



# 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

## RESOLUTION OF THE EVERGLADES COALITION, DECLARING SUPPORT FOR DRY SEASON BASE FLOWS TO THE CALOOSAHATCHEE & ESTUARY

April 12, 2011

**WHEREAS**, 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; and

**WHEREAS**, the Caloosahatchee Estuary suffers ecologically during the dry season if no freshwater is discharged from Lake Okeechobee; and

**WHEREAS**, lack of dry season flows have caused the loss of hundreds of acres of freshwater tapegrass habitat in the Caloosahatchee estuary; and

**WHEREAS**, tapegrass habitat is a critical food source for the Endangered Florida Manatee in the Caloosahatchee estuary where the state's largest number of animals congregate in the winter; and

**WHEREAS**, loss of this habitat requires animals to migrate 50 miles to find food sources in the lower estuary, causing them to use vital energy stores and placing them at increased exposure to boat risks; and

**WHEREAS**, the freshwater tapegrass habitat in the Caloosahatchee estuary is a critical habitat for reproduction and survival of economically important fishery species including snook, drum, silver perch, redfish, bay anchovy, crabs and shrimp; and

**WHEREAS**, lack of flow causes salinities in the lower Caloosahatchee estuary oyster beds to rise above the desired range for oyster productivity, growth, larval recruitment and spawning, increasing risks of infection and predation and decreasing survival; and

**WHEREAS**, lack of dry season "base flow" causes stagnation resulting in algae blooms by the Olga Water Treatment Plant that cause the plant to shutdown and require Lee County to purchase water from Cape Coral; and

**WHEREAS**, the Caloosahatchee is in its 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of MFL exceedence, having passed the significant harm stage it is now in serious harm; and

**WHEREAS**, SFWMD-funded research studies demonstrate the need for freshwater releases; and

**WHEREAS**, the minimal “base flow” requested would have a minimal effect on water levels in Lake Okeechobee and water available for agriculture in the Everglades Agricultural Area and for water utilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Caloosahatchee is routinely completely cut off from all water flow at the most critical times even when no water use restrictions have been imposed on any other users; and

**WHEREAS**, the economy of the west coast communities is dependent upon a healthy, vibrant and resilient estuary,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the 53 organizations of the Everglades Coalition and their members urge the 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 River and estuary.

Approved April 12, 2011.



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