Urban Rivers as Social-Ecological Systems: An Examination of History & Ecology in the Miami River
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Goals

• To examine the Miami River as a socio-ecological system, tracing the interactions through time between human populations and the river

• To compile a comprehensive environmental history, bridging historical conditions and the current status, of the Miami River

• To investigate how public perception of the Miami River as well as its change in quality over time

• To examine the social connectivity of the Miami River in a longitudinal, lateral, and vertical dimensions from a historical perspective

Preliminary Findings

• The Miami River was essential to the formation of the city of Miami and played an important role in many historical events and developments

• Due to the development and establishment of Miami as a city, the Miami River is now a severely degraded system because of urban development and years of use as a dumping area

• Complete alteration of the river’s ecosystem disrupted connectivity of this urban river

Expected Results

• Our changed perception of the Miami River enabled permanent ecological damage and a changed socioeconomic landscape

• As the river’s ecosystem services became less valued, people’s view of the river changed, decreasing the river’s water quality due urbanization

• Through time, people’s relationship to the river changed as new ways of interacting with the river on the spatial dimension emerged

This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. HRD-1547798. This NSF Grant was awarded to Florida International University as part of the Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST) Program. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.