



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

January 24, 2017

Mr. Carl Hiaasen
Miami Herald
3511 NW 91 Avenue
Miami, FL 33172

Dear Mr. Hiaasen:

As a South Florida literary icon, you are in a unique position to reach a wide audience encompassing virtually all walks of life in our community. Many people read your column with interest and enthusiasm, as well as the various newspapers that run your columns on water issues that are so important to all Floridians.

Your point of view about water resources and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) organization are well respected. Make no mistake; we do not write to change your mind about the issues, but rather to offer an opportunity to receive and pass along additional information to your readers, the people we serve.

With over 40 combined years of dedicated study of South Florida's ecosystems and water management, we respectfully disagree with the conclusion from your Jan. 15, 2017 article, entitled "*Big Sugar's Slime Flows North to the Capitol*," insinuating that the SFWMD Governing Board no longer relies on *real* scientists or engineers. We assure you there is a strong group of us here; many are renown nationwide and internationally as experts in their respective fields. We approach our work objectively and make our findings subject to the scrutiny of fellow scientists through the independent peer review process.

The scientists and engineers at the SFWMD would be honored to have you as our guest to see the workings of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control System up close. We could also highlight the interesting projects underway in our southernmost region and include a detailed tour of the work being implemented in Florida Bay and Water Conservation 3A. A firsthand experience with the people in the field doing the work that informs decision-making about water in South Florida helps tell the ecosystem restoration story. Our team will work around your schedule to make this tour a potential learning opportunity.

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With your calendar in mind, another opportunity is the annual Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Conference (GEER) taking place April 17-21 in Coral Springs. Our scientists will be submitting their research findings and welcome the prospect to spend time with you for dialogue and information exchange. Visit <http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/GEER2017/> for logistics and program agenda.

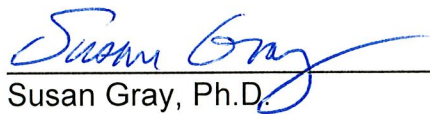
We look forward to hearing from you and hope you are able to dive further into South Florida's water resource issues, whether it's a bird's eye view, an interpretive tour or a scientific forum for information exchange.

Thank you for the consideration and we hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



Akintunde Owosina, P.E.
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Susan Gray, Ph.D.
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From: Owosina, Akintunde
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 4:39 PM
To: 'Hiaasen, Carl' <chiaasen@miamiherald.com>
Cc: Gray, Susan <sgray@sfwmd.gov>
Subject: RE: Invitation from SFWMD Scientists and Engineers

Dear Mr. Hiaasen,

I appreciate your speedy response to our offer, which will remain open to you.
I hope when your schedule does loosen up, you will take advantage of this opportunity and come see the great science being done at the SFWMD today.

Regards.

Akin Owosina

From: Hiaasen, Carl [<mailto:chiaasen@miamiherald.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 24, 2017 1:34 PM
To: Owosina, Akintunde <aowosin@sfwmd.gov>
Subject: Re: Invitation from SFWMD Scientists and Engineers

Dear Dr. Owosina,
Thanks for your kind invitation. Unfortunately, my schedule for the next few months is jammed, and I have a previous commitment that takes me to the Gulf Coast during that week of your conference in April.
There is no doubt that many hard-working scientists such as yourself are still doing important research and field work for the district.
Unfortunately, we have a governor whose disregard for science is epitomized by his stated views about climate change and other pressing environmental issues. Numerous former staff members of the various water districts have expressed alarm about the non-scientific direction of water management in Florida.
Having lived on Florida Bay for many years myself, I saw first-hand the damage of poor management decisions. Sadly, the situation there has only worsened.
The best science in the world is wasted when it's at the mercy of bad politics.
I have confidence that you, Susan and your colleagues will continue to produce valuable work. I have zero faith in the current political leadership, which is shamelessly in the pocket of Big Agriculture and major land developers.
Feel free to write anytime, and to share with me any of the papers being presented in April.
When my schedule loosens up, I will try to make a time to come visit with the staff.

Sincerely,

Carl Hiaasen