

March 18, 2010

LETTER

Everglades Land Purchase

To the Editor:

[“Deal to Save Everglades May Help Sugar Firm”](#) (front page, March 8) offered a chronological account of the negotiations by the State of Florida to purchase lands from the United States Sugar Corporation, including acreage in the Everglades Agricultural Area.

While the article questioned the cost of this purchase, it did not thoroughly discuss the significant benefits this acquisition would provide to South Florida’s sensitive environment and freshwater resources.

When the state and federal governments committed 10 years ago to restoring the Everglades, adequate land needed to treat, store and convey freshwater south from Lake Okeechobee through the Everglades Agricultural Area to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay was unavailable.

The alternative to land is expensive and energy-intensive underground injection wells that have never been shown to work on a large scale. Getting land now used for sugarcane is the only option, regardless of price.

The proposed acquisition opens the way to flow more water south in a manner that more closely mimics nature and replaces the need for and the cost of hundreds of manmade wells. The acquisition also opens the way to replenishing parched wetlands, reviving natural plant communities and healing habitat so important to struggling bird and wildlife populations.

We have made significant progress on restoring the Everglades, an ecosystem that exists nowhere else in the world. Neither we nor our children can afford to let this opportunity pass us by.

Eric Draper

Executive Director

Audubon of Florida

Miami, March 10, 2010

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