

# FIU Nature Preserve - History

## Timeline

6500 bp

Drop in sea level allows for the formation of the modern-day Florida Everglades.

1900

Much of the current Florida International University (FIU) Modesto Maidique Campus (MMC) was short-hydroperiod marsh dominated by sawgrass (still present today) with scattered bay-heads and one small tree island where the housing quad is today.

1920's

Dredging of the Tamiami Canal begins in order to construct Tamiami Trail (which essentially acts as a large dam across the "River Of Grass"). Immediately, there is a significant drop in water levels where FIU would soon be, altering the hydrology of the Everglades and FIU-MMC forever.

1940

Establishment of Tamiami Airport with construction of runways and taxiways adjacent to the present-day FIU Nature Preserve; Nature Preserve soils remained undisturbed and intact. Dr. Brad Bennett has recorded the presence of organic muck soils in the Preserve (which are associated with marsh areas), proving that it has remained unscathed. However, no trees were allowed to grow during the airport period, so as to not impede airplane takeoffs and landings.

1966

Tamiami Airport is closed and northern half of the land is designated Florida International University.

1972

FIU's opening day; with 5,667 students, it was the largest opening enrollment in U.S. collegiate history.

1978

Just 6 years after FIU's opening day, the Executive Vice President of the University, Joseph Olander, dedicates 7 acres on the south side of the present-day Nature Preserve as the "FIU Environmental Preserve and Education Area".

1987

The FIU Nature Preserve was designated a certified Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

1989

The new Hardwood Hammock Nature Trail was inaugurated, signage and trail guide by environmentalist Mabel Miller and dedication by President Modesto “Mitch” Maidique.

2002

The Faculty Senate created an Environmental Preserve Committee to oversee the management and development of the Preserve.

2003

To commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Nature Preserve, the FIU School of Architecture holds a Design Charrette competition to generate ideas as to how this place can be developed and improved upon. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution in support of the winning master plan concept design.

2006

Provost/Executive Vice President Ronald Berkman passes a resolution stating:

*The Preserve will stay its present boundaries and be sustained into perpetuity for the purposes of research, teaching, and recreation. Development of the Preserve should be consistent with the Master Plan passed by the Faculty Senate in December, 2003.*

2007

The Preserve joins the Connect-To-Protect program as maintaining critically endangered Pine Rockland habitat. FIU Faculty raised \$25,000 to hire a graduate student to manage the maintenance of the Preserve.

2008

The Martin Foundation donates \$70,000 to the Nature Preserve for its conservation and upkeep as an educational facility, bringing the Preserve Endowment close to \$100,000.

2010

A Landscape Architecture class holds another Charrette to generate development concept ideas.

2011

The Nature Preserve is designated a certified Butterfly Habitat by the North American Butterfly Association.