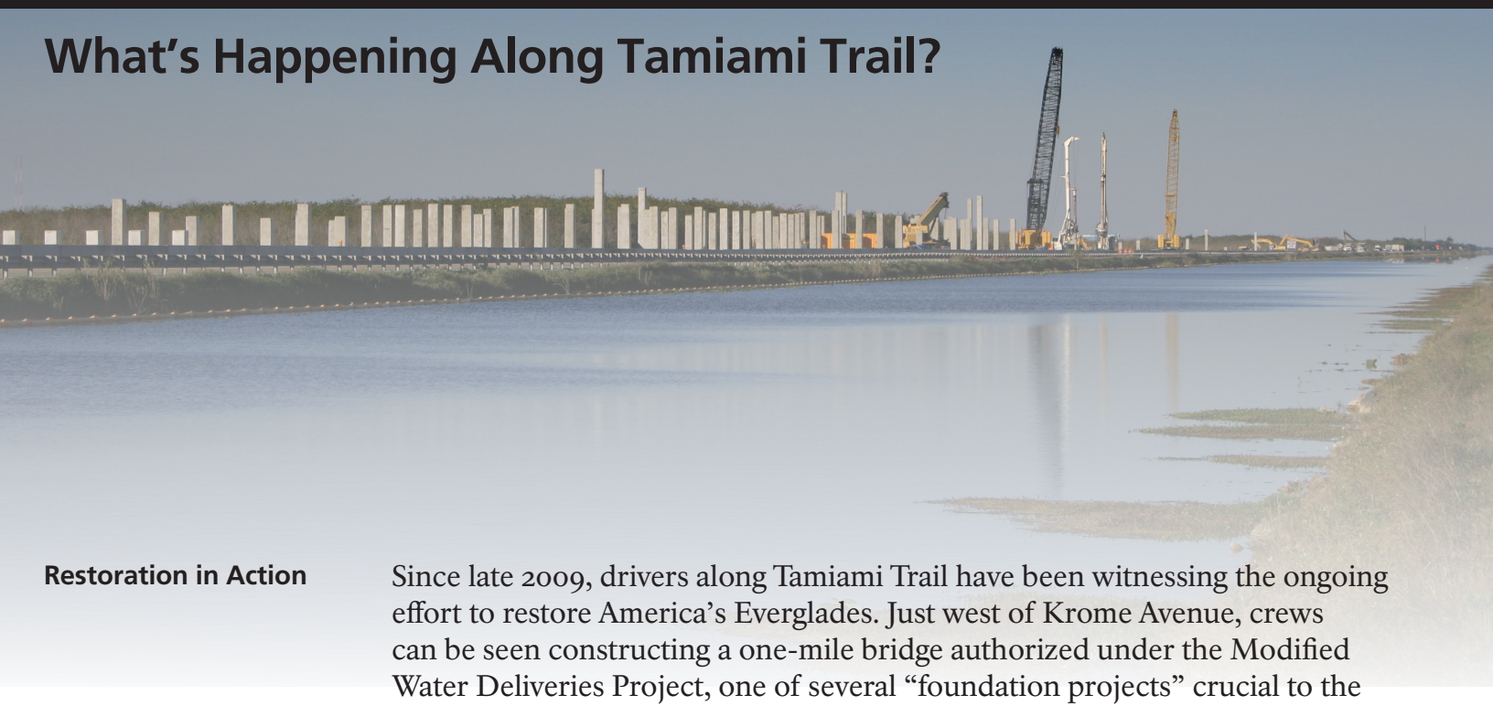
# South Florida National Parks

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Everglades National Park
40001 State Road 9336
Homestead, FL 33034

## What's Happening Along Tamiami Trail?



### Restoration in Action

Since late 2009, drivers along Tamiami Trail have been witnessing the ongoing effort to restore America's Everglades. Just west of Krome Avenue, crews can be seen constructing a one-mile bridge authorized under the Modified Water Deliveries Project, one of several "foundation projects" crucial to the restoration of the famed River of Grass. Once complete, the project will allow for the improved flow of freshwater to Everglades National Park, rehydrating northeastern Shark Slough and the marshes further downstream.

### Tamiami Trail and the L-29 Canal and Levee

The Tamiami Trail, which stretches between the cities of Tampa and Miami, was hailed as an engineering marvel at the time of its completion in 1928. Construction of the roadway across the Florida Everglades was a costly and difficult undertaking that took nearly 20 years to complete. The road afforded motorists unprecedented access to the watery expanse of the River of Grass.

During the 1950s, portions of the historic Everglades north of the Tamiami Trail were converted into several large Water Conservation Areas. Part of that process gave birth to the wide L-29 Canal north of Tamiami Trail and the associated L-29 Levee. Together, these features help provide both urban flood protection and water storage in the large impoundment areas to the north.

**A car navigates a lonely stretch of the Tamiami Trail, 1930.**
Image courtesy of the State Archives of Florida

### Unintended Consequences

Because the south Florida landscape is of such low relief, construction of the Tamiami Trail and the L-29 Levee created a dam that effectively blocks flows from the north and diverts water away from its historic course. Within only a few years, pronounced differences were observed between the perennially flooded water conservation areas to the north, and the parched marshland to the south.

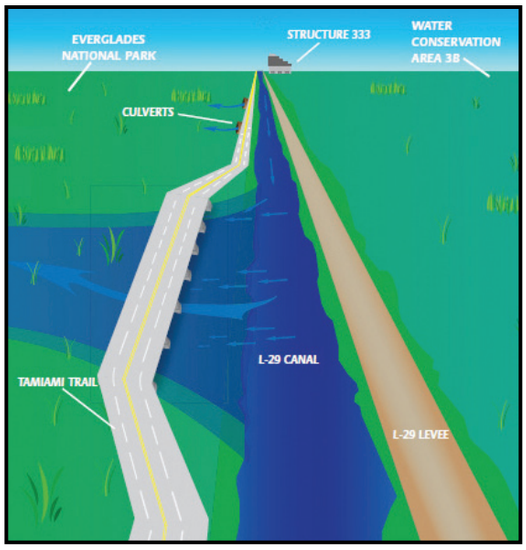
The interruption of water flow has resulted in unusually deep water north of Tamiami Trail, threatening the health of upland habitats. The water-starved areas to the south have become less hospitable to wildlife and are plagued by frequent wildfires and changes in vegetation. Traffic across the Tamiami Trail also presents a hazard to the movement of wildlife, as there is no safe passage beneath the roadway. Countless animals are killed annually in collisions with vehicles, and the diversity of wildlife impacted includes several protected species.

**Ponding in Water Conservation Area 3 contrast sharply with drier conditions to the south in Everglades National Park.**
NPS Photo by Lori Oberhofer

## What the Project Will Accomplish

Authorized as part of the Everglades National Park Expansion and Protection Act of 1989, the Modified Water Deliveries Project is intended to restore more natural hydrologic conditions to the northeastern area of the park. The project aims to divert greater quantities of water from Water Conservation Area 3 to the L-29 Canal, from which it would flow south into the park. Hydrologic modeling, however, suggested that the amount of water necessary to push flows through existing culverts beneath the Tamiami Trail could compromise the stability of the roadway.

Construction of the one-mile bridge and raising the remaining roadbed along the Tamiami Trail, therefore, are critical components of the Modified Water Deliveries Project. Together, they will maintain the safety of the road while allowing for passage of additional water beneath.

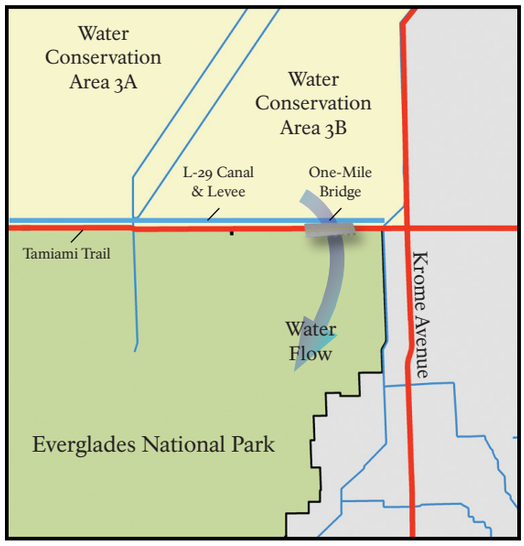



**Bridging will allow for improved flows beneath Tamiami Trail.**
Image courtesy of the US Army Corps of Engineers

## What the Project Won't Do

Completion of the Modified Water Deliveries Project and the Tamiami Trail Bridge are critical first steps in restoring flows to northeastern Everglades National Park. But to maximize ecological benefits, the project must work in tandem with other planned restoration projects intended to further remove barriers to flow from the north.

Completion of the bridge will pave the way to advance work on the Water Conservation Area 3 Decompartmentalization and Sheet Flow Enhancement Project, which would partially remove existing impediments upstream (including portions of the L-29 Levee.) The National Park Service has also recommended the construction of an additional 5.5 miles of bridging along the Tamiami Trail to restore more natural patterns of flow and enhance ecological connectivity across the road.




**Completion of the bridge will pave the way to remove additional barriers to flow upstream in the Water Conservation Areas.**

## Learn More & Get Involved

You can learn more about this and other Everglades restoration projects online at:

www.EvergladesPlan.org

Sign up to receive the Everglades Report newsletter, view the calendar of upcoming events, browse teaching materials for the classroom, and follow our progress on Facebook and Twitter.

the journey to restore America's Everglades

## See the Project Site

Want to see this exciting restoration project in person? All you need is a handheld GPS!

Follow these coordinates to find the **Everglades Restoration Geocache #2** and get a great view of the Tamiami Trail bridge project site:

**N 25° 45.711'**
**W 080° 31.321'**

Please be sure to seal the cache well and return it to its original location. New to geocaching? You can learn more by visiting the park website at:

**www.nps.gov/ever/geocaching**

This cache has been placed with the kind permission of our partners at the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Transportation for the purposes of public outreach and education.

As a reminder, geocaching is generally prohibited within areas managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.