

Box 12  
D 23

December 12, 1996  
Mohawk, Florida


Dear Edna

Since my retirement in 1981 I have heard many stories of how the  
the hundred mile waterway in Everglades National came into  
being. I have written an account of how this came about, to the best  
of my knowledge this is exactly how it happened,

discovery of the connection between the Broad and Shark River  
ages made it possible. After this was found it became a matter  
figuring out the waterway and doing a lot of hard work to make  
a continuous waterway between Everglades City and Flamingo.

This letter is being sent to many different locations including former  
co-workers, newspaper, parks and the E&AA "Newsletter". If any  
publication of this material is made please contact me before  
publication.

Sincerely

  
Richard A. Stokes  
NPS 1950-1981

cc: Joe Brown, former Supt, ENP  
Present Supt. ENP  
E&AA "Newsletter"

Robert Kerr, former Chief Ranger ENP  
Ralph Maxwell, former Asst. Chief Ranger ENP  
The Orlando Sentinel, Florida Magazine  
Dan Brown, NPS SE Regional Office

Thought this would make a good article  
for the news letter.

D. Stokes

## The Everglades 100 Mile Waterway and How It Really Happened

Back in 1958 I was assigned to the Everglades at 40 Mile Bend, where I spent ~~the year~~. Then in 1959 I was moved to Everglades City along with Roy Evenson and two junk boats nobody would have.

here being no place to live I commuted from 40 Mile Bend for six months and finally found a house to rent. This lasted only 30 days and I was homeless again. Then we finally found an apartment to live in for the next 3 years, when Service housing became available.

of the original park plans by Dan Beard the first Supt. ~~was to dredge~~ <sup>proposed</sup> between the upper reaches of the Shark and Broad River drainages. ~~Would allow a small boat to go from Everglades City to Flamingo~~ <sup>down.</sup> going out in the gulf. This was never accomplished as it would ~~create another unnatural problem for the Everglades. In defense of~~ <sup>the plan, it was not known at this time of the damage that would occur</sup> from this action.

After working at Everglades City for a few years I began to know the area quite well. The first charts of this area were called T-Charts. They were in black and white with no depths on them. In studying these charts I found that there was a creek from Broad River into Broad Creek which went into the Harney River and thence to the Shark. These charts had much more detail of the interior than the present day navigation charts and they showed three small creeks off the main creek which would make the connection.

<sup>made</sup> Plans were set to attempt this passage. Roger Allen, Supt. and Bob Kerr Chief Ranger came up from Headquarters and we all went to Lostman's River Ranger Station to spend the night. We had a 17' open boat with outboard motor and a 10' by 5 skiff with a 20 h.p. motor. (there were others in the party)

### The Plan

<sup>boat</sup> Bob Kerr was to take Roger and I to the beginning of the creek at Broad River. Roger and I would take the small skiff to make the passage and Bob was to go around the outside and meet us in Broad Creek. So much for the best laid plans, of mice and men.

The chart showed three small creeks which we found, the third creek was the one to be taken. This was perhaps about 11 a.m. We started up the third creek as planned, the tide was falling and as we got up the creek further and further we begin to encounter many logs and the creek begin

to narrow. We lifted the boat over several logs and finally decided we could not make the passage. So we turned around and started out and found <sup>back</sup> the tide had fallen a great deal and we would have to lift the boat over logs for the entire distance back to the main creek. After about 200 yds Roger became exhausted and we climbed up on the bank to rest. Oh, we had a radio, but as usual when you needed it it did not work. We were in a dilemma as to the course of action, after Roger became rested it was decided

that we would walk across the mangroves to Broad Creek, as we could hear Bob running the boat up and down the creek looking for us. This was perhaps 4 p.m.

Anyone who has walked through mangroves knows what we faced as it was about 1/2 mile to Broad Creek. We took two life boat cushions with us and started out. We made it to Broad Creek, however on arrival Roger was completely exhausted. This was around 6 p.m. I did not know what to do as I could not carry or swim with him for help...

to radio for help. He got Ralph Miele and the park plane up to look for us. While back at Pine Island residential area the employees were gathering for a picnic, one of the rangers brought his truck over to the Chickee and turned on the radio so all could hear what was going on, including our wives.

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WHAT IS  
A "CHICKEE"?

While back at the creek Roger had become rested so I talked him into getting into the creek. This revived him so with our life cushions we started swimming down the creek to the gulf. Roger's only thoughts were of alligators and mine of sharks. About half way to the gulf we heard the park plane, waving our cushions frantically. Miele saw us, and radioed Bob to come pick us up. By the time he arrived back at the creek it was dark and we had reached the forks of Broad Creek, being dark when he started up the creek he went up the wrong right hand fork as he had been directed however we were on the left fork. Finally after he had been gone sometime we decided to swim across a small bay so that we would be at the narrow mouth of the creek when he came out. After a few minutes here came Bob full throttle out the creek as he passed us we threw the cushions and hit the boat to get him stopped. Then back to Lostman's for a good meal and a good nights sleep.

so we could go back to Everglades City the next day.

The second try to find the passage occurred a few days later. Ed Carlson, Ken Morgan, and I came back with the same equipment as on the first try. I am not sure if one of them went with me in the small skiff or if I went by myself and they both went around to Broad Creek to make the pick up. However we took the same route through the main creek, but this time we took the fourth creek instead of the third, with a little effort we made it through to Broad Creek. This was the first trip through the waterway.

determine  
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As far as I could find out none of the locals had ever been through this waterway. No one knew of it nor did it show on any of the modern navigation charts. There was no sign of the creek ever being used. ~~within modern times~~ I strongly suspect that the only use was by the Calusa Indians, which were the native Indians of the coast and Everglades. ~~of Everglades National Park.~~ <sup>Americans probably</sup>

was not  
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The next trip through the waterway was by Frank Masland and I. Frank took movies of the trip and they are in possession of one of his sons if Frank is not living. Every effort should be made by the Park Service to obtain this film. It covered many other things and trips which he made with me and other rangers in Everglades National Park.

Frank Sr. is  
dead. Did he  
donate any  
EVER?

Ed, Ken, and I proceeded to cut out this creek <sup>where an</sup> ~~and an~~ open 16' skiff could make it through on high tide. After getting the creek open we proceeded to lay out the entire route of the waterway.

The next step was to locate campsites approximately one day apart on the trail. This we did using mainly indian mounds and high places along the river banks from Everglades City to Whitewater Bay. One site on Onion Key was very interesting as we installed a pit privy, however the regional archaeologist said we had to take the dirt out in six inch layers, sift it in one quarter inch screens, and bag it for future study. This we did.

P. 02 We had no maintenance crew at Everglades City therefore Ed, Ken, and I scrounged tables and grills at headquarters, cleared the sites, and built the campgrounds. Later when I moved to Flamingo as District Ranger, with ngers we built the first Chickee on stilts along the Joe River.

?  
CHICKEE ON STILTS

is is the true story of how the <sup>99</sup> 100 mile <sup>with 2 more antennas</sup> ~~Everglades~~ came to be. Lapelegize omitting any names ~~however the main names are all included in the~~  
~~It is hoped that this will clear up exactly who discovered the waterway and built the campgrounds to go with it.~~

Written by:  
Richard A. Stokes  
Ranger Everglades National Park 1958 to 1970