



# **An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century (Environmental History and the American South)**

*Jack E. Davis*

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No one did more than Marjory Stoneman Douglas to transform the Everglades from the country's most maligned swamp into its most beloved wetland. By the late twentieth century, her name and her classic *The Everglades: River of Grass* had become synonymous with Everglades protection. The crusading resolve and boundless energy of this implacable elder won the hearts of an admiring public while confounding her opponents--growth merchants intent on having their way with the Everglades. Douglas's efforts ultimately earned her a place among a mere handful of individuals honored as a namesake of a national wilderness area.

In the first comprehensive biography of Douglas, Jack E. Davis explores the 108-year life of this compelling woman. Douglas was more than an environmental activist. She was a suffragist, a lifetime feminist and supporter of the ERA, a champion of social justice, and an author of diverse literary talent. She came of age literally and professionally during the American environmental century, the century in which Americans mobilized an unprecedented popular movement to counter the equally unprecedented liberties they had taken in exploiting, polluting, and destroying the natural world.

The Everglades were a living barometer of America's often tentative shift toward greater environmental responsibility. Reconstructing this larger picture, Davis recounts the shifts in Douglas's own life and her instrumental role in four important developments that contributed to Everglades protection: the making of a positive wetland image, the creation of a national park, the expanding influence of ecological science, and the rise of the modern environmental movement. In the grand but beleaguered Everglades, which Douglas came to understand is a vast natural system that supports human life, she saw nature's providence.

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