

Miami River Commission

Annual Report 2006

In 2006,

the lower Miami River continued its transformation into a destination landscape, as new riverwalk sections, homes and businesses welcomed people to the riverfront.

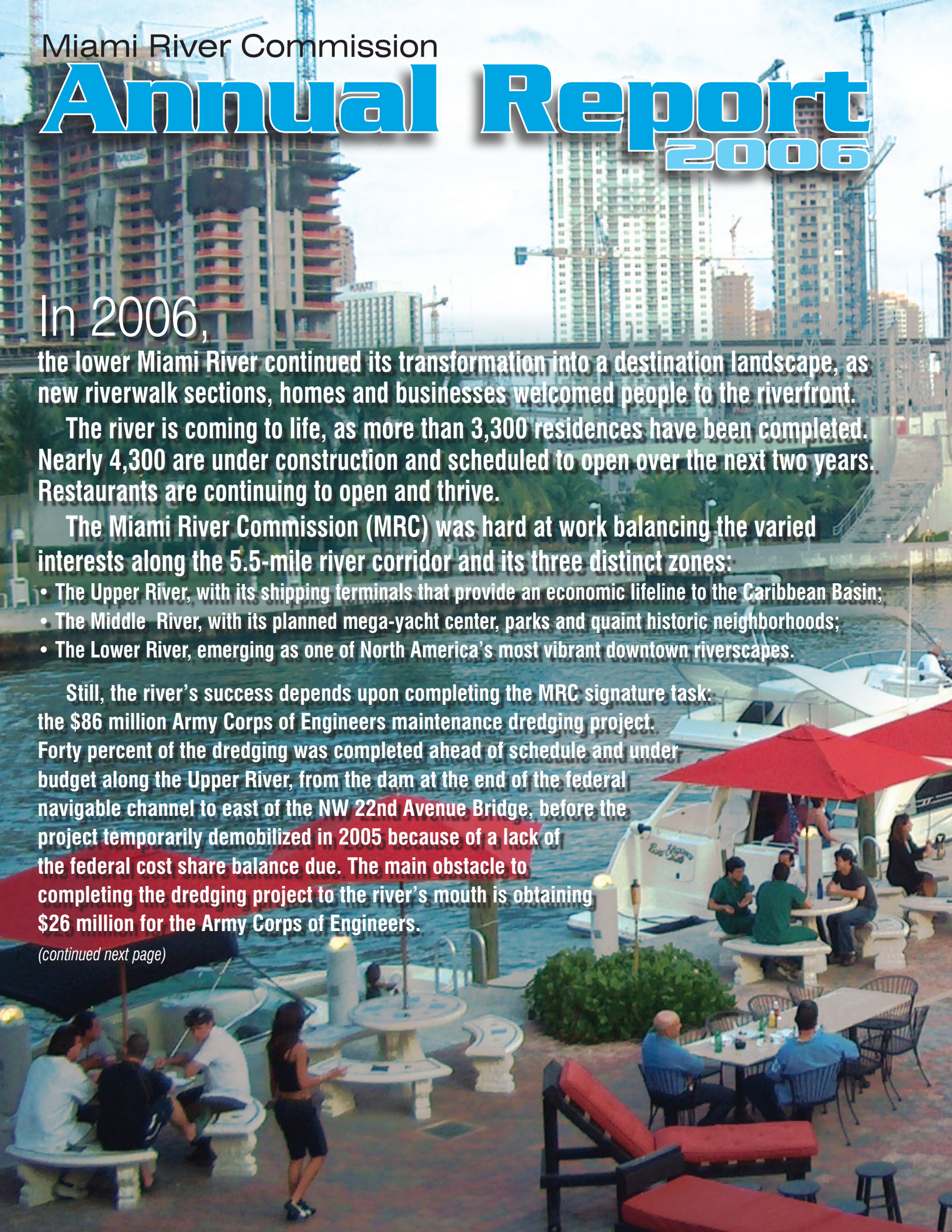
The river is coming to life, as more than 3,300 residences have been completed. Nearly 4,300 are under construction and scheduled to open over the next two years. Restaurants are continuing to open and thrive.

The Miami River Commission (MRC) was hard at work balancing the varied interests along the 5.5-mile river corridor and its three distinct zones:

- The Upper River, with its shipping terminals that provide an economic lifeline to the Caribbean Basin;
- The Middle River, with its planned mega-yacht center, parks and quaint historic neighborhoods;
- The Lower River, emerging as one of North America's most vibrant downtown riverscapes.

Still, the river's success depends upon completing the MRC signature task: the \$86 million Army Corps of Engineers maintenance dredging project. Forty percent of the dredging was completed ahead of schedule and under budget along the Upper River, from the dam at the end of the federal navigable channel to east of the NW 22nd Avenue Bridge, before the project temporarily demobilized in 2005 because of a lack of the federal cost share balance due. The main obstacle to completing the dredging project to the river's mouth is obtaining \$26 million for the Army Corps of Engineers.

(continued next page)





The stakes are high.

Failure to complete dredging jeopardizes the future of the estimated 6,700 jobs in South Florida generated by the river's marine industry, ambitious plans for mega-yacht service center in the Middle River and the cleanliness of Biscayne Bay.

With so much accomplished, the MRC urges Congress and the Corps to appropriate the funds to ensure that taxpayers and citizens receive the expected return on the \$100-million investment already made by local, state and federal governments and private and public utilities.

The MRC is grateful for the project's continued support from Congress, the State of Florida, the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), Miami-Dade County and the City of Miami. We are dedicated to this essential project's completion.

Finnegan's River, opened in 2006, attracts a happy hour crowd as nightlife picks up along the Miami River.

In the background above: Latitude on the River and Neo Vertika. On the opposite river bank, the new towers Wind, Mint, Ivy and Cima rise with new restaurants connecting to publicly accessible riverwalk sections.



**IRELLA
BAGUÉ**

Chair's Report

New publicly accessible Miami River Greenway trailhead at north bank of the river's mouth.

IN 2006, the Miami River Commission's (MRC) dream for the Miami River continued to shape into a reality. The River enjoyed success as a thriving shallow-draft port for mega yachts, boatyards and international shipping terminals; new mixed-use, mixed-income housing opportunities adorned the river's shores; and, more and more riverwalks broke ground in the city's urban core, increasing public access to the riverfront and promoting the area as a unique destination landscape.

REVITALIZATION ALONG THE RIVER continues thanks to a concerted public-private effort supporting the completion of the long-awaited Miami River Maintenance dredging project. The project will greatly improve navigation and the natural environment through the removal of contaminated sediments that have accumulated for decades on the bottom of the Miami River.



COMPLETION OF THE widely-supported dredging project has encouraged business owners to invest in the future of the Miami River. Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock Company announced tremendous plans for a \$55 million expansion, generating hundreds of high-paying jobs. New riverfront developments, such as Terrazas River Park Village, River Oaks and Residences at Riverwalk commenced construction close to the newly branded "Health District."

THE MRC CONTINUED to bolster the river's image as a jewel of Miami and a tourist destination through creating new waterfront parks, sponsoring community environmental clean-ups and hosting the annual free Miami Riverday festival, which celebrates the unique heritage, culture and environment of Miami's "working river." The MRC launched a public outreach campaign with the production of a television PSA "Miami River Works for Me," highlighting the different cultural and economic facets of the Miami River and its potential to appeal to a variety of lifestyles.

AS THE RIVER CONTINUES to experience an unprecedented renaissance, the MRC maintains its main priority of enhancing the Miami River corridor while balancing the interests of its marine industries, historic neighborhoods, flourishing businesses and mixed-use redevelopment opportunities.

Irella Bagué, *Chair*

Miami River Works for Me

The MRC continued its public outreach campaign with the production of a television Public Service Announcement (PSA). The campaign demonstrates how the Miami River works for different people in a variety of ways. The river is a place where people from many cultures, incomes and vocations:

LIVE, in affordable apartments, historic homes and multimillion-dollar penthouses;

WORK, in international shipping terminals, recreational boatyards, commercial fishing businesses, restaurants, hotels and offices, and;

PLAY, along riverwalks, riverside establishments and numerous public parks.

Working Group Reports

DREDGING

Eric Buermann, Chair

FINISHING THE 40 PERCENT COMPLETE maintenance dredging is the river's most important task—for navigation, economic development and the natural environment. This first maintenance dredging of the Miami River finally started in 2004 to restore the authorized 15-foot-deep federal navigable channel. After Hurricane Katrina damaged New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, congressional funding was curtailed and dredging was temporarily demobilized between the NW 22nd Avenue and NW 17th Avenue bridges. Federal, state and local governments have already spent nearly \$40 million on the project, and utility companies have spent \$55 million to relocate lines for dredging.

Restoring the River's 15-foot-deep federal navigable channel allows vessels to fill cargo to full capacity and traverse regardless of tide, thereby increasing international trade, commerce and local employment. In addition, removing the contaminated sediments will improve the natural environment of the Miami River and Biscayne Bay.

Since dredging proceeds east from the salinity dam, the project can only succeed if dredging

extends to the river's mouth at Biscayne Bay. If the dredging is left incomplete, the money will have been wasted, the shipping industry in the western end of the river will be hobbled

If the dredging is left incomplete, the money will have been wasted, the shipping industry in the western end of the river will be hobbled and plans to create a mega-yacht service center will be suspended or canceled.

and plans to create a mega-yacht service center will be suspended or canceled. The \$26 million from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would revive this vital project.

The MRC appreciates the ongoing support to complete this long-awaited project from the Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Sens. Bill Nelson and Mel Martinez, the State of Florida, the Florida Inland Navigation District (FIND), Miami-Dade County, the City of Miami, and the South Florida Water Management District.

GREENWAYS

Dr. Ernest Martin, Chair

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE Trust for Public Land, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the city and the county, 2006 included continued progress toward implementing The Miami River Greenway Action Plan (available at www.miamirivercommission.org).

New, publicly accessible Greenway sections were completed at One Miami, Brickell on the River, Neo Vertika, South River Drive from José Martí Park to NW 1st Street, and North River Drive from NW 3rd Street to NW 6th Avenue, in front of Garcia's, Joe's and Casablanca Seafood Restaurants and Markets.

FDOT has awarded the city grant funding to construct the Greenway adjacent to the Big Fish and new Finnegan's River restaurants. Six more restaurants are under construction next to the riverwalk, which will help create a destination landscape for tourists and residents to enjoy, while creating new employment opportunities.

MIAMI RIVER



Awards

- **"BEST OF MIAMI – IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE,"** awarded to MRC Chair Irela Bagué – *Miami Today*, 2006
- **"THE ACHIEVER – MIAMI RIVER'S RENAISSANCE MAN,"** awarded to MRC Managing Director Brett Bibeau – *Miami Today*, 2006
- **"COMMUNITY STEWARD AWARD,"** 1,000 Friends of Florida, 2005
- **"BEST NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION,"** *Miami Today*, 2004
- **"MOST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT,"** for the Miami River Greenway, Urban Environment League, 2004
- **EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR INFILL PLAN,** American Landscape Architects, 2003



New Greenway historical marker in José Martí Park.

representatives from the Fort Lauderdale Riverwalk Trust addressed attendees, shared their experiences, and toured the area by foot and water bus.

The second full-day session was held along the Miami River Greenway, where riverwalk stakeholders and partners reviewed and discussed national models, which provide similar services to greenways and public green spaces.

The Greenways subcommittee appreciates The Villagers' \$25,000 grant, which was used to install the first series of historic markers along the Miami River Greenway at sites including the 1844 Fort Dallas, 1856 Wagner Homestead, 1897 Flagler Workers House, Alligator Joe's and more.

URBAN INFILL

James Murley, Chair

THE MIAMI RIVER CORRIDOR URBAN INFILL PLAN was prepared over two years and 42

public hearings under a joint planning agreement with the MRC, city, county and Miami River stakeholders.

The plan envisions the river in three distinct sections, as shown on the map. Most of the nearly 80 implementation steps are either completed or undergoing significant progress. The plan is available at www.miami-rivercommission.org.

Miami's downtown skyline and Lower River area are undergoing their biggest change in generations, setting the stage for the next 50 years. With nearly 7,600 units either completed or under construction, the riverscape will change dramatically. An additional 7,500 residential units along the river's shores are in permitting stages.

In partnership with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Urban Infill Working Group launched the public process to create the Miami River Corridor Multi-Modal Transportation Plan.

The plan, scheduled for com-



Rendering of planned Merrill-Stevens expansion west of NW 12th Avenue Bridge.

pletion in 2007, will recommend new multi-modal transportation improvements, including, but not limited to: waterborne transit; synchronizing signals with draw bridge openings; two-waying certain one-way streets; short sea shipping; centralized freight forwarding center, a tug-boat basin and more. FDOT,

UPPER RIVER

Shipping and Marine Industrial Zone: Center of the river's trade and industry. By 2009, the Miami Intermodal Center will link rail, air, freight, transit, pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Residential / Mixed Use and parks with



MIAMI RIVER MAINTENANCE DREDGING CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

1935

Army Corps of Engineers dredges Miami River to 15-foot depth and 90-150-foot width.

1972

Congress authorizes Corps to investigate maintenance dredging of Miami River to improve navigation and reduce pollution.

1977

Corps feasibility study placed on hold, pending action by local governments in cutting pollution

1985

Corps feasibility study resumed.

1986

Congress directs Corps to "remove polluted bottom sediments" from the Miami River, with local governments paying 25 percent of cost.

1990

Final feasibility study recommends maintenance dredging and ocean disposal of sediments.

199

The EPA recommends upland di-



for Miami-Dade County and the FDOT to partner and establish development guidelines and review procedures for the MIC Associated Development Area.

In addition, the Urban Infill Working Group is advocating for consistency between the Urban Infill Plan and the City of Miami's draft "Miami 21" zoning code rewrite, in addition to the Downtown Development Authority's draft Downtown Miami Master Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & COMMERCE

Bruno Barreiro and Megan Kelly, Co-Chairs

IN 2006, MERRILL-STEVENS DRY DOCK COMPANY, in operation on the Miami River since 1923, unveiled plans for a \$55 million expansion, which would include a 2,500-ton lift capable of removing 250-foot mega-yachts for servicing.

The planned expansion requires completion of the Miami River maintenance dredging project in order to provide a sufficient navigable channel for the larger recreational yachts. The expansion would create 350 new jobs with salaries well above the county average, a marine vocational school, publicly accessible riverwalk/greenway sections, and a Miami River historical exhibit/museum area. Mr. Antonio Villamil and Mr. Charles Yaros of the Washington Economics Group prepared an independent economic analysis, which estimated a total annual recurring economic impact from the facility at \$195 million.

STORM WATER

Sallye Jude and Arsenio Milian, Co-Chairs

STORM WATER MANAGEMENT IS VITAL to the public health and ecological safety of a major city prone to flooding and hurricanes.

The main source of pollution in the Miami River and Biscayne Bay is the antiquated storm water system serving the 69-square-mile Miami River basin.

The City of Miami has already implemented most of the MRC Stormwater Subcommittee's Miami River Basin Water Quality Improvement Report recommendations. It has retrofitted and repaired the old storm water system and installed new solid waste interceptor baskets to prevent debris from entering the Miami River and Wagner Creek.

In 2006, the city received and reviewed bids submitted in response to its Wagner Creek and Seybold Canal Dredging Request for Letters of Interest and subsequent Request for Additional Information. The city expects to start dredging in 2007.

The MRC commends the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, which smoke-tested sections of the sanitary sewer system and discovered and repaired minor leaks.

the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority, Miami-Dade Transit and the city are participating in the creation of the upcoming transportation plan.

With the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) moving forward, the Urban Infill Working Group has been working on the Infill Plan's recommendation

MIDDLE RIVER

Use Zone: Includes historic neighborhoods with marine-industrial businesses.



LOWER RIVER

Downtown Zone: Urban, high-density residential, offices, commercial businesses. Riverwalks link historic landmarks and parks along river.



UNCOMPLETED DREDGING

1991

Corps recommends an disposal; the Coordinating Committee (MRCC) finds more costly disposal.

1998

State of Florida creates Miami River Commission (MRC), which identifies dredging as a priority.

1999

Corps amends the Miami River dredging project cost-share ratio to 80 percent federal and 20 percent local funding, making project feasible.

2001

Corps advertises Dredging Request for Proposals, asks private utilities to relocate crossings.

2003

Corps and local project sponsors execute Miami River dredging Project Cooperation Agreement. Corps reviews five submitted RFP bids.

2004

Miami River maintenance dredging commences in the upper river at the salinity dam.

2005

Dredging temporarily demobilized due to lack of available pledged federal cost share with 40 percent of the project completed.



Antillean Marine Shipping Co. in the Upper River.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Gary Winston, Robert Ruano,
Co-Chairs

THE MIAMI RIVER SECURITY COMMITTEE, CHAIRED by Joe Piñon, coordinated by the Miami River Marine Group (MRMG) and hosted by the Coast Guard, continues to meet monthly and is focused on homeland security along the Miami River. In 2006, the United States Coast Guard appointed MRMG Executive

Director Dr. Frances Bohnsack to the Regional Maritime Security Committee to coordinate security efforts on the Miami River in cooperation with other ports.

The Miami River's 24 internationally certified shipping terminals are frequently inspected by the Coast Guard to ensure compliance with the federal Maritime Security Act.

Outreach

The 10th annual free Miami Riverday Festival was held in March 2006 and featured river boat tours, live music, environmental education, a marine expo, historic re-enactors, children's activities and much more. The 2007 Miami Riverday is scheduled for March 24, 2007, at José Martí Park, SW 4 Street and SW 4 Avenue, 11 am-5 pm.

During 2006, the MRC sponsored and coordinated the creation of a new riverfront pocket park, decorative painting beneath the Flagler and First Street bridges in Little Havana, and more than a dozen river clean-ups, in partnership with Hands on Miami and University of Miami volunteers and sponsorships from the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department, Vila and Sons, EDAW landscape architecture firm, Florida Department of Transportation, the City of Miami, BellSouth, P&L Towing and Brian Veale Painting, Inc.



Volunteers work together to create a pocket park along the river.



Old NW 5 Street Bridge

Bridges

The MRC thanks FDOT, which in 2006 started replacement of the NW 12 Avenue and NW 5th Street bridges over the Miami River, for a total of over \$100 million. The MRC's strategic plan recommended the expedited replacement of the NW 5th Street Bridge, which was deemed a hazard to navigation in 1929, and struck by vessels under tow 14 times over the past decade, thereby costing millions to repeatedly repair.

Testimonials

“The Miami River Commission recognizes the importance of the Miami River to our mega-yacht repair business, and we are counting on the maintenance dredging project to make the river and the South Florida area a magnet for skilled marine jobs.”

MARK BAILEY

V.P., External Affairs

Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock Company

“The commission has done an outstanding job of making the river a better place to live and do business and promoting the Miami River as a major asset to our community. On behalf of our more than 13,000 members, the Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches is proud to present The Miami Image Award to the commission and Brett Bibeau in 2007.”

TERESA KING KINNEY, CEO

Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches

“The Miami River is at the heart of South Florida's rich history, and the Commission has reminded us of this treasure with the historical markers funded by a grant from The Villagers Inc., which were installed along the river's new greenways.”

HISTORIAN PAUL GEORGE, PhD



Miami River Commission Members

Chair: IRELA BAGUÉ

DESIGNEE: South Florida Water Management District

Vice Chair: Mr. PHIL EVERINGHAM

Chair of Marine Council

Florida Gov. JEB BUSH

DESIGNEE: Mr. Tony Garrastazu
Succeeded by Gov. Charlie Crist

State Rep. GUS BARREIRO

Chair, Miami-Dade Delegation
Succeeded by Sen. Frederika Wilson

Mayor CARLOS ALVAREZ

Miami-Dade County Mayor
DESIGNEE: Ms. Amy Gonzalez-Hernandez

Mayor MANUEL A. DIAZ

Mayor of the City of Miami
DESIGNEE: Mr. Robert Ruano
Succeeded by Mr. Robert Villar

Commissioner BRUNO BARREIRO

Miami-Dade County Commissioner
DESIGNEE: Ms. Betty Gutierrez

Commissioner JOE SANCHEZ

City of Miami Commissioner
DESIGNEE: Mr. Steve Wright

Mr. KEVIN McCARTY

Chair, Governing Board, South Florida Water Management District
DESIGNEE: Ms. Irela Bagué

KATHERINE FERNANDEZ RUNDLE, Esq.

Miami-Dade State Attorney
DESIGNEE: Gary Winston, Esq.

ERIC BUERMANN, ESQ.

Member at Large Appointed by the Governor

Mr. CHARLES "BUD" MORTON

Chair, Miami River Marine Group
DESIGNEE: Captain Beau Payne
Succeeded by Mr. Richard Dubin

Mr. DANA NOTTINGHAM

Executive Director, Downtown Development Authority
DESIGNEE: Mr. Adam Lukin

Mr. BARRY JOHNSON

Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
DESIGNEE: Ms. Megan Kelly

Dr. ERNEST MARTIN

Neighborhood Representative appointed by the City of Miami Commission
DESIGNEE: Mr. Michael Cox

Ms. SALLYE JUDE

Neighborhood Representative appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission
DESIGNEE: Ms. Jane Caporelli

Ms. SARA C. BABUN

Member at Large appointed by the Miami-Dade County Commission
DESIGNEE: Ms. Carmen Polanco

Mr. MANNY PRIEGUEZ

Member At Large Appointed by the City of Miami Commission

REPRESENTATIVE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL OR CIVIC ORGANIZATION APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR: To be designated**EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:****CONGRESSWOMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

DESIGNEE: Ms. Debbie Zimmerman

CAPT. JAMES MAES, USCG

Captain of the Port of Miami
Succeeded by Capt. Karl Schultz, USCG

Managing Director

MR. BRETT BIBEAU

Assistant Managing Director

MS. ASHLEY CHASE

Prepared by

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Designed by Toni Kirkland

Learn more about the river's history, view records of our meetings and see all our major reports at our web site at www.miamirivercommission.org a great resource for what's happening on and near the river.

MIAMI RIVER COMMISSION

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The new Point Park opened in the Spring Garden historic neighborhood.

