



Everglades Coalition

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Everglades Coalition Calls for “All Hands on Deck” for Restoration at Annual Conference

CAPTIVA ISLAND, *Fla.* –The Everglades Coalition convenes its 35th annual [conference](#) today and tomorrow with the theme “All Hands on Deck” for America’s Everglades, highlighting the need for widespread support to advance Everglades restoration and address Florida’s ongoing water crisis. The conference is at the South Seas Island Resort in Captiva Island, in a region of Florida that has been plagued by toxic blue-green algae and red tide. The [conference program](#) explores recent progress while calling for increased momentum to implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Over 350 participants, including elected leaders, agency officials, environmental groups, members of the public, and community leaders are registered for the conference which features discussions on the importance of securing consistent and sufficient funding to complete CERP projects and improve water quality for over eight million Floridians who live in the Greater Everglades watershed.

“We are extremely grateful for the leadership of Governor Ron DeSantis, the Florida Legislature, and the U.S. Congress for supporting CERP with significant funding levels in 2020,” said Marisa Carrozzo, Co-Chair of the Everglades Coalition and Environmental Policy Manager for the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. “We need to see this type of consistent, high-level funding realized annually to ensure that projects are planned, built, and operated for restoration benefits for the Everglades and the estuaries.”

America’s Everglades is recognized as a global treasure and one of the world’s largest ecosystem restoration projects. Over the past century, 50% of Everglades habitat and 70% of the historic “River of Grass” water flow has been lost at great expense to Florida’s ecological, wildlife, and public health. Toxic algae blooms, seagrass die-offs, and depleted fish populations are just a few of the consequences of this broken water system. With recent harmful algae blooms still fresh on the minds of many Floridians, the Coalition is focused on bringing together stakeholders, experts, and decision-makers for collaborative discussion about fast-tracking restoration efforts.

Committed to full protection and restoration of America’s Everglades

1000 Friends of Florida
Angler Action Foundation
Audubon Florida
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Audubon of the Western Everglades
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Backcountry Fly Fishers of Naples
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
Peace River Audubon Society
Reef Relief
Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
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
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
The Florida Wildlife Federation
The Institute for Regional Conservation
The National Wildlife Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Tropical Audubon Society

“The Everglades, the estuaries, our tourism-based economy, and human health continue to suffer the longer restoration is delayed,” said Mark Perry, Co-chair of the Everglades Coalition and Executive Director of the Florida Oceanographic Society. “We must continue to work for strong partnerships to achieve CERP and use this funding momentum to bring relief to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee, and restored flow south to the Everglades and Florida Bay.”

The economic impact of Florida’s water crisis is a critical theme of the conference. The convening of presenters from the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, Bonita Springs Chamber of Commerce, realtor groups, fishing guides associations, and several business owners highlight the intrinsic link between clean water and a thriving South Florida economy.

The connection between Everglades restoration and climate resiliency is also featured this year. Everglades restoration offers significant benefits for both mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts – from restored seagrasses and mangroves that sequester greenhouse gases to protected drinking water supply from saltwater intrusion, but is threatened by expanding oil and gas operations. Climate advocates are joining forces with the Everglades community to ensure “all hands on deck” for resilient climate solutions for South Florida.

The Everglades Coalition’s annual state legislative priorities closely mirror many of the topics covered in the conference, including strong funding levels and water quality restoration. The priorities also call for the protection of Florida’s natural wonders through conserving lands, ensuring oil exploration and drilling do not undermine Everglades restoration efforts, and safeguarding our investments in restoration through comprehensive land use planning and smart growth.

Keynote and panel speakers include Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Congressman Brian Mast, Florida Representative Heather Fitzenhagen, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava, Okeechobee County Commissioner David E. Hazellief, former Florida Governor and U.S. Senator Bob Graham, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Ryan Fisher, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District Commander Andrew Kelly, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Noah Valenstein, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board Chair Chauncey Goss, South Florida Water Management District Executive Director Drew Bartlett, Everglades National Park Superintendent Pedro Ramos.

The [Everglades Coalition](#) represents more than 60 regional, state, national and international organizations committed to the restoration of America’s Everglades. The Coalition’s annual conference is the largest forum for Everglades conservation and restoration, bringing together Coalition members with business leaders, stakeholders, local, state, tribal and federal partners, academics, and students to engage in meaningful discussions about restoring America’s Everglades.

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