



THE EVERGLADES COALITION

July 21, 2004

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon of Florida
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Broward County Audubon Society
Clean Water Action
Clean Water Network
Collier County Audubon Society
The Conservancy of Southwest
Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
Earthjustice
Environmental & Land Use Law
Center
The Environmental Coalition
Environmental Defense
Everglades Coordinating Council
Florida Defenders of the
Environment
Florida Keys Chapter of the
Izaak Walton League of America
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
Florida Public Interest Research
Group
Florida Sierra Club
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of the Everglades
Izaak Walton League of America
Last Stand
Legal Environmental Assistance
Foundation
League of Woman Voters of
Florida
Loxahatchee River Coalition
Mangrove Chapter of the Izaak
Walton League of America
Martin County Conservation
Alliance
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation
Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Carolina Outward Bound
School
The Ocean Conservancy
The Pegasus Foundation
The Redland Conservancy
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
The Wilderness Society
World Wildlife Fund

Whereas Palm Beach County and the State of Florida have undertaken to site a branch of the Scripps Research Institute in northwestern Palm Beach County as part of a large scale biotechnical research park which is proposed to include 10.5 million square feet of industrial development, 430,000 square feet of commercial development, and 2000 or more residential units; and

Whereas the proposed site, Mecca Farms, is located in an extremely remote area within Palm Beach County's rural tier, surrounded by tens of thousands of acres of environmentally sensitive lands; and

Whereas the Mecca Farms location lacks virtually all necessary infrastructure, including roads, public transit, and water and sewer services to support the intense level of development which has been proposed; and

Whereas Mecca Farms has been identified in previous planning efforts by Palm Beach County and other governmental entities as being a very important location for regional water storage to restore the Loxahatchee River, due to its location within the River's watershed on the western leg of the C-18 canal; and

Whereas significant related development has also been proposed on 2000 acres of the Vavrus Ranch, directly east of Mecca Farms, which includes 7500 residential units and several million square feet of industrial and commercial use to support the Scripps Research Park.

Now therefore, because the urbanization of this area would create serious adverse environmental impacts, and would compromise the restoration of the Loxahatchee River, as well as decades worth of planning for western Palm Beach County, the Everglades Coalition strongly opposes siting of the Scripps Research Institute and related development on Mecca Farms, in the Everglades Agricultural Area, or any other location that would compromise restoration of the Northern Everglades watershed.

The Everglades Coalition strongly supports siting the Scripps Research Institute and related development in an existing urban location that promotes infill and redevelopment, such as Riviera Beach.

