



# Everglades Coalition

## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT Dawn Shirreffs, National Everglades Coalition Co-Chair,  
C: 305.546.6689 or [dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Julie Hill-Gabriel, State Everglades Coalition Co-Chair,  
C: 786.246.2903 OR [jhill-gabriel@audubon.org](mailto:jhill-gabriel@audubon.org)

### **Everglades Coalition Releases 2012 Restoration Priorities at 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

RELEASE Stuart, FL - At its 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, the Everglades Coalition today will share its vision and priorities for 2012. Business leaders, elected officials and environmentalists will gather to discuss opportunities and challenges for restoring the Everglades' unique ecosystem. The 2012 priorities build upon the Coalition's first ever statewide legislative education effort, launched in November to educate policymakers and community leaders about the tremendous economic and ecological value of restoring America's Everglades. This year's conference is hosted by Earthjustice, a public-interest law firm that has represented environmentalists in many key legal cases to protect the Everglades over the past 24 years.

"Everglades restoration is a sound investment that generates at least four-to-one return on every dollar spent," said Dawn Shirreffs, national co-chair for the Everglades Coalition. "Restoration projects provide key water supply protections, and have generated more than 10,500 jobs in the last three years."

"The unprecedented progress on Everglades restoration continues, bringing with it ecological benefits that make Florida a unique natural wonder," said Julie Hill-Gabriel, state co-chair for the Coalition. "The economic return on investment in restoration is just another strong argument to continue funding for projects like bridging Tamiami Trail."

2012 priorities for the Everglades Coalition include:

- Secure sustained and adequate funding to agencies and for projects to ensure restoration momentum continues, including the 5.5 miles of additional bridging for Tamiami Trail. Congress and the Florida Legislature must continue to fund Everglades restoration to demonstrate their commitment to real environmental and economic progress. There is no longer a divide between saving the environment

and promoting business interests.

- Protect water resources through strong statewide conservation policies and improved water quality standards that safeguard Florida's most important resource - America's Everglades.
- Prioritize the acquisition and conservation of land needed to protect and connect wildlife habitat, and provide water storage and treatment. Complete planning and authorization of critical projects, including the Central Everglades Planning Project, to increase the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of critical freshwater flows into the central Everglades, Everglades and Biscayne Bay National Parks and Florida Bay.

"Getting water flow right is enormously important," said Earthjustice President Trip Van Noppen. "And so is protecting the water quality in Lake Okeechobee and in the rivers, streams and canals that flow into the Everglades. That's why we continue to fight for clear, enforceable clean water standards."

Joining the Coalition for this year's 27<sup>th</sup> annual Conference are U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, famed novelist and Miami Herald Contributor Carl Hiaasen, Governor Rick Scott, U.S. Senator Bill Nelson, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, Department of the Interior's Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Rachel Jacobson, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality Nancy Sutley and many others.

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**About the Everglades Coalition Conference:** The Everglades Coalition Conference is the largest annual forum for Everglades conservation and restoration, bringing together the Coalition's 56 allied organizations with local, state and federal partners. This year's conference theme is *Everglades Restoration: Worth Every Penny* and is hosted by Earthjustice. Building on recent successes, panelists and attendees will discuss strategies for advancing Everglades restoration through strengthened and new partnerships. For additional information, please visit our website at: [www.evergladescoalition.org/conference.htm](http://www.evergladescoalition.org/conference.htm).