

Highland Oaks Park, Florida

marine environmental



The Highland Oaks Mitigation project received the *Florida Native Plant Society 2010 Award of Excellence* in the Ecosystem Restoration Category (Professional). Coastal Systems conducted design, permitting and construction administration services for the Highland Oaks Park mitigation site. The mitigation was constructed on Miami Dade County lands managed by the Parks and Recreation (Parks) Department as compensation for impacts to wetlands associated with a private development project. This project required extensive coordination between the Developer, Parks Department and the regulatory agencies. Prior to project implementation, the mitigation site consisted of approximately 3.2 acres of historic wetlands that had become filled with debris and overgrown with exotic plant species.

Major design aspects of the habitat restoration project included the removal of invasive plant species and debris, scraping the site down to an appropriate elevation to ensure a proper hydroperiod, and replanting with native freshwater wetland species. A unique aspect of the project site is its proximity to the Oleta River, which passes through the site. As such, Coastal Systems designed the restoration with channels cut into each parcel connecting to the river, which allow both all-season flow and flushing within the parcels. This aspect of the design allowed for an expansion of aquatic habitat into the wetland parcels.

Permits were secured from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), South Florida Water Management District, and Miami-Dade County Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) for the mitigation construction. One of our current staff also assisted in issuing this project's permits while employed previously with the COE and DERM. Agency coordination continued throughout construction and post-construction. To date, the project is functioning according to the design intent and turtles, fish, and migratory birds are utilizing the site. Monitoring to confirm maintenance of mitigation success criteria in accordance with the permit conditions is ongoing and is showing upland and wetland species to exceed their success criteria after three years, while levels of invasive species are near zero percent.



Successful emergent species and maintained mature upland species.



Restoration area with channels connecting to the Oleta River.

Client:	J. Milton & Associates
Location:	Miami-Dade County, Florida
Date of Completion:	2006
Construction Cost:	N/A

