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Florida as Amazonia

At this time I would like to widen our perspective, take a more panoramic view - a view that reveals not issues to be debated but crises to be recognized and confronted. Florida is rather like the Amazon. I speak of rampant, unrestrained destructive deforestation and overdevelopment. Except for scale, the regional problems are virtually identical. We're witnessing the destruction and loss of life-sustaining fundamental resources and processes that when lost will be gone forever. Both in the Amazon and here the loss of unique and priceless biodiversity is grievous.

The motivation and rationale for this overdevelopment is always the same: economic growth and the pursuit of profits and wealth. I believe this lust has crossed an important line where greed, masquerading as virtue, subverts to evil.

Roads, highways, and expressways are promoted as ways to alleviate traffic congestion resulting from growth and increased population. The CFEA, an organization with way too much authority in my view, has utilized that excuse to promote many projects. (In fact, this specific project is definitively designed to facilitate an enormous amount of development.) But we all know that more roads, highways, and expressways ONLY and inevitably stimulate more development and sprawl leading to more traffic and....Well, where and when will it end?

It WILL end eventually, when there is no more land to clear and pave, with greatly diminished quality of life for the human inhabitants and all our amazing natural neighbors and communities that will be ghettoized, like the Split Oak Preserve, or just dead and gone.

The Floridan aquifer is already overburdened and surface water resources are increasingly degraded and contaminated with stormwater runoff burdened by agricultural and lawn fertilizers, human sewage difficult and expensive to process, and other waste difficult and expensive to manage.

Remember, nature knows no boundaries. She is blind to the arbitrary lines we scribble across this globe: this being mine, that being yours. Our future quality of life, our prosperity, and, some argue, our survival is fundamentally communal and universally at risk. We can take an

important step to assure a brighter future by saying: "Enough! No more! Stop this madness!" Don't build this road.

Let us end our addiction to economic theories that no longer serve us well, rethink our reliance on numerical abstractions that have no form, that have no substance, that exist only in our human imagination but enslave us now nonetheless. Let us envision not just an end to unfettered growth but the beginning of a greater understanding and a higher moral calling.

"Mainstream economics views endless economic growth as a must, but nothing in nature grows forever,.... It may not be hard to give up having GDP growth as an economic goal, but it is going to be far harder to overcome our addiction to it. Today we have economies that need to grow, whether or not they make us thrive; what we need are economies that make us thrive, whether or not they grow." *Donut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st Century Economist*, Kate Raworth, Chelsea Green Publishing.

"The remainder of the century will be a bottle-neck of growing human impact on the environment and diminishment of biodiversity. We bear all of the responsibility of bringing ourselves and as much as possible of the rest of life through the bottleneck into a sustainable edenic existence. Our choice will be a profoundly moral one. Its fulfillment depends on knowledge still lacking and a sense of common decency still not felt. We alone among all species have grasped the reality of the living world, seen the beauty of nature, and given value to the individual. We alone have measured the quality of mercy among our own kind. Might we now extend the same concern to the living world that gave us birth?" *The Meaning of Human Existence*, Edward O. Wilson, Liveright Publishing Corporation.

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