



Everglades Coalition

2016 Florida Legislative Priorities

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon Florida
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
Everglades Trust
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
National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry Glades Audubon Society
Institute for Regional Conservation
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
Miami Waterkeeper
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Research & Conservation Association
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
Snook and Gamefish Foundation
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League of
Greater Miami

America's Everglades is widely recognized as one of the world's most unique and spectacular natural wonders. Florida has a compelling interest in protecting and restoring the ecosystem due to its tremendous economic and ecologic value. The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of 58 local, state, and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to full restoration of the Greater Everglades ecosystem, from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes into Lake Okeechobee, through the "River of Grass," out to Florida Bay and the Florida Keys.

The Everglades Coalition urges the Florida Legislature to:

Provide Adequate Everglades Restoration Funding: The Everglades Coalition urges the Florida Legislature to reaffirm the state's commitment to protecting the Greater Everglades system and estuary communities by establishing a dedicated funding stream of 25.7% of Amendment 1 dollars for Everglades restoration projects, including land acquisition. This 25.7% allocation, originally put forward by Governor Scott, would result in nearly \$6B for the Everglades over the next twenty years.

Protect Water as a Critical Economic Resource: One in three Floridians depend on the Everglades for their drinking water; our state's economies depend on clean, abundant water. Strong pollution standards and controls should stop pollution at its source and local control should never be preempted; proactive protection of water resources through updating oil and gas regulations and other policies that impact water supply is urgently needed.

Promote Florida's Economy through Responsible Growth, Transportation and Energy Planning: Community and transportation planning should protect agricultural lands, coastlines, wildlife habitat and corridors, and eliminate sprawl to support the restoration of our Everglades. Minimize freshwater waste, saltwater intrusion and flooding through expanded use of renewable and water-smart energy sources. Oil exploration and drilling projects should not undermine Everglades restoration efforts. Updated oil laws are needed to address all forms of unconventional oil well stimulation; while safeguarding the home rule authorities of local governments.

Thank you for helping us protect our Everglades, estuaries, and water.

Cara Capp

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair

Jason Totoiu
State Co-Chair



The Everglades: A Brief History

America's Everglades is a unique and vitally important ecosystem that extends from above the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to the estuaries of Florida Bay and the coral reefs of the Keys. This vast natural wonder – once larger than New Jersey – has been severely impacted over recent decades by over-development, pollution, and humanmade changes to the natural flow of water.

Historically, water flowed through the Everglades in a slow-moving “River of Grass” from Lake Okeechobee, south to the Everglades and out to sea, covering nearly 11,000 square miles. The water is purified along the way, prior to entering the sensitive coral reef ecosystem that is home to one of the most diverse, beloved, and valuable habitats in the world and a vital water resource for our state.

In the early part of the 20th century, investments were made in projects to drain and “tame” the Everglades to accommodate agriculture and development. An extensive network of dikes and canals were cut through the Everglades to move water away from farms and new development. These changes altered the natural flow of water, and pollution that accompanied subsequent development compromised the quality and supply of water of the Southern Everglades.

Today, the Everglades ecosystem is on life support. More than 1.7 billion gallons of polluted fresh water is dumped into Florida's coastal estuaries, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Gulf of Mexico each day, while destroying sensitive seagrasses, reefs and fisheries resources. Fertilizer pollutants run from agricultural lands into the fragile ecosystem of the Everglades as well as Biscayne and Florida Bays. Red tides bloom on Florida's coasts, killing marine life, jeopardizing public health and our economy. Despite an annual rainfall of almost five feet, South Florida faces regular water shortages.

Progress and Promise: Everglades Restoration

In 2000, under the bipartisan leadership of Governor Jeb Bush and President Bill Clinton, Congress passed legislation calling for a Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), an \$11 billion state-federal partnership to restore the flow of clean water into the Everglades, protect Florida's drinking water, and save its estuarial bays.

Everglades restoration has seen tangible progress in recent years including completed construction of the one-mile Tamiami Trail bridge that will restore water flow into the Everglades National Park and the backfilling of the Picayune Strand failed housing development to restore 55,000 acres of natural wetlands. However, as the ecosystem continues to decline, it is now more important than ever to maintain and build on this momentum of restoration.

Everglades and the Economy: Florida's Most Valuable Resource

- Nearly eight million people – one-third of Floridians – depend on the Everglades for daily water supply.
- Tens of thousands of jobs are supported by a healthy Everglades in Florida's multi-billion dollar tourism, boating, real estate, recreational and commercial fishing industries in our coastal and southern communities.
- More than 63 million pounds of commercial seafood is harvested from Florida Bay and the coastal estuaries every year, which provide a steady income and food supply for our state.
- In 2008, the U.S. Department of Commerce reported that Florida's commercial fishing industry, which relies heavily on the Greater Everglades system, generated \$5.6 billion and created over 108,000 jobs.