

# Earth Stewardship — One Man's Opinion

**T**erry Mock, a 4th generation Floridian, was born and raised in Palm Beach County and credits much of his sensitivity towards natural systems to his father Kenneth C. Mock, a local consulting engineer.

Armed with a degree in Real Estate and Urban Land Studies from the University of Florida, Terry formed his own real estate development, consulting and brokerage firm in 1974. Since that time he has developed a variety of residential and commercial projects, all of which have employed both native plant preservation and restoration techniques. In 1979, due to his inability to locate native plants in local nurseries, Terry started Palm Beach County's first native plant nursery. Soon Terry's plants were being used for projects other than his own such as Palm Beach County's solid waste landfill, the Boynton Beach Mall and the first restoration effort on the Kissimmee River personally planted by Governor Bob

Graham. In 1980 Terry co-founded the Florida Native Plant Society. He has served on the Board of Directors since that time and in 1986 was elected President.

A strong advocate of native plants and habitat restoration, Terry states, "Native plants provide man with the perfect tools to begin to cope with the threat to our long term survival. By adopting a holistic view of planet Earth and our self-sustaining native plant communities, we can begin to design and construct landscape systems which conserve energy, prevent erosion, improve air and water quality, provide wildlife habitat, and preserve biological diversity while at the same time sustaining a healthy economic growth rate."

When asked about the concern that some environmentalists have about restoration weakening the arguments for preservation Terry replies that, "I think that they are missing the point. I'm not talking about restoring the relatively small amount of land that is suitable for preservation — let's take that right off the top and preserve it. I'm talking about restoring the other 80 - 90% of Florida. That's where we live, work and play — the human habitat. We are part of nature too!"

Regarding the debate as to whether man can actually reclaim enough of the original ecosystem in order to qualify as

a true restoration, Terry says only "I'm too busy to get involved in splitting hairs. They can call it what they want but as far as I'm concerned if it looks like a duck, feels like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck. Anyone who says that restorations can't work just isn't aware of the exciting work that is now being done."

Currently, Terry has two major



Live oaks to be preserved at new Florida Native Plants, Inc. nursery location.

projects underway. The first is a state-of-the-art campground development, featuring over two miles of natural shoreline where people can come to experience the native wilderness. Extensive habitat preservation and restoration techniques will be employed.

The second new venture is a nursery and consulting business called Florida Native Plants, Inc. The first location is under construction in Ft. Pierce and Terry sees a regional, if not state-wide, need for his native plant materials and services. According to Terry, "Most people will admit that a certain amount of growth is inevitable, if not desirable. The key for the future is to manage that growth. The intelligent use of native plants will play an important role in state, regional and local growth management plans of the future. Earth stewardship is destined to become a major industry."



Wetland and Upland Habitat Restoration in progress at Palm Beach County's solid waste landfill.



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