



Everglades Coalition

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ARTHUR R. MARSHALL FOUNDATION
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AUDUBON SOCIETY OF THE EVERGLADES
AUDUBON OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS
ASSOCIATION / RIVERWATCH
CENTER FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
CLEAN WATER ACTION
COLLIER COUNTY AUDUBON SOCIETY
CONSERVANCY OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE
DING DARLING WILDLIFE SOCIETY
EARTHJUSTICE
ENVIRONMENT FLORIDA
EVERGLADES COORDINATING COUNCIL
EVERGLADES FOUNDATION
EVERGLADES LAW CENTER
FLORIDA CONSERVATION ALLIANCE
FLORIDA DEFENDERS OF THE
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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
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DIVISION
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CHAPTER
IZAACK WALTON LEAGUE MANGROVE
CHAPTER
IZAACK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA
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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
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FOUNDATION
SAVE IT NOW, GLADES!
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SNOOK AND GAMEFISH FOUNDATION
SOUTH FLORIDA AUDUBON SOCIETY
TROPICAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT LEAGUE OF
GREATER
MIAMI

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20360

February 28, 2014

Dear Administrator McCarthy,

On behalf of the 57 organizations of the Everglades Coalition and our members and supporters in Florida and throughout the United States, thank you for your commitment to improving water quality across the country. We write to ask you to continue to prioritize a specific course of action in your plans for achieving clean water by expediting the rulemaking process to clarify the scope of wetland protections under the Clean Water Act. We need to restore the Clean Water Act.

The Everglades is the hallmark of Florida – a unique ecosystem found nowhere else on earth – that provides our state with clean drinking water, incredibly biodiversity, and countless recreational opportunities for Floridians and visitors alike that bolster our tourism economy. We need to do everything possible to protect the source waters of the Everglades and important rivers, lakes and streams across the United States.

The health of our waters is in crisis. Beginning in 1972, the Clean Water Act protected all of the nation's waters, from small, unnamed streams, to the Mississippi River. But now, because of two bitterly divided Supreme Court decisions (*SWANCC* in 2001 and *Rapanos* in 2006), legal uncertainty threatens countless critical resources with unregulated pollution, including headwater streams, lakes, tributaries, and wetlands.

The threat is enormous. In Florida, according to EPA data, 30% of streams could lose protection because they are headwater streams and no other streams flow into them. Florida also has more wetlands than any other state. Nationwide, an estimated 59% of the nation's streams do not flow year-round, and 20% of the roughly 100 million acres of wetlands in the continental U.S. are "isolated." These kinds of resources face the greatest risk of losing protections. Small and seasonal streams help feed the drinking water supplies for more than 117 million Americans.

We are encouraged by the EPA's recent science report, which illustrates the important connection between tributaries and wetlands and the larger bodies of water into which they feed. To help Everglades restoration, we call on the EPA to continue to prioritize a rulemaking to end the confusion over which waters are protected by the Clean Water Act, and help reaffirm the broad scope of the Clean Water Act that existed for more than three decades. By restoring the Clean Water Act to ensure pre-SWANCC and *Rapanos* protections, the EPA can put us back on track to becoming a country where all our waters will be safe for us to swim in and fish from, and all Americans will have access to safe drinking water.

Thank you again for your dedication to protecting our waterways.

Sincerely,

Cara Capp

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