

# A Call For Action



Florida  
Oceanographic  
Society

This document is intended to address Florida Oceanographic Society's position on the issue of south Florida's water. As a member of the Everglades Coalition, we have joined together to identify common goals for restoring south Florida's ecosystems. This is a summary of the Essentials and 2007 Action Plan from the Coalition and a Call to Action for all of us to help.

There are many water issues and they are all deep seated within the culture of south Florida. After two devastating hurricanes in 1926 and 1928, the water that once flowed from the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee and eventually to the Everglades was manipulated to provide flood protection and suit the region's growing agriculture business.

The Herbert Hoover Dike and many miles of canals and levees were put in place to control the water and divert the original sheet flow to drain the swamp for growing development and industry. This diversion of freshwater has created an unbalanced natural system.



## The Everglades Coalition

The Everglades Coalition was established in 1968 following an organizational meeting in New York City. The National Parks Conservation Association and the National Audubon Society were the lead organizers, and other major national and Florida environmental organizations were represented. The Coalition's mission is advocacy of Everglades' restoration, and its initial priorities were to fight for water supply for Everglades National Park and to gain protection for the Big Cypress watershed under the National Park System.

Florida Oceanographic Society's intention is to motivate individuals, like you, to take time to understand the issues and place a call to action for restoration.

## Role of the Coalition

Through consensus the Everglades Coalition will:

- Advocate for the restoration, protection and enhancement of the greater Everglades ecosystem;
- Support and provide education and public understanding regarding all aspects of the Everglades ecosystem;
- Support and sponsor research in the protection, restoration and enhancement of the Everglades ecosystem; and
- Facilitate the coordination of information resources, strategies and efforts among Everglades Coalition members.

The Coalition works in the public arena to inform decision makers on the collective view of the conservation community regarding the greater Everglades ecosystem. Some of the tools used by the Coalition include policy papers, comparisons of proposed policy decisions focused on sound science, and public comments on critical aspects of restoration, as identified in our Vision Statement.

## Who Speaks For The Coalition?

Two co-chairs lead the Everglades Coalition and are authorized to speak on its behalf. These co-chairs are elected by a majority of the members on an annual basis. In addition to maintaining communication with Coalition members, the co-chairs sign letters, organize meetings, deliver testimony, and coordinate issue teams that focus on pressing issues. Coalition policy and advocacy positions are developed by these issue teams and approved by the entire Coalition.

The 2007-2008 Co-Chairs are Mark Perry, Executive Director, Florida Oceanographic Society and Drew Martin, Sierra Club, Loxahatchee Group.

### Current Members:

1000 Friends of Florida  
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation  
Audubon of Florida  
Audubon Society of the Everglades  
Broward County Audubon Society  
Clean Water Action  
Collier County Audubon Society  
Conservancy of Southwest  
Florida Defenders of Wildlife  
Earthjustice  
The Everglades Coordinating Council  
The Everglades Law Center  
Florida Defenders of the Environment  
Walton League of America  
Florida Public Interest Research Group  
Florida Oceanographic Society  
Florida Wildlife Federation  
Friends of the Everglades  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Last Stand  
Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation, Inc.  
League of Women Voters of Florida  
Loxahatchee River Coalition  
Mangrove Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America  
Martin County Conservation Alliance  
National Audubon Society  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
North Carolina Outward Bound School  
The Ocean Conservancy  
Pegasus Foundation  
The River Coalition  
Sierra Club Broward Group  
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group  
Sierra Club Miami Group  
Tropical Audubon Society  
The Urban Environment League of Greater Miami  
World Wildlife Fund

# Essentials for Everglades Restoration

Congress approved the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) six years ago, however, key elements of the plan have not been implemented. Wildlife habitat and the spatial extent of the Everglades continue to disappear as development, invasive species, and poor water management decisions further threaten the sustainability of the remaining ecosystem. The Everglades Coalition has identified nine restoration essentials and benchmarks that must be achieved if CERP is going to deliver benefits as it originally promised.

## 1. Restore historic sheet flow in the southern Everglades and to Florida Bay

The Essential: Fill in the lower C-111 canal, construct a spreader canal along the highest feasible elevation, while restoring flow through Taylor Slough to Florida Bay, and secure long-term protection and restoration of wetlands necessary to carry this out.

## 2. Restore historic sheet flow in the Everglades

The Essential: The maximum removal of artificial barriers to flow and ecological connectivity within the Everglades should be initiated. Maximum sheet flow depends on the widest possible flow-way under the Tamiami Trail. Replace the existing grade-level Tamiami Trail with an elevated roadway that will not impede water flow. This should be financed as a transportation project.

## 3. Provide adequate water storage for the ecological needs of Everglades National Park and the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs)

The Essential: Secure a volume of approximately 1.6 million acre-feet of dedicated storage in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) for adequate water supply to meet the ecological needs of Everglades National Park and the WCAs during droughts and dry seasons.

## 4. Provide for large wet year flows from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades

The Essential: Create the conveyance capacity to move at least 1.5 million acre-feet of water from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades. This will require about 45,000 additional acres of Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) in the southern EAA.

## 5. Provide additional water storage to protect the estuaries and Lake Okeechobee

The Essential: Beyond the storage volume needed for Everglades National Park and the WCAs, there is a scientifically demonstrated need for at least 2.8 million acre-feet of *additional storage*, preferably as natural wetlands, to avoid harmful discharges to the estuaries.

## 6. Restore the Kissimmee River

The Essential: Restore and maintain historic flows of the Kissimmee River from its headwaters to Lake Okeechobee.

## 7. Improve and protect water quality

The Essential: Prevent water pollution from entering the greater Everglades ecosystem. Eliminate harmful discharges to the coastal estuaries.

## 8. Prevent development that undermines the greater Everglades ecosystem protection and restoration

The Essential: Ensure effective growth management and permitting decisions for agricultural land that is important to restoration, such as the EAA, prevent intensification of use or conversion of land to non-agricultural uses, and acquire adequate amounts of land to avoid expensive remediation by future generations.

## 9. Restore the federal-state partnership

The Essential: These Everglades restoration essentials can only be achieved by renewal of a full working and funding partnership between the federal government and the State of Florida. Renewing and restoring that relationship should be one of the highest priorities of the new administration in Tallahassee.



Satellite image of south Florida

## 2007 Action Items

The Everglades Coalition has identified specific steps that must be taken in 2007 toward achieving these essential restoration elements.

- Authorize Indian River Lagoon, Picayune Strand and Site 1 CERP projects, and assure compliance with WRDA 2000 “assurances” requirements
- Increase Congressional funding for the Kissimmee and Modified Water Deliveries projects
- Identify and begin acquiring land in the EAA for dynamic water storage
- Evaluate a topographically aligned canal for the C-111 Spreader Canal Project
- Acquire land in the Southern Everglades to protect Florida and Biscayne Bays
- Coordinate the C-111 Spreader Canal Project with the Florida Department of Transportation regarding the 18-mile stretch construction and bridging
- Secure state funding for the Tamiami Trail Skyway
- Advance the CERP Decentralization Project-planning process to bring the project back on track
- Secure at least 1.2 million acres in the Kissimmee Basin for dynamic water storage
- Fully fund and complete the Southwest Feasibility Study
- Clean the water entering Lake Okeechobee to the water quality standards of the Lake Okeechobee Protection Act of 2000 and begin reversing decades of neglect
- Authorize Broward County WPA CERP Project by Congressional Committee resolution, and assure compliance with WRDA 2000 “assurances” requirements
- Congressional passage of the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act
- Make water reservations and the corresponding operational changes to assure the Everglades is protected and restored
- Implement an aggressive land acquisition program to increase the spatial extent of natural areas and increase wildlife habitat connectivity
- Reduce or eliminate damaging discharges of polluted water from Lake Okeechobee to the estuaries by changing the regulation schedule, urban and agricultural Best Management Practices, and adequately sizing STAs
- The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District must undertake a CERP reevaluation report, a.k.a. CERP Update, and include reconsideration of Plan 6 as a viable part of restoring the Everglades ecosystem

*Write a letter to elected officials and express our common demands for the suggested Essentials and Action Items listed above!*

### Tips for effective letter writing strategies:

- Address it properly (see following)
- Identify the bill or issue by number or popular name
- Mail so the letter arrives while there is still time for officials to take action
- Focus on your representatives
- Be reasonable, brief and concise
- Ask for a response, don't hesitate to ask questions, and request clarification to an equivocal response
- Write your own views-- A personal letter incorporating your own experiences and observations is far more effective than a form letter or petition
- Give your reasons for taking a stand-- Your legislators may not know all the effects of the bill and what it may mean to an important segment of their constituency
- Be constructive and offer alternative solutions
- Ask for specific actions to be taken
- Show understanding. Indicate an awareness of the proposed bill or action and its potential impacts within your community
- Share expert knowledge with your representatives-- Well researched information is appreciated
- Say “Well Done” when it is deserved-- Remember to thank representatives for their efforts

## Officials to contact:

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