



Everglades Coalition

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE JANUARY 7, 2010

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RELEASE EVERGLADES COALITION RELEASES ITS 2020 VISION FOR EVERGLADES RESTORATION

Palm Beach Gardens, FL – At its 25th Annual Conference, the Everglades Coalition today released its 2020 vision for Everglades restoration. Elected officials, environmental groups, and community leaders gathered to discuss the *Changing Face of Everglades Restoration*, and develop solutions for the next ten years of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.

“As state and federal partners and the environmental community gather to celebrate a year of change, we must work together to ensure the next decade of restoration puts us well on our way to a restored Everglades,” said Sara Fain, National Co-Chair of the Everglades Coalition and Everglades Restoration Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association.

Over the last year, the Everglades has finally received significant federal funding, ground has been broken on two key projects—Tamiami Trail and Picayune Strand—and the State of Florida’s planning for the River of Grass Initiative has moved into its second phase. As we enter the second decade of restoration, the Coalition says it is time to fully fund and build critical projects, and set an example for the world.

“This is an exciting time in restoration, but we can’t stop now,” said Mark Perry, State Co-chair of the Everglades Coalition and Executive Director of the Florida Oceanographic Society. “As the Everglades continues to decline, we believe our list of priorities for 2020 is key to turning restoration around.

Highlights from the **Everglades Coalition 2020 Vision for Everglades Restoration** include:

1. ***The U.S. Congress and the Florida State Legislature must fund key restoration projects.*** Adequately fund the Indian River Lagoon, Picayune Strand, Site One Impoundment, and Modified Water Deliveries projects and other critical projects and programs in FY2011 with \$305 million, which will result in critical on-the-ground benefits throughout the ecosystem. Ensure the state of Florida continues its financial support for restoration at or above previous funding levels.
2. ***Congress must authorize four key restoration projects in the 2010 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).*** Four projects that must be authorized in WRDA include the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands, C-111 Spreader Canal phase 1, C-43 Reservoir, and the

Broward County Water Preserve Area.

3. *The State of Florida must, upon closing its first deal with U.S. Sugar Corporation this summer, immediately announce the commencement of a restoration project on the newly-acquired lands and begin negotiations to act on its option to acquire the remaining 100,000+ acres.* This unprecedented opportunity to fix long-standing shortcomings in restoration projects and our ability to meet the region's water supply, ecosystem restoration, and flood protection demands must be seized for the benefit of all Floridians.
4. *Everglades Coalition 2020 Vision for restoration provides detailed recommendations to successfully move restoration towards completion.* Building on the Coalition's Priorities for 2010, the 2020 Vision will provide direction for local, state, and federal officials as they proceed forward with restoration planning and projects, as well as decisions that may impact restoration goals.

"For more than a quarter of a century, the Everglades Coalition has dedicated its efforts to protecting and restoring our River of Grass," said John Marshall of the Arthur R. Marshall Foundation, this year's conference host. "We are delighted to host this year's conference, as Palm Beach County must be a full partner in Everglades restoration for the benefit of the entire ecosystem and our community."

"If we are successful here over the next decade, we will set an example for all other ecosystem restoration initiatives nationally and internally," said Mark Perry. "With the establishment of the Great Waters Coalition to create a united agenda to benefit all ecosystems, we must strive for the Everglades to serve as a model to follow."

Joining the Coalition for its 25th anniversary conference, keynote speakers include U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, former U.S. Senator and Florida Governor Bob Graham, Thomas Strickland, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Sam Hamilton. Sessions focus on topics such as growth management, political and public partnerships, endangered and invasive species, wildlife habitat, energy policies, and water quality.

The Everglades Coalition annual conference is the largest annual forum for Everglades conservation and restoration, bringing together the Coalition's 53 allied organizations with local, state, and federal partners. Senators, members of Congress, and political figures come to discuss their positions, pledge their support and offer challenges to the community. For more information, visit: www.evergladescoalition.org.

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