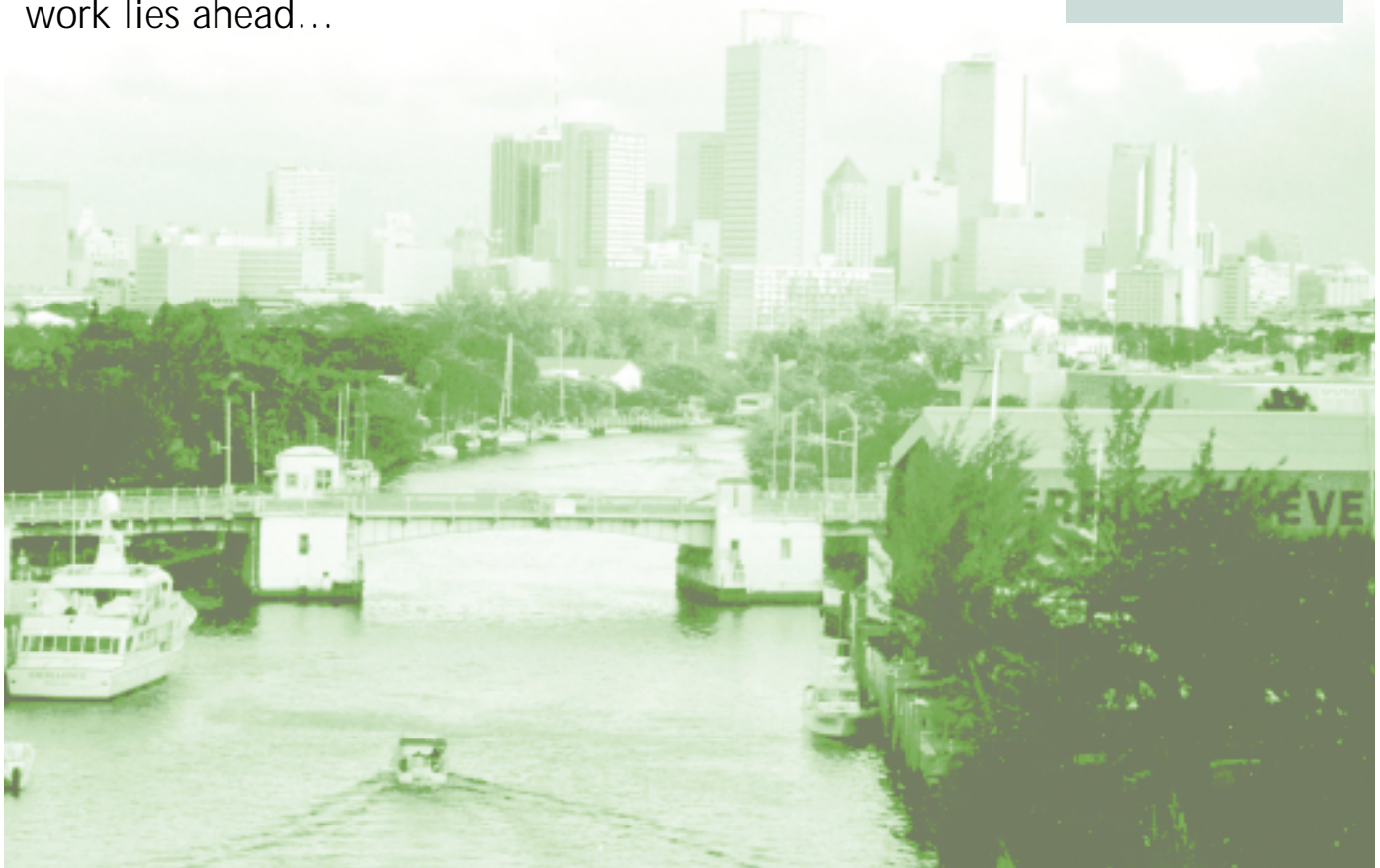


ONE VOICE *for the river*

Florida is waking up to The Miami River's importance. As the state's fifth largest port, the source of most of its Caribbean sea trade, it is a \$5 billion business employing more than 8,000. It is also Biscayne Bay's largest tributary, and environmentally critical. The Miami River Commission has worked with the river community to reverse the area's historical neglect and bring it the verge of a renaissance. Yet the most important work lies ahead...

Spring
2000
Report



The river and our mission

The Miami River is a 5.5-mile navigable working river running through Miami's heart to Biscayne Bay. This exotic, vibrant urban waterscape flows past boatyards, shippers, tugboats, marinas, public parks, mangroves, historic homes, pleasure craft, public parks, restaurants, hotels and downtown office and condominium towers into Biscayne Bay. It is the center of a 69-square-mile urban watershed twice the size of the City of Miami.

Most of Miami-Dade County's marine businesses operate here, some in the same family for generations. The river is the source of more than 90 percent of Florida's marine trade with the Caribbean, serving 84 ports of call. No more than 275 feet wide, the river is dredged to 15 feet at the center of the channel, but silt and shoaling over more than two generations have reduced its navigability.

For more than a thousand years, people have dwelled along the river's banks. In 1513, Ponce de Leon found a spring-fed river with a large Tequesta Indian village and burial mound on the north bank where downtown Miami now stands. The name "Miami" is said to come from an Indian term for "sweet water," and the city took the river's name upon its incorporation in 1896. Today, roughly one-third of the river passes through working waterfront; one-third through historic residential neighborhoods and parks, and one-third through Miami's bustling downtown into Biscayne Bay.

As an international trade center, the river is one of the state's most important bodies of water. Yet because the river has not been dredged since 1933, buildup of sediment has reduced its navigability.

That sediment - contaminated by stormwater runoff, sewage, oil spills and other sources - has also made the river among the most polluted bodies of water in the state. Without dredging, comprehensive cleanup of the river is impossible. Two grand jury reports in the last decade and the Miami River Study Commission's January 1998 Call To Action cited continuing problems of



Miami River circa 1884. Munroe Collection, Historical Museum of Southern Florida.

pollution and the buildup of sediments. ***That report said it was essential to marshal political and civic leadership to dredge the river and thereby remove accumulated pollutants.***

In response, the 1998 Legislature established The Miami River Commission as "the official coordinating clearinghouse for all public policy and projects related to the Miami River."

More importantly, the commission was entrusted with finding solutions and getting results. Its mission is to work to ensure that government agencies, business and residents speak with **one voice** on river issues, to develop projects to improve the river, to secure funding for projects

and make sure they are completed on time and within budget. It includes shipyard owners, government officials, small business owners, Coast Guard personnel, neighborhood activists, and concerned private citizens. Under Managing Director, Capt. David Miller, the commission works with an operating budget of about \$100,000.

The commission's immediate priority is to get the river dredged and thereby purge it of dangerous pollutants and return the navigable channel to its original depth. Without dredging, true cleanup of the river and Biscayne Bay cannot happen, and ship traffic can proceed only at high tide. Although most channels in port areas are dredged routinely, The Miami River has not been dredged since 1933. With each passing year, as sediment builds, problems of both pollution and navigability only worsen.

As a watchdog group, The Miami River Commission is the main catalyst and advocate for the river. We operate in the Sunshine, with our documents and meetings open to the public.

We approach our work with urgency. By law, that work shall end July 1, 2003, unless the Legislature deems otherwise. In keeping with our mission and mandate, this initial report describes the commission's purpose, accomplishments and pending tasks.



ROBERT PARKS

Chair's Report

The Miami River Commission's first full year was filled with accomplishment and promise. We believe the river is finally on the verge of a revival, but big tasks still lie ahead. In 1999, a varied group of people representing industry, government, residents and businesses rapidly shaped themselves into a results-oriented group speaking with one voice. We brought river dredging and cleanup within sight for the first time in nearly 70 years. Our productive, hard-working committees quickly set about to improve every aspect of river life. These are some of the achievements:

■ **We got an allocation for dredging.** In late September 1999, President Clinton signed into law the first \$5 million to dredge the Miami River. That happened because, the preceding spring, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers determined that the federal government fund 80 percent of the cost of dredging the river, with the city, county and state paying for the rest. That was critical. Never before had the federal government agreed to pay most of the dredging cost. The decision made dredging fiscally practical for the city, county and state. This was the keystone to the Miami River's revival.

■ **We built political support.** The partnership would not have happened without the Miami River Commission's work with the offices of Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Carrie Meek, Sen. Bob Graham and the support of the South Florida delegation. Miami-Dade County Commissioner Bruno Barreiro worked particularly hard to build local support. Today, the city, county and state are working to complete their partnership to raise the local share needed to make dredging happen. We hope to begin

dredging in late 2000 or early 2001.

■ **In 1999, we launched a Greenways project** with the Trust for Public Land to ensure that the river is friendly for residents and visitors alike. In September, many of us traveled to Chattanooga, Tenn., to learn from the Trust about that city's nationally recognized Riverwalk and Greenway. We worked to start an Urban Design Center to harmonize the river's physical appearance and initiate an action plan to improve blighted areas. We helped get parkland dedicated in the Spring Gardens residential neighborhood. We know that a working river can be friendly for residents and visitors alike, as Chattanooga, Cleveland and Providence, R.I., have taught us.

Our hard work is paying off, but we won't rest until we are confident that the Miami River basin will develop into an area that benefits shippers, businesses, recreational boaters, residents and visitors. Our goal is to create a lasting asset not only for Miami-Dade and South Florida, but for our state as a whole.

Robert L. Parks,
Chair

Miami River Commission's Accomplishments, 1999-2000

- Made dredging fiscally possible
- Built local and state support for dredging
- Launched a greenways plan for the river
- Accelerated public safety and cleanup efforts
- Built a consensus with public, private and civic leadership
- Dramatically increased public awareness of the river

DREDGING GROUP



RICHARD BUNNELL AND SCOTT MITCHELL
CO-CHAIRS

Group Reports

The Miami River Commission is divided into working groups. This report highlights work of four groups for Dredging, Quality of Life, Public Safety and Economic Development. These groups operate separately but work in concert, as we believe that dredging, zoning, the environment, public safety and economic development are interrelated.

Dredging the river is a major project, and needed for both environmental and economic reasons. The Miami River contains some of the most contaminated sediments in Florida – the result of decades of inadequate storm water systems, untreated sewage flowing into the river, and a lack of environmental stewardship.

While the environmental benefits are clear, the economic benefits are equally important. Dredging the channel to its original depth results in timely ship movements less dependent on tides, thereby adding cargo capabilities. Planned free trade agreements with Caribbean Basin nations will require a better infrastructure to accommodate the foreseen 30-60 percent growth in trade and the associated increase in jobs.

Dredging the river will take five years. Dredged sediment will travel by barge to an above-ground drying area near the river that Miami-Dade County is working to secure. Trucks will then take dried sediments to an environmentally approved landfill.

Failure to dredge is the greatest stumbling block to stronger international maritime trade with our neighbors in the Caribbean and Latin America. Trade has doubled in the last decade, but shoaling of sediments hobbles the river and limits shipping. The Army Corps estimates the channel is narrowing by two feet per year, sometimes grounding ships. Because of the reduction in channel depth from shoaling and sedimentation, loaded ships can only move at high tide.

Dredging is the solution. The Army Corps created a "worst case" estimate of Miami River dredging costs at approximately \$80 million – a deliberately high estimate that includes a \$16 million contingency fund. Another \$32 million is allotted for Miami-Dade County's landfill tipping fee (the per-ton fee to pass the gate to the Miami-Dade Landfill). This, too, is a worst-case estimate with less costly

options probable. Eighty percent of the costs are to be paid for with federal funds over five years.

For that to happen, local sponsors would pay up to \$7 million to acquire land for the fills. Of the other \$13.8 million, with the state contributing 50 percent (\$1.3 million a year for five years), the city 25 percent (\$650,000 a year) and the county 25 percent (\$650,000 a year).

When local sponsorships are completed, we can return to the federal government to provide its share to start dredging. From all we have learned so far this year, we believe we are in an excellent position to put all the parts in place and make dredging happen.

QUALITY OF LIFE GROUP



JAMES MURLEY AND BRENDA MARSHALL
CO-CHAIRS

The Quality of Life Group is dedicated to improving the river's environmental conditions and increasing public access to, while maintaining its unique, enduring character as a working river. The group's Greenways Subcommittee seeks to enhance pedestrian's access to the river by promoting riverwalks and encouraging development of riverside parks and restaurants that are also accessible to boaters. The Stormwater Subcommittee is charged with improving stormwater systems to reduce inflow of pollutants into The Miami River and its tributaries.

We are mindful of the river's heritage; The Miami River Commission is a proud cosponsor of Miami River Day on April 1, 2000. This festival – now in its fourth year - at historic Lummus Park - is dedicated to celebrating the river and educating the public on its importance and rich history.

The Trust for Public Land is an active partner in nearly all our quality of life issues. The TPL is working in cooperation with the commission, river business community and developers to create a greenway/riverwalk friendly to pedestrians and bicyclists. Together with the Trust, the Miami River Commission supported the purchase and dedication of The Point Park in the Spring Gardens residential neighborhood. They worked to create a greenways plan for Miami's historic Riverside area. The TPL has also worked to guarantee park areas near the river's mouth by the recently excavated Miami Circle project.

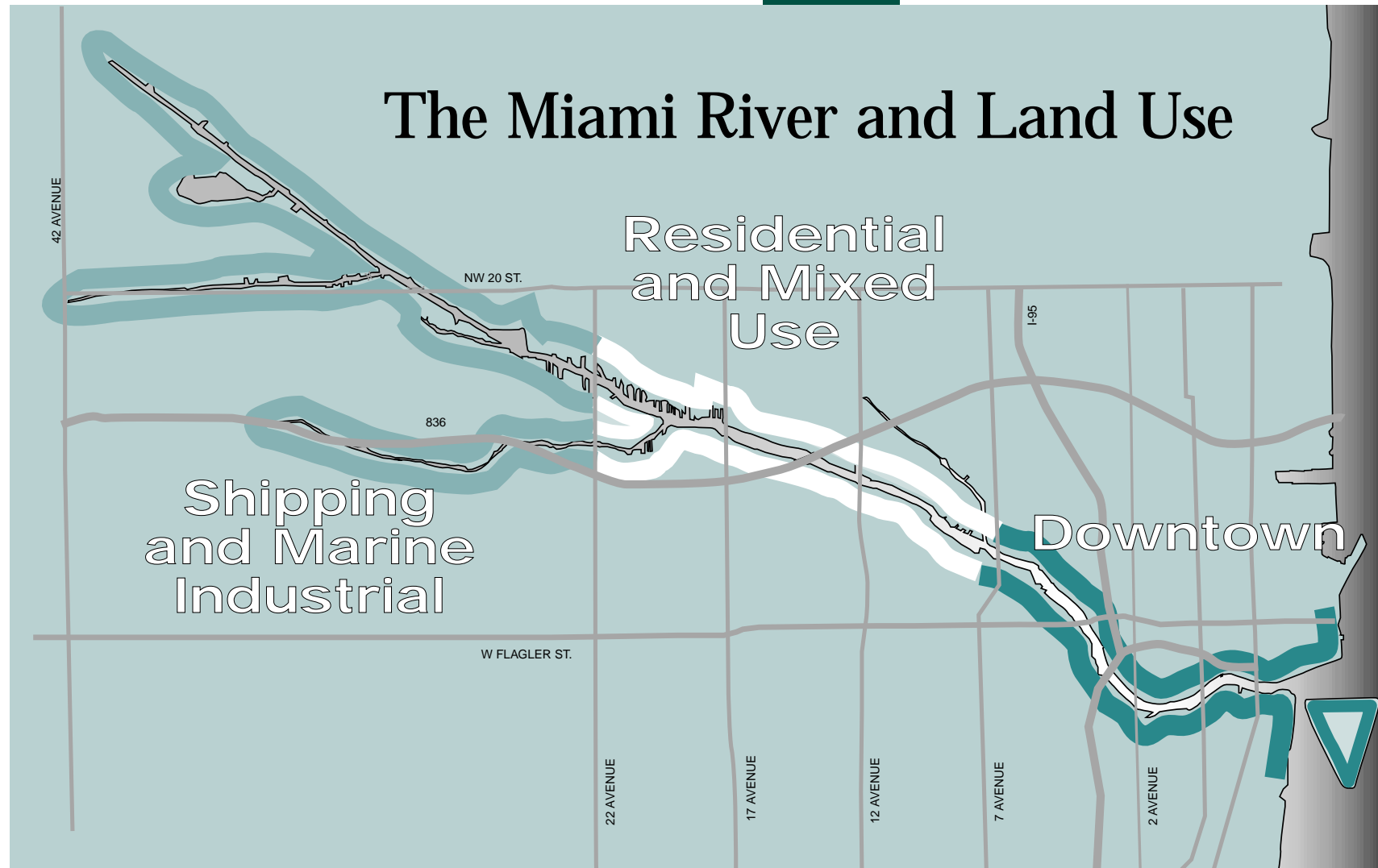
Our group is developing an "Urban Infill Plan" with the city and county to attract more residents and visitors back to the central urban area. We will start by identifying vacant and blighted properties and work with the city and county to develop a plan for the best uses. That plan will update zoning to promote water-dependent and water-related activities and safer, more vital neighborhoods. While envisioning a river accessible and friendly to residents and visitors, our group encourages such developments to capitalize on the "working" river's gritty, unconventional charm.

In tandem with this effort, we are creating a Miami River Urban Design Center, similar in concept to Chattanooga's. The center will champion good urban, architectural and landscape design to urge development in keeping with a consistent vision for the area. Making the area a better place to live and do business will raise the tax base and benefit the local economy.

The Stormwater Subcommittee has spurred action on several important fronts. Task force teams of regulators from the Department of Health and the City of Miami's Solid Waste Department and Allapattah Neighborhood Enforcement Team conducted a systematic education and enforcement program at the Allapattah Marketplace. The effort dramatically reduced contaminated runoffs from that giant produce distribution center into Wagner Creek, the river's largest urban inflow.

The City of Miami, as a member of the Stormwater Subcommittee, has completed a master plan update for stormwater system improvements in the Wagner Creek area.

The greatest challenge is funding. The Miami River Commission is encouraging municipalities throughout the river basin to work in common cause to raise funds and seek needed grants to comprehensively update the Miami River drainage basin's stormwater system.



PUBLIC SAFETY GROUP



CAPT. LAWRENCE BOWLING, U.S.C.G. AND GARY WINSTON, STATE ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
CO-CHAIRS

Thanks to cooperation among businesses, residents, and law enforcement agencies, the Miami River area is safer than it has been in years. While much work lies ahead, law enforcement is far more visible along the river. Two of the Public Safety Group's most important arms are the Quality Action Team, which comprises private river businesses and government agencies, and the Miami River Enforcement Group, a team of law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

The Quality Action Team has supervised a dramatic reduction in derelict vessels on the river. In the last 18 months, the number of derelict vessels requiring removal has been cut from more than 50 to fewer than 10. The Coast Guard, as a QAT

member, has fully implemented its system targeting high-risk, foreign flag vessels. As a result of this policy of tightened enforcement and strengthened education, foreign flag vessels are significantly safer than they were two years ago, and in full compliance with federal pollution prevention regulations, thereby reducing oil spills and sewage discharge.

The Miami River Enforcement Group has increased nighttime marine police patrols through the City of Miami, created code enforcement inspection teams to educate the public and enforce regulations and laws in a coherent, harmonious way. River businesses appreciate the value of these teams in fostering consistency in enforcement.

The Enforcement Group has systematically promoted a cooperative spirit among the assorted law enforcement and regulatory agencies. That cooperation has produced numerous seizures of contraband and a notable reduction in criminal activity.

and even a high-rise "mini-city" of apartments, condos, theaters, restaurants, hotel rooms, parking, and shopping.

These projects, while preliminary, attest to developers' growing confidence in the river's unique appeal after years of stagnation along the downtown riverfront. The Miami River Commission wants developers to complement both the river's natural and working assets.

In commercial maritime trade, no other port in Florida can so effectively serve the smaller, but vital, maritime markets throughout the Caribbean and the northern cone of South America. These markets, with smaller populations, lack the intermodal rail and road links that big container ships require. This makes the Miami River the state's most logical port for smaller, shallower-draft vessels that are the staple of maritime Caribbean Basin trade. This river trade is critical to the economic, social and political health of our neighboring nations.

The Miami River is South Florida's only shallow draft port of vital economic influence internationally. The nearby Miami International Airport is a growing international cargo center, and the planned Intermodal Transportation Center will only strengthen the river's role as a transportation link.

In 1990, the Miami River was documented as Florida's fifth largest port. Cargo values rose from \$2.3 billion in 1990 to \$4.3 billion in 1998, and by most estimates exceed \$5 billion today. Terminals rose from 14 to 38. In 1998 alone, 4,172 cargo vessels called on the Miami River. If and when trade opens with Cuba, shippers say, that traffic could easily double.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE GROUP



JAMES MCDONALD
CLEVE JONES
PATTI ALLEN
CO-CHAIRS

The Miami River's position is vital for both the recreational boating and commercial shipping industries. The Economic Development and Commerce group aims to protect and promote these vital industries and other businesses along the river, while adhering to the letter and spirit of laws and regulations to protect the environment.

We are working with the Quality of Life Group to bring zoning, land and water uses into harmony with the best interests of residents, visitors and the general commercial and maritime businesses that support them.

Our group urges developers to make projects and greenways accessible to recreational boaters by including boat slips and docks with new developments. We are also encouraging river-area expansion of the pleasure boating and growing mega-yacht business.

This task is urgent, because developers have targeted Miami River as a new hot spot over the last year. Developers have been busy assembling land and announcing an unprecedented number of ambitious plans along the river.

Those plans have included: a three-tower, mixed-used residential development on the river's north bank; a riverfront restaurant and nightclub district comparable to those found along Cleveland and San Antonio riverfronts,

MIAMI RIVER FUND, INC. INTEGRATED BUDGET FISCAL YEAR
July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000

USES OF FUNDS	SFWMD (1)	FDEP ADMIN (2)	FDEP DREDGING (3)	MRCC(4)	MIAMI-DADE CBO GRANT(5)	CITY OF MIAMI STORM-WATER FUNDS (6)	TOTAL
Office space		\$1,200.00					\$1,200.00
Administration	\$4,100.00	\$12,050.00	\$3,000.00	\$5,593.92	\$8,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$35,243.92
Printing	\$2,000.00	\$5,300.00				\$2,000.00	\$9,300.00
Office Equipment	\$1,000.00	\$3,550.00					\$4,550.00
Transportation	\$3,000.00	\$5,620.00	\$10,000.00				\$18,620.00
Payroll		\$64,780.00					\$64,780.00
Environmental education	\$2,500.00	\$5,000.00		\$9,040.00	\$18,875.00	\$2,000.00	\$37,415.00
Informational brochures	\$1,500.00	\$2,250.00	\$3,000.00		\$2,500.00		\$9,250.00
Lease/purchase of land			\$200,000.00				\$200,000.00
Audit fees	\$250.00	\$250.00	\$3,000.00			\$250.00	\$3,750.00
Governmental			\$50,000.00				\$50,000.00
Environmental engineering			\$16,000.00				\$16,000.00
Water quality permits and analysis			\$10,000.00				\$10,000.00
Transportation permits and analysis			\$5,000.00				\$5,000.00
Miami River stormwater improvement				\$13,560.00	\$5,625.00	\$18,250.00	\$37,435.00
Miami River Greenways Project				\$8,000.00			\$8,000.00
Miscellaneous reserve funds	\$25,967.75						\$25,967.75
TOTALS	\$40,317.75	\$100,000.00	\$300,000.00	\$36,193.92	\$35,000.00	\$25,000.00	\$536,511.67

All the funds on this chart are for the specific purposes indicated. Some of the funds are pending, others are carryovers. Our core budgeting is under the category "FDEP Administrative" with help from certain moneys of the South Florida Water Management District and Miami River Coordinating Committee.

1. South Florida Water Management District funds carried over from 1998 appropriations for MR Study Commission. Non-recurring.
2. Florida Department of Environmental Protection funds for MRC administration. This reflects the true administrative budget of the Miami River Commission. For 2000-2001, the MRC is requesting a total of \$150,000, which would allow the commission to obtain an assistant managing director to help further ongoing projects.
3. Florida Department of Environmental Protection dredging budget has been largely left unused because dredging yet to begin.
4. Remaining funds of the Miami River Coordinating Committee, which the Miami River Commission superseded in 1999.
5. This Miami-Dade County Community Based Organization grant is a reimbursable grant focused on environmental education.
6. City of Miami stormwater utility funds are pending final approval by city officials.

Miami River Commission Members

Managing Director:

CAPT. DAVID MILLER

Chair: MR. ROBERT L. PARKS, ESQ.

Member at Large Appointed by Governor

Vice Chair: MR. PHIL EVERINGHAM

Chair of Marine Council

Designee: Mr. James Wellington

FLORIDA GOV. JEB BUSH

Designees: Mr. James F. Murley

Mr. Ralph D. Cantral

SEN. MARIO DIAZ-BALART

Chair of Miami-Dade Delegation

Designee: Rep. Gustavo Barreiro

MAYOR JOE CAROLLO

Mayor of Miami

Designee: Ms. Christina Bahamonde

COMMISSIONER JOE SANCHEZ

City of Miami Commissioner

Designee: Ms. Eileen Damaso

MAYOR ALEX PENELAS

Mayor of Miami-Dade County

Designees: Ms. Sandy O'Neil/

Ms. Virginia Sanchez

COMMISSIONER BRUNO A.

BARREIRO

Miami-Dade County Commissioner

Designee: Mr. Alfredo J. Gonzalez

MR. MICHAEL COLLINS

Chair of Governing Board of South

Florida Water Management District

Designee: Mr. Gerardo B. "Jerry" Fernandez

MS. KATHERINE FERNANDEZ

RUNDLE, ESQ.

Miami-Dade State Attorney

Designee: Mr. Gary Winston, Esq.

MR. JAMES BROWN

Chair of Miami River Marine Group

Designee: Mr. Richard Bunnell

MS. PATTI ALLEN

Executive Director of Downtown

Development Authority

Designee: Mr. Alonso Menendez

MR. WILLIAM O. CULLOM

President,

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

Designee: Mr. James E. McDonald,

Esq.

DR. ERNEST MARTIN

Neighborhood representative

appointed by

City of Miami Commission

Designee: Ms. Virginia Newell, PhD.

MS. SALLYE JUDE

Neighborhood Representative

Appointed by Miami-Dade

Commission

Designee: Ms. Jane Caporelli

MS. JANET McALILEY

Representative from Environmental or

Civic Organization Appointed by the

Governor

Designee: Ms. Theo Long

MS. SARA BABUN

Member at Large Appointed by the

Governor

Designee: Mr. Tom Parker, Esq.

MR. CLEVE JONES, III

Member at Large Appointed by City of

Miami Commission

Designee: Mr. William Parkes, Jr.

Ex officio (non-voting) members:

U.S. SEN. CONNIE MACK

Designee: Ms. Nilda Rodriguez (will

change)

U.S. SEN. BOB GRAHAM

Designee: Ms. Ellen Roth

U.S. REP. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

Designee: Ms. Debbie Musgrove

Zimmerman

CAPT. LAWRENCE J. BOWLING

Captain of Port, US Coast Guard

Designee: Commander Mike Miles,

USCG

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