

EVERGLADES RESTORATION

A Priority for Sportsmen

The Florida Everglades are the largest subtropical wetland in North America—and a unique place to fish and hunt. The Everglades are unlike any other ecosystem in United States, a **vast wetland of slow-moving freshwater sometimes called the “River of Grass.”**

Extensive alterations—including the construction of the Hoover Dam around Lake Okeechobee, the conversion of much of the Everglades to sugar farming and suburbs, and the channelization of the Kissimmee River—have reduced the Everglades to less than half its historic size and dramatically altered the way the water flows through the landscape, damaging its ability to support fish and wildlife.

Important sections of the Everglades are now protected, but there remains a need to restore a more natural water flow in the Everglades. **America’s sportsmen support Everglades restoration, which will improve fishing in one of our greatest natural landscapes.**

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ABOUT THE EVERGLADES

Largest subtropical wetland in North America, now half its original size

Anglers catch more fish per hour than any other place in Florida

Seven million Floridians get their water from the Everglades

Every dollar spent on Everglades restoration will create four dollars in economic returns

Everglades Restoration

Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir

Right now, the State of Florida has a historic opportunity to purchase a strategically-located property south of Lake Okeechobee. Currently, when the lake levels are high, polluted water is sent down the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers—often fouling the waters with algae outbreaks, harming fish and wildlife and hurting the economy.

Under a previously-negotiated contract, the state has an option that expires this year to purchase a piece of property—owned by U. S. Sugar—that is perfectly situated for building a reservoir to store and clean the polluted waters while allowing for controlled releases of water that would mimic natural water flows, improving the health of both rivers and their estuaries.

Florida voters—particularly anglers—overwhelmingly support restoring the Everglades and want the Legislature and the Governor to act now to use Amendment 1 conservation funding to protect seven million Floridians' water supply.

Tamiami Trail

Tamiami Trail was the first highway across the Everglades, connecting Tampa and Miami. Since its construction in the 1920s, Tamiami Trail has acted as a dam, impeding the natural north-south flow of water through the system.

As a result, this part of the Everglades and coast is starved of fresh water, degrading important bird and wildlife habitat and the unique ridge and slough landscape. This has significantly altered the historic River of Grass, and increased salinity in the naturally shallow Florida Bay.

Elevating strategic sections of Tamiami Trail will increase the capacity to move more water from Lake Okeechobee through the Central Everglades and south through Everglades National Park, thus reducing the devastating water flows that are forced into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

Additional Funding—The RESTORE Act

The fines and penalties from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon disaster could provide an additional funding source for Everglades restoration. In particular, the RESTORE Act sends 80% of the Clean Water Act fines from the disaster back to the Gulf States and this money can be used to address longstanding environmental threats to the health of the Gulf of Mexico—not just problems caused directly by the oil spill.



The Caloosahatchee River is often fouled by polluted water from Lake Okeechobee. The State of Florida currently has the opportunity to restore the Everglades and protect the river, but it needs to act.
Photo: Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation



The Tamiami Trail highway blocks the natural flow of water through the system. Elevating sections of the highway would allow the water to flow more naturally.
Photo: Lori Oberhofer, Everglades National Park