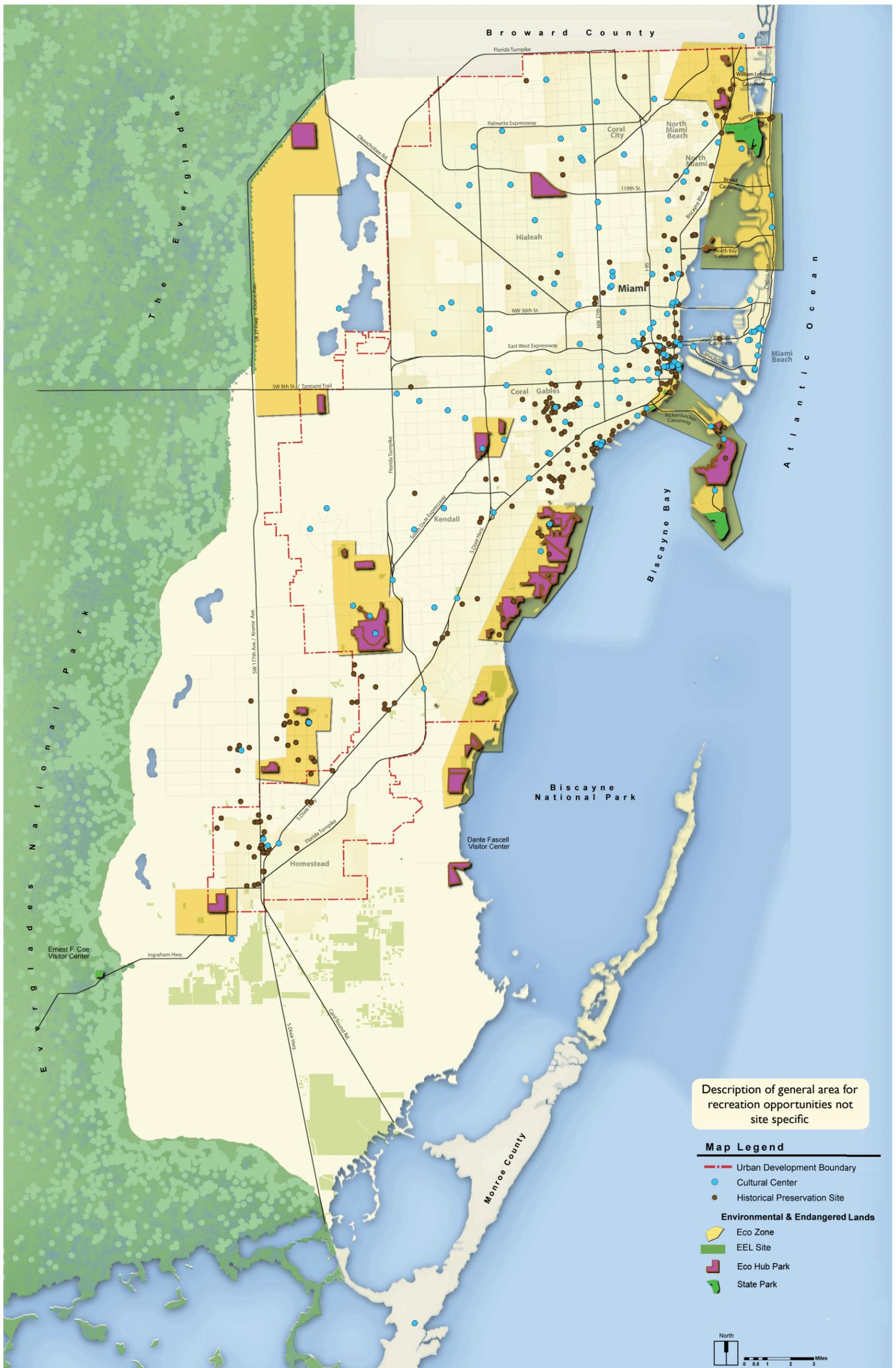


# Great Natural and Cultural Areas Vision



The experience of a natural area would also differ depending on what part of the transect of the urban environment they are located in. Example characteristics are:



**Urban Zone**

- Green building practices design construction facilities
- Good signage: educational, interpretive, well-designed
- Rollerblading, hiking, biking trails -- paved, multi-purpose trail in areas where there will be no degradation to the adjacent resource
- Environmental centers that are safe -- provide security through structured environmental programs
- See urban wildlife - provide community gardens for butterflies



**Sub-Urban Zone**

- Green building practices design construction facilities
- Good signage: educational, interpretive, well-designed
- Rollerblading, hiking, biking trails -- paved, multi-purpose trail in areas where there will be no degradation to the adjacent resource
- Butterfly gardens - provide community gardens for butterflies
- Environmental centers that are safe - provide security through structured environmental programs
- Picnicking with family -- provide tables, trash removal



**Rural Zone**

- Green building practices design construction facilities
- Good signage: educational, interpretive, well-designed
- Co-op gardens use existing agricultural lands
- Equestrian, hiking, biking trails - unpaved, multi-purpose trails in areas where there will be no degradation to the adjacent resource
- Camping - provide well-drained, campsites as compatible with resource conservation
- Environmental centers that are safe - provide security through structured environmental programs
- Provide trailhead facilities at regular locations throughout the County. Facilities should include parking, bike racks, shade structures, seating, water and information kiosks. Larger trailheads may also include bike maintenance, repair facilities, concession stands and amenities for group activities.



**Natural Zone**

- Green building practices design construction facilities
- Good signage: educational, interpretive, well-designed
- Kayaking - provide free launch sites
- Camping - provide well-drained (or platforms on wetland areas), primitive campsites as compatible with resource conservation
- Fishing - provide shoreline access, and maintain existing facilities for launching.
- Resource-based recreation - provide low-impact access
- Expanded, free boat launches and marinas - improve existing facilities
- Provide trailhead facilities at regular locations throughout the County. Facilities should include parking, bike racks, shade structures, seating, water and information kiosks. Larger trailheads may also include bike maintenance, repair facilities, concession stands and amenities for group activities.

## Great Cultural Heritage Areas



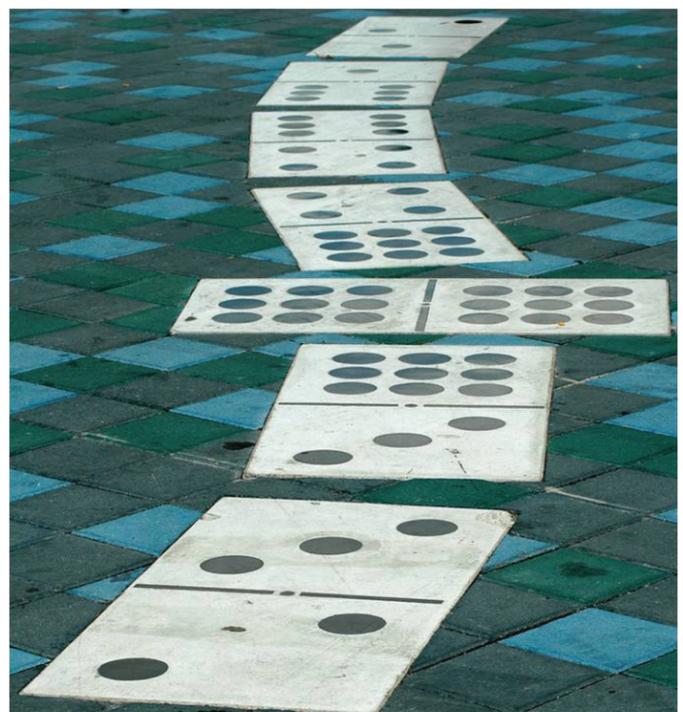
During World War II, the military brought thousands of troops to Miami-Dade for training; when the war was over, many of the soldiers returned to South Florida with their families to settle down permanently. Population growth continued throughout the second half of the twentieth century, boosted especially from emigration from Latin American nations such as Cuba and Haiti. Today, Miami-Dade is an international melting pot of the tropics and the United States' gateway to Latin America.

Historic sites, galleries, and cultural centers, these are the places that illustrate the history and the people of Miami-Dade County. Some, such as the hotels of Miami Beach or the neighborhoods of Overtown, provide a physical link to the area's past. Others, like the County's great museums and galleries are on the cutting edge of art. Still others, like the cultural centers that celebrate the region's diversity, provide a meeting place for both.

### Great Cultural Heritage Areas Vision

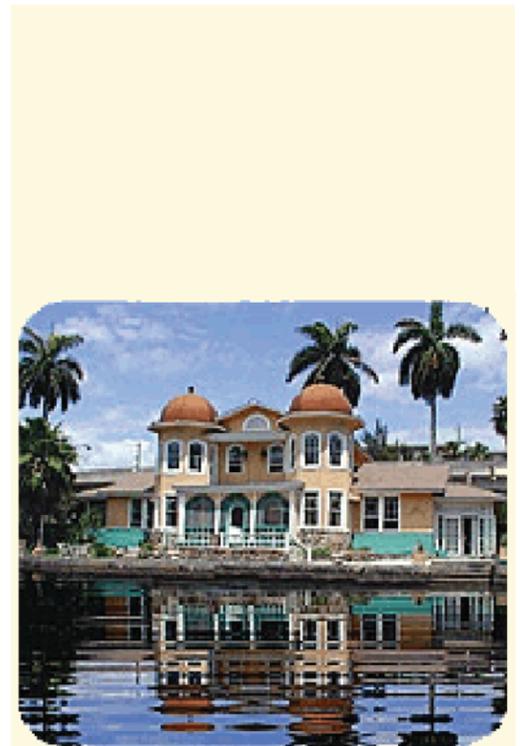
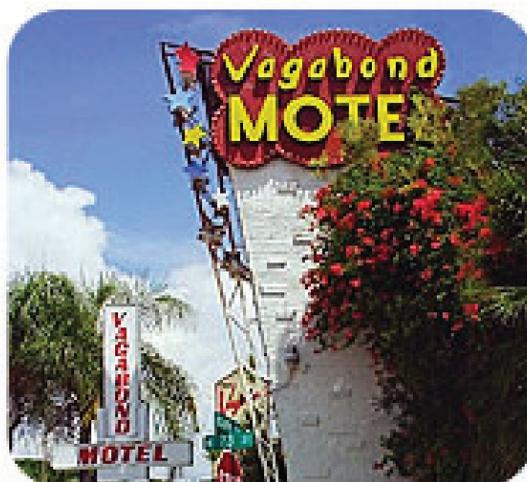
The vision for great Cultural Zones is similar to that of the Environmental Zones: to thematically cluster cultural and historical sites that provide a variety of heritage education activities and programs; elevate the public's appreciation and understanding of the County's history and culture; and to engage the surrounding communities in the stewardship of the sites. In fact, many of the hubs contain both environmental and cultural/historical elements, such as the archeological and natural attractions of Biscayne Bay. These clusters of heritage sites, both cultural and environmental, provide unique opportunities to celebrate the qualities that make Miami-Dade an interesting, diverse place to discover.

Miami-Dade's cultural areas tell the story of the County: a unique subtropical environment that is like nowhere else in the country. Hundreds of years ago it was a battleground between competing European nations, and the major form of income was "wrecking:" pillaging shipwrecked vessels that had sailed too close to the coral reefs. Settlement was sparse until the arrival of Henry Flagler's railroad in 1896. Gradually the area was drained and more land became available for development; by the 1920s a large real estate boom sparked great interest in South Florida, and many of the County's most beautiful historic landmarks hark from this era.



Strong communities need great cultural areas. The benefits are many:

- **Education** – Cultural areas educate residents and visitors about the history and present of the Miami-Dade, and what makes the County unique.
- **Community Connections** – Organizations and special events provide forums to bring together different communities and strengthen relationships.
- **Beauty** – Cultural and historic sites often provide a beautiful and unique aesthetic to the surrounding neighborhood.
- **Economics** – Cultural organizations have been shown to have positive economic impacts far beyond their costs through providing local jobs and attracting heritage tourists.
- **Sustainability** – Cultural areas provide a record of time and continuity for future generations. Also, the rehabilitation of historic buildings for new purposes embraces the sustainability principle of “recycling” existing resources and using them for future generations.



Great cultural and historic places not only benefit residents, but encourage heritage tourism. Heritage tourism is defined as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.” (National Trust for Historic Preservation). These are the travelers that seek out museums, are attracted to historic sites, and want to have new, unique experiences. They also tend to spend more time and more money at their destinations: a heritage tourist spends an average of \$631 per trip and stays 4.7 nights, compared a typical vacationer that spends an average of \$457 per trip and stays 3.4 nights.

## The Economics of Great Natural and Cultural Areas

Centralized locations such as trailheads and outdoor education centers can be a draw for residents and a way to encourage residents and tourists to utilize other parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities. Similarly, being located near an open space that is appreciated or patronized by residents and tourists allows businesses and education centers to capture that audience. Having specific locations and activities associated with open spaces can maximize usage and support and create a mutually beneficial relationship for all facilities and organizations involved.

### CASE STUDY: International Wolf Center - Ely, Minnesota



Ely, Minnesota, serves as a gateway to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area (BWCA) recreation areas. The International Wolf Center (IWC) opened in the Superior National Forest in 1993 as a 17,000 square-foot nature center, seeking to educate the public on wolves and their ecosystems. While the area's waters and parks continue to be the primary driver for Ely's tourism industry, a 1996 study showed the impact and draw of this education center was having a positive and significant effect on the area.

The IWC draws almost 50,000 annual visitors, approximately 20 to 30 percent of all Ely tourists. 24 percent of all IWC visitors report that the Wolf Center had a great influence on their decision to visit Ely, resulting in approximately 12,000 new visitors who would not have visited Ely if not for the IWC. An additional 27 percent of respondents said that the IWC had some influence on their choice of destination. While half of all Ely tourists reported a previous visit to Ely since 1993, only one quarter of IWC-influenced tourists reported a previous visit. This implies that IWC is introducing new visitors to the area.

For all IWC visitors surveyed, 19 percent of respondents cited the Wolf Center as their main reason for visiting Ely (tied with canoeing for second place after fishing). An additional 14 percent listed it as the second most important reason for their visit to Ely, and 15 percent listed it as third. In just three years of activity, the IWC has become one of the area's largest draws and has increased tourism to the area.

Although IWC-influenced tourists spend less money over fewer nights than the typical Ely tourist, the impact of these tourists is still significant. In 1995, the average group expenditure of IWC visitors was \$185, resulting in an estimated influx of \$655,000 to the Ely area. Combined with an additional \$70,000 spent by the 20 percent of IWC visitors who extended their vacation, a total of \$725,000 worth of tourist expenditures in Ely were directly attributable to the International Wolf Center.

The University of Minnesota study estimates that additional tourist expenditures in restaurants, retail shops and lodging establishments have generated approximately 20 new jobs in the region. Regional spending could result in an additional 16 more jobs. Through employment, purchasing, and contractors, total economic impacts from the IWC are about \$1.5 million, twice their annual operating budget. Using the IMPLAN Model of economic impacts, the 1996 study anticipates that, including employment, approximately \$3 million in annual economic activity and as many as 66 new jobs are associated with the International Wolf Center.

The IWC continues to be successful. An expanded theatre space and viewing area was added in 1998. In 2003, the museum saw attendance of around 40,000. In 2004 the museum posted revenues of almost \$1.2 million, an increase of around \$226,000 from the prior year.

## Great Cultural Heritage Areas



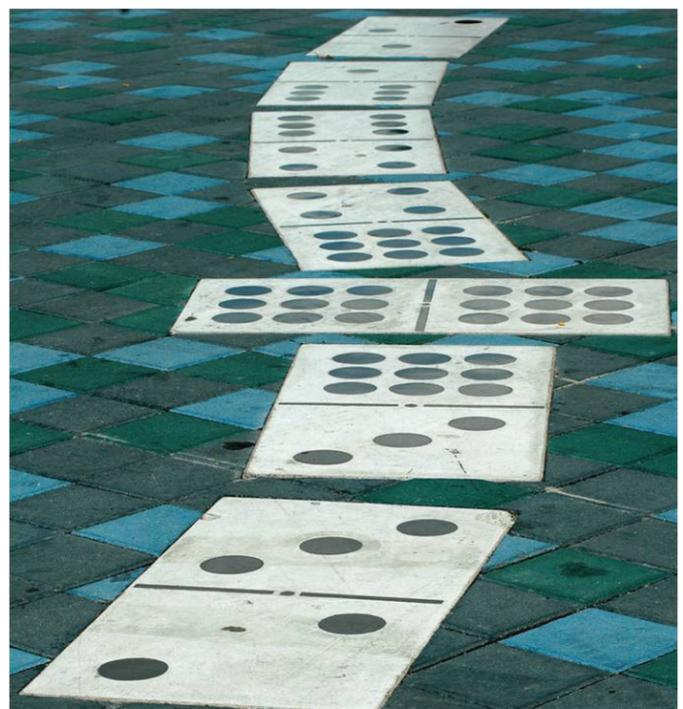
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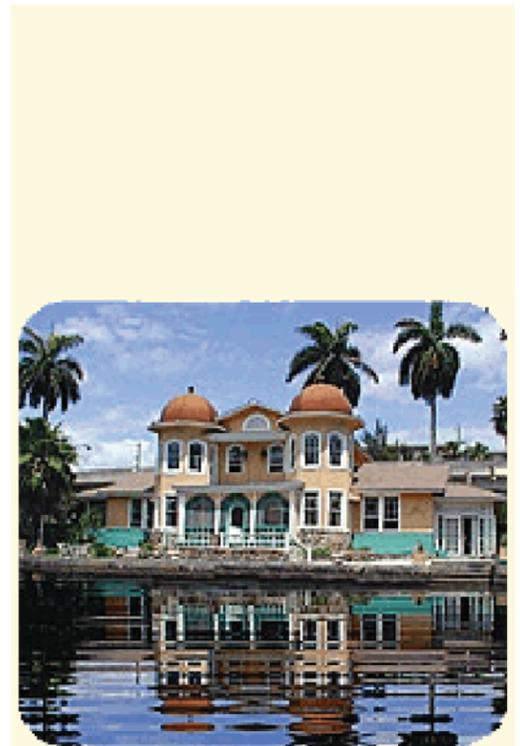
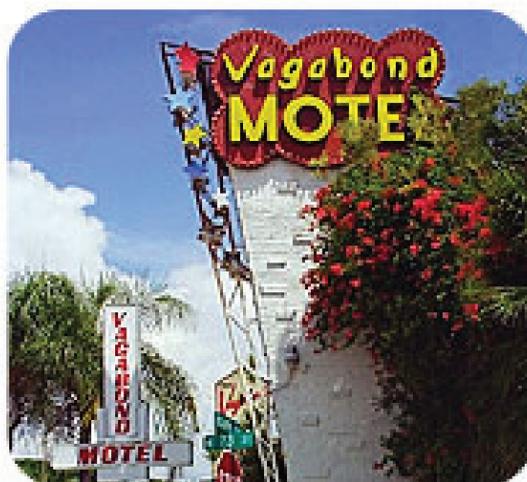
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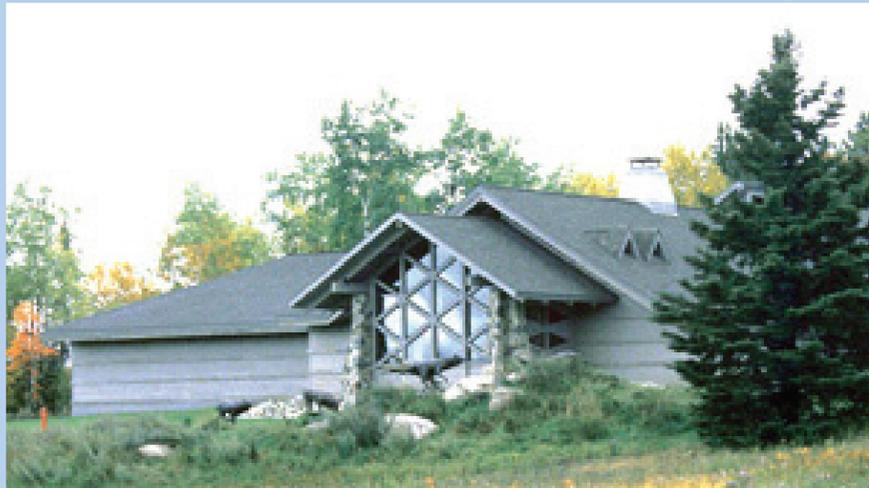


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