

# KEY WEST'S DUCK POND

A Unique Wetland in the “Island City”

# A Vital Water Resource for Wildlife

Swelled by rainwater, the Duck Pond provides rare, low-salinity habitat for these American widgeon, blue-winged teal, and American coot. (1988, C. Kruer)



# A Part of Key West's Original, Natural Salt Pond

Historic salt works and berms from the 1820's, and approximate location of the Duck Pond in the lower right corner of this 1923 shot of eastern Key West.



1923 Key West Photo Courtesy of the National Archives

# Key West International Airport built on the Salt Pond

The newly constructed runway and the location of the modern Duck Pond at the west end are shown in this 1940 aerial photo



# Today's Duck Pond

Semi-isolated by fill, a unique pond habitat evolved with the functions and productivity of the natural Salt Pond, seasonally hypersaline to almost fresh.



# In the Wet Season

Low salinity and high water attract flocks of migratory waterfowl like these blue-winged teal that gave the pond its name. (2007, R. Draper)



# In the Dry Season

Seasonal low water concentrates fish and invertebrates, creating a magnet for wading birds and shore birds, like these white ibis, greater yellowlegs, and white phase reddish egret . (2007, R. Draper)



# Why Save the Duck Pond?

- **Part of the original, natural, historic Key West Salt Pond**
- **An important, seasonally low-salinity water resource for wildlife**
- **Outstanding Florida Waters in an Area of Critical State Concern**
- **A unique feature that cannot be replicated through mitigation**
- **Proposed mitigation is not in-kind, but an additional adverse impact by converting the pond to a fully tidal system**
- **FAA requires standard RSA's only "where practicable"**
- **Many airports do not conform due to buildings or water bodies**
- **Excellent safety record does not indicate need for bigger RSA's**
- **95% of the take-offs and landings are toward the other (east)end**
- **Conservation easements have not been executed**
- **Filling creates secondary and cumulative impacts relative to future runway extension**
- **A large scale fill project in the small scale Keys is a bad precedent**
- **Community efforts to preserve the Salt Ponds, the island's last natural area, span at least 30 years**

# Coexisting

The Duck Pond in spring dry-down and safe regional jet service



# Balancing Safety and Environment

## We urge SFWMD to:

- Deny this permit application due to the scale of destruction and the lack of demonstrated need, in-kind mitigation and executed conservation easements.
- Encourage the applicant to split the project and proceed without delay to construct RSA improvements as proposed at the far riskier east end of the runway.
- Take no action at the west end that will impact the unique and valuable resources of the Duck Pond.