Florida Essay, Research Paper

Florida is one of the most appealing states in the U.S. Florida is very

Unique in that it has many strong points about it. Florida named for the

Spanish “feast of flowers,” stretches more than four hundred miles from north

To south, and nearly as many miles from east to west. Florida has the

Privilege to brag about its more than 425 species of birds, 3500 plants, and

65 snakes. Florida is relatively flat, especially in south Florida, rising no

Higher than 230 feet above sea level. More than 1700 rivers flow through

Florida, while 7800 natural lakes fill the states interior, including Lake

Okeechobee, the second largest lake in the continental United States. Florida

has nearly 1350 miles of coastline, more than any other state except Alaska.

The Florida Natural Areas Inventory distinguishes eighty-one different

Communities in Florida, ranging from beach dunes to tidal swamps. No state

East of the Mississippi River can match Florida for its diversity of living

Things and natural systems.

What gives Florida its many remarkable differences are the warm,

Humid climate, due to the maritime influence of the Caribbean Sea and the

Gulf of Mexico. Abundant rainfall and the length of the state, all of this

Helps to contribute to the wonderful mixing of temperature and tropical life

Forms. In south Florida and in the Keys are several different species of

Tropical invertebrates and many birds from the West Indies and the Bahamas.

Tropical trees and vegetation dominate the southern half of the state, with

Tropical plants extending into northern Florida beneath a canopy of temperate

Trees.

The Florida peninsula extends into the warm waters of the Gulf of

Mexico and Atlantic Ocean. Because the peninsula is surrounded by warm

Water, it has not become desert like many other land masses at the same

Latitude, such as northern Mexico or the Sahara Desert. Instead, Florida’s

Climate ranges from temperate in north Florida to tropical in extreme south

Florida and the Keys, with the southern portion of the same experiencing a

Marked wet season of May through October and a dry season of November

Through April.

Florida averages forty to fifty-five inches of rain annually most falling

In the summer from afternoon thunderstorms. These thunderstorms produce

Tumultuous downpours and frequent lightning. More lightning strikes occur in

Florida than anywhere else in the world except certain areas of Australia.

Late fall through early spring is typically dry throughout the state,

Although the northern half can receive significant rainfall from cold fronts

Pushing down from the north. The amount of rain decreases as the fronts

Move into the central and southern parts of the peninsula. After a cold front

Has pushed through, freezing conditions sometimes occur in the Panhandle

Northern Florida, while temperature may dip into lower forties in central and

Southern parts of the state. Regardless of how cold the north wind blows,

Temperatures in the Keys rarely sink below the lower fifties.

June through November is hurricane season in Florida. Tropical waves move off the western coast of Africa and begin their journey across the Atlantic and Caribbean Sea. Some die out, but others continue to strengthen as they drift west and become tropical depressions. If conditions remain favorable for strengthening, tropical depressions can develop into tropical storms with wind speeds of 39-74 mph and hurricane speeds greater then 74 mph. The peak time for hurricanes is September and October, when humidity is consistently high and ocean temperatures are their warmest.

High winds and flooding caused by the storm surge, heavy rain, and storm driven waves and tides cause the greatest damage during hurricanes. Islands can be torn apart, thousands of acres of mangrove swamp can be destroyed, pine forests leveled, and hammocks of giant tropical hardwoods shredded. Coastlines are eroded and dune systems erased.

In spite of the damage hurricanes can cause, natural communities in Florida evolved with hurricanes and recover with time, provided if we give them the chance. Hurricanes are thought to have transported many of the tropical plants found in Florida from the Yucatan peninsula and the West Indies , washing them ashore with waves or bearing their seeds aloft on high winds. Hurricane winds blow down large trees and hardwood hammocks, providing new plant life on the forest floor that speeds up extra light and nutrients resulting from the tear in the forest canopy. Florida Bay depends on periodic hurricanes to mix nutrient-rich waters and help regulate the bays salinity.