



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
Bullsugar Alliance
Calusa Waterkeeper
Cape Coral Friends of Wildlife
Center for Biological Diversity
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Everglades Trust
Florida Bay Forever
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
Lake Worth Waterkeeper
Last Stand
League of Women Voters of Florida
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
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Tropical Audubon Society

2019 Florida Legislative Priorities

The 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 64 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.

Everglades and the Economy: Florida’s Most Valuable Resource

Florida’s multi-billion-dollar tourism, boating, real estate, recreational and commercial fishing industries supports tens of thousands of jobs by a healthy Everglades:

- Nearly 8 million people – about one-third of Florida’s population – depend on the Everglades for their daily water supply.
- 1.4 million Florida jobs alone depend on tourism.¹
- 114,898 jobs supported by the recreational saltwater fishing industry, which contributed \$8 billion to the state’s economy in 2014.²
- 14,000 jobs supported by Florida’s freshwater fisheries in 2014, contributing an additional \$1.7 billion economic impact.²
- 92,858 jobs supported by the commercial seafood industry in 2014. Florida is second in the nation when it comes to highest sales, income and value-added impacts with \$18.3 billion in sales impacts.²
- 1.6 million jobs and \$208 billion in sales, with 36% of all recreational fishing trips taken in Florida,³ were supported by U.S. Fisheries in 2015.
- Florida’s waterways have been devastated by recurrent harmful algal blooms and seagrass die offs that have damaged local economies and businesses, harmed wildlife, and threatened human health and safety:
 - \$87 million of combined losses were reported between July-December 2018 by The Sanibel Island and Captiva Island Chamber of Commerce and Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce.
 - 4.4 million pounds of dead marine life removed from Lee County beaches between June-September 2018.
 - Microcystins tested positive at a level of 495.06 parts per billion, (nearly 50 times more toxic than the level considered safe for human contact)⁴ from algae discharge into the St. Lucie River from Lake Okeechobee as recently as August 23, 2018.

¹ <https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/about-us.html>

² NOAA’s Fisheries Economics of the United States, 2014, at www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov

³ NOAA’s Fisheries Economics of the United States, 2015, at

www.st.nmfs.noaa.gov/economics/publications/feus/fisheries_economics_2015/index

⁴ Highly toxic blue-green algae at dam where Lake O waters enter St. Lucie River, TCPalm,

<https://www.tcpalm.com/story/news/local/indian-river-lagoon/health/2018/08/29/dep-highly-toxic-blue-green-algae-dam-leading-st-lucie-river/1131439002/>

Committed to full protection and restoration of America’s Everglades

In 2019 the Everglades Coalition urges the Florida Legislature to:

Fully Fund Everglades Restoration: The Everglades Coalition urges the Florida legislature to reaffirm the state's commitment to protecting our Everglades and estuary communities by supporting a budget of \$360 million to advance the planning, construction, and operation of Everglades restoration projects and programs, including the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the State's Restoration Strategies project for water quality, and the final phase of Tamiami Trail road raising.

Strengthen protection for all waters – Everglades, estuaries, wetlands, springs, lakes, rivers, coastal waters and beaches: Last year communities affected by the mismanagement of water in and around the Greater Everglades Ecosystem experienced a combination of toxic blue-green algae blooms and red tide that, at times, wrapped around the entire peninsula of Florida. This devastates businesses, families, wildlife, and the State's bottom line. The Florida Legislature must engage in an overhaul of Florida's water policy that stops pollution at its source; strictly regulates the use of biosolids; fully funds the implementation and enforcement of effective Basin Management Action Plans for all impaired waters; prioritizes land acquisition to increase ecosystem connectivity, as well as to store and clean water; and mandates that all regional water plans account for and prioritize water for the environment.

Reinstate strong statewide and regional land use planning to guide sustainable growth that is protective of Florida's remaining natural areas and resources, including the taxpayer investment in Everglades restoration and Florida Forever: Community and transportation planning should protect agricultural lands, wetlands, coastlines and wildlife corridors by promoting compact urban development and transit-oriented projects that prevent sprawl. Reinstate an independent state land planning agency, such as the former Department of Community Affairs, with the necessary authority, funding and resources to meaningfully oversee comprehensive land use planning. Restore the ability of Regional Planning Councils to evaluate and challenge developments exhibiting significant regional and intergovernmental impacts. Increase Florida Forever Funding to levels compatible with priority land acquisition needs to help offset the development pressures on these parcels before they are lost or are too expensive to protect.

Protect Florida's Investment in Everglades Restoration through Responsible Energy Production: Responsible and renewable energy production will help reduce pressure on our natural resources and support the restoration of our Everglades. Minimization of freshwater waste, saltwater intrusion and flooding through expanded use of renewable and water-smart energy sources is the responsible way to plan for a growing population. Oil exploration and drilling projects should not undermine Everglades restoration efforts. Updated oil laws are needed to ban 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 supply.



Mark Perry
Co-Chair



Marisa Carrozzo
Co-Chair

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