



The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Announces October 17 Grand Opening of Visitors Center & Everglades Exhibition

Public is Invited to Free Grand Opening Events Including Marsh Trail Tours, Canoe Rides and Special Exhibits

(Boynton Beach, FL – September 25, 2009) **Sylvia Pelizza**, Refuge Manager for the **Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge**, today announced the October 17th Grand Opening of the Visitors Center and its new \$1-million, state-of-the-art Everglades Exhibition.

Starting with a color guard, flag raising and ribbon cutting at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 17, the festive day long Grand Opening events will include:

- + The unveiling of informative and interactive new exhibits and displays, including The History of the Refuge, Everglades Attitudes, the refuge Management Game, an American alligator “gator hole” diorama and a tribute to Arthur R. Marshall. Two showcase exhibits will be the night sounds room and virtual airboat tour.
- + The premiere of a memorable new video that will capture the imagination of every visitor.
- + Participatory events for the whole family such as Cypress Boardwalk and Marsh Trail tours, canoe rides, a static helicopter display, environmental education programs for children, light refreshments and more.

The exciting new Visitors Center exhibits were funded by private donations and governmental grants, with special thanks to the Batchelor Foundation, Inc., Samuel & Joyce McLendon, American Express, Florida Department

of Environmental Protection/Florida Recreational Development Assistance Program and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

“A wealth of gratitude is expressed to **Nancy Marshall**, president of the **Arthur R. Marshall Foundation**, who championed the fund raising efforts for the exhibits,” said Pelizza. “Without her assistance, we wouldn’t have the caliber of exhibits that people can see starting October 17. Nancy’s focus and unending desire to teach people about the Refuge and our Everglades Ecosystem enabled her to raise more than a half million dollars for the project”.

“The National Wildlife Refuges are America’s promise to its citizens that there will always be places where wildlife and wildlife habitat can survive. The Everglades, known as the ‘River of Grass,’ is one such treasure,” said **Josette Kaufman**, executive director of the Marshall Foundation.

About the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge:

Located at 10216 Lee Road, seven miles west of Boynton Beach, FL. the **Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge** was established in 1951 and covers more than 221 square miles of natural habitat, the largest northernmost portion of the unique Everglades. Home to the American alligator and the critically endangered Everglades snail kite, as many as 257 species of birds may use the Refuge's diverse wetland habitats in any given year. The Refuge was established under the authority of the Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929. For more information, please call **561.732.3864** or visit www.fws.gov/loxahatchee.

Available for Interview:

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