



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
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 Sierra Club
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Hendry-Glades Audubon Society
Izaak Walton League
Florida Keys Chapter
Florida Division
Izaak Walton League of America
Mangrove Chapter
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 Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
South Florida Audubon Society
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
World Wildlife Fund

April 13, 2011

Governing Board
South Florida Water Management District
PO Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Colonel Alfred A. Pantano, District Commander
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207-0019

Dear members of the Governing Board and Colonel Pantano:

The attached resolution is submitted on behalf of the 53 organizations of the Everglades Coalition urging the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board and the United States Army Corps of Engineers to establish a policy to provide ecologically sufficient base flow releases to the Caloosahatchee and estuary for the health of the west coast economy and sustenance of the resource.

The Caloosahatchee and its estuary provide critical habitat and environmental resources that support a \$3 billion economy and over 124,000 jobs in southwest Florida. In the dry season and under drought conditions, the Caloosahatchee is the first and often only system that is cut off from public water in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem, even when no water use restrictions have been imposed on any other users. The result is the loss of freshwater habitat downstream of the S79 Franklin Lock structure that is critical to the endangered Florida Manatee and numerous commercially important fishery species including snook, drum, silver perch, redfish, bay anchovy, blue crabs and shrimp. Lack of flow also causes stagnation of the pooled basin upstream of S79 resulting in algae blooms that have caused the closure of the Olga Water Treatment Plant and health warnings to avoid contact with the water by the local Health Department.

In contrast, during the wet season, unwanted excess water is dumped down the Caloosahatchee in volumes and timing that alter the estuarine quality of the 33 mile estuary, impacting the habitat of the endangered smalltooth sawfish, seagrass and commercially important shellfish and fisheries.

The Caloosahatchee is currently in its 4th consecutive year of MFL exceedence due to the lack of freshwater flow. As a result, the estuary is in serious harm, having lost over 300 acres of tapegrass habitat since the year 2000. Past decisions to not supply public water to this public resource have been made despite scientific studies funded by the SFWMD that demonstrate the critical need for dry season flows for the health of the estuary. Providing ecologically sufficient flows during the dry season have an “insignificant” effect on water levels in Lake Okeechobee.

The attached resolution therefore requests that the SFWMD Governing Board and the United States Army Corps of Engineers establish a public policy to provide ecologically sufficient base flow releases of water to the Caloosahatchee and estuary.



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