



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
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 Defenders of the Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
The Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Florida Sierra Club
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry Glades Audubon Society
Izaak Walton League
Florida Keys Chapter
Florida Division
Izaak Walton League of America
Mangrove Chapter
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
Sanibel-Captiva
Conservation Foundation
Save It Now, Glades!
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
South Florida Audubon Society
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
World Wildlife Fund

March 5, 2010

Eric Buermann, Chair
Jerry Montgomery, Vice Chair
Sandy Batchelor
Joe Collins
Charles Dauray
Shannon Estenzo
Kevin Powers
Patrick Rooney, Jr.
Glenn Waldman

Dear Governing Board members,

We write on behalf of the Everglades Coalition, an alliance of 53 National, State, and local organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem, representing more than a million members in Florida and more than 6 million members nationwide. On March 11, you will have to decide whether to extend the contract deadline with the United States Sugar Corporation (U.S. Sugar) to purchase critical lands for the benefit of restoration and the people of south Florida. We urge you to stay your current course, and extend this deadline to ensure we have the opportunity to move forward on this landmark acquisition. The Coalition passed a resolution in 2009 supporting this landmark acquisition, which is attached.

For decades, the missing piece of the overall puzzle to comprehensively restore the Everglades, recover Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries and Florida Bay has been sufficient availability of land for water storage, treatment and conveyance in the EAA. Your bold decision to purchase at least 73,000 acres of U.S. Sugar's land holdings, including extensive acreage in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), is vital for restoration of the Everglades. It has long been recognized that without the ability to store and treat water in the EAA, restoration efforts would be extremely difficult. This acquisition will provide an unprecedented opportunity to store, treat and convey water in a manner that more naturally mimics the historic Everglades, and will provide ecosystem-wide benefits.

During these critical moments in Everglades restoration, your continued support is needed more than ever to ensure that future generations can experience and enjoy the abundance of America's Everglades, and ensure a dependable water supply for South Florida's future.

Sincerely,

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