

## **Miccosukee Prescribed Burn Meets Objectives Everglades National Park, Florida National Fire Plan – Fuels Reduction**

The Miccosukee Reserved Area (MRA) is a wildland-urban interface community adjacent to the northern boundary of Everglades National Park. The community is at risk from wildfires burning in tall sawgrass fuels. Fires in this fuel type typically exhibit intense fire behavior and rapid rates of spread. Long ago, park fire staff identified the need for hazard fuels treatments adjacent to the MRA. Complicating fuels treatments are the presence of endangered species habitat, cultural sites, designated wilderness, a major travel corridor, and natural fuels intermixed with homes in the community.



*Aerial view Everglades National Park and Miccosukee Reserved Area, showing fuels treatment south of Highway 41 (Tamiami Trail).  
Photo by Liz Struhar.*

Everglades Fire and Aviation Management, working in close cooperation with the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and most South Florida Fire Planning Unit partners, developed strategy and tactics so that a hazard fuels treatment burn could be implemented without the need to install fire lines that would be detrimental to the fragile ecosystem. The plan relied upon utilizing weather and natural fuel breaks as well as single engine air tankers (SEATs) to control fire spread. In April 2005, 604 acres were burned, protecting five miles of wildland urban interface. Operations were scheduled to take advantage of northerly winds which kept smoke out of the community and away from Highway 41. While these winds were desirable for smoke dispersal, they also pushed fire towards sensitive cultural sites and endangered species habitat. Monitoring fire behavior, assessing fuel continuity and accurate water delivery by two SEATs, allowed objectives to be realized with no impacts to values at risk.

Resources from Biscayne National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, J. N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge and three “call when needed” (CWN) aircraft assisted Everglades National Park in this successful fuels treatment effort.

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