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**NatureScape Broward Takes Center Stage  
At Everglades Coalition's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**  
*Mayor Kristin Jacobs Outlines Benefits of NatureScaping,  
A Broward County Water Conservation Initiative*

Water is an important natural resource around the world and in South Florida especially. Educating the public about the limitations of this resource is a priority of the Broward County Board of County Commissioners.

On Friday, January 14 at 3:45 p.m., Broward County Mayor Kristin Jacobs will participate in the Everglades Coalition's 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, which takes place at the Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club, 851 Gulf Shore Blvd. North in Naples, Florida.

The theme of this year's conference is "Everglades Land and Water: Preserve Now to Restore Forever." The conference is hosted by the Conservancy of Southwest Florida.

Mayor Jacobs will be discussing the NatureScape Broward program on a panel titled "Everglades Education Initiatives: Inspiring Citizen and Community Communication." The main goal of this dialogue is to teach people about environmental education programs that engage and inspire community participation in Everglades' restoration and conservation efforts.

Now entering its third year, NatureScape Broward is a program of the Broward County Environmental Protection Department and is part of its Water Matters outreach initiative. Water Matters is Broward County's effort to coordinate the sources and users of water in the county in order to bring about effective and efficient water management.

The NatureScape program aims to both reduce the amount of water used for irrigation and improve the quality of Broward's water resources by encouraging the use of Florida-friendly landscape practices, including planting native plants and integrated pest management.

"NatureScape is a model for water conservation and quality control that the rest of country is beginning to see it as a viable option," said Mayor Jacobs. "Brevard County is currently instituting a program resembling NatureScape Broward."

It is estimated that in Broward County up to 50 percent of total household water consumption is due to outdoor applications, namely landscape irrigation. Native plants have adapted to South Florida's unique environment and generally require less

supplemental irrigation than non-native plants. Native plants also require less pesticide and fertilizer application and provide sustainable habitat for wildlife. Reducing or eliminating the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers helps control pollution and helps keep waterways free of pesticides and fertilizers. In Broward County, properties that meet certain requirements can be certified as environmentally friendly through the NatureScape Broward program.

There are currently more than 750 NatureScape certified properties in Broward County. Tradewinds Elementary (5400 Johnson Road, Coconut Creek) was awarded an Emerald Award by NatureScape Broward in the School/Municipality/Government category for its landscaping, which includes butterfly gardens, native tree walking paths and a continued commitment to the environment. Tamarind Village at the Township (2550 Calamondin Circle, Coconut Creek) received an award in the Special Achievement category. This 177-home community modified its irrigation system, re-landscaped a number of common areas and now benefits from reduced water and maintenance costs. The BP America, Inc., Site 5116 (250 E. Sample Road, Pompano Beach) has a native landscape with added features such as a bat house and pond and is certified through the University of Florida's Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program and the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat program.

"We are working to have Broward County recognized and certified as a wildlife 'habitat' by the National Wildlife Federation by having 7,000 certified sites, countywide, over the next five years," said Mayor Jacobs. "When that happens we'll be the first county in the nation to carry that recognition."

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