Residential location choice of non-natives moving into South Florida before World War II was strongly affected by ecosystem and hydrological constraints. Non-natives moved first onto higher elevation areas along the coastal ridge. Later draining of wetlands and creation of fill islands along the shore enabled later urban expansion west and east of the coastal Ridge into former Everglade areas and reconfigured barrier islands. Since in-migration patterns over time have been ethnically and socio-economically differentiated, clear spatial relationships now exist between ecosystem and human system patterns.

Legacies of 20th century urban growth patterns in South Florida and resultant environmental/social justice implications given SLR

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Low income areas persist in many parts of the old urban core on the coastal ridge. In the near future, climate change-induced sea level rise will require difficult choices about what to do to enable lower elevation areas to adapt. Given human system socio-cultural patterning in relation to elevation, ecosystems, and hydrology, these choices will have strong social and environmental justice implications.

South Miami-Dade summary maps