

Community Meeting to discuss West Matheson Hammock Park

Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava and
County Commissioner Raquel Regalado
May 8, 2023



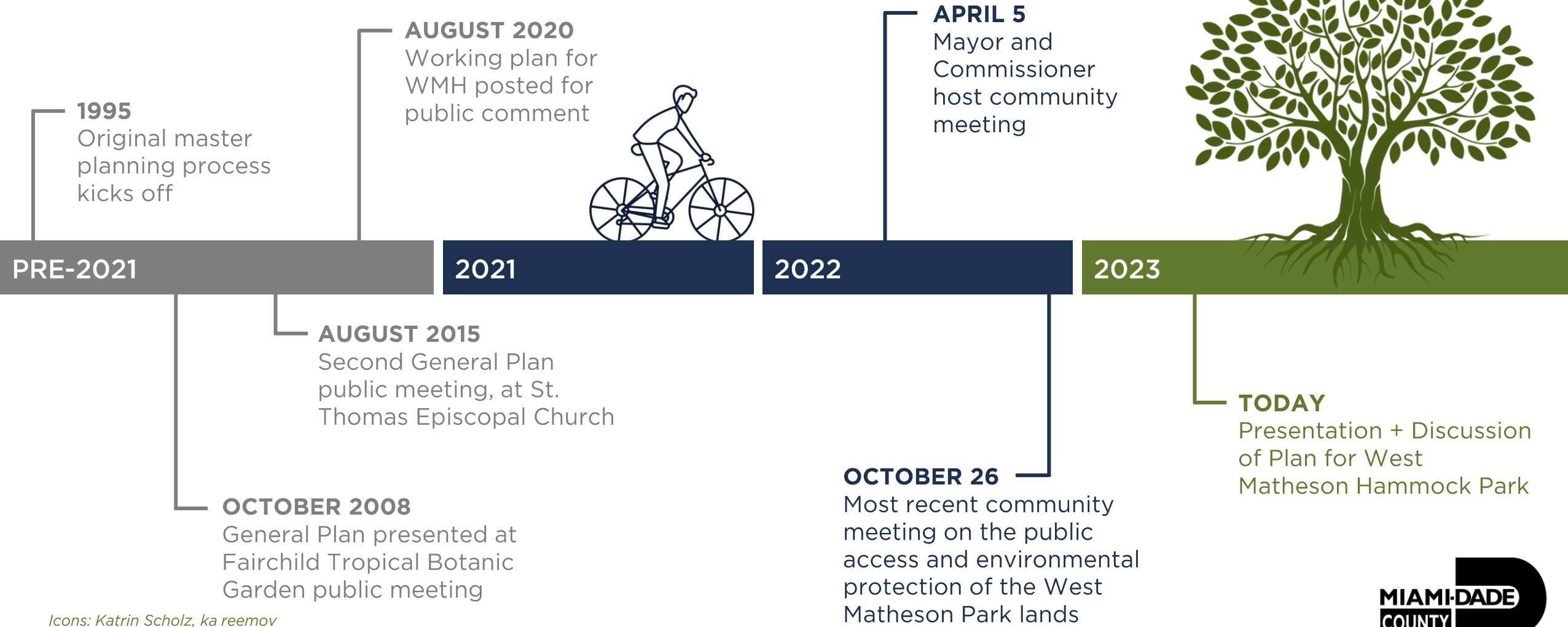
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
DANIELLA LEVINE CAVA



Office of
**Commissioner
Raquel Regalado**
Miami-Dade County District 7



The process to determine an optimal future for West Matheson Hammock Park is years in the making



Icons: Katrin Scholz, ka reemov

Since we last met in October, a lot of work has gone into producing a revised plan that meets community needs

Internal due diligence and deliberation

*Analysis of community feedback
Research on best practices
Cross-department collaboration*

Preparation of today's compromise plan

*Revising plan elements in response to feedback
Preparing a compromise plan that incorporates feedback received to date*

FINEST PARK IN SOUTHEAST BEING DEVELOPED HERE

WHERE DADE COUNTY'S NATURAL BEAUTIES ARE PRESERVED FOR THE PUBLIC

CENTRAL LISTING BUREAU CALLED ADVANTAGEOUS

Miami Beach Realty Board Finds Department Distinct Help

One of the outstanding services rendered to members by the Miami Beach Realty Board, is accomplished through a central listing bureau. Its operation has proved highly satisfactory, according to Guy W. Ellis, board president, who points out that it is advantageous both to realtors and to property owners.

Mr. Ellis said: "This central listing bureau is particularly advantageous in a community where there is a large number of absentee owners.

"Heretofore, the owner of Miami Beach property who might live in the North was likely to receive 30 to 40 different inquiries as to whether his property was on the market. Under the central listing bureau plan, board members do not communicate directly with the owners for listings, but rather send one communication from the board offices, the result of which is sent to all members of the board on the daily bulletin.

"This has been a most acceptable innovation for the owners of Miami Beach property. They receive one communication from the realty board and if they desire to sell, they can list with the realty board and it is immediately bulletined to the entire membership.

"As the membership in the Miami Beach Realty Board is composed of more than 95 per cent of the active brokers on the beach, it gives a wide distribution of this listing and hence the opportunity of



PUBLIC BEACHES ARE GUARANTEED TO GENERAL USE

Matheson Hammock Grant Augmented by County's Purchase

The finest public park in Florida and probably in the entire South has been insured for residents of this area through the action of the Dade county commission last week in approving the purchase, at a price of \$25,000, of 160 acres adjoining the county-owned Matheson hammock property on the south.

The transaction gives the public a half-mile white-sand natural beach, which is guaranteed against encroachment of individual developers in Greater Miami's expanding realty activities.

Pretentious plans for improvement of this park over a long period of years have been made by the park committee of the county commission, of which C. H. Crandon is chairman. Mr. Crandon's entry into politics was largely motivated by a desire to see Dade county adequately provided with public parks, and immediately after he took office, some seven years ago, the park committee of the county commission was formed and A. D. Barnes was employed as county superintendent of parks.

Matheson hammock, containing 80 acres in the original plan, has been developed by the Matheson on the old with the name of the American arrangement of this land to the county. He said yesterday that ever since that time he has been working toward the acquisition of sufficient land to

HISTORY

Miami Realty Board News

By TED REBER
(Executive Secretary)



Matheson Park's creation in 1930 was historic, and heralded in its early years as a regional flagship and national model for marrying environmental stewardship with public park enjoyment

MATHESON PARK TERMED THING OF WILD BEAUTY

100 Acres of Unspoiled
Wilderness Given
Dade County

Mr. Matheson's purpose in obtaining the park plot in the first place was to preserve it from despoilation. A syndicate had bought it for development purposes, and planned to use it for home sites. Mr. Matheson was offered a substantial sum for it during the real estate rise in Florida, but disdained all offers, because he wished to preserve it. This is also his purpose in giving it to Dade county.

They are to be found in 100 acres of unspoiled Florida wilderness, named Matheson Hammock, in honor of the donor, by the Dade county commission, and dedicated to the people of the county "that this wild and natural growth may be preserved and perpetuated." Here nature is to be allowed to riot untrammelled throughout the years, for the sole provision that Mr. Matheson has made in connection with the royal gift is that the growth is to go unchecked. Otherwise the park is to revert to the Matheson estate.

The gift was made to Dade county about a month ago. C. H. Crandon, county commissioner, is mainly responsible for it, for Mr. Crandon, who is in charge of the county parks and highway beautification, was first to see the possibilities of the beauty spot, and it was through his personal efforts the donatoin was arranged.

Improvements to the property are to be started immediately, Mr. Crandon says, Mr. Matheson's stipulation that the vegetation is not to be harmed to be held constantly in mind. Fallen trees—such as do not add to the attractiveness of the park—are to be cleared away, pathways are to be

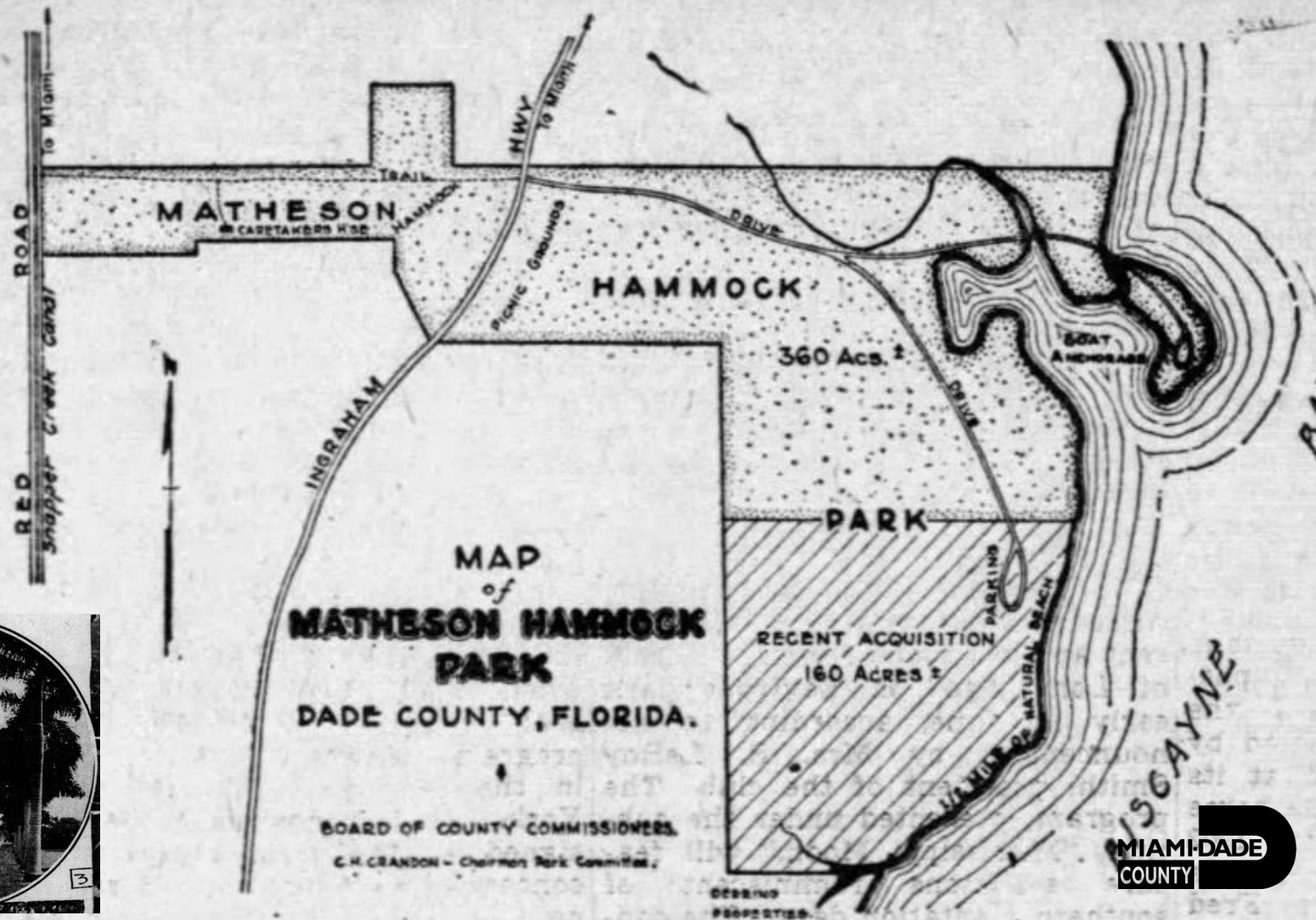


C. H. CRANDON



The final deal, Mr. Crandon said, was made possible through the cooperation of George E. Merrick, who was able to obtain suitable land for \$25,000 after long negotiations which reduced the original estimated price from \$41,000.

"The ownership of this particular area by the public has been one of my objectives ever since I first took office," Mr. Crandon said. "Had any individual developer backed the retailing of the land adjoining this natural beach we have just got, he would undoubtedly have made a fortune, for no finer area exists in southeast Florida for sites of extensive private estates. Through the present county commission's far-sightedness, however, this land is forever preserved for the enjoyment of the people."



Miami Daily News, May 17, 1936



What is today known as West Matheson Hammock Park is the product of two land acquisitions by Dade County in the 1930s

Deed from A. Benest to Dade County 1939

Deed from Biscayne Company (Mathesons) to Dade County 1930

Parcel acquired by County separately

Parcels acquired by County separately

Boundaries are approximate, not survey quality
Further due diligence may be required;
1930 Deed Boundary verified by FR Aleman.



The Matheson family's deed to the County made clear the need to preserve public enjoyment of the land and protection of its wild, natural state

2. That said premises shall be perpetually and forever owned, held and kept by the party of the second part for the use and benefit of and in trust for the public as a botanical park, and shall not be owned, held, kept, used or enjoyed for any other purpose or purposes, whatsoever. That said premises shall perpetually, continuously and forever be kept open, at any and all reasonable times, for the free access, use and enjoyment of the public; provided, however, that the party of the second part may and shall impose and enforce such reasonable restrictions and regulations upon the use of said premises by the public as may in the opinion of its duly constituted authorities from time to time be necessary to fully effect the purposes for which said premises are herein dedicated.

3. That the said premises shall be perpetually and forever kept, preserved and protected in its present original and natural state of vegetation and growth so that the flora, timber, plants and all natural growth now on said premises in a virgin state shall be at all times, so far as possible, protected, preserved and perpetuated in a wild and natural condition appropriate to the use of said premises as a botanical park; provided, however, that the party of the second part, when it is advisable so to do for the purpose of protecting, preserving and perpetuating the vegetation on said premises, may and shall clear, clean, cut away and remove all and only such undergrowth and dead, diseased or fallen growth or matter or such growth or matter as might otherwise mar or endanger the virgin beauty or life of such vegetation.

A PLAN

Satellite image showing West Matheson Hammock Park, Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO, via Google Earth - January 4, 2021



West Matheson Hammock
Park's natural beauty and
configuration enables a
unique visitor experience
that is treasured by many

The revised plan that we have crafted takes into account and balances several important concerns

Park Enjoyment Concerns



Environmental Concerns



Neighborhood Concerns



It is also oriented around a series of principles which we arrived at by listening to you and our experts

A

Abide by the original intentions of the 1930 deed



B

Public access to our parklands



C

Preserve our hardwood hammock



D

Visitors allowed to bring dogs to the park while following park rules



E

Park traffic and parking should not spill out into the surrounding neighborhood

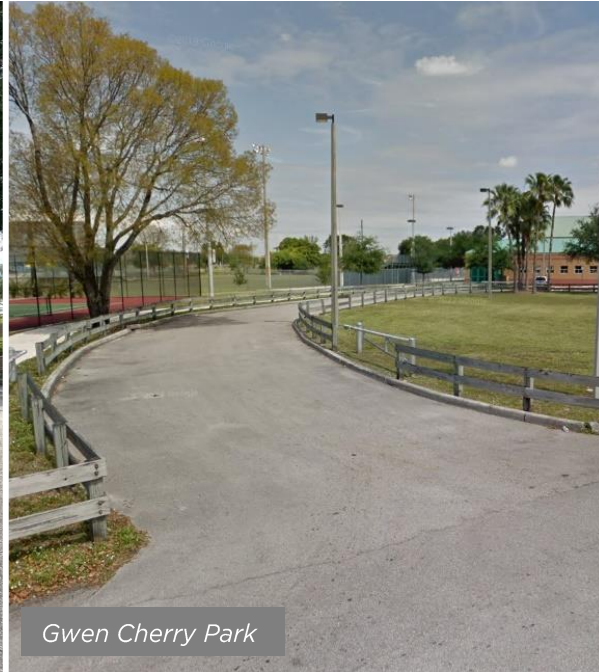


What we are presenting today is a **community-driven compromise final draft plan** to protect and improve the West Matheson Park lands

Park access will be improved through two key interventions



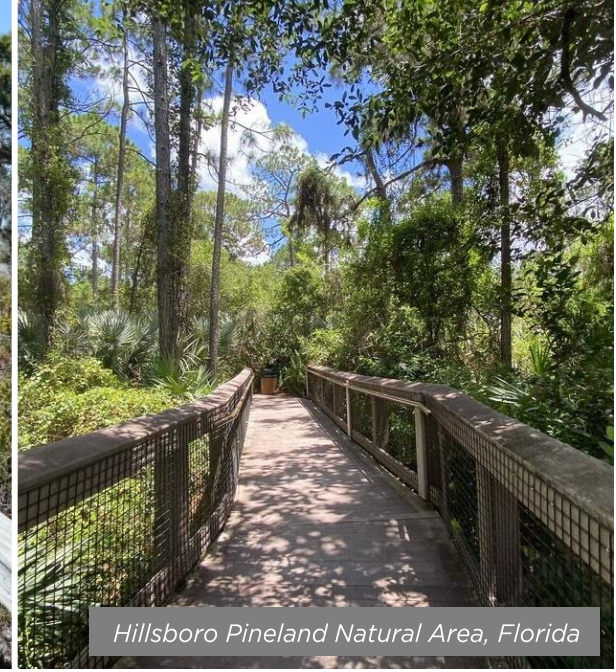
Amelia Earhart Park



Gwen Cherry Park



Briggs Nature Center, Florida



Hillsboro Pineland Natural Area, Florida

Concerns addressed: Park Enjoyment + Environmental

Principles incorporated:



Images: Miami-Dade PROS Department, Google Maps, Salty Palette, Maria Masha Saba (via AllTrails)



Our parking plan has also been modified in response to concerns we heard in October

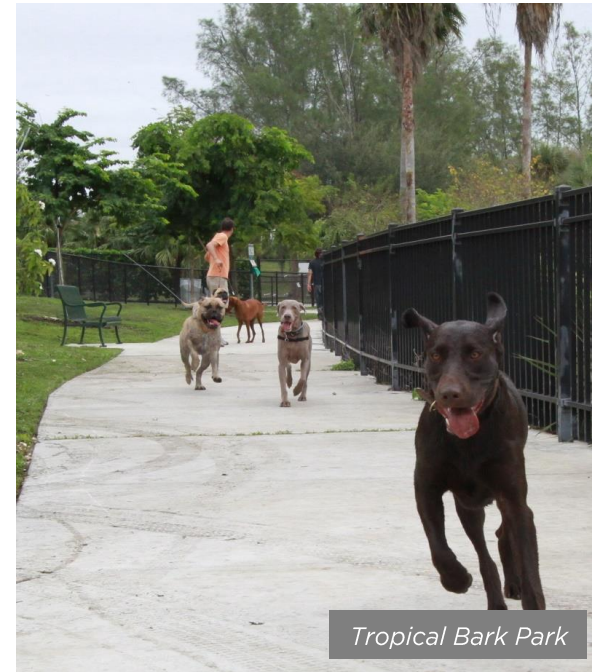


Concerns addressed: Park Enjoyment + Neighborhood Impact

Principles incorporated:  

Images: Miami-Dade PROS Department, Google Maps

We have expanded the top-class play area for dogs in response to your feedback

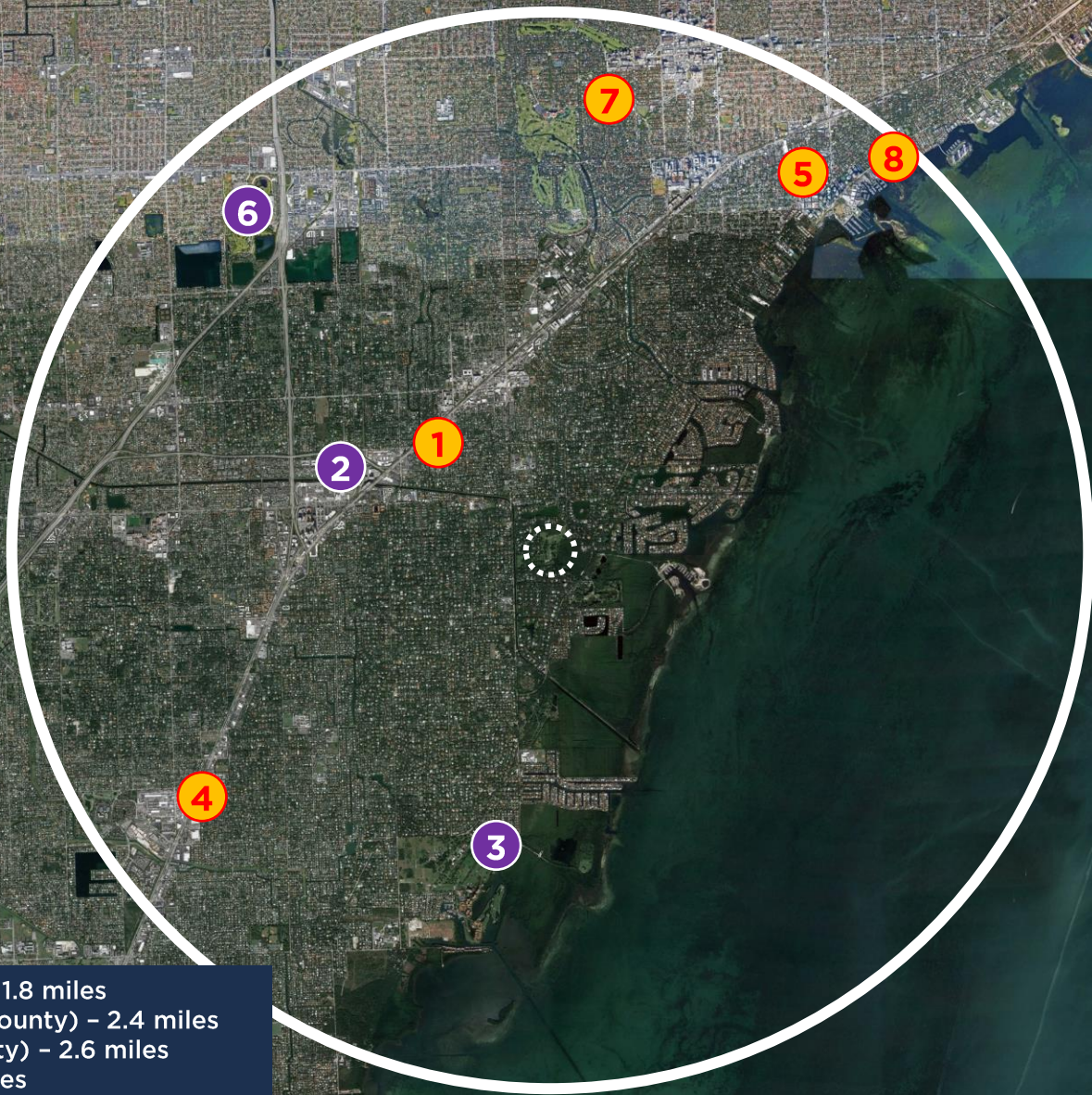


Concerns addressed: Park Enjoyment + Environmental

Principles incorporated:



There are eight dog parks within a five-mile radius of West Matheson Hammock



- 1. South Miami Dog Park (City of Miami) - 1.8 miles
- 2. Modera Colonnade Park (Miami-Dade County) - 2.4 miles
- 3. Chapman Field Park (Miami-Dade County) - 2.6 miles
- 4. Suniland Park (City of Pinecrest) - 4 miles
- 5. Blanche Park (City of Miami) - 4.3 miles
- 6. Tropical Park (Miami-Dade County) - 4.3 miles
- 7. Catalonia Park (City of Coral Gables) - 4.4 miles
- 8. David T. Kennedy Park (City of Miami) - 4.9 miles

We also believe that **new signage** throughout the park will improve the visitor experience



Concerns addressed: Park Enjoyment + Environmental

Principles incorporated:



Images: Miami-Dade County, Leave No Trace, Tyler Barker



This signage will not only encourage good behavior but also educate visitors of all ages about valuable environmental assets in the park that we all have a stake in preserving

2 federally endangered plant species
18 state endangered plant species
19 state threatened plant species



A revised plan for West Matheson Hammock Park

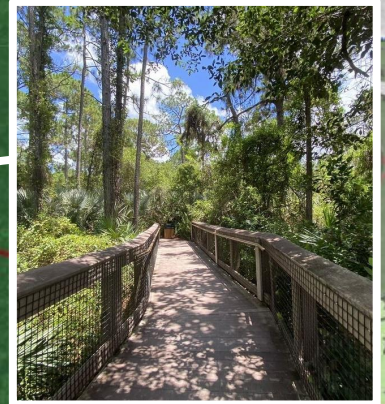
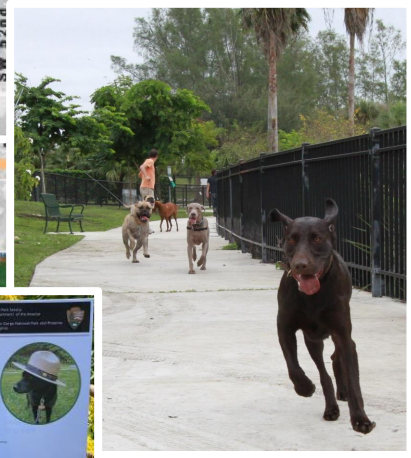
OVERVIEW

- 1 Park Sign
- 2 Existing North Entrance
- 3 Existing Asphalt Trail with 2-rail Fence on Both Sides
- 4 Parking Area / 5 ADA Parking Spaces
- 5 Dog Park Entrance
- 6 Fenced Dog Park
- 7 Existing 6' Nature Trail
- 8 Existing Utilities Station
- 9 Existing Underground and Overhead Electric Service
- 10 Existing Asphalt Trail
- 11 Existing Historic Coral Rock Nursery
- 12 Elevated Nature Trail
- 13 Elevated Nature Trail Entrance
- 14 Nature Trails
- 15 New Trail Loop
- 16 Existing Parking Area
- 17 Existing Parking Area
- 18 Signalized Pedestrian Crossing



A revised plan for West Matheson Hammock Park

HIGHLIGHTS



- 1 Park Sign
- 2 Existing North Entrance
- 3 Existing Asphalt Trail with 2-rail Fence on Both Sides
- 4 Parking Area / 5 ADA Parking Spaces
- 5 Dog Park Entrance
- 6 Fenced Dog Park
- 7 Existing 6' Nature Trail
- 8 Existing Utilities Station
- 9 Existing Underground and Overhead Electric Service
- 10 Existing Asphalt Trail
- 11 Existing Historic Coral Rock Nursery
- 12 Elevated Nature Trail
- 13 Elevated Nature Trail Entrance
- 14 Nature Trails
- 15 New Trail Loop
- 16 Existing Parking Area
- 17 Existing Parking Area
- 18 Signalized Pedestrian Crossing

A revised plan for West Matheson Hammock Park

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

- 1 Park Sign
- 2 Existing North Entrance
- 3 Existing Asphalt Trail with 2-rail Fence on Both Sides
- 4 Parking Area / 5 ADA Parking Spaces
- 5 Dog Park Entrance
- 6 Fenced Dog Park
- 7 Existing 6' Nature Trail
- 8 Existing Utilities Station
- 9 Existing Underground and Overhead Electric Service
- 10 Existing Asphalt Trail
- 11 Existing Historic Coral Rock Nursery
- 12 Elevated Nature Trail
- 13 Elevated Nature Trail Entrance
- 14 Nature Trails
- 15 New Trail Loop
- 16 Existing Parking Area
- 17 Existing Parking Area
- 18 Signalized Pedestrian Crossing

NORTH GATE ACCESS: Access for pedestrians and vehicles with ADA placard (with space for 5 parked vehicles adjacent to new fenced-in dog area).

VISITORS WITH DOGS: New dog park on par with facilities at Chapman Park. Dogs may be off-leash within this fenced-in area but must remain leashed elsewhere in park (consistent with all other County parks).

OLD CUTLER ROAD ACCESS: Access for pedestrians from existing parking lot on west side of Old Cutler (to be enhanced) and existing lot on east side of road via new ADA-accessible elevated nature walk.

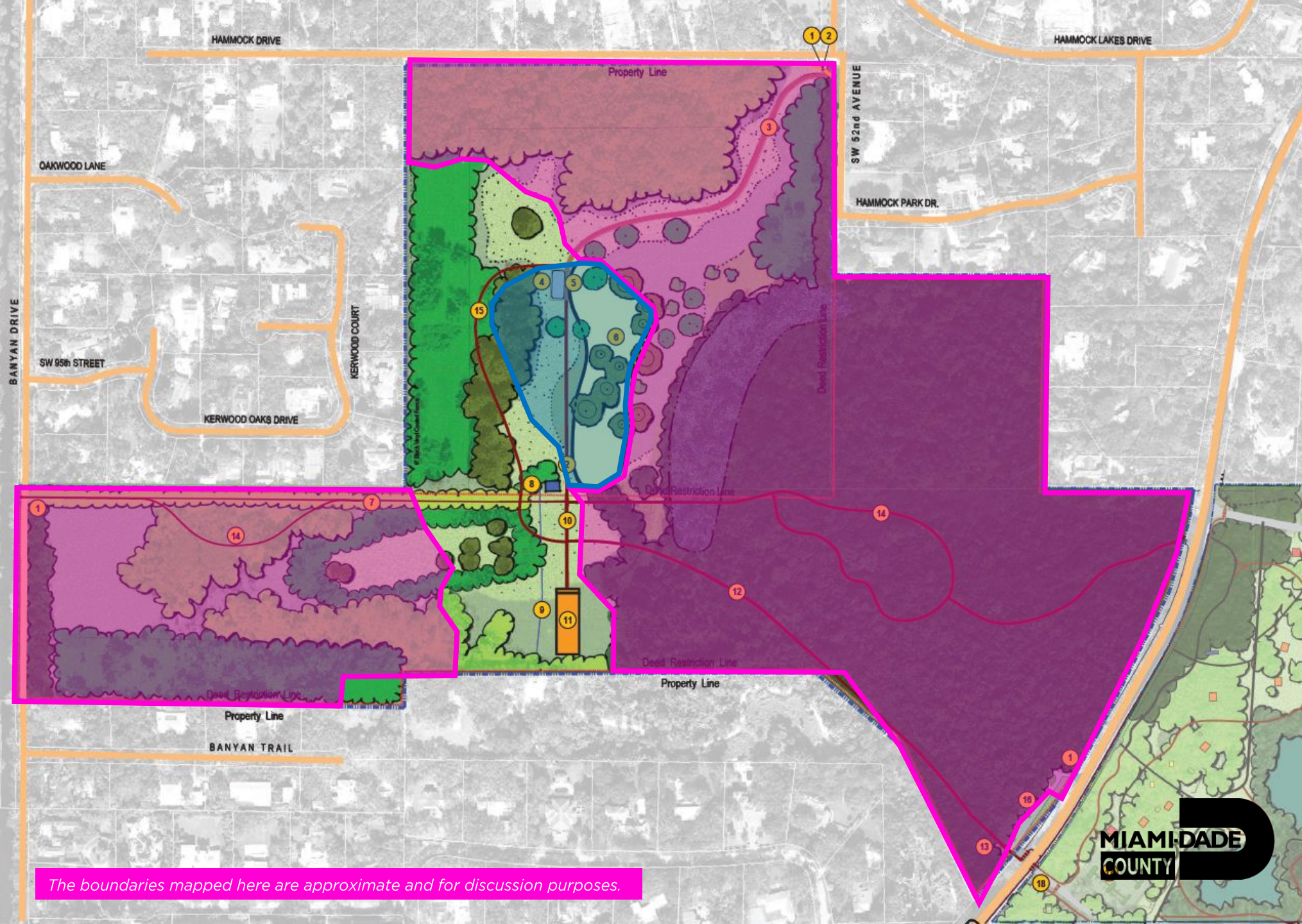
BANYAN DRIVE ACCESS: Banyan Drive access path will be improved with a new nature trail section and enhanced signage.

EXPLORING THE TROPICAL HARDWOOD HAMMOCK: For the first time, park visitors will be able to experience and learn about the beautiful natural features of the park without disturbing them, via the enhanced trail that will feature engaging educational signage.



Proposed EEL-managed areas under the revised plan

The fenced in dog park plan is a compromise made possible by the land swap of environmentally sensitive lands managed by EEL, since dog use in EEL lands would not be consistent with its purpose. Through this land swap, the area in blue, which is currently EEL designated and includes the area to be occupied by the dog park, will no longer be designated. In its place, environmentally sensitive land within the eastern section of Matheson Hammock Park that is not currently EEL designated would then be managed by EEL. The number of EEL-designated acres would be the same, and the areas in pink would be the extent of EEL-designated lands in West Matheson Hammock.



The boundaries mapped here are approximate and for discussion purposes.

The role of enforcement and compliance in **promoting kindness and respect** at the park

Challenge

The operational cost of having round-the-clock enforcement by personnel makes this infeasible

Challenge

There is also a risk to over-patrolling the park in terms of the overall visitor experience

Opportunity

We can rely on positive, engaging signage to encourage good behavior

Opportunity

Parks staff can provide a friendly reminder to visitors whenever they are in the park

Opportunity

In collaboration with law enforcement, can provide occasional and spot patrols

With your input today, we will prepare a final compromise plan that balances our collective needs, is true to our shared principles, and honors the intentions set in 1930.



It doesn't take long to imagine you're lost in the denseness of the forest. This trail winds through the tropical ferns that at times reach to the

tourists' shoulders. Matheson Hammock park ranks as one of the richest in plant material in Florida and is one of the state's outstanding parts.

The Miami News, July 25, 1948

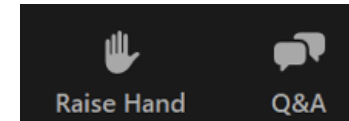


The "Forest Trail" sign across from entrance to Matheson Hammock points the way to the jungle. Girl Scout Ann Connolly is just starting on trip.

Q&A

We want to hear from you! These community guidelines will guide our Q&A

For this Zoom Webinar, we will be using these two key features
which you can find at the bottom of your Zoom window.



which you

To submit **written questions** that you would like us to respond to, or to view other participant questions, open the Q&A window. We will attempt to answer every question.

To ask a **verbal question or make a comment**, tap the Raise Hand button. We will recognize you in order of hands raised.

Please keep your points to the topics being discussed, and please be cognizant of other participants and keep your thoughts or questions to 2 minutes.

Please respect fellow residents, and the facilitation and notetaking team.