

FROM PAGE 1A

# SHARK VALLEY

environmental impact from the Shark Valley plan, but according to Gantt, the project remains several years off.

## A HISTORY OF HIGH WATER

Flooding was an issue almost from the start in Shark Valley.

The trail was built in 1946 when Humble Oil company, now known as Exxon, decided to drill for oil in that section of the Everglades. When Humble Oil decided the oil wells were not economically viable, the trail was added into the National Park system. The signature observation tower at the trail's midway point was built in 1965 as part of mission 66, which was a construction program that added development to Everglades National Park for the National Park Service's 50th anniversary. The park opened the Shark Valley trail to visitors the following year in 1966.

But just two years later, flood gates along Tamiami Trail were opened and the entirety of Shark Valley was inundated. This also caused devastation to the wildlife. After two and a half years, the trail debris was removed and the trail was repaired.

South Florida's dry season is the best time to visit, roughly from November to April, when temperatures tend to be cooler and water levels lower in the surrounding marsh. The summer months can be up and down depending on rainfall and hurricanes. But Everglades hydrologists say peak flooding occurs in October and November as the entire wet season's outfall collects in the marsh and slowly flows south toward Florida Bay. So complaining that Shark Valley is too flooded during the wet season is a bit like saying hiking Mount Rainier in Washington state is too cold during winter.

Ricky Ramsingh, a tram-tour guide at Shark Valley, said that since 2017, Shark Valley has been closed only three or four times. Although flooding is common, the trail is still passable most of the time, and the park closes entirely only during severe cases.

Tropical storms and hurricanes are the wild card for Shark Valley conditions. In 2017, the park was closed for three months after Hurricane Irma dumped a deluge on South Florida.

In January 2021, Shark Valley was reopened after two months of closure due to record-high flooding caused by Hurricane Eta, which submerged the trail and parking lot. Michelle Collier, a hydrologist who had worked in the Everglades, wrote in an article

published by the National Park Service in 2020 after a hurricane about the water levels being the highest on record after rainfall and water-management restoration.

In May 2023, the park was closed for 17 days for the repaving of the entirety of the tram trail, parking lot and entrance road to Shark Valley.

Besides the main loop trail at Shark Valley, there are also three walking trails: The Bobcat Boardwalk near the visitors center, the Otter Cave Hammock trail half a mile from the visitors center and the Borrow Pit trail next to the observation tower. Most of the year, the Otter Cave Hammock trail and the Borrow Pit trail are flooded. During the dry season the Borrow Pit trail was completely submerged. Walkable ... but also a potential gator pool party.

## COMING IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Long-term, climate change in the form of sea rise might be the biggest issue for traversing Shark Valley. Even bigger than the gators that sometimes flop themselves in the middle of the trail.

Randall Parkinson, a research associate professor at the Institute of Environment at Florida International University, said he believes it will require "crazy construction" to keep Shark Valley open by 2050.

As surrounding seas rise, the pressure will also raise groundwater under the Everglades and the rest of South Florida and the natural gravity-driven flow of drainage to the coasts will slow.

"As sea level has risen, it has reduced the slope of the groundwater table. When the slope is decreased, it flows more slowly, and in some locations it essentially backs up to cause localized flooding," said Parkinson. "You can imagine there's a lot of low-lying places that will flood in the Everglades with freshwater as sea level continues to rise."

Of course, sea rise will have more immediate effect on the Everglades' coastal wetlands, such as Flamingo and the Ten Thousand Islands, but the ripple effects will be felt across the inland marshes as well. Down the road, freshwater marshes will turn salty and the entire ecosystem of the Everglades will undergo radical changes.

The proof of sea rise can be seen in tidal gauges, including one in Key West. Its record, he said, shows the average sea rise was 2.6 millimeters per year from 1913 until 2022. "Between 1993 and 2022 it has risen at five and a half millimeters per year."



SOPHIA BOLIVAR sbolivar@miamiherald.com

Flooded patches of the west side of the Shark Valley trail can be seen from the observation tower on Sept. 10.



SOPHIA BOLIVAR sbolivar@miamiherald.com

Bethany Richey drives a tram during a tour along the flooded east side of the Shark Valley trail on Sept. 10.

"If you look at the rate of sea-level rise from 2003 to 2022 in Key West, it's almost eight and a half millimeters," said Parkinson. "This is a phenomenal acceleration in sea-level rise that is caused by climate change and unlikely to stop in our lifetime."

Shark Valley patrons have learned to adjust to flooding. Last October, Aitor Echeverria, a frequent Shark Valley visitor, took his bike to the park.

After reaching the observation tower and returning down the winding path on the east side, Echeverria said he encountered water up to his ankles and had to walk his bike five miles. All in all, though, it was still a great experience in the wilds of the Glades.

"I felt adventurous," said Echeverria. "It was refreshing. It's a hot day and then you have water to wade through."

## IF YOU GO

With the wet season ending in the next couple of months, park spokes-

person Gantt said activities will begin to ramp up, with more details coming

in October. "Starting in January, we'll have more night programs, slough slogs, which are the wet hikes, where you walk off trail, bike tours and they are also planning a new behind the scenes van tour that'll be about Everglades restoration along Tamiami Trail," she said.

Here are some tips for visiting Shark Valley:

● **Arrive early:** During the dry winter, the parking lot can fill quickly, meaning long waits at the entrance or parking along Tamiami Trail; doing so can result in tickets. Arriving at or before 9 a.m. when the park opens is the safest bet to secure a spot or getting through the gate at all — particularly on weekends.

● **Prep for sun, bugs:**

There is little shade on the trail and, depending on the season, a lot of insects. Dress for the conditions and pack repellent and sunscreen.

● **Hydrate:** You're surrounded by watery marsh along the 15-mile trail but there are no water fountains along the route. There is one at the observation tower, but it has long been out of service. The National Park Service suggests one gallon of water per person.

● **Check for flooding:** The visitor center is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. To find out how flooded the trail is and for more information on activities, the visitor center can be reached at: 305-221-8776. The park address is 36000 SW 8th St, Miami, FL 33194.



## CITY OF DORAL INVITATION TO BID NO. 2024-16 CONSTRUCTION OF CITY OF DORAL TROLLEY SHELTERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Doral is soliciting Bids from qualified contractors to The City of Doral desires to retain the services of a qualified General Contractor to construct, furnish, and install prefabricated bus shelters and construct concrete pads for installation of bus benches at designated trolley stops along the Doral Trolley System citywide, as described in City of Doral Invitation to Bid ("ITB") No. 2024-16. Such solicitation is available on the City's webpage, DemandStar <https://network.demandstar.com/> and Vendor Registry <https://vendorregistry.com/>. Electronic responses will be received online via DemandStar or Vendor Registry.

Non-Mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting	Oct 2, 2024, 10:00 AM (America/New York) Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone. <a href="https://meet.goto.com/970935861">https://meet.goto.com/970935861</a> You can also dial in +1 (312) 757-3121 Access Code: 970-935-861
Submission Deadline and Bid Opening	Oct 30, 2024, 2:00 PM (America/New York) Join from your computer, tablet or smartphone. <a href="https://meet.goto.com/790098277">https://meet.goto.com/790098277</a> You can also dial in +1 (312) 757-3121 Access Code: 790-098-277

Attendance at the pre-bid meeting is recommended as a source of information but is not mandatory. Proposers interested in participating may join online via the above link or may dial in at the specified phone number.

This ITB is subject to the "Cone of Silence" as more particularly described in the solicitation. Accordingly, all questions regarding this ITB must be made in writing and be directed to Procurement at the following email: [procurement@cityofdoral.com](mailto:procurement@cityofdoral.com). All inquiries must reference "ITB No. 2024-16 Construction of City of Doral Trolley Shelters in the subject line.

**Connie Diaz, MMC**  
City Clerk, City of Doral

## BAL HARBOUR

- VILLAGE -

### ANNUAL NOTICE OF PUBLISHING LEGALLY REQUIRED ADVERTISEMENTS AND PUBLIC NOTICES ON MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S DESIGNATED PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE

Bal Harbour Village, in accordance with Section 50.0311(6) of the Florida Statutes, is notifying the public that, starting September 30, 2024, legally required advertisements and public notices will be available on the publicly accessible website designated by Miami-Dade County. These notices will be searchable and will display the date of initial publication. To view the notices, visit Miami-Dade County's website at <http://legalads.miamidade.gov> and filter by municipality.

Residents and property owners who wish to receive notices by first-class mail or email must submit a written request to the Office of the Village Clerk. The request should include the name and mailing or email address. Requests can be submitted by email to [clerk@balharbourfl.gov](mailto:clerk@balharbourfl.gov), by mail to 655 96th Street, Office of the Village Clerk, Bal Harbour, FL 33154, or in person at the same address.



Dwight S. Danie, Village Clerk