th annual **Everglades Coalition Conference**, January 7-10, 2010 at the PGA National Resort & Spa in Palm Beach Gardens.

The theme for the upcoming Everglades Coalition Conference is: ***The Changing Face of Everglades Restoration.***

"This will be the first Everglades Coalition Conference in many years to be held in Palm Beach County and more than two dozen local environmental and cultural organizations, governmental entities and private businesses are working together to make this silver anniversary event truly special," said Marshall.

Among the expected highlights of the upcoming Everglades Coalition Conference are three events specifically organized by the Marshall Foundation:

**\* River of Grass Canoe Expedition – January 2-7**

This 78-mile adventure for Core Paddlers will set off on the morning of January 2 at the point where the Kissimmee River flows into Lake Okeechobee, and will culminate at 4 p.m. on January 7 at The

Bingham Nature Pavilion at **Grassy Waters Preserve** at 8264 Northlake Boulevard in West Palm Beach.

Among the dozen Core Paddlers expected to make the six-day Canoe Expedition are team leader **Chris Schuld**, biologist **Allen Trefry**, **Janice Kerber**, South Florida Water Management District Deputy Director of Operations **Susan Sylvester** and **Tomas Boiton**. In addition, world-renowned author, nature enthusiast and wildlife photographer **Dudley Edmondson** will film a documentary of the trek.

A Grand Finale Flotilla of Paddlers in as many as 30 different vessels will join in for the last leg of the adventure, paddling through the Loxahatchee Slough to The Bingham Nature Pavilion at Grassy Waters Preserve. Kurt Gebhart, the former president of Grassy Waters Preserve, will lead the flotilla.

“The multi-purpose mission of the River of Grass Canoe Expedition is to draw attention to the invaluable role that the Everglades plays in the ecology of Florida, to emphasize the need to conserve and respect this key resource, and to document the current state of its health and well-being,” said Marshall, who is co-chairing the Expedition with **Joan Goldberg**, Waterfront Project Manager & Cultural Affairs Consultant to the City of West Palm Beach.

### **\* The Everglades: Nature’s Classroom at Pine Jog Elementary School – January 7**

The Marshall Foundation is coordinating a 4-hour workshop for educators from grade school through college level, at Florida Atlantic University’s Pine Jog Education Center and Pine Jog Elementary School, located at 6301 Summit Boulevard in West Palm Beach.

The offsite Environmental Education plenary program of the Everglades Coalition Conference will include tours of the elementary school, Florida’s first gold-certified LEEDs school, and the Education Center’s 135-acre pond/pine flatwoods “living laboratory,” plus a keynote address by **Glenn Thomas**, the Assistant Dean of PK-12 Schools and Educational Programs at Florida Atlantic University where he’s responsible for \$23 million annually in grants, state appropriations and donations.

Under the direction of Program Moderator **Wendy Spielman**, the K-12 Science Manager of Curriculum Development and School Improvement for the School District of Palm Beach County workshop panelists will be:

- + **Fred J. Barch**, Principal of Pine Jog Elementary School
- + **Dr. Rachel Docekal**, Deputy Director of the South Florida Science Museum
- + **Alana Edwards**, Education & Training Coordinator at FAU's Florida Center for Environmental Studies
- + **Allyson Gantt**, the Education & Outreach Coordinator at Everglades National Park
- + **Eric Gehring**, the Director of Education at the Marshall Foundation
- + **Caroline Lewis**, Director of Education at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden
- + **Erica Robbins**, Outreach Program Specialist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- + **Jackie Stone**, third grade teacher at Avocado Elementary School in Homestead who was featured in the book, *Everglades Forever – Restoring America's Wetland*
- + **Toni Westland**, a Federal Park Ranger and Environmental Education Specialist at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in Sanibel Island

There is no conference fee for educators to participate in this workshop scheduled for 11 a.m. to 3:15 on January 7. To register or for more information, contact Isabel Botero at [boteroic@cdm.com](mailto:boteroic@cdm.com).

### \* **Conference Finale at the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge – January 10**

Scheduled to last from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Everglades Coalition Conference participants will enjoy a keynote address by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director **Sam Hamilton**, guided tours of the Refuge, brunch on the Pavilion hosted by Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, and the opportunity to try out the recently installed state-of-the-art interactive exhibits of the Visitor Center. The Refuge is located on the west side of SR7/441, two miles south of Boynton Beach Blvd.

The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1951 and is named for the longtime head of the Florida's Fish and Wildlife Offices, who also drafted the first Everglades Restoration plan. Explore a remnant of the Cypress forest that once stretched south to Miami-Dade and marked the eastern edge of the Everglades; a butterfly garden; and an 80-acre microcosm of the Everglades where restoration techniques are tested. Rental canoes and kayaks can also be arranged.

**About the 25th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference:**

The Everglades Coalition Conference is the largest annual forum for debate of Everglades conservation and restoration, and will bring together leaders, elected officials, scientists, community and environmental activists, educators, and the general public to discuss the current changes we are facing, in government, in our worsening environment, and in the economy, as we work to restore America's Everglades. Conference sessions focus on topics such as growth management, political and public partnerships, wildlife issues and energy policies.

"With a new Administration that is committed to fulfilling its partnership role, we look forward to finally moving into constructing projects as envisioned in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan," said Sara Fain, Everglades Coalition National Co-Chair and Everglades Restoration Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. "We must also focus on educating and inspiring the next generation who will be completing the world's largest ecosystem restoration plan in the world."

**About the Everglades Coalition:**

The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of 53 local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem, from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes into Lake Okeechobee, through the River of Grass, out to Florida Bay and the Keys. Complete conference details, including the agenda and list of speakers, will be announced later this year. For more information, visit: [www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org) or contact Sara Fain at [sfain@npca.org](mailto:sfain@npca.org).