

GFWC Florida Women's History & Resource Center Club Creativity Report



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Rededication of Royal Palm Park in the Everglades National Park: On November 17, 2016, the GFWC Woman's Club of Coconut Grove **partnered with 10 clubs** in District 11 to join together with the support of the National Park Service and the South Florida National Parks Trust to hold a rededication service commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Royal Palm Park in the Everglades National Park, Homestead, Florida. With approximately 150 attendees, visitors were inspired by messages from: Fran Mainela – the First Woman Director of the Florida Park Service and the First Woman Director of the National Park Service, appointed by George W. Bush, Mary C. Powell – President of the GFWC Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, Leslie Kemp Poole – Author of *Saving Florida: Women's Fight for the Environment in the Twentieth Century*, Donald Forgione – Director of the Florida Park Service and Pedro Ramos – Superintendent of the Everglades National Park. Members set up Club informational booths to receive guests and for area clubs to promote their activities and upcoming events. As part of the promotional efforts, clubs set up informational booths at two local farmer's markets **prior to** the centennial event. Clubs participated in the receiving of guests, provided name tags and information on the day's events; **green ribbons were given to guests to wear as was originally done at the 1916 park dedication.** There was a live musical performance by local singer/songwriter, Grant Livingston and **historical reenactors portraying Charles Mosier, the 1st Park Ranger at Royal Palm, and May Mann Jennings, GFWC Florida President 1914-1917.** A historical marker honoring May Mann Jennings is on display at the Royal Palm Welcome Center. Clubs came together to host a delicious **luncheon for all attendees which was based on the luncheon served at the original dedication ceremony in 1916 – BBQ chicken with trimmings and donuts for dessert!** The day also included guided tours on the newly reopened Anhinga Trail, and on the Long Pine Key Trail to a location where the original Royal Palm Lodge stood. The Lodge was built by funds raised by the **Florida Federation of Women's Clubs** in the early years of the park and was destroyed in 1992 when Hurricane Andrew struck the south Florida area.

"Saving Paradise" display panels were erected and told the story of how the **clubwomen of Florida saved Royal Palm Hammock as a State Park in 1915 when May Mann Jennings convinced the Florida Legislature to deed 960 acres to the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, and then maintained it thirty-two years until 1947 when GFWC Florida deeded it to the Everglades National Park (ENP).** Based on 2016, figures these panels will be seen by 340,000 local, national and worldwide visitors. 17 volunteers from the Woman's Club of Coconut Grove gave 539 hours putting this event together; a total of \$5,588 was donated by the Everglades National Park and the South Florida National Park Trust to cover expenses: tents, podium, chairs, tables, food, entertainment, etc., for the event. A total of \$ 2,000 was donated to pay for the "Saving Paradise" displays by the Dade County Federation of Women's Clubs.