



Everglades Coalition

October 19, 2015

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon
Audubon Florida
Audubon of the Everglades
Audubon of Southwest Florida
Audubon of the Western Everglades
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 Coordinating Council
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Everglades Trust
Florida Conservation Alliance
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 National Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry Glades Audubon Society
Institute for Regional Conservation
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
Miami Waterkeeper
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Ocean Research & Conservation Association
Reef Relief
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
Snook and Gamefish Foundation
South Florida Audubon Society
Southern Alliance for Clean Energy
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League of
Greater Miami

Honorable Jeff Miller
Honorable Gwen Graham
Honorable Ted Yoho
Honorable Ander Crenshaw
Honorable Corrine Brown
Honorable Ron DeSantis
Honorable John Mica
Honorable Bill Posey
Honorable Alan Grayson
Honorable Dan Webster
Honorable Rich Nugent
Honorable Gus Bilirakis
Honorable David Jolly
Honorable Kathy Castor

Honorable Dennis A. Ross
Honorable Vern Buchanan
Honorable Tom Rooney
Honorable Patrick Murphy
Honorable Curt Clawson
Honorable Alcee Hastings
Honorable Ted Deutch
Honorable Lois Frankel
Honorable Debbie Wasserman-Schultz
Honorable Frederica Wilson
Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Honorable Carlos Curbelo
Honorable Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Dear Members of the Florida Delegation:

The Everglades Coalition, along with the 58 organizations and the 6 million members it represents, urges Congress to reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), which expired for the first time in the Fund’s more than fifty-year history on September 30, 2015.

The LWCF is one of America’s most popular and effective conservation funding programs. The program has invested more than \$17 billion in federal, state, and local conservation and recreation efforts without spending a penny of taxpayer dollars. The program is funded entirely through a portion of the royalties the United States receives from offshore oil and gas drilling. The program has provided over \$3.9 billion in matching grants to states that have funded nearly 42,000 public parks and outdoor recreation projects. It has provided \$394 million towards endangered species protection on private lands and it has protected more than 2 million acres of working forestlands.¹

The LWCF plays a critical role in our local communities by investing up to \$900 million annually in our national parks, wildlife refuges, and historic sites. These and other federally managed lands and waters contribute approximately \$51 billion and 880,000 jobs to the U.S. economy every year.² As U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Sally Jewell explained in her October 1, 2015 statement on the expiration of the LWCF, it plays a “vital role in boosting local economies in every state. For every \$1 invested through the fund, there is an estimated return of \$4 in economic activity.”³

Committed to full protection and restoration of America’s Everglades

The LWCF plays a uniquely important role in Florida and in the restoration of America's Everglades. The state has received approximately \$949 million in funding since 1964 to protect some of our nation's greatest ecological treasures, including Everglades National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve and Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge.⁴ Over the years the LWCF has proven critically important for Everglades restoration. For example, LWCF funds are being used to acquire properties that will restore the flow of water under Tamiami Trail once bridging is constructed. Without LWCF funding for these properties, the federal government would be unable to send water south through the River of Grass to Everglades National Park. LWCF funds are also essential for new conservation opportunities such as the Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area.

In conclusion, the expiration of the LWCF would compromise Everglades restoration efforts already in progress and have lasting, negative impacts to the Greater Everglades ecosystem and the region's local economies. We hope Congress takes immediate steps towards reauthorizing the LWCF to protect our nation's multi-billion dollar investment in restoring America's Everglades.

Sincerely,

Cara Capp

Cara Capp
National Co-Chair



Jason Totoiu
State Co-Chair

¹ <https://www.doi.gov/lwcf>

² https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.opengov.ibmcloud.com/files/uploads/LWCF2016BudgetInBrief_031915.pdf

³ <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/statement-secretary-jewell-expiration-land-and-water-conservation-fund>

⁴ <http://lwcfcoalition.org/files/State/Florida.pdf>

Committed to full protection and restoration of America's Everglades