



# Everglades Coalition

## Everglades Coalition State and Federal Restoration Priorities 2017 – 2020

*Goal: A full, committed and apolitical partnership at all levels of government that affords optimal progress for the protection and restoration of America's Everglades*

Everglades restoration based on sound science must remain a high, bipartisan priority with the federal and state governments to afford visible successes in sending clean water south to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay and minimizing high-flow releases to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. To advance efforts in line with this goal during the next four years, the Everglades Coalition recommends the following restoration roadmap:

### **Leadership and Funding**

- Appoint demonstrated Everglades champions to high-level state and federal leadership roles, including the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Governing Board of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, as well as to key decision-making committees in Congress and the Florida Legislature.
- Promote strong bipartisan support among those elected officials in the U.S. Congress, the Florida Legislature, and county and municipal governments who recognize the significant economic and ecological benefits of accelerating Everglades restoration.
- Restore federal and state funding levels each to a minimum of \$200 million per year to advance the planning, construction, and operation of restoration infrastructure as envisioned in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) in 2000.
- Ensure that Legacy Florida Act funds are utilized in a manner that optimizes their impact on Everglades restoration – specifically Sen. Negron's proposal to purchase land and advance planning in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) in 2017.
- Require SFWMD to implement the Legacy Florida Act by allocating a minimum of \$100 million annually over the next ten years for the planning, design, engineering and construction of CERP projects. Legacy Florida funding should be the minimum funding allocation for state CERP expenditures – not the cap.
- Promote a continued partnership between the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the SFWMD and allocate funds to control invasive species in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge to ensure the long-term viability of the refuge, safeguard wildlife and protect the integrity of the remaining Everglades ecosystem.
- Pass federal Water Resources Development Acts (WRDA) on a biennial schedule to ensure timely project authorizations and congressional funding for Everglades projects and other important water infrastructure efforts that impact Florida.
- Re-energize the Congressional Everglades Caucus, with particular focus on non-Florida membership, to ensure the Caucus' effectiveness in promoting an accelerated schedule and adequate funding for complete Everglades restoration and to continue to raise the national profile of America's Everglades.
- Uphold and comply with federal and state laws including but not limited to the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Endangered Species Act consistent with the goals of Everglades restoration.

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  
Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association/  
Riverwatch  
Center for Biological Diversity  
Clean Water Action  
Conservancy of Southwest Florida  
Defenders of Wildlife  
"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society  
Earthjustice  
Environment Florida  
Everglades Foundation  
Everglades Law Center  
Everglades Trust  
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  
Last Stand  
League of Women Voters of Florida  
Loxahatchee River Coalition  
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

*Committed to full protection and restoration of America's Everglades*

- Promote energy policies at the federal and state level that prioritize sustainable, clean energy sources and reduce carbon emissions to benefit Florida's economy while safeguarding natural resources.
- Provide leadership through high-level engagement of President Trump and Governor Scott's administrations to include regular tours of the ecosystem and discussions with stakeholders including local elected leaders, tribal leadership, recreational users, scientists, and agency experts.

### **Restoration Progress and Ecosystem Protection**

- Require SFWMD and USACE to begin planning the EAA Reservoir project outlined in CERP and in Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) in 2017 with a resulting Chief's Report ready for congressional authorization in 2020.
- Fund the Central Everglades Plan to achieve groundbreaking and significant construction progress by 2020.
- Complete the next 2.6-miles of Tamiami Trail bridging by 2019. Prioritize planning and appropriations for the remaining 2.9-miles of bridging and road raising need to complete the project, with groundbreaking by 2018.
- Continue adequate federal and state funding and staffing of two CERP projects currently underway, the Lake Okeechobee Watershed (LOW) and Western Everglades Restoration Plan (WERP), so as to complete Chief's Reports ready for congressional authorization in 2020. These projects will be advanced with the goal of maximizing ecosystem benefits. Funding for the Project Partnership Agreements (PPAs) should be requested in the FY 2021 budget for construction in FY 2022.
- Improve freshwater flow to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay through expedited construction of the remaining portions of the C-111 South Dade Project, and through the constructed C-111 Spreader Canal project. Any new proposals to change the flow into Florida Bay must be vetted by the USACE through a full NEPA analysis and denied if shown to be counter to established long-term restoration goals.
- Require the USACE to immediately begin operation of the Modified Water Deliveries Project infrastructure so as to maximize flow into Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. 2016 emergency high water levels operations demonstrated this can be done successfully.
- Complete construction of Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) Phase 1 by 2018. Expedite planning for BBCW Phase 2 to begin before the currently scheduled 2021 timeframe.
- Complete the Kissimmee River Restoration project in 2018 with more than 40 square miles of river-floodplain ecosystem restored, including almost 20,000 acres of wetlands and 44 miles of historic river channel.
- Complete the Picayune Strand project in 2018 restoring 55,000 acres of habitat. The more natural sheet flow of water ultimately benefit 170,000 acres of downstream 10,000 Islands estuary and neighboring Preserves.
- Complete the Broward Water Preserve Areas project in 2020, with a focus on the C-11 Impoundment, to reduce both harmful runoff of phosphorus-laden water from urban Broward County into Everglades Water Conservation Areas and water seepage out of the Central Everglades.
- Complete the Caloosahatchee West Basin Storage Reservoir in 2018 to provide critical freshwater in the dry season to the Caloosahatchee estuary and improve its salinity balance.
- Complete construction of the C-44 Reservoir by 2020 so that clean fresh water from the local basin can be stored to attenuate flows to the St. Lucie estuary.
- Expedite completion of repairs to Herbert Hoover Dike by 2020 for improved safety. Hold Lake Okeechobee between 12.5 and 15.5 feet to protect downstream residents, secure water supply and protect the Lake's marshes.
- Maintain water quality standards for phosphorus and other nutrients. Maintain scheduled timing for the SFWMD's Restoration Strategies program.
- Finalize operating regimes for restoration projects to achieve restoration goals as stated in CERP.
- Do not approve any near-shore oil drilling off Florida's coast or fracking in the state.
- Complete outstanding easements and land purchase for the Everglades Headwaters Ntl Wildlife Refuge by 2018.
- Initiate planning is for the creation of the Fisheating Creek Ntl Wildlife Refuge and the expansion of the Florida Panther Ntl Wildlife Refuge. USFWS should approve PPAs in 2018 and establish/expand refuges by 2020.
- Provide adequate dedicated funding to monitor the effects of restoration projects as they are completed to ensure that they deliver the promised ecological outcomes.
- Maintain science as the driving force for decisions in support of restoration.

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