



**WHITE PAPER ON
ARCH CREEK EAST ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Monday, March 5, 2018**

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The Destruction of an Environmental Preserve and a Quiet Neighborhood

Access to nature is recognized as a human need and a human right, yet a public Environmental Preserve is being stolen from the people of North Miami and Miami-Dade County.

A last-minute amendment hidden in legalese, rushed through the Florida Legislature, now threatens to impact the daily lives of 1,000 residents - and every Miamian who values and enjoys what is left of south Florida's nature. Florida International University (FIU) is trying for the fourth time, using new back door methods, to pass legislation in Tallahassee allowing a land grab of a City of North Miami Environmental Preserve. FIU's stealth amendment will allow them to force traffic into their North Campus, destroying the quality of life in a quiet neighborhood – against the wishes of the residents and government of North Miami. In doing so, they would decimate the 13-acre Arch Creek East Environmental Preserve. This is bullying and abusive behavior and it needs to stop.

1 - A state university is literally stealing land from the City of North Miami.

How are they 'stealing' it?

The City of North Miami donated the land where FIU sited its North Campus. FIU is showing its gratitude by stealing an Environmental Preserve owned by North Miami. To do so, they have used devious means - indeed a blatant attempt to bypass local opposition - inserting a few lines of text and not mentioning the FIU or North Miami by name. Beyond being unfair and undemocratic, this creates a dangerous precedent of Tallahassee lawmakers trampling the Home Rule of the City of North Miami.



2 – Sacrificing everyday safety for false security.

Emergency access through the Preserve exists by design. It can be quickly activated for First Responder vehicles or for evacuation. Access was created by the City of North Miami, and UPG (Urban Paradise Guild) has shown FIU PD Officers how to activate it.

FIU President Rosenberg claims that “We are sitting on a very dangerous situation,” so they demand the right to force a secondary entrance road because of the Parkland murders. North Miami Police Chief (Retired) Kenneth Each stated on Sunday 3/5: “That’s a lot of nonsense. It doesn’t make any sense.” That is because providing first responders with access unimpeded by oncoming traffic through 135th Street and the Preserve would ensure the fastest response. ***NMPD would be the backup agency to any FIU emergency, so it was Each’s job to plan the NMPD response when he was Chief.***

FIU’s use of the Parkland murders is a cynical ploy: in the name of false security they would expose the 1,000 residents of ACENA to harm every day from thousands of college students rushing through their neighborhood. It will put the lives of children, retirees, working adults and dogs at risk, through vehicle accidents, through respiratory illness from air pollution, and through loss of access to healthy exercise on their street and in the Preserve.

3 – Destroying quality of life and property values in a quiet cul-de-sac.

What are the immediate and long-term consequences?

The island of tranquility and calm that residents of ACENA (Arch Creek East Neighborhood Association) cherish at the dead-end of NE 135th Street will be shattered by the mammoth increase in traffic.

If opened to traffic, NE 135th would likely become the main access point to FIU, so a four-lane road is anticipated. Thousands of cars with young drivers will rush through the neighborhood *every day* at all hours, with corresponding risks, pollution and noise. It will mean the destruction of a place now loved for cycling, walking, dog-walking, jogging, running, and other activities, along with an overall decrease in safety, community, quality of life. The Preserve is part of the community fabric as well, and it will be destroyed by the planned highway.

Stealing the very things that homeowners bought into when they purchased their homes will create a dramatic drop in property values, stealing their hard-earned investment in the one major asset that most families struggle to attain. The aggregate loss would be millions of dollars, also impacting the city’s tax base.

4 – Destroying habitat and access to nature.

What will the community and nature-lovers lose?

The Preserve is a favorite park, providing access to nature for residents, visitors and commuters to local schools and FIU. It is frequented by dog-walkers and families out for a healthy walk or run.

Urban Paradise Guild (UPG) has been working for 5 years on Habitat Restoration projects in the Preserve. Our steady progress will accelerate, since we recently obtained our first grant for this project which will allow full Habitat Restoration of roughly 1.8 acres.

'FIU contends there is already an existing road and it will not impact the environment.' Nothing could be further from the truth. There is a wide paved path that has not been used as a road for decades, free of most pollution and hazards. Turning into a road will shatter the tranquility which allows people to enjoy nature will be destroyed. It will become unsafe for the many who walk, bike or dog-walk there.

Traffic will kill birds, mammals, and insects in one of North Miami's few remaining natural areas. Pollution (road runoff and exhaust) will degrade the air and water, affecting federally protected mangroves and manatees, as well as seagrass beds, corals and aquatic organisms in Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves.

[View Video of a young manatee swimming in the Preserve.](#)

5 – Links to information

Legislative

Amendment: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2018/1287/Amendment/816979/PDF>

Bill tracking: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2018/1287> (Amendment # 816979)

Media

2011 Attempt to take the Preserve:

http://www.biscaynetimes.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1031:time-for-plan-b-&catid=73:north-miami&Itemid=239

6 – Next steps for concerned citizens

Time is of the essence.

It is anticipated that the Florida House will vote shortly, on Monday 3/5/2018.

The Florida Senate may vote soon after.

Legislative session ends on 3/9/2018.

For most current info and who to call, please visit:

urbanparadiseguild.org/ace/



A group of high school students after volunteering with UPG in the Preserve – February 2018

“This was the best field trip in my whole career.”

- Beth, the lead teacher, who has been teaching science for decades.

UPG will offer these experiences to students of all ages during the Habitat Restoration of the Preserve.