



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 21, 2014

Everglades Foundation announces **The Grand Challenge** **A \$10 Million Science Prize**

Today, the Everglades Foundation announces a global initiative offering a \$10 million prize to anyone who can solve one of the world's most daunting environmental problems.

A donor has committed the \$10 million prize for *The Grand Challenge*. An additional \$1 million will be awarded in a variety of subcategories.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency calls nutrient pollution, “one of America’s most widespread, costly and challenging environmental problems . . . resulting in serious environmental and human health issues, and impacting the economy.”

A major culprit is phosphorus.

The Grand Challenge \$10 million prize will be awarded to anyone who can successfully develop and execute a process to remove excessive phosphorus from our waterways, and develop a method to recycle that phosphorus into much needed phosphate for use in growing the world’s food supply.

During the past 18 months, Everglades Foundation scientists have met with dozens of scientists, as well as business and government leaders, to study the concept and develop criteria for the prize.

After extensive research, the Everglades Foundation decided to move forward with *The Grand Challenge*. Applicants for the \$10 million prize will be carefully screened, required to meet certain benchmarks, and have their results monitored by an independent panel of scientists.

Formal launching of *The Grand Challenge* will take place in February 2015. We expect the \$10 million prize to be awarded by 2022. In addition, a series of smaller prizes will be awarded to those who successfully contribute to the process of removing phosphorus and finding other uses for recycled phosphorus.

Everglades Foundation Chief Scientist Dr. G. Melodie Naja, will oversee the research effort on behalf of the Foundation. During the coming months, the independent panel of scientists will be formed, criteria for success will be completed, benchmark timelines will be structured, and an Everglades Foundation team will be in place to administer *The Grand Challenge*.

“We are extraordinarily grateful for the generous \$10 million gift to be awarded to the winner of *The Grand Challenge*,” said Dr. Maurice Ferré, chairman of the Everglades Foundation *The Grand Challenge* Committee.

“Phosphorus pollution is destroying waterways around the globe, diminishing sea life and wildlife, threatening human health, and, as recently happened in Toledo, Ohio, caused the shutting down of the city’s water supply. We believe that *The Grand Challenge* will lead us to a solution that will restore the health of our waterways, improve the ecosystem, and protect our water supply,” said Dr. Ferré.

“This is the most ambitious effort ever undertaken by the Everglades Foundation,” said Eric Eikenberg, Everglades Foundation CEO. “*The Grand Challenge* is a tremendous opportunity to provide a solution to one of our most daunting environmental problems.”

About the Everglades Foundation

The Everglades Foundation is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3), science based organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of America's Everglades. Founded in 1994, the Everglades Foundation science, education, communication and advocacy teams work diligently each day to accomplish this goal.

www.evergladesfoundation.org

About Dr. Maurice Ferré

Dr. Ferré is a member of the Everglades Foundation Board of Directors and serves as chairman of The Grand Challenge committee. In 2004, Dr. Ferré became the founding President and Chief Executive Officer of MAKO, a developer of innovative techniques for robotic orthopedic surgery. In 2011, Deloitte recognized MAKO as the fastest growing technology company in North America. In December 2013, the South Florida based robotic surgery manufacturer was sold to Stryker Corp. of Michigan, a Fortune 500 company, for \$1.65 billion. In 1993, Dr. Ferré founded Visualization Technology, Inc., a medical device company for image-guided surgery, where he served as Chief Executive Officer until April 2002 when Visualization Technology was acquired by GE Healthcare. In 2007, Dr. Ferré received the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award for emerging companies in Florida. Dr. Ferré received his Medical Degree and a Master's Degree in Public Health from Boston University.

About Dr. G. Melodie Naja

Dr. G. Melodie Naja is the Everglades Foundation's Chief Scientist. Prior to joining the Foundation, Dr. Naja was a research officer at the National Research Council of Canada and visiting professor at McGill University in Montreal. She holds a bachelor's degree in physical chemistry, a master's degree in molecular and physical chemistry and her doctorate in environmental physical chemistry and chemical engineering, from the University Henry Poincaré. Dr. Naja has conducted research as a consultant for government institutions, non-governmental organizations and the corporate sector.

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