



THE EVERGLADES AGRICULTURAL AREA (EAA)

The following recommendations have been approved by the Everglades Coalition with regard to the EAA:

1. Local governments should commit to no changes in density or intensity of land uses in the EAA until
 - Such changes are definitively determined to be compatible with Everglades restoration, and
 - A comprehensive sustainability plan is adopted.
2. The South Florida Water Management District (District), the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the U.S. Department of Consumer Services, the Florida Department of Community Affairs, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) should support and actively engage in EAA planning. The planning initiative of Palm Beach County should be expanded to include federal, state, regional, local, and private stakeholders.
3. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture should develop a long-term agriculture sustainability plan for the EAA.
4. To assure that future changes in the area do not negatively impact the towns south of Lake Okeechobee, the State should initiate a socio/economic study to determine what uses in the EAA could create jobs and other economic benefits without hindering restoration efforts.
5. The District and Corps should develop an aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) contingency plan for water storage, investigate capacity for additional storage alternatives to ASR, and make these proven storage technologies the first priority for implementation. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan for EAA storage should be expanded to at least 150,000 acres.
6. The USFWS and FWC should engage stakeholders in creating a wildlife management and restoration plan. As agricultural land goes out of production, wetlands should be established. Flooding and destruction of wildlife habitat in the Holey Land and Rotenberger Wildlife Management Areas should be prohibited, as well as in other natural areas adjacent to the EAA.
7. The District should:
 - Design and implement new treatment and best management practices (BMPs) to improve water quality for the region,
 - Increase use of periphyton pollution control strategies and increase the size of Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs), and
 - Implement BMPs on lands where runoff enters STAs or the Everglades Protection Area to reduce nutrient and toxic loadings.
8. The Florida Legislature should:
 - Implement the “Polluter Pay” requirement of the Florida Constitution, and
 - Amend the Everglades Forever Act to require that BMPs in the C-139 basin in Hendry County be strengthened to reduce loadings considerably below historic levels.
9. Federal and state agencies should fully fund a land acquisition plan for the EAA by 2010, including funding to purchase land from willing sellers as it leaves current agricultural production or sooner. Storage should be optimized by increasing the total spatial extent of natural areas, building new storage areas, and selectively raising groundwater in appropriate areas.

10. All agencies involved in restoration should recognize the need to restore flow through the Everglades. The connection between Lake Okeechobee and the remaining Everglades should be reestablished by managing water and water flow within the EAA.

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