

WATER



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80%

of historic water flow to the Everglades has been lost due to development

1/3

of Floridians rely on the Everglades for their daily water — that's 8M people!



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Water for America's Everglades

Florida's waters are in crisis. Everglades National Park and Florida Bay are starved for freshwater, while the northern Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie River are inundated with polluted Lake Okeechobee discharges. The solution to this crisis is to send clean water south to the Everglades, restoring some of the historic "River of Grass" that once dominated this unique ecosystem.

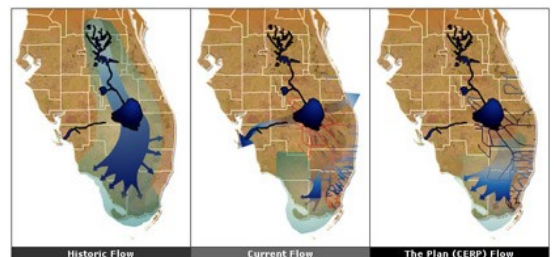
NPCA supports Florida Sen. Rob Bradley's plan to buy land south of Lake Okeechobee to store, treat, and flow clean water to Everglades National Park, outlined in SB10.

The natural footprint of the original Everglades was huge, spanning an area twice the size of New Jersey! Water would flow through the meandering Kissimmee River, deposit into Lake Okeechobee, then slowly flow down to Florida Bay and the Keys. This process would purify the water along its journey, ensuring that only pristine water would enter the southern Everglades. This clean, abundant water is why the ecosystem is internationally unique and abundant in life!

Decades of development changed the natural flow of the Everglades, impacting Florida's ecology and economy. More than 80% of the natural flow of water has been lost as agricultural and urban development overtook the landscape. Without sufficient freshwater flow, Florida Bay and the Keys experienced widespread seagrass die-offs.

While Everglades National Park needs more water, the northern coastal estuaries struggle with too much polluted flow. When Lake Okeechobee becomes too high the excess water is discharged to the Caloosahatchee River to the west and the St. Lucie River to the east, because there is no additional storage capacity south. The impact is devastating, causing foul-smelling and dangerous algae blooms in coastal communities, killing sea grasses and oyster beds, and decimating fisheries.

In 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) authorized a suite of projects to restore some of the southern flow of water that has been lost. Progress has been made on many key projects that are bringing ecological benefits to the Everglades! Now we must take the next big step — purchase land south of Lake Okeechobee to store and clean up the water as agreed to in CERP.



CERP seeks to restore some of the water flow that one characterized the Everglades. Buying land to store water south of Lake Okeechobee is essential for restoration of Everglades National Park. Graphic: NPS

WATER FOR AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

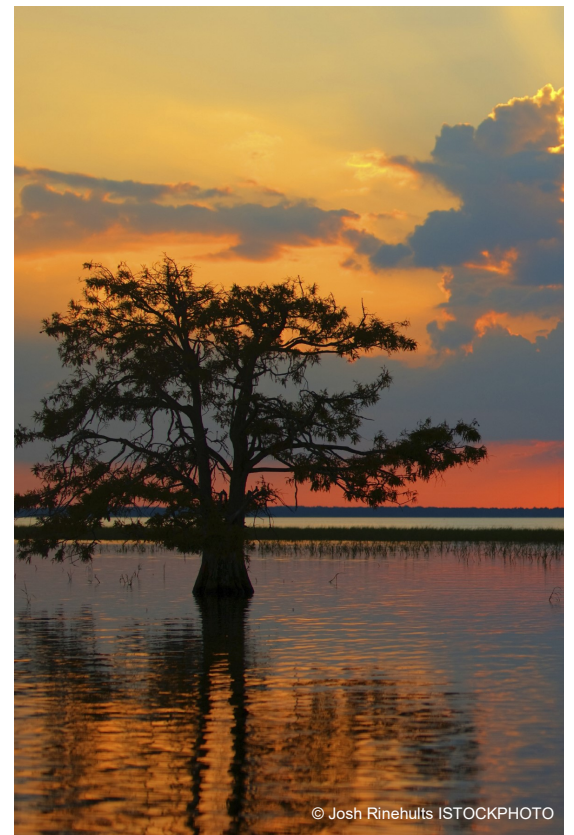
NPCA supports Florida Senator Rob Bradley's proposal (SB10) to buy land and accelerate project planning to send clean water to Everglades National Park and protect Florida's estuaries. The plan will be considered in the upcoming Florida Legislative Session, March to May 2017. The plan must also garner Florida Gov. Rick Scott's endorsement for final approval. If passed the plan would:

- Direct the state to purchase 60,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) from willing sellers. This area is less than 10% of land in the EAA and would allow agriculture to continue in many areas, while using strategically-located parcels for needed water storage.
- Accelerate EAA Reservoir Project planning outlined in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) due to the urgent ecological conditions experienced these past few years. Planning for the EAA Reservoir Project is currently set to begin in 2021, and this plan would move up that date.
- Use funding from the Florida Water and Land Legacy Amendment of 2014 and the Legacy Florida legislation of 2016 — set aside by Florida voters specifically for the protection of our state's natural resources — to both purchase the land and fund the accelerated EAA Reservoir planning effort.
- Work with other restoration projects to deliver more water to Everglades National Park. The recently authorized Central Everglades Project (CEP) and ongoing bridging of Tamiami Trail provide the infrastructure needed to send water south. Now the EAA Reservoir Project must supply the additional water and deliver freshwater flows, to maximize the benefits of these projects.
- Reduce harmful discharges to the coastal estuaries by nearly 50% according to scientific analysis by the [Everglades Foundation](#).
- Add storage south of Lake Okeechobee to the toolkit of storage options that will be needed to achieve full ecosystem restoration. There is no silver bullet to restore the Everglades. Storage is needed north, south, east, and west of the lake! The EAA Reservoir is an important project that will complement the work already being done in other areas of the ecosystem.
- Improve the economy of Florida's multi-billion dollar recreational and commercial fishing, boating, and other water-based tourism industries.
- Provide a safe outlet for water when Lake Okeechobee levels become too high, protecting communities and businesses south of the lake from future risk of flooding due to conditions of the dike around Lake Okeechobee.
- Bring quality local jobs to Florida residents. These include well-paying construction, engineering, operations, and monitoring jobs in the region.
- Continue the legacy of work by restoration partners at the federal and state governments in the journey to restore an international treasure and economic engine — America's Everglades!

“Storage south of Lake Okeechobee to clean and flow water is needed to restore Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. NPCA calls on the Florida Legislature and Governor Scott to take action in 2017.”

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