



National Park Service

Everglades National Park Hosts International Day for Biological Diversity on May 19

Date: May 3, 2013

Contact: **Volunteer Coordinator: Kevin Bowles Mohr**, (305) 242-7752

Contact: **General Park Information:**, 305-242-7700

Contact: **Mary Plumb, Public Affairs Officer (Acting)**, 305-242-7714



HOMESTEAD, Florida: Everglades National Park's nationally award winning volunteer program is hosting a volunteer event in recognition of the International Day for Biological Diversity on Sunday, May 19, at Shark Valley. The International Day for Biological Diversity aims to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

Due to the tropical environment of south Florida, common house plants and ornamental landscaping shrubs have become invasive weeds in the Everglades, harming native plant diversity. For this project, volunteers will hand pull Syngonium, an exotic plant, and bag it for disposal.

The theme for the International Day for Biological Diversity is, "Water and Biodiversity." This coincides with the United Nation's designation of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation. These designations raise awareness of the challenges facing water management, in light of the increase in demand for water access, allocation and services. As part of the project, volunteers will be given a short talk about the one-mile long Tamiami Trail Bridge that is designed to begin healing the ecological wounds inflicted by the Tamiami Trail, a road which once blocked the water flow of the Everglades.

Volunteers will meet in at the Shark Valley Entrance to Everglades National Park at 8:30 a.m. Please park your vehicles in the grass along Highway 41, near the entrance road to the park. Walk towards the Shark Valley Entrance Station to meet the project coordinators.

All are invited. To volunteer, show up or RSVP with Kevin Bowles Mohr at (305) 242-7752

Participating volunteers will receive a free entry pass, enabling each volunteer to visit the Everglades again and share this unique national park with their family and friends.

Anyone under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian fill out the approval section of the Volunteer Agreement before volunteering.

Directions: Physical Address - 36000 SW 8th St. Miami, Florida 33194

The Shark Valley Visitor Center is located on Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail / SW 8th St.) 25 miles west of the Florida Turnpike, exit 25A (from the north) and exit 25 (from the south).

From the Naples area, take U.S. 41 (Tamiami Trail) approximately 70 miles east to Shark Valley.

Volunteer Program: Everglades National Park's volunteer program has been recognized nationally as a recipient of the Hartzog Park Program Volunteer Service Award. In the last five years, Everglades National Park's volunteer program has seen a 150 percent increase in volunteers and nearly a growth of 50 percent in contributed hours, due to its strategic planning and focused collaboration. Through collaboration with Biscayne National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve, more than 300 student volunteers contributed more than 5,000 hours in two months.

In 1970, when Director Hartzog started the National Park Service volunteer program, there were about 300 participants. Last year, more than 257,000 volunteers of all ages, from all over the country, and the world, donated 6.7 million hours of their time to help preserve and protect the national parks they love.

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.