



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

Total Clips: 4

Headline	Date	Outlet	Reporter
Study projects 400,000 jobs and \$46 billion economic boost from Everglades restoration	10/19/2010	Sun Sentinel - Deerfield Beach Bureau	Reid, Andy
River of Grass gets help from South Florida Water Management District	10/19/2010	Examiner.com	Amor, Valerie
The Sugar Industry's Assault on the Environment and Florida's Politics	10/19/2010	AlterNet	Farago, Alan
 Everglades restoration 'a wise investment'	10/19/2010	South Florida Business Journal	Brinkmann, Paul

Study projects 400,000 jobs and \$46 billion economic boost from Everglades restoration

[Return to Top](#)

10/19/2010

Sun Sentinel - Deerfield Beach Bureau

Reid, Andy

Study projects 400,000 jobs and \$46 billion economic boost from Everglades restoration

By Andy Reid, Sun Sentinel

7:02 p.m. EDT, October 18, 2010

Everglades = economy.

That's the message of a new economic study commissioned by environmentalists, which concludes that stepped-up Everglades restoration would result in hundreds of thousands of new jobs and a more than \$46 billion boost to Florida's economy.

The Everglades Foundation on Monday released the results of a year-long study that estimates the economy gets a \$4 return for every \$1 the state and federal governments invest in protecting what remains of Florida's famed River of Grass.

Investing nearly \$12 billion to get Everglades restoration back on track would bring more than \$46 billion return and create 400,000 jobs over 50 years, according to the study completed by Mather Economics, an Atlanta-based consulting firm.

According to the study, the job-creating benefits from cleaning and storing stormwater needed to replenish the Everglades include: bolstering South Florida's drinking water supply; boosting tourism by improving water quality and fishing grounds in the Everglades and South Florida's coastal estuaries; and creating nearly 23,000 construction jobs to build reservoirs, stormwater treatment areas and other environmental projects.

"Our state's economy is entirely dependent on the Everglades and our water supply," said Kirk Fordham, CEO of the Everglades Foundation. "This is an economic imperative that [we] invest in Everglades restoration."

The results of the study will be used as a sales pitch to the new federal and state leaders that voters choose in the

Nov. 2 election. The idea is to give elected officials a dollars-and-sense reason to invest in Everglades restoration at a time when the slumping economy strains spending on environmental projects.

The Everglades Foundation wants to restore the \$200 million a year of state money that used to flow to Everglades restoration, before the budget squeeze.

The group also wants to increase the federal funding for Everglades restoration that has picked up under the Obama's administration, after eight years of delays and unkept commitments from Congress and the White House.

The study comes after the completion of the South Florida Water Management District's \$197 million Everglades restoration land deal with U.S. Sugar Corp.

The land deal give the district 26,800 acres to use to help store and treat stormwater for the Everglades, but the district still needs the money to pay for construction.

In addition, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in September called for a revised Everglades cleanup effort that the district estimates would include \$1.5 billion in costs — money that district officials say they don't have.

Supporters of the U.S. Sugar land deal point to the study as proof that the expense of finding more money to build restoration projects is worth the rewards to the environment and the economy.

But opponents long warned that spending \$197 million of taxpayers' money during a lean economy on more land would take away money from already-overdue restoration projects.

Getting those eye-popping 400,000 new jobs over five decades that the study projects would require following through on a host of Everglades projects that remain shelved.

The study estimates the economic benefits of completing the Everglades restoration plan that state and federal officials agreed to in 2000, but that has since been bogged down by funding delays and other hurdles.

One of the benefits of restoring more of the "sheet flow" of stormwater that once naturally drained south from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades would be to beef up South Florida's drinking water supply, according to the study.

More clean water in the Everglades would boost drinking water supplies. The study estimates that Everglades restoration would bring \$13 billion in savings for South Florida communities that would otherwise have to tap into saltier underground water supplies that require more costly treatment to use for drinking water.

Improving water quality throughout the region would improve property values throughout South Florida by about \$16 billion, according to the study.

The more than 400,000 jobs projected over 50 years would include more than 270,000 related to construction and real estate, 80,500 tied to improved wildlife habitat and hunting and nearly 37,000 connected to recreational fishing, according to the study.

"The results of this report are encouraging," said Barry Johnson, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce. "Creating jobs in new categories is very important to the sustainability of our economy."

Andy Reid can be reached at abreid@SunSentinel.com or 561-228-5504.

River of Grass gets help from South Florida Water Management District

10/19/2010
Examiner.com
Amor, Valerie

[Return to Top](#)

River of Grass gets help from South Florida Water Management District
October 18th, 2010 7:59 am ET. Do you like this story?

Valerie J. Amor
Green Culture Examiner.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) today closed on the purchase of land from the United States Sugar Corporation, providing 26,800 acres of strategically located property south of Lake Okeechobee for Everglades restoration. The \$194 million acquisition places 42 square miles of agricultural land into public ownership for the construction of water quality improvement projects that will bring meaningful environmental benefits to the famed River of Grass.

"Hard work and a steadfast commitment to restore the River of Grass has successfully brought to fruition — in an affordable way — an opportunity to further improve water quality in the Everglades and address important federal mandates," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. "Once considered out of reach, the District now has ready access to thousands of acres of strategically situated property to advance Florida's steady progress in restoring the Everglades."

Highlights of the acquisition include:

- Acquisition of 17,900 citrus acres in Hendry County to improve water quality in the C-139 Basin, where phosphorus loads have been historically high. This parcel, just west of thousands of acres of existing constructed wetlands, can be used for additional water storage and treatment facilities that would improve the quality of water flowing into the Everglades.
- Purchase of 8,900 acres of sugarcane land in Palm Beach County to benefit the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge by expanding existing Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) and increasing water quality treatment for the S-5A Basin, just southeast of Lake Okeechobee.

The agreement contains options to purchase another 153,000 acres for up to 10 years should future economic conditions allow. The options to acquire additional lands, which provide further opportunities to benefit the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, include:

- An exclusive 3-year option to purchase either a specifically identified 46,800 acres or the entire 153,000 acres at a fixed price of \$7,400 per acre. U.S. Sugar could sell the option property to a third party but must retain the District's option.
- After the exclusive option period, a subsequent 2-year, non-exclusive option to purchase the approximately 46,800 acres at Fair Market Value. U.S. Sugar could sell all or a part of the option property, but subject to a Right of First Refusal by the District.
- A subsequent 7-year, non-exclusive option to purchase the remaining acres at Fair Market Value. U.S. Sugar could sell all or a part of the option property, but subject to a Right of First Refusal by the District.

"This acquisition allows access to critical land south of Lake Okeechobee needed for project construction that will bring meaningful water quality and environmental improvements to the Everglades," said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Mimi Drew. "We thank the Governing Board members for their thorough deliberation and their commitment to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

In identifying the 26,800 acres for this acquisition, the District evaluated science and engineering factors as well as its existing requirements and mandates, all of which drive the agency's restoration and water quality improvement efforts. This acquisition, together with additional lands in the Everglades Agricultural Area already in public ownership, gives the District access to more than 40,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee needed for water quality and restoration project construction.

Today's closing is the culmination of more than two years of work since the District began negotiations with the U.S. Sugar Corporation in June 2008 to acquire land south of Lake Okeechobee for Everglades restoration. This downsized, more affordable acquisition recognizes dramatic changes in economic conditions over the last two years, which have resulted in a decline in District property tax revenues by nearly \$150 million, or 30 percent, since 2008.

For additional information, see Just the Facts: Reviving the River of Grass — Land Purchased for Everglades Restoration.

Documents relating to the U.S. Sugar acquisition are posted online at www.sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass.

#

About the Everglades:

America's Everglades once covered almost 11,000 square miles of south Florida. Just a century ago, water flowed down the Kissimmee River into Lake Okeechobee, then south through the Everglades to the Florida Bay—the ultimate destination of the pure sheetflow. Because of efforts to drain the marshland for urban development, agriculture and flood control, the Everglades is today half the size it was a century ago. Dubbed the River of Grass for the sawgrass that flourished throughout the marsh, the Everglades is a mosaic of freshwater ponds, prairies and forested uplands that supports a rich plant and wildlife community. Renowned for its wading birds and wildlife, the Everglades is home to dozens of federally threatened and endangered species, including the Florida panther, American crocodile, snail kite and wood stork. The mix of salt and freshwater makes it the only place on Earth where alligators and crocodiles exist side by side.

About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state — 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.

The Sugar Industry's Assault on the Environment and Florida's Politics

[Return to Top](#)

10/19/2010

AlterNet

Farago, Alan

The Sugar Industry's Assault on the Environment and Florida's Politics

A recent move by Florida Governor Charlie Crist to take land out of sugar production to help save the Everglades is monumental on so many levels.

October 18, 2010 |

Put it down, etched in granite: Florida Governor Charlie Crist took land out of sugar production to help save the Everglades. There is one exceptional fact to this achievement, memorialized on Oct. 12. Crist engineered this critical initiative for the environment despite the opposition of Florida Crystals or New Hope Sugar, owned by the Fanjul family. Nothing like that has ever happened before in Florida. Why this political event deserves a monument illuminates the dark politics engulfing the nation.

Sugar is grown on about 700,000 acres around the southern rim of Lake Okeechobee. Originally, it was all Everglades. Any hope of realizing the nation's keystone environmental initiative depends on hugely expensive application of technology and science to vast new cleansing marshes built from lands owned by sugar billionaires. Although there are small sugar farmers who are politically active, it is really the Big Two who provide the energy and funding for the industry in the halls of power: US Sugar and sugar companies owned by the Fanjuls, including Domino Sugar. The Fanjuls are US Sugar's only similarly scaled competitor. That said, the nation's biggest sugar producers are 99 percent of the time on the same side of politics and positions opposed to environmental regulation.

The water supply requirements of sugar production -- flood control in the wet season and supply during the dry -- is out of sync with the natural Everglades. Keeping it that way enhances sugar profits. At the same time, fertilizer runoff and chemicals released by the exposure of wetlands to extensive drying have massively polluted the Everglades. These factors converted the Everglades from a multi-billion dollar economic engine including fisheries, estuaries, and natural habitats valued by the nation into a resilient if flickering shadow. At the same time, Big Sugar has used its profits to become the main obstacle to restoring America's River of Grass.

Crist's accomplishment was historic, albeit on a much reduced scale from his original plan; 187,000 acres at a cost of \$1.75 billion. Crist appointees at the water management district -- mostly Republicans -- saw the moment through, despite the chaos organized by the Fanjuls. For doing the right thing -- Crist's own words, why he conceived the deal -- GOP insiders hounded him from the party. Fanjul interests were early and big contributors to Marco Rubio; the Republican candidate for US Senate. In July, Pepe Fanjul hosted a fundraiser for Rubio, at \$42,500 per ticket.

For many decades, the public purpose of converting sugar lands from production in order to remove pollution has been like trench warfare. Fanjul lobbyists, lawyers and experts have been armed to the gills; all pointing in one direction; delay, delay and more delay. Even after selling property to government, they pushed to the final dotted 'i',

working behind the scenes to hobble environmental agencies from within, whether threatening funding cuts, cajoling, intimidating and applying pressure at any point of weakness.

Lately, in the case of the US Sugar purchase, regular meetings of the water district governing board have been disrupted by anti-tax zealots, funded by the Fanjuls, dressed as the Tea Party with only the vaguest idea who their talking points benefit. As well documented in radical publications like the Wall Street Journal, the wealth of the sugar billionaires exists as a function of corporate welfare; import quotas, price supports, and other subsidies that occur through a malleable Congress and the Florida legislature. The Fanjuls protect their prerogatives with campaign contributions. For example, in the US Senate race one Fanjul patriarch supports Kendrick Meek and the other, Marco Rubio. Recently, Pepe Fanjul was tagged by national news for employing as executive assistant for thirty five years a woman married to a prominent leader of KKK and of the American Nazi Party.

The Fanjuls say the Crist deal is a colossal waste of taxpayer money. But in the scientific community, there is unanimous agreement that the highest priority for the Everglades is to add vast acres of new treatment marshes. These cleansing areas, funded by the public, will clean sugar's pollution because the Florida legislature will not make the polluters pay. As to waste of taxpayer money, that has the Tea Partier's charging to District meetings with their hair on fire, no one has the guts to explain to them how the Farm Bill is what keeps the billions flowing into the pockets of special interests to commandeer our representative democracy.

For the most part, environmental insiders have been silent on the influence of the Fanjuls because the family owns lands that, hopefully, in the future will join to lands acquired through the US Sugar purchase. In other words, unless the Fanjuls fundamentally change their strategy -- squeezing the last dime from their private property and selling only when the peat soil is too exhausted to produce -- Everglades restoration will be hobbled.

Whether or not it was the best deal -- Charlie Crist did something that no national politician, either Democrat or Republican has ever done. He did the right thing for Florida and for the Everglades. Bill Clinton who is Alfie Fanjul's golfing partner, wouldn't do it. Nor would Bob Graham whose willingness to do the Fanjuls' bidding opened a gaping hole in plans to restore the Everglades. Nor Bill Nelson who sticks to bland Everglades talking points neat as Mitch McConnell's hairstyle. It is still the Fanjuls tinkering with dark science. In the press you will read their spin: how the US Sugar purchase takes away from restoration. The backstory is how the Fanjuls funded, in the early 1990's, Wise Use activists to suppress environmental regulations, tying knots in a line straight to today's Tea Party, how the Fanjuls funded African American churches and leaders to oppose the polluter pay referendums and scared off President Clinton in the mid 1990's, how Governor Jeb Bush connived, at urging of Fanjul funded lobbyists, to change water quality standards for the Everglades in 2003 now judged to be violations of federal law, happily using the occasion to divide Florida's environmental community. These are all chapters along the way to Gov. Charlie Crist's acquisition of US Sugar lands.

Does the Tea Party really want to put badges of honor on polluters? Come November 2nd, America will have its answer in Florida.

Everglades restoration 'a wise investment'

10/19/2010

South Florida Business Journal

Brinkmann, Paul

[Return to Top](#)

Restoring the Everglades is a wise investment for Florida, resulting in higher home values, increased tourism and a stronger fishing and boating industry, a new study suggests.

The study, commissioned by the nonprofit Everglades Foundation, shows that, for every dollar spent on Everglades' restoration, \$4.04 in economic benefits will be generated.

Projections in the study indicated a possible additional 442,644 jobs over 50 years. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also estimates there will be 22,966 new short- to mid-term jobs created as a result of actual restoration projects.

Restoration was defined as the federal plan known as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, which is estimated at about \$11.5 billion, but years behind schedule.

The study projects that restoration will produce an increase in economic benefits of about \$46.5 billion, and up to \$123.9 billion, based on an investment of \$11.5 billion.

"As we look to the future of Florida, jobs in new categories are clearly important to the sustainability of our economy," said Barry Johnson, president and CEO of the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce, during a morning teleconference.

Michele Miller, executive director of the Marine Industries Association of Florida, indicated her support for study and its results, noting that, despite the economic downturn, boating is still a \$16 billion industry in Florida.

The study assumes that cleaner water and environment will result in higher real estate values.

Everglades Foundation CEO Kirk Fordham said the study relied on concrete evidence from real estate professionals who said sales can be killed by algae blooms and warnings against eating fish in contaminated waters.

He said the study was partly aimed at combating viewpoints in Washington, D.C., and Tallahassee that we must choose between Everglades restoration and more direct economic stimulus.

"When we invest in protecting and restoring the Everglades, we are also revving up a powerful job creation engine," Fordham said. "Aside from the good-paying jobs in construction, engineering and the sciences that come with restoration projects, we are boosting employment in a wide range of industries."

The foundation spent about \$195,000 on the study, Fordham said.

It assumed that failing to restore the Everglades would result in increasing groundwater salinity and additional damage to ecosystems.

The study did not anticipate any damage associated with rising sea level, which many climate scientists are predicting. The study also left out any possible money value provided by carbon sequestration, or the trapping of carbon greenhouse gases.

Earlier this month, the state finalized the purchase of 26,790 acres of sugar and citrus farmland for Everglades restoration.

The purchase of croplands and wetlands south of Lake Okeechobee is considered critical for improving water quality and ecosystem restoration in the Everglades.

The study, conducted by Roswell, Ga.-based Mather Economics, can be found on the foundation's website.

