

Fairchild Challenge holds 10th annual environmental debates



Participants in the 2011 Fairchild Challenge environmental debates.

High school students across Miami-Dade County will compete in the Fairchild Challenge's 10th annual environmental debates, "Water for Life," as part of the Fairchild Challenge multidisciplinary environmental education program for grades PreK-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

The event will be held Saturday, Jan. 28, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden (in the Garden House and outdoors), 10301 Old Cutler Rd.

Students will be tasked with researching local, state and national bills on freshwater security and supply issues and be prepared to debate and respond to questions. These debates provide a forum for students to discuss these vital environmental issues while gaining confidence, improving reasoning, public speaking and leadership skills.

The debates will follow the Student Congress format (also known as Congressional Debate), in which students emulate members of the United States Congress by debating bills and resolutions. Each team attempts to research as many topics as possible, with the goal of being able to speak on both sides of every piece of legislation. Student performance will be evaluated by a distinguished panel of judges including representatives of the South Florida Water Management District, Everglades National Park and Florida International University.

Garden admission is waived for teachers, family members and friends who attend to support their debaters. For all others, paid admission to the Garden applies.

Page 2 of 2

AGENDA/SPEAKERS

8:30 a.m.: Carl Lewis, director, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, introduction.

8:45 a.m.: Sandy Batchelor, keynote speaker. Batchelor will speak about the importance of water conservation and water quality. She will remain at the debates the entire day and participate as a judge for the panels. Batchelor is a Fairchild Challenge donor and is on the board of governors of the South Florida Water Management District.

9 a.m.: Debates begin.

For additional information, visit www.fairchildgarden/education.org