

<

SFWMD

Compiled by: South Florida Water Management District
(for internal use only)

Total Clips: 5

| Headline | Date | Outlet | Reporter |
|--|------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
|  Crist chided over U.S. Sugar job losses | 08/26/2008 | Palm Beach Post - Online | MICHAEL C. BENDER |
| Workgroup Looks at Sugar Issue | 08/25/2008 | Caloosa Belle | Zaragoza, Jose |
| Goals for U.S. Sugar Corporation Land Acquisition | 08/25/2008 | Caloosa Belle | |
| Letter to the Editor: To the Mayor and City Commissioners | 08/25/2008 | Caloosa Belle | |
|  Senator Raises Job-Loss Fears In U.S. Sugar Buyout | 08/25/2008 | Tampa Tribune - Online | CATHERINE DOLINSKI |

Crist chided over U.S. Sugar job losses

08/26/2008
Palm Beach Post - Online
MICHAEL C. BENDER

[Return to Top](#)

TALLAHASSEE The chairman of the warned Gov. Charlie Crist on Monday that the deal to purchase U.S. Sugar could have 'drastic consequences' for the state's economy. 'The taxpayers of Florida cannot afford to buy land we do not need, at the expense of the valuable agricultural jobs that are vital to our region,' wrote Sen. J.D. Alexander, R-Lake Wales.

Alexander asked Crist for a 'conceptual plan outlining your commitment to preserving thousands of jobs that are in jeopardy as a result of this acquisition.' Crist's office responded that officials from the state Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development have been working with agricultural communities to accelerate local economic development plans. 'The governor shares his concerns,' Crist spokesman Sterling Ivey said.

Crist unveiled a plan this year to buy 187,000 acres owned by U. S. Sugar Corp. for \$1.7billion to help restore natural water flow through the Everglades.

While the South Florida Water Management District negotiates the

deal, sugar giant Florida Crystals is lobbying to develop an inland port south of Lake Okeechobee and within the proposed pathway of the state's restoration efforts, as a way to make up for job losses in the U.S. Sugar deal.

Water managers, who hope to have a deal by Nov. 30, have said it could take two months to determine how the port would affect restoration efforts.

Workgroup Looks at Sugar Issue

08/25/2008

Caloosa Belle
Zaragoza, Jose

[Return to
Top](#)

08-21-08

Workgroup looks at Sugar issue

By Jose Jesus Zaragoza

Clewiston News CLEWISTON -- It seems that locals aren't ready to give up any-time soon.

A 22-person workgroup is putting forward its suggestions regarding what should happen in the wake of U.S. Sugar's sale of land to the state.

The board, comprised of concerned residents, leaders and representatives of various agencies and organizations throughout the county, first met on July 21. Since then it has tapped the knowledge and opinions of its members to come up with a plan of action -- one that was approved by the board of county commissioners on Tuesday.

The one-page summary is entitled, "Hendry County: Where Restoration, Agriculture and Green Energy Development Meet."

The group outlined ten items it hopes the county will take to heart in promoting over the next few weeks.

Among the various bullet points highlighted, the work-group proposes that the future purchaser of the mill, juice plant and railroad continue operations for at least 10 more years.

Other points include: * Creation of a Green Energy Research and Manufacturing Park with infrastructure funding by the state and assistance in attracting companies, universities and research groups to the park.

* Locating the engineering, research and operations division of the water management district responsible for the water storage and treatment area to Hendry County.

* The donation of S.R. 80 to the department of transportation, and the re-installation of Hendry County projects, including expanding S.R. 80 to a four-lane highway within a 10-year plan.

* Agreement to fund Payment in Lieu of Taxes for all lost taxes and special assessments in perpetuity or until county population reaches 150,000.

Foremost on the minds of the panel, according to Vince Caute-ro, the county's community development director, is jobs. With the possibility that one of its strongest economic engines -- if not the most -- will cease, concern over whether 1,700 people will be out of a job is still a galvanizing discussion in the community.

All conversations about the matter center fiercely around the

workforce that stands to be affected by the state's move to purchase 187,000 of agricultural land.

" They (the workgroup) work on how the state should assist them with economic develop-ment," explained Mr. Cautero.

Recently, the county board listened to a presentation on the Inland Port project; an idea that, if successful, leaders believe may be the very thing to adequately supplant the departure of agricul-ture in the area.

The project represents an am-bitious move to redirect major cargo ports through the heart of Florida, namely through the Glades and U.S. 27.

Officials close to the planning say that the Inland Port project is just the shot in the arm the local economy needs to continue mov-ing forward. As work on this con-tinues, locals consider the siting of the main component. The talk at the governmental level is focused on sites south of the city of South Bay, but surrounding municipali-ties still stand to benefit from the increase in traffic stemming from the port.

This, too, may be included in the workgroup's recommenda-tions.

Goals for U.S. Sugar Corporation Land Acquisition

08/25/2008

Caloosa Belle

[Return to
Top](#)

08-21-08

Goals for U.S. Sugar Corporation land acquisition

WEST PALM BEACH, FL — The South Florida Water Manage-ment District's (SFWMD) restora-tion goals to revive the "River of Grass" are ambitious: Clean the water before it reaches the Ever-glades and store enough water to minimize harmful discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries.

In an update to its Governing Board on Wednesday, District staff presented an overview of concepts to incorporate vital wa-ter storage and treatment on vast tracts of agricultural land if nego-tiations to acquire the land and assets of the U.S. Sugar Corpora-tion are successful.

" This acquisition represents an unprecedented opportunity to protect and restore the Ever-glades in a way we never antici-pated," said Kenneth Ammon, District Deputy Executive Director for Everglades Restoration. " The increased flexibility provided by these lands will present a suite of restoration options and will work to build upon and enhance the federal/state partnership known as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan."

On June 24, 2008, Florida Gov-ernor Charlie Crist announced a strategy to purchase vast tracts of land south of Lake Okeechobee to protect and restore America's Everglades and Florida's coastal estuaries.

Benefi ts from the land acquisi-tion would include: Major improvements in the volume and delivery of water to the Everglades.

Preventing tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades.

Increases in water storage to reduce harmful freshwater dis-charges from Lake Okeechobee to Florida's coastal rivers and es-

tuaries.

Eliminating the need for "back-pumping" water into Lake Okeechobee.

Enhancing the timing and de-livery of cleaner water to the natural system.

Managing Lake Okeechobee water levels within an ecologically desirable range.

Acquiring agricultural land on which to build a highly engineered network of managed storage and treatment is intended to better manage the timing and quality of water delivered to the Everglades. The District's preliminary restoration concepts include creating one million acre-feet of water storage south of the lake. An acre-foot means one acre of land covered by one foot of water. That storage would be combined with one million acre-feet of storage north of the lake, as called for by Florida's technical plan to restore and protect the Northern Everglades. Along with storage, part of the land would be used to provide one million acre-feet of water quality treatment on an average annual basis. These additional treatment wetlands would help improve the quality of water flowing into the River of Grass. The District currently operates 52,000 acres of stormwater treatment wetlands that use plants to take up nutrients from water flowing into the Everglades.

The District is also evaluating concepts to include and/or increase storage, treatment and restoration in other watersheds, including the C-139 basin, the S-4 basin and around Lake Hicpochee, the headwaters of the Caloosahatchee River.

The Governing Board also received an update from staff on the acquisition activities and the public process associated with the potential purchase. The SF-WMD is moving forward with "due diligence" and evaluation of U.S. Sugar Corporation's assets, which include a mill, refinery, citrus plant, railroads, buildings and equipment. The due diligence includes engineering assessments, land surveys, environmental assessments and appraisals.

Another key component of that due diligence is the addition of an independent outside auditor to assist with the evaluations. This brings additional expertise and oversight to the due diligence process and ensures the District's actions are transparent. The outside auditor is also a core component of providing assurances and value for investment of taxpayer dollars.

If successful, the District staff will present a proposed contract to the Governing Board. The public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the contract. Public meetings will be held to discuss due diligence results before any closing.

Letter to the Editor: To the Mayor and City Commissioners

08/25/2008

Caloosa Belle

[Return to
Top](#)

08-14-08

Letters to the Editor

To the Mayor and City Commissioners,

It's budget time again and tough decisions will have to be made. I would like to encourage you to consider funding for the Passive Recreational Park. We already have a permit from the Army Corp. to work on the river bank and I'm confident when SFWMD receives the Management Plan it will be ap-proved.

I've expressed my concerns to the Mayor that with the US Sugar deal the SFWMD is looking at all properties that they could surplus to pay for the deal. I would hate to lose the opportunity that has been presented itself to the City by not positively showing our intentions to developed the park.

Respectfully, Craig Bartoshuk Chairman of the Board Passive Recreational Park

Senator Raises Job-Loss Fears In U.S. Sugar Buyout

08/25/2008

Tampa Tribune - Online

CATHERINE DOLINSKI

[Return to](#)
[Top](#)

Sen. J.D. Alexander wrote Gov. Charlie Crist today demanding 'a conceptual plan outlining your commitment to preserving the thousands of jobs that are in jeopardy' because of the \$1.75 billion buyout of U.S. Sugar that Crist announced in July.

Crist has pledged, somewhat vaguely, to stem the bleeding of jobs likely to result if U.S. Sugar leaves Florida. If Crist does not produce hard details for proposed economic relief, Alexander, R-Winter Haven, cannot support the buyout, he said. 'U.S. Sugar has been a major employer for decades, as well as a leader in shaping agricultural policy. Your commitment to ensuring that the sugar and citrus facilities continue to provide both employment and an opportunity to process two of Florida's leading commodities is critical to the State of Florida.' It remains unclear how much, if any, support Crist will need from state lawmakers for the deal. The intended buyout is between U.S. Sugar and the South Florida Water Management District, and the latter claims it will be able to foot the bill by borrowing the money.

Water district officials have a plan for paying back the money by redirecting the district's property tax collections " rather than digging into state coffers.

