



Everglades Coalition

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon Florida
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Audubon of the Western Everglades
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Backcountry Fly Fishers of Naples
Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association/
Riverwatch
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Everglades Trust
Florida Conservation Voters Education Fund
Florida Defenders of the Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
International Dark-Sky Association,
FL Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League Florida Division
Izaak Walton League Florida Keys Chapter
Izaak Walton League Mangrove Chapter
Last Stand
League of Women Voters of Florida
Loxahatchee River Coalition
Martin County Conservation Alliance
Miami Pine Rocklands Coalition
Miami Waterkeeper
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
North Carolina Outward Bound School
Ocean Research & Conservation Association
Reef Relief
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
Save It Now, Glades!
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Florida Chapter
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Calusa Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
Snook and Gamefish Foundation
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
The Florida Wildlife Federation
The Institute for Regional Conservation
The National Wildlife Federation
The Urban Environment League of
Greater Miami
Tropical Audubon Society

August 22, 2016

Daniel O’Keefe, Governing Board Chair
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Dear Chairman O’Keefe:

On behalf of the 61 member organizations of the Everglades Coalition committed to the protection and restoration of America’s Everglades, we ask the South Florida Water Management District (District) to continue to partner and work collaboratively with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) in managing invasive species in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge).

We appreciate that the State of Florida has increased funding for exotic removal in recent years to offset insufficient federal funding. Whenever the District and FWC act proactively and work together with USFWS, the funding goals needed to perform important work are met. FY 2016 is a prime example of the fruit of this partnership among agencies. The District’s investment of an additional \$2,550,000 from FWC, combined with USFWS’s \$2,754,628, surpassed the \$5M needed yearly to successfully contain invasive exotic species in the Refuge. We believe continuing a collaborative partnership between the state and the federal agencies is in the best interest of the Refuge, Floridians, and all Americans who appreciate and enjoy this special place.

We agree that the loss through exotic plant infestation of the hundreds of tree islands critical to the Everglades would terminally degrade wading bird habitat, the habitat that makes the Refuge a haven for wildlife and a treasure. We believe collaboratively sharing resources (while advocating for federal funding) is the path toward a satisfactory resolution of the situation in the Refuge.

As the only National Wildlife Refuge in Palm Beach County, LNWR currently averages more than 300,000 resident and tourist visits each year. Many Floridians and tourists use the canals and interior marshes for fishing, hunting, and paddling. Public-use areas at the Refuge provide viewing and photography opportunities for a large variety of wetland flora and fauna including over 250 bird species.

Committed to full protection and restoration of America’s Everglades

Therefore, we encourage the District to re-establish its collaborative partnership with USFWS. Doing so will better facilitate our shared goal for invasive species management in the Refuge, benefit wildlife, compliment Everglades restoration efforts, and serve the interest of Florida public.

Sincerely,

Cara Capp

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Baldwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michael J. Baldwin
State Co-Chair

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