



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Lisa P. Jackson  
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Administrator Jackson,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

[www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org)

Ph: 954-961-1280 ♦ Fax: 954-985-5047 ♦ 450 N. Park Rd, #301, Hollywood FL 33021

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of the Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Janet Napolitano  
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, DC 20528

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Madam Secretary,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Rebecca Blank  
Acting Secretary of U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitutions Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20230

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Madam Secretary,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Ken Salazer  
Secretary of U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy  
Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Army  
108 Army Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20310-0108

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Ms. Darcy,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

[www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org)

Ph: 954-961-1280 ♦ Fax: 954-985-5047 ♦ 450 N. Park Rd, #301, Hollywood FL 33021

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Rick Scott  
Governor of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Governor Scott,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the

comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)



# Everglades Coalition

1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA  
ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION  
AUDUBON OF FLORIDA  
AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE  
EVERGLADES  
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA  
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS  
ASSOCIATION/ RIVERWATCH  
CLEAN WATER ACTION  
CLEAN WATER NETWORK  
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY  
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST  
FLORIDA  
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE  
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY  
EARTHJUSTICE  
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA  
THE ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION  
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL  
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION  
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER  
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE  
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT  
FLORIDA KEYS ENVIRONMENTAL FUND  
FLORIDA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
FLORIDA OCEANOGRAPHIC SOCIETY  
FLORIDA WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
FRIENDS OF THE ARTHUR R. MARSHALL  
LOXAHATCHEE WILDLIFE REFUGE  
FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
HENDRY GLADES AUDUBON SOCIETY  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA  
DIVISION  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE FLORIDA KEYS  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE  
CHAPTER  
IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA  
LAST STAND  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
FLORIDA  
LOXAHATCHEE RIVER COALITION  
MARTIN COUNTY CONSERVATION  
ALLIANCE  
NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION  
ASSOCIATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE  
ASSOCIATION  
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE  
COUNCIL  
THE OCEAN CONSERVANCY  
THE PEGASUS FOUNDATION  
REEF RELIEF  
SANIBEL-CAPTIVA CONSERVATION  
FOUNDATION  
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!  
SIERRA CLUB  
SIERRA CLUB BROWARD GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CALUSA GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB CENTRAL FLORIDA  
GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB FLORIDA CHAPTER  
SIERRA CLUB LOXAHATCHEE GROUP  
SIERRA CLUB MIAMI GROUP  
THE SNOOK AND GAMEFISH  
FOUNDATION  
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY  
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE  
WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

August 16, 2012

Honorable Herschel Vinyard  
Secretary of Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
3900 Commonwealth Blvd MS 49  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

## RE: Restoring Florida's Gulf Coast

Dear Secretary Vinyard,

The Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 57 local, state and national conservation organizations, recognizes the tremendous continued environmental and economic damage resulting from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill to natural ecosystems and communities scattered across America's Gulf coast. We are enthusiastic that the recent passage of the RESTORE Act holds those responsible for the disaster accountable and outlines that distribution of Clean Water Act penalties are spent to restore the damaged ecosystems and economies. We are confident that meaningful comprehensive restoration of Gulf coast ecosystems can be achieved and steps taken to guard against future environmental catastrophes.

As we work to improve the ecology and economy of the Gulf coast, it is important that any new projects considered protect the environment and do not result in further harm to our natural resources and wildlife habitat. All projects funded through Clean Water Act penalties should be protective of the environment, which is a foundation of Florida's economic sustainability.

The Gulf, which includes Florida Bay, the 10,000 Islands, the Caloosahatchee River and estuary, is part of the Everglades Ecosystem and the Everglades Coalition is committed to ensuring that funds are spent on projects which improve conditions in the southern Gulf coast of Florida. Lack of water management options within the altered Everglades ecosystem have resulted in environmental and economic damages to the Gulf coast, including severe impacts to commercial fishing and tourism industries. In order to make the Gulf coast economically viable and more resilient to future ecological harm, restoration projects that seek to reverse these damaging impacts and more closely recreate the natural quality, quantity, timing and distribution of freshwater flows through the Everglades, into the Gulf and Florida Bay should be made part of the comprehensive recovery plan and other efforts described in the RESTORE

Act. By restoring the former functions of the Everglades ecosystem across the south Florida landscape, we increase the buffering capacity of our coastal ecosystems to withstand future impacts.

Two such projects that have direct benefits for the health of the Gulf are the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and Tamiami Trail Next Steps bridging. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released through the Caloosahatchee River. The releases can cause toxic algal blooms and other problems because of high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater needed to maintain the health of the Caloosahatchee estuary. In times of drought, this estuary needs additional freshwater to maintain salinity levels that make it home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Hendry and Glades counties, the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir will retain 170,000 acre/feet of freshwater, helping reduce harmful Lake releases in times of flood and providing a necessary freshwater source in times of drought. Support of additional bridging Tamiami Trail will eliminate the harmful nutrient releases down the Caloosahatchee river and restore flows to Florida Bay estuary in the southern Gulf. Restoring these adequate freshwater flows source is also important for mitigating against impacts from unforeseen events like oil spills when water management options are critical. This project has tremendous value for the people who depend on the ecological health of the unique marine, estuarine and freshwater wetlands of the Gulf coast estuary for their livelihood.

We strongly urge the state of Florida and members of the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council to include projects that restore the Everglades when considering a comprehensive restoration plan and to carefully review the environmental impacts of all projects proposed to recover the economy and ecology of the Gulf coast. As the criteria for qualifying projects becomes clearer, we look forward to providing additional input regarding appropriate projects that would benefit the Everglades and Gulf ecosystems.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dawn Shirreffs  
National Co-Chair  
954-961-1280 x 205  
[dshirreffs@npca.org](mailto:dshirreffs@npca.org)

Jennifer Hecker  
State Co-Chair  
239-262-0304 x 250  
[jenniferh@conservancy.org](mailto:jenniferh@conservancy.org)