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## Editorial: Keep full U.S. Sugar buy alive

### *Editorial*

Now that the state has scaled its U.S. Sugar land purchase back for the time being to less than what's needed for full Everglades restoration - and to protect the Caloosahatchee River system - future purchases are vital.

The cutback to 72,500 acres of sugar cane and citrus to be bought now includes land near the Caloosahatchee that could be used to store and treat runoff before it pollutes that river and its estuary.

That's good, but there's little of the land that would be needed south of the lake to create a flow way for flood years. The dumping of such water west into the Caloosahatchee in 2004 and 2005 created environmental havoc in Lee County.

The state plans to acquire the remainder of the original 180,000 acres, still needed if the once-bright potential of this purchase is to be eventually realized.

The cutback was necessary as state revenues collapsed.

Now the challenge will be to keep the drive alive until more money becomes available, and to push for land purchase as a high priority for a state likely to be in a financial squeeze for years.

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