A Resolution Of The Everglades Coalition In Support Of Additional Funding For Controlling Invasive Exotic Plant Species In The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

WHEREAS, the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge is a 147,374-acre wetland marsh and wildlife sanctuary located in Palm Beach County, Florida and includes the most northern remnant of the historic central Everglades wetland ecosystem;

WHEREAS, despite all of its treasures, the refuge is in serious danger of quickly becoming an exclusive haven for invasive plants;

WHEREAS, the land on which the Refuge was established is owned by the State of Florida and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) under a 50-year License Agreement;

WHEREAS, in 2002, the License Agreement with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) was renewed and included 13 performance measures;

WHEREAS, several of these performance measures are related to the control of exotic vegetation, including one of these performance measures which states that the Refuge’s goal is to achieve maintenance control of Melaleuca, Brazilian pepper, Australian pine, and Old World climbing fern by 2017;

WHEREAS, despite significant progress in meeting this challenge under the current funding levels, the Refuge will struggle to meet this requirement;

WHEREAS, to sufficiently control and maintain control of the four species, the current invasive exotic species funding of $2 million for on-the-ground work is insufficient;

WHEREAS, a total of $6 million per year for the next 4 years has been identified as the funding level needed to ensure compliance with this lease agreement and $2 million per year after that for maintenance;

WHEREAS, President Obama’s FY 2016 budget requests only $2 million to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this purpose, an additional $4 million must be appropriated toward this important goal;

WHEREAS, there is a shared state and federal responsibility to protect native ecosystems against invasive species.
Therefore, be it resolved:

The Everglades Coalition, with 57 organizations dedicated to protecting and restoring America’s Everglades, urges the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to increase President Obama’s FY 2016 request by $4 million for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to control invasive exotic plant species in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

Approved: March 24, 2015

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair

Jason Totoiu
State Co-Chair