

## ***Special Guests***



**The Honorable Holly Raschein**  
**State Representative, District 120**

Holly Raschein is a member of the Florida House of Representatives, elected in 2012 to represent the 120<sup>th</sup> district, which includes Monroe County and southern Miami-Dade County. Originally from Alaska, Holly attended Florida State University, where she graduated with a degree in political science in 2003. She then moved to the Keys, where she worked as a District Aide and then Legislative Aide for Representatives Sorensen and Saunders. Holly serves as Chair of the Natural Resources and Public Lands Subcommittee, and is a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriation Subcommittee Agriculture and Property Rights

Subcommittee, Appropriations Committee, Government Accountability Committee, and Tourism and Gaming Control Subcommittee.



**The Honorable Heather Carruthers**  
**Monroe County Commissioner, District 3**

First elected in 2008, County Commissioner Heather Carruthers has a long history of public and community service. In addition to serving as Monroe County Mayor, she served as Chair of the South Florida Regional Planning Council and on the Executive Committee of the Seven50 sustainable community project; a seven county, fifty-year blueprint for ensuring economic prosperity and the best-possible quality of life for Southeast

Florida. She is a former hotelier and recent Board Chair of the grassroots organization Fair Insurance Rates in Monroe. She is the Board of County Commissioners liaison to Monroe County's Climate Change Advisory Committee, and serves on the Board of the Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties, Florida Association of Counties Federal Legislative Committee, and Co-Chair FAC Representative to the National Association of Counties Gulf Caucus.

On May 24, 2017, Commissioner Carruthers testified at the inaugural public meeting of the U.S. House of Representatives' House Climate Solutions Caucus in Washington, D.C. Her remarks emphasized the reality that many local governments already are being forced to take expensive action to prepare for the negative impacts of sea level rise on their communities and their vital infrastructure. Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL), who represents the Florida Keys, chairs the bi-partisan caucus that quickly has grown to 40 members – 20 Republicans and 20 Democrats. The mission of the Climate Solutions Caucus is to educate members on economically-viable options to reduce climate risk and to explore bipartisan policy options that address the impacts, causes and challenges of our changing climate.



**Eric Buck, Manager, Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves  
Florida Coastal Office, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection**

Eric is the Manager for the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves under the Florida Coastal Office of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. He oversees the submerged lands of Biscayne Bay outside of Biscayne National Park for the state of Florida. Established as an Aquatic Preserve in 1974 to protect its natural resources and ensure public access for residents and visitors, he coordinates with local and federal partners on natural resource science, law enforcement, restoration, public use, and outreach and education to promote stewardship.

Prior to joining the Department two years ago, Eric was with NOAA Fisheries coordinating national policy planning for habitat science. He previously was with The Nature Conservancy working with coral restoration in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and NOAA Fisheries in Florida monitoring the distribution of epifaunal organisms in near shore seagrass and algae communities of Biscayne Bay relative to Everglades water delivery restoration plans. He has a Master Degree in Marine Policy and Biology through the Rosenstiel School at the University of Miami.



**Steve Davis, Ph.D., Ecologist, The Everglades Foundation**

Dr. Steve Davis is The Everglades Foundation's Ecologist and began working in the Everglades and Florida Bay more than 20 years ago with research on Everglades mangrove response to freshwater flow and storm disturbance. After nearly a decade as a professor of wetland ecology at Texas A&M University and ongoing Long-Term Ecological Research in the Coastal Everglades, he began working at the Everglades Foundation in 2009, where he has since led efforts in restoration planning and synthesis, science communication, and ecological impacts of water management, episodic disturbance, and sea-level rise.



**James W. Fourqurean, Ph.D.**  
**Professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Southeast  
Environmental Research Center**  
**Director, Marine Education and Research Initiative for the Florida Keys**  
**Principal Investigator, Aquarius Reef Base**  
**School of the Environment, Arts and Society**  
**Florida International University**

Dr. Fourqurean is a marine and estuarine ecologist with a special interest in benthic plant communities and nutrient biogeochemistry. He received his undergraduate and graduate training in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Virginia, where he became familiar with the Chesapeake Bay and its benthic communities. He developed a love of tropical ecosystems while doing his dissertation research in Florida Bay. After a post doctorate at San Francisco State studying planktonic processes in Tomales Bay, California, he was recruited to return to south Florida to join a new research group at the newest research university in the country, Florida International University. He has been at FIU since 1993 and is now Professor of Biological Sciences and Director of the Marine Education and Research Center in the Institute for Water and Environment. For the past three decades, his main research areas have been in the seagrass environments of Florida Bay and the back-reef environments of the Florida Keys. He has also worked in coastal environments around the Gulf of Mexico, in Australia, Indonesia, Mexico, Panama, Bahamas, Bermuda, the United Arab Emirate and the western Mediterranean. He is the lead scientist and overall manager of FIU's Aquarius Reef Base, the world's only saturation diving habitat and laboratory for research, education and outreach. He has served as the Principal Investigator of over \$25M in grants and contracts at FIU, and published 123 papers in the refereed scientific literature and 10 book chapters. Seven graduate students have received PhD degrees working under his direction, along with 15 MS students.