



Everglades Coalition

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon of Florida
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Caloosahatchee River Citizens
Association/ Riverwatch
Clean Water Action
Clean Water Network
Collier County Audubon Society
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
Ding Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
The Environmental Coalition
Everglades Coordinating Council
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
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 NWR
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry Glades Audubon Society
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
National Audubon Society
National Parks Conservation
Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge
Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
The Ocean Conservancy
The Pegasus Foundation
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
South Florida Audubon Society
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
World Wildlife Fund

August 4, 2011

Melissa Meeker
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33146

South Florida Water Management District Governing Board
Joe Collins, Chair
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33146

RE: Pending Water Reservation Rulemaking and Everglades Restoration

Dear Executive Director Meeker and Governing Board Members:

The Everglades Coalition is an alliance of 54 local, state and national conservation organizations working together to assure America's Everglades are protected and restored for future generations. It has come to our attention that in the upcoming months the Governing Board will be considering the future of rulemaking to protect the Caloosahatchee estuary, Kissimmee River, and Biscayne Bay. We write to highlight the importance of the development and implementation of these rules for Everglades restoration projects and ask for written clarification of a rulemaking timeline.

These rules are required for the South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) cost share agreements with the federal partner, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to legally commit to fund and construct restoration projects. For Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects to move forward, the SFWMD is required to set aside or "reserve" the new water produced to meet restoration needs. This protection of water ensures that taxpayer money is not wasted building a project that produces and delivers insufficient water. The water reservation must occur prior to the SFWMD executing an agreement to construct these projects with the ACOE, consistent with 373.470 (3)(c), Florida Statutes.

www.evergladescoalition.org

Ph: 954-961-1280 ♦ Fax: 954-985-5047 ♦ 450 N. Park Rd, #301, Hollywood FL 33021

The proposed Caloosahatchee Water Reservation and Biscayne Bay Restricted Area Allocation Rule¹ are linked to the C-43 Reservoir project and the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project, respectively. These two projects were specifically listed in the SFWMD FY 2012 Budget draft to move forward. The proposed Kissimmee Water Reservation reserves water for Kissimmee River restoration, a project that has the similar authorization process as CERP and has been progressing for some time.

We understand that it has been trying for everyone to watch the budget reduction process at the SFWMD with the necessity to re-prioritize fundamental water management responsibilities. We hope you will understand our urgent request that you make rulemaking for water reservations a top priority. The Everglades system cannot afford delay. The success of the Kissimmee River restoration and the efforts put into the planning and land acquisitions needed for the C-43 reservoir and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands projects are providing a sense of momentum that is long overdue for restoration progress. Timely action by the SFWMD to complete water reservation rulemaking will add impetus to Congressional action to fund construction that will then allow the SFWMD to claim the credits it has accrued with the ACOE and recoup its expenditures.

Could you please supply us with a written clarification of the timeline for the rulemaking process for these three crucial rules? Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please don't hesitate to contact us or any of our member organizations on this vital issue.

Sincerely,



Julie Hill-Gabriel
State Co-Chair
305-371-6399 x136
Jhill-gabriel@audubon.org



Dawn Shirreffs
National Co-Chair
954-961-1280 x 205
dshirreffs@npca.org

¹ A Biscayne Bay Water Reservation rule could more comprehensively protect the Bay's freshwater resources and should also be further explored.