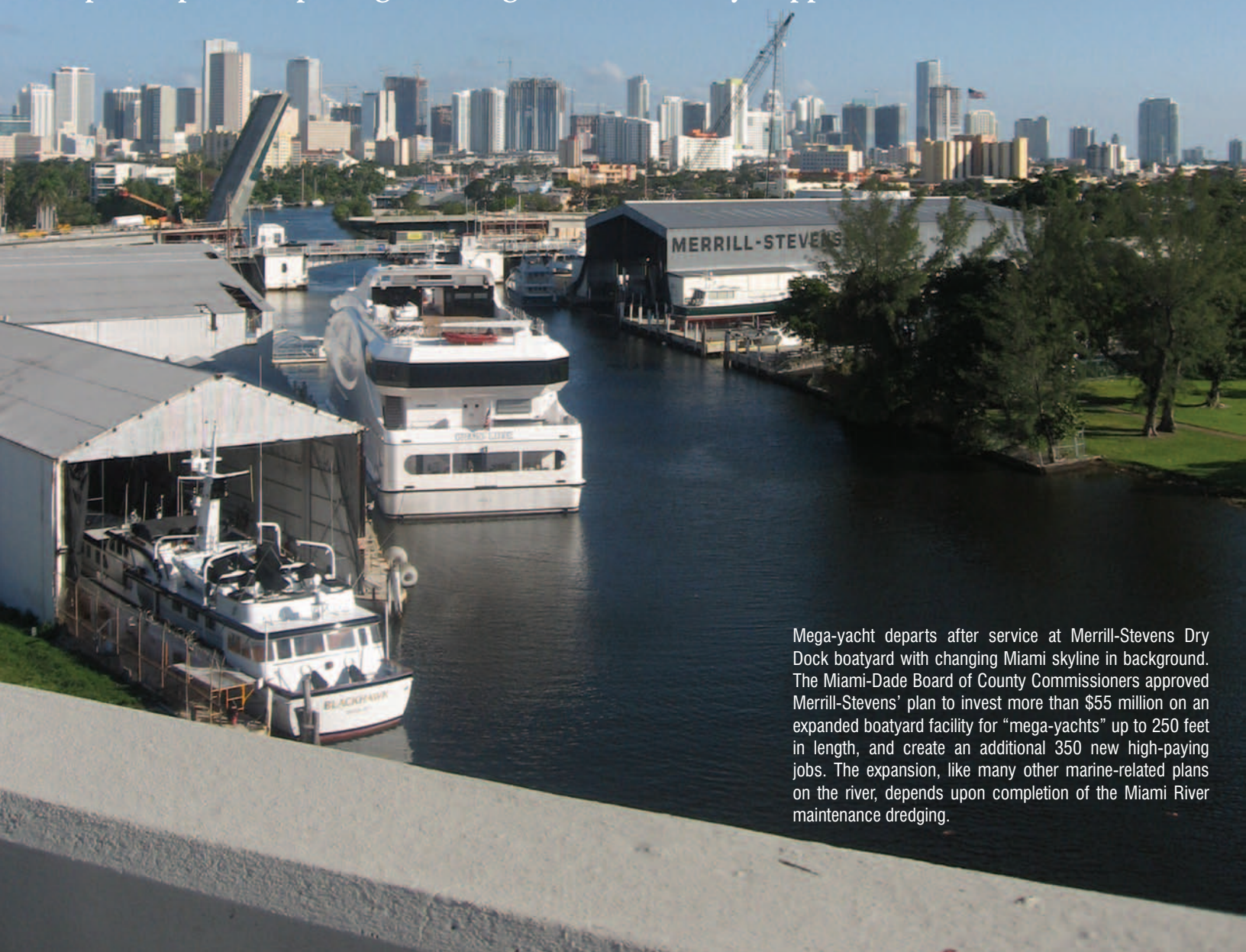


# Annual Report

## 2007

**D**redging crews are set to resume removing contaminated sediment from the Miami River on Feb. 15, 2008, after a two-and-a-half-year demobilization.

This is a big step forward for the signature project of the 5.5-mile river corridor. Finishing the Miami River maintenance dredging and environmental cleanup project, now 40 percent complete, is the river's most important task – for navigation, economic development and the natural environment. Since dredging is proceeding eastward from the salinity dam to the mouth of the Miami River, all of its benefits depend upon completing this long-awaited, widely-supported effort.



Mega-yacht departs after service at Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock boatyard with changing Miami skyline in background. The Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners approved Merrill-Stevens' plan to invest more than \$55 million on an expanded boatyard facility for "mega-yachts" up to 250 feet in length, and create an additional 350 new high-paying jobs. The expansion, like many other marine-related plans on the river, depends upon completion of the Miami River maintenance dredging.

# Timing is critical.

This year will determine whether the Miami River maintenance dredging and environmental cleanup project succeeds or fails. The Army Corps of Engineers' current five-year dredging contract was executed in 2004 and established a flat-rate cost per removed cubic yard. Any new contract would therefore likely cost far more.

The dredging and environmental cleanup project is needed to restore the river's federal navigable channel to its allotted 15-foot depth. That way, vessels can fill cargo to full capacity and traverse regardless of tides. In addition, larger mega-yachts would be able to access the river's boatyards for service. Overall, the completed project would increase international trade, commerce and local employment. Dredging would remove contaminated sediments from the river's bottom, a critical part of the greater ongoing effort to improve the natural environment of the Miami River, its tributaries and Biscayne Bay.

For the dredging to be completed at its current maximum \$86 million cost, two things must happen in 2008:

- The Army Corps of Engineers must receive by July 31, 2008, the final \$10 million, yet to be appropriated, to finish the project .
- The State of Florida must repair its seawall at the ancient Miami Circle site, which in the summer of 2007 collapsed and remains in the federal navigable channel. The Florida Inland Navigational District (FIND) recently awarded a \$750,000 grant to the State of Florida, which requires a \$750,000 match to remove and replace the Miami Circle seawall. If the collapsed seawall is not removed from the federal navigable channel before the dredgers arrive, they will be unable to dredge the river's mouth.

Failure to complete dredging jeopardizes the future of the estimated 6,700 jobs in South Florida generated by the river's marine industry, plans for a \$55 million-plus mega-yacht service center in the Middle River, and the cleanliness of Biscayne Bay.

Dredging has been a centerpiece of the MRC's mission since its 1998 founding by the Florida Legislature to balance the varied interests along the river corridor's three distinct zones:

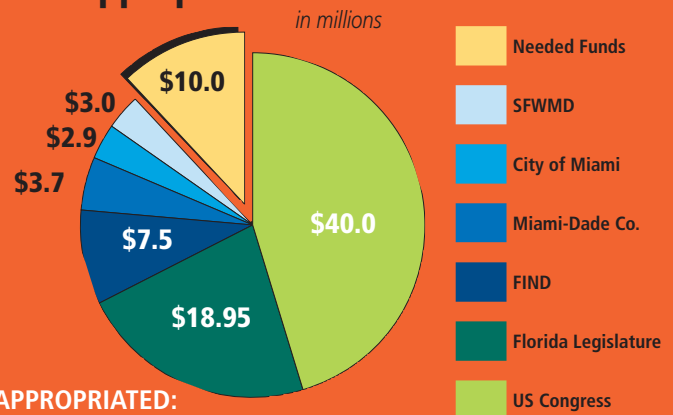
- The Upper River, tied with Tampa as Florida's fourth-largest port based on cargo value, and its shipping terminals that provide a lifeline to the Caribbean Basin;
- The Middle River, with its planned mega-yacht center, health district, parks and quaint historic neighborhoods;
- The Lower River, emerging as one of North America's most vibrant downtown riverscapes.

After 35 years of heroic effort by Miami-Dade's elected representatives in Washington, Tallahassee and Miami, the project deserves complete success. There is little doubt that the river is a safer, cleaner, more livable place than when the Miami River Commission (MRC) was founded nearly 10 years ago.

Thanks to previous appropriations, the dredging crews are returning in February 2008. The MRC is grateful for the project's continued appropriations from Congress, the State of Florida, South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami.

The additional, final \$10 million appropriation for this \$86 million project will ensure that the dredging crews stay to finish the long-awaited and widely-supported project.

## Estimated Dredging Budget: Appropriated vs. Needed Funds



### APPROPRIATED:

US Congress: \$40 million

Florida Legislature: \$18.95 million

FIND (Florida Inland Navigational District): \$7.5 million

Miami-Dade County: \$3.7 million

City of Miami: \$2.9 million

SFWMD (South Florida Water Management District): \$3 million

**TOTAL SO FAR: \$76 million**

**NEEDED TO COMPLETE: \$10 million\***

\* Figure is approximate. All dredging work so far has been on time and within budget.





ERIC  
BUERMANN

Chair's Report

*After 35 years of effort, 2008 will determine whether* or not the Miami River maintenance dredging and environmental cleanup will get done before the contract expires in 2009. Although we are in a tight spending environment, federal, state and local representatives must come together so we can finish what we started.

While there is no question that the river is far cleaner, safer and more livable than before, 2008 is critical. *Our priorities:*

**DREDGING.** Although the dredging crews are returning in February, our first priority is the same as it was a year ago: to encourage and assist the Army Corps of Engineers and the local sponsor, Miami-Dade County, to complete the project. Dredging of the river is 40 percent complete and halted because of lack of the federal cost share balance due. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and our dedicated South Florida congressional delegation continue to fight for the federal funding, and we thank them for all their hard work. State and local governments have done their parts to fund the dredging, and we are trying to secure the last \$10 million before the July 31, 2008, funding deadline to complete the project.

**SMART GROWTH.** The Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan – prepared jointly with the City of Miami, Miami-Dade County and the general public – calls for high-density mixed-use and mixed-income developments in the downtown lower river area; lower density as we move into historic neighborhoods in the middle river, and preservation and enhancement of the marine-industrial businesses which generate needed jobs in the upper river area.

**A "PEOPLE-FRIENDLY" RIVER.** This means publicly accessible greenways linking parks, homes and businesses – all well-maintained and policed. To this end, the MRC will work with developers and businesses in linking their riverwalks through a 10-mile greenways system that will grow into a source of community pride.

Finally, thanks are in order for past and future efforts. For this work, I would especially thank bipartisan help from: Reps. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Kendrick Meek, and Mario and Lincoln Diaz-Balart; Sens. Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez; Gov. Charlie Crist; the Florida Legislature; Miami-Dade County Commission Chair Bruno Barreiro and Mayor Carlos Alvarez; former U.S. Sen. Bob Graham; the late Rep. Claude Pepper, and all who have preceded us in making the effort to restore the Miami River so productive.

Eric Buermann, *Chair*

## Awards

- **"AWARD OF MERIT"** was awarded to the MRC for its Multimodal Transportation Plan – *American Planning Association, 2007*
- **"THE NEWSMAKER"** was awarded to MRC Chair Eric Buermann – *Miami Today, 2007*
- **"BEST BACKSTAGE LEADER"** was awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau who was then included in the "Book of Leaders" – *Miami Today, 2007*
- **MIAMI IMAGE AWARD OF 2006** was awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau – *Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches*
- **"BEST OF MIAMI – IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE"** was awarded to MRC Chair Irela Bagué – *Miami Today, 2006*
- **"THE ACHIEVER – MIAMI RIVER'S RENAISSANCE MAN"** was awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau – *Miami Today, 2006*
- **"COMMUNITY STEWARD AWARD,"** – *1,000 Friends of Florida, 2005*
- **"BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION,"** – *Miami Today, 2004*
- **"MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT,"** for the Miami River Greenway – *Urban Environment League, 2004*
- **EXCELLENCE AWARD** for the Miami River Corridor Urban Infill Plan – *American Landscape Architects, 2003*

# Miami River Works for Me

The MRC took its "Miami Works for Me" public awareness campaign on TV with three initiatives:

- Six talk shows titled "Miami River Works For Me" focused on dredging, greenways, history of the Miami River, development, the marine industry and the MRC. They aired on Cable-TAP TV.
- The MRC produced and aired a Public Service Announcement (PSA) themed "Miami River Works for Me."
- Reflections on the Miami River, a half-hour documentary on the river's history, aired on WPBT-Channel 2.

In all its efforts, the MRC stresses that the river is where people from many cultures, incomes and vocations:

**LIVE** in affordable apartments, historic homes and multimillion-dollar penthouses;

**WORK** in international shipping terminals, recreational boatyards, commercial fishing business, restaurants, hotels and offices, and;

**PLAY**, alongside riverwalks, riverside establishments and numerous public parks.

During 2007, the MRC continued to sponsor and coordinate more than a dozen volunteer river beautification projects, in partnership with Hands on Miami, the University of Miami, Ransom Everglades, the Jewish Volunteer Center, Engage Miami and other groups.



# Working Group Reports

## DREDGING

Eric Buermann, Chair

**DREDGING IS SLATED** to resume Feb. 15, 2008 between the 22nd Avenue and 17th Avenue bridges, where the 40-percent-complete project was temporarily demobilized in late 2005.

This is the first maintenance dredging of the Miami River. It restores the federal navigable channel to its authorized depth of 15 feet. Federal, state and local governments have spent \$38 million on the project, and utility companies have spent \$55 million to relocate lines to the appropriate depth beneath the federal navigable channel for dredging.

This still leaves the \$86 million project with a shortfall of roughly \$10 million. That money must be provided to the Army Corps of Engineers by July 31, 2008, for the dredging to conclude as budgeted and contracted.

The county has requested \$10 million from the Florida Legislature, and the South Florida Water Management District is applying for \$3 million from the Florida Inland Navigational District (FIND).

Restoring the river's federal navigable channel allows vessels to fill cargo to full capacity and traverse regardless of tide, thereby increasing international trade, commerce and local employment. In addition, removing contaminated sediments will improve the natural environment of the Miami River and Biscayne Bay.

## GREENWAYS

Dr. Ernest Martin, Chair

**IN PARTNERSHIP** with the Trust for Public Land, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), city and county, and riverfront developers, the MRC continued progress toward implementing The Miami River Greenway Action Plan (available at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org)).

In 2007 the public and private sectors continued developing the following sections of the publicly accessible Miami River Greenway system:

### PUBLIC SECTOR:

- City of Miami, with grant funding from the Florida Department of Transportation, constructed an on-road Greenway section along North River Drive from I-95 to NW 2nd Street.

### PRIVATE SECTOR:

- "Latitude on the River" riverwalk under construction
- "Mint" riverwalk under construction
- "Wind" riverwalk under construction
- "Terrazas Riverpark Village" riverwalk under construction
- "Miami River Oaks Marina and Condominium" riverwalk under construction

The south shore trailhead at the ancient Miami Circle site can only be created after the site's collapsed seawall is replaced.

The MRC continues to urge the state's immediate repair of the seawall, followed by creation of the riverwalk to finally create public access to this site, purchased by the taxpayers in 1998 for \$25 million.

MRC is continuing to coordinate and cosponsor volunteer cleanup and beautification of the Greenway with Hands on Miami, the University of Miami, Ransom Everglades, the Jewish Volunteer Center, the Junior League, Engage Miami and

other groups.

The MRC continues to meet with the City of Miami administration regarding the needs for additional maintenance, security and special events, which are critical to ensure the Greenways' success and longevity after completion.

## URBAN INFILL

James Murley, Chair

**IN 2007, THE MRC** adopted the Miami River Corridor Multimodal Transportation Plan in partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), city and county. The plan recommends multimodal transportation improvements to accommodate the significant growth of residents, tourists and freight along the Miami River.

The final \$10 million appropriation must be provided to the Army Corps of Engineers by July 31, 2008, for the dredging to conclude as budgeted and contracted.





Removal of the NW 5th Street Bridge

A major recommendation of the multi-modal transportation plan would alleviate downtown truck traffic through implementing “short-sea shipping” operations linking the Port of Miami with the Upper River. Trucks would drop off and pick up their cargo containers at a marine industrial upper river site with access to SR 112, rather than drive through congested downtown streets to the Port of Miami. Then the containers would be barged to and from the Port of

Miami overnight. A pilot short-sea shipping program would result in transporting four barges with three containers every night, thereby removing 1,200 trucks per day from the downtown streets. In addition, the plan recommends other multimodal transportation improvements, including, but not limited to: waterborne transit, synchronizing signals with drawbridge openings; two-way certain one-way streets; a tugboat basin, a centralized freight-for-

warding center, and more. Mixed-use and mixed-income redevelopment continues, often on once-vacant and contaminated brownfield sites within the downtown lower river section of the Miami River corridor. Currently there are 3,373 residential units recently completed, 4,046 units under construction and 6,548 units in final permitting stages along the Miami River.

The Urban Infill Working Group has been encouraging the river corridor stakeholders to take additional steps toward consistency with Gov. Charlie Crist’s 2007 Energy and Climate Change executive orders to reduce our carbon footprint and create a more sustainable environment. These initiatives are consistent with the Miami River Commission’s 2005 Energy and Water Conservation Plan.

The Urban Infill Working Group is advocating for consistency between the Urban

Infill Plan and the City of Miami’s draft Miami 21 zoning code rewrite, in addition to the Downtown Development Authority’s draft Downtown Miami Master Plan.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMERCE

Bruno Barreiro and Megan Kelly, Co-Chairs

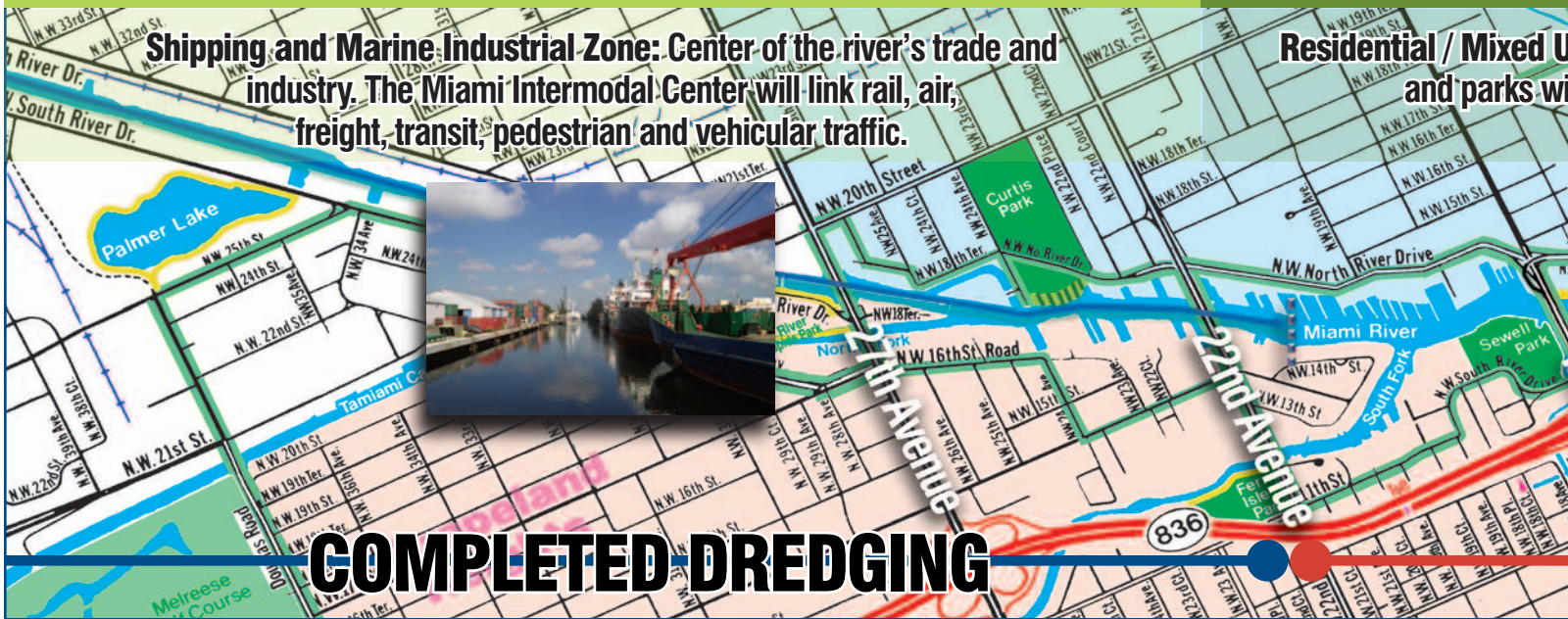
**IN JULY, THE** Miami-Dade County Commission approved Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock Company’s plans for a \$55 million-plus expansion. The recreational boatyard has been in continuous operation on the Miami River since 1923.

The expansion, first announced in 2006, would include a 2,500-ton lift capable of removing 250-foot mega-yachts for servicing. The planned expansion requires completion of the Miami River maintenance

## UPPER RIVER

**Shipping and Marine Industrial Zone:** Center of the river’s trade and industry. The Miami Intermodal Center will link rail, air, freight, transit, pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

**Residential / Mixed Use and parks with**



## COMPLETED DREDGING

### MIAMI RIVER MAINTENANCE DREDGING CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

**1935**

Army Corps of Engineers dredges Miami River to 15-foot depth and 90-150-foot width.

**1972**

Congress authorizes Corps to investigate maintenance dredging of Miami River to improve navigation and reduce pollution.

**1977**

Corps feasibility study placed on hold, pending action by local governments in cutting pollution.

**1985**

Corps feasibility study resumed.

**1986**

Congress directs Corps to “remove polluted bottom sediments” from the Miami River, with local governments paying 25 percent of cost.

**1990**

Final feasibility study recommends maintenance dredging and ocean disposal of sediments.

**1991**

The EPA recommends against ocean disposal; the Miami River Coordinating Committee (MRCC) recommends more costly upland disposal.



dredging project to accommodate the larger recreational yachts Merrill-Stevens services.

The project would create 350 new jobs with salaries well above the county average, a marine vocational school, publicly accessible riverwalk/greenway sections, and a Miami River historical exhibit/museum area.

Antonio Villamil and Charles Yaros of the Washington Economics Group prepared an independent economic analysis, which estimated a total annual recurring economic impact from the facility at \$195 million.

The Economic Development and Commerce subcommittee

is overseeing the creation of an independent Miami River Marine Industrial Economic Analysis, which Florida Atlantic University is scheduled to complete in 2008.

In addition, the Economic Development and Commerce Working Group recommends that Miami-Dade County create an "Upper River Plan" followed

by Miami Intermodal Center Associated Development Specifications and Guidelines. The plan, specs and guidelines will provide the needed framework to steer appropriate intermodal connectivity between the Port of Miami River and adjacent Miami Intermodal Center, Miami International Airport and existing railroad lines.



Vessel towed through 2nd Avenue Bridge with new riverfront developments in background

## STORM WATER

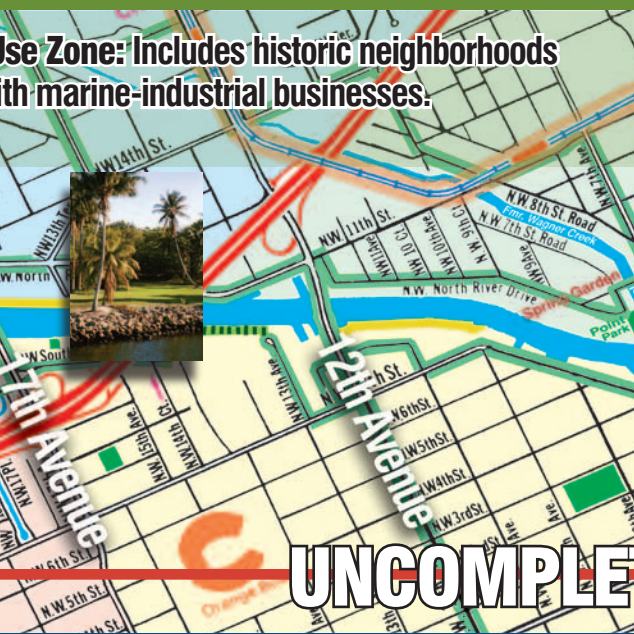
Sallye Jude, Chair

**STORM WATER** management is vital to the health and ecological safety of a major city prone to flooding and hurricanes. The main source of pollution in the Miami River and Biscayne Bay is the antiquated storm water and sanitary sewer system serving the 69-square-mile Miami River basin.

Environmental agencies—including the City of Miami, Miami-Dade Department of Environmental Resource Management and the Water and Sewer Department, South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection – continued to implement the working group's Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Plan. The city estimates a September 2008 completion of the design, permitting and

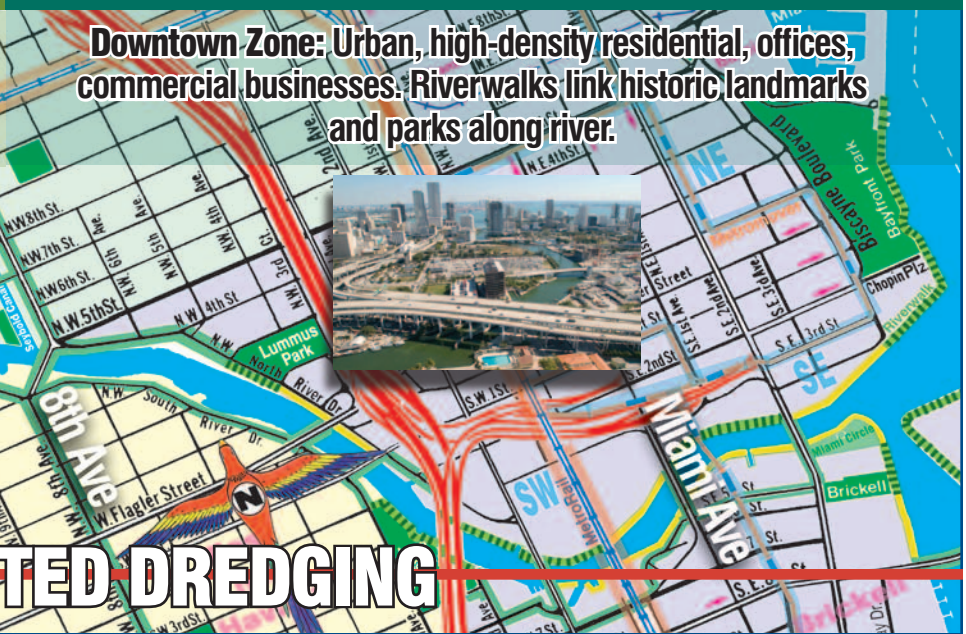
## MIDDLE RIVER

**Use Zone:** Includes historic neighborhoods with marine-industrial businesses.



## LOWER RIVER

**Downtown Zone:** Urban, high-density residential, offices, commercial businesses. Riverwalks link historic landmarks and parks along river.



# UNCOMPLETED DREDGING

Map © 2001 Richard Troutner. All rights reserved.

### 1998

State of Florida creates Miami River Commission (MRC), which identifies dredging as a priority.

### 1999

Corps amends the Miami River dredging project cost-share ratio to 80 percent federal and 20 percent local funding, making project feasible.

### 2001

Corps advertises dredging Request for Proposals, asks private utilities to relocate crossings.

### 2003

Corps and local project sponsors execute Miami River Dredging Project Cooperation Agreement. Corps reviews five submitted RFP bids.

### 2004

Miami River maintenance dredging commences in the upper river at the salinity dam.

### 2005

Dredging temporarily demobilized due to lack of available pledged federal cost share with 40 percent of the project completed.

### 2007

Army Corps orders dredging to resume.



public outreach for the dredging project for the Seybold Canal and Wagner Creek, two of the most polluted bodies of water in Florida.

The City of Miami has already retrofitted and repaired several old storm water systems and installed new solid waste interceptor baskets to prevent debris from entering the Miami River and Wagner Creek. In 2007, improved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) water quality goals were established for Wagner Creek, which environmental agencies will strive to attain and exceed.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Gary Winston, Robert Ruano,  
Co-Chairs

**THE MIAMI RIVER** Security Committee, coordinated by the Miami River Marine Group and hosted by the U.S. Coast Guard, continues to meet monthly and is focused on homeland security on the Miami River.

We thank Joe Piñon, former chair of the committee, for his service. He has moved to Iraq to work in the private sector.

The Miami River's 20 internationally certified shipping terminals are implementing the Transportation Workers Identification Card (TWIC), which requires a thorough background check of all employees of the shipping terminals.

# Outreach

The 11th annual free Miami Riverday Festival was held March 24, 2007, featuring river boat tours, live music, environmental education, marine expo, historic reenactors, children's activities and much more.



Dirk Verdoorn's paintings of the Miami River were unveiled at an art show at Neo Vertika, a new riverside development, in February 2007.

All MRC and subcommittee meetings are publicly noticed and public participation is encouraged. The full MRC meets on the first Monday of every month at noon.

## Bridges

Four bridges on the Miami River are undergoing replacement or repair.

**THE NW 5TH STREET BRIDGE** has been removed. This bridge had been deemed a hazard to navigation in 1929 and struck by vessels under tow 14 times in the last decade. The MRC thanks FDOT for removing this long-standing obstacle to navigation. Construction is scheduled to begin on the new bridge in December 2008, with completion in summer 2010 at an estimated cost of \$60 million.

**THE NW 12TH AVENUE BRIDGE** is undergoing a \$64-million FDOT replacement, and will expand from four to six lanes. Traffic will move to the new span, as demolition of the old bridge starts this spring and summer, with completion scheduled in late 2009.

**THE 17TH AVENUE BRIDGE**, owned by Miami-Dade County, is undergoing a \$10-million repair for significant steel deterioration and rust damage. The new project should extend the life of the bridge by 40 years. It is scheduled to open for traffic March 7, 2008, with completion at the end of May.

**WHILE THIS SIMULTANEOUS WORK** creates short-term inconveniences and disruption, these improvements will significantly improve traffic and create a safer infrastructure for the coming decades.

**THE SW FIRST STREET BRIDGE** was temporarily closed Jan. 7, 2008, for a \$100,000 repair to recondition the trunnion assembly, a device that helps raise the bridge. The work was scheduled for a Feb. 8, 2008, completion.

# Testimonials

“The Miami River Commission has a fundamental role in the development of the Miami River as a balanced, mixed-use destination to ‘live, work and play.’ Mr. Bibeau and the commission, through the boat tours and Miami Riverday, have been a great help to support the new lifestyle that the river has to offer.”

**SEBASTIAN BARBAGALLO**, BD Developments, Inc., Terrazas River Park Village

“The Miami River Commission has been an invaluable resource not only for our restaurant, but also for our commercial fishing business.”

**LUIS GARCIA**, owner, Garcia's Seafood Grille and Fish Market

“Marine industrial properties on the Miami River have become increasingly attractive to end-users and savvy investors, both local as well as international. Such investors have gained confidence in these sites due to partnerships and projects launched and supported by the Miami River Commission: the long-awaited dredging of the river; the economic incentives offered as a result of the synergies created by the commission with the local and federal government, and the community; and the passion to sustain the marine industry. The knowledge and integrity of the commission staff are sure to keep moving the marine industrial real estate forward on the Miami River.

**ADIBA ASH**, real estate broker

# Miami River Commission Members

## **Chair: ERIC BUERMANN, ESQ.**

Chair: South Florida Water Management District

## **Vice Chair: MR. ED SWAKON**

Chair of Marine Council

**DESIGNEE, VICE CHAIR:** Phil Everingham

## **Florida Gov. CHARLIE CRIST**

## **State Rep. JUAN C. ZAPATA**

Chair, Miami-Dade Delegation

## **Mayor CARLOS ALVAREZ**

Miami-Dade County Mayor

**DESIGNEE:** Mr. Robert Villar

## **Mayor MANUEL A. DIAZ**

Mayor of the City of Miami

**DESIGNEE:** Mr. Robert Ruano

## **Commissioner BRUNO BARREIRO**

Miami-Dade County Commissioner

**DESIGNEE:** Ms. Lubby Navarro

## **Commissioner JOE SANCHEZ**

City of Miami Commissioner

**DESIGNEE:** Mr. Steve Wright

## **KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, Esq.**

Miami-Dade State Attorney

**DESIGNEE:** Gary Winston, Esq.

## **Mr. RICHARD DUBIN**

Chair, Miami River Marine Group

**DESIGNEE:** Captain Beau Payne

## **Mr. DANA NOTTINGHAM**

Executive Director, Downtown Development Authority

**DESIGNEE:** Mr. Adam Lukin

## **Mr. BARRY JOHNSON**

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce

**DESIGNEE:** Ms. Megan Kelly

## **Dr. ERNEST MARTIN**

Neighborhood representative appointed by the City of Miami Commission

## **Ms. SALLYE JUDE**

Neighborhood representative appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission

**DESIGNEE:** Ms. Jane Caporelli

## **Ms. SARA C. BABUN**

Member at Large appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission

**DESIGNEE:** Ms. Elena Licea

## **Mr. MANNY PRIEGUEZ**

Member at Large appointed by the City of Miami Commission

## **REPRESENTATIVE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL OR CIVIC ORGANIZATION APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:** To be designated

## **Member at Large appointed by the Governor:** To be designated

## **EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:**

## **CONGRESSWOMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

**DESIGNEE:** Ms. Debbie Zimmerman

## **CAPT. KARL SCHULTZ, USCG**

Captain of the Port of Miami

## **Managing Director**

MR. BRETT BIBEAU

## **Assistant Managing Director:**

MS. ASHLEY CHASE

## **Prepared by:**

Wragg & Casas Public Relations, Inc.

## **Designed by:**

Toni Kirkland

**Learn more about the river's history, view records of our meetings and see all major reports at our web site at [www.miamirivercommission.org](http://www.miamirivercommission.org) a great resource for what's happening on and near the river.**

## **MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION**

c/o Robert King High

1407 NW 7 St., Suite D, Miami, FL 33125

Phone 305-644-0544 • Fax 305-642-1136

miamiriver@bellsouth.net

Westward view of the Miami River from Dolphin Expressway (SR 836).

