



EVERGLADES *Action!*

Everglades Action! is our quarterly newsletter providing articles of interest to Foundation stakeholders about restoration developments, water management issues and other ecosystem activities associated with America's Everglades ~ **Spring 2009**

Also in this issue...

- ✓ U.S. Sugar Land Purchase Most Cost-Effective Option to Save the Glades
- ✓ Obama Appoints Floridians to Key Posts
- ✓ Everglades Foundation Welcomes Senior Communications Director and Water Quality Scientist as New Team Members
- ✓ Foundation Scholarships Advance Restoration
- ✓ Obama Signs Bill Funding Everglades Restoration

Kick the Tamiami Trail Project into High Gear to Save Everglades National Park

Kirk Fordham, CEO, Everglades Foundation, was a featured speaker at a Department of Interior event held last fall at Everglades National Park Shark Valley entrance that included Everglades champion and Foundation Vice-Chair Nathaniel Reed.

The Department of the Interior held the event to launch the planning of the second phase of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' project to bridge a portion of the Tamiami Trail, a key restoration initiative to improve water flow into Everglades National Park.

Fordham's remarks stressed the need to accelerate the glacial pace of the project which will have significant environmental benefits for Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. Below are his comments:



Kirk Fordham, CEO, Everglades Foundation, addresses audience members attending the Department of the Interior event at Shark Valley, Everglades National Park.

"Today, I'm encouraged by the announcement that federal agencies will immediately begin efforts to plan for the next phase of elevating Tamiami Trail.

Scientists widely point to this project as the one of the most critical components to saving Everglades National Park and Florida Bay from collapsing forever.

But, since I came to the Everglades Foundation at the beginning of the year, I've been stumped by a nagging question that few people can seem to answer:

Just what is it about the Tamiami Trail that makes building a bridge so darn difficult?

On September 13 of this year, residents of Minneapolis celebrated the reopening of a bridge that collapsed in 2007, killing more than a dozen people and injuring 145 others.

The new \$235 million dollar bridge was built in just more than a year's time after the original structure collapsed.

It was completed on budget and three months ahead of schedule.

The new structure is hailed as a so-called "smart bridge" embedded with 323 sensors that will measure the stresses and strains of traffic and of Minnesota's icy winter weather.

A system of sensors and cameras will feed data on traffic flow,

(continued on page 2)



Everglades Foundation's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) Partners

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accidents, vehicle speeds and other information into a central system.

Other detection devices will activate anti-icing systems when weather conditions warrant.

It is truly a spectacular engineering marvel.

Now I point this out – not because I’m advocating for the construction of a series of bridges that have all the bells and whistles that the new structure in Minneapolis possesses – God knows we don’t need an anti-icing system on the Tamiami Trail!

But, I do raise this today because if the fine people of Minnesota can band together in a crisis and plan, design and construct a \$235 million bridge in one year, surely the people of Florida, working with our Federal partners can do the same.

We too – face a crisis here in this region.

The Everglades continue to decline, wildlife continues to diminish and our water supply remains in serious jeopardy.

We already know that one of the key pieces of the solution to this crisis is the elevation of Tamiami Trail.

We know how to build a bridge and we know, in this economy, there are plenty of folks in the construction business who are looking for work.

I would challenge all of us—the conservation community, Congress, the Corps, Interior, the state of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe and all of those who desire a thriving, dynamic Everglades ecosystem –to take advantage of the opportunity being provided to us today to get this project done quickly, responsibly and cooperatively.”



Nathaniel Reed, Vice-Chair, Everglades Foundation talks about his experiences with Everglades restoration at the Department of Interior event at Shark Valley, Everglades National Park.

U.S. Sugar Land Purchase Most Cost-Effective Option to Save the Glades

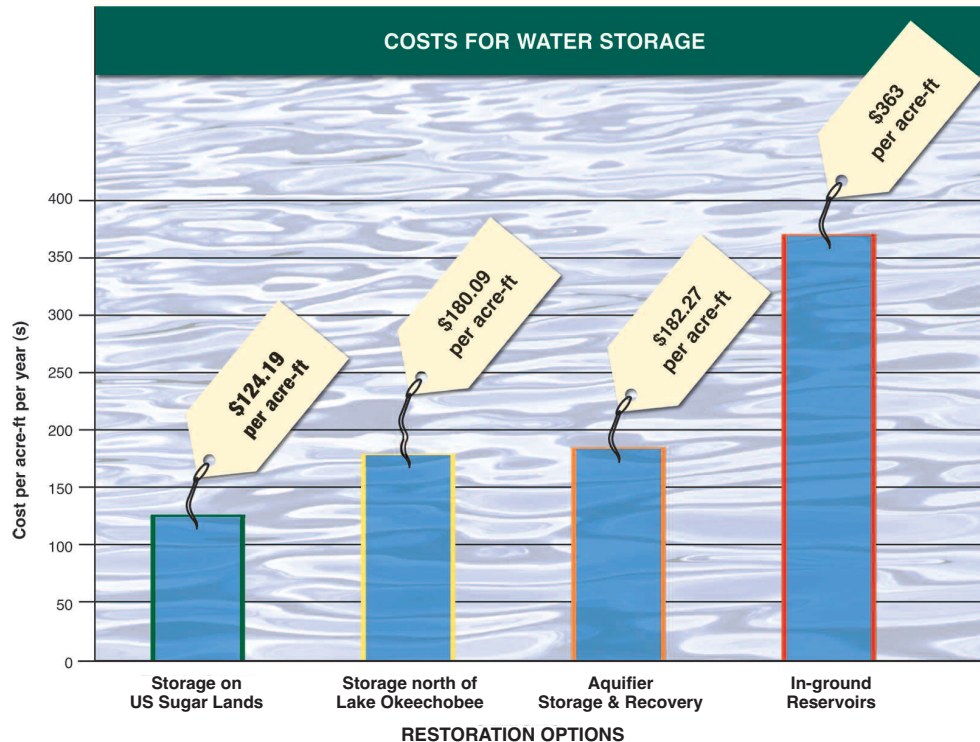
If you were on a tight budget and had the option to choose between a less expensive, energy-efficient automobile that was easier to operate and maintain or an untested, more expensive, harder-to-maintain gas-guzzling luxury model, what would be your choice?

That is essentially the decision that Florida water managers have to make when considering water storage costs associated with Everglades restoration. South Florida’s future freshwater supply and the fate of the Everglades, a national treasure, hang in the balance. Data comparing the cost of various water storage alternatives associated with restoration efforts should make the right decision more obvious to everyone.

The Everglades Foundation examined costs associated with traditional and proven water storage techniques provided by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

There are currently three options: above-ground water storage provided by the acquisition of U.S. Sugar Corporation land south of Lake Okeechobee or water storage north of Lake Okeechobee, reclaimed rock pits known as in-ground reservoirs, and underground Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR), the latter of which provides 90 percent of total water storage in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

Taxpayers stand to pay a significantly greater price if this acquisition is not completed. Water storage solutions on U.S. Sugar land would be the most cost-effective storage option. Storage solutions located on U.S. Sugar land would provide taxpayers **\$6.8 billion** in maintenance and operations savings over the 50-year life of the project or **\$136 million** a year when compared with ASR storage costs.



The purchase of U.S. Sugar land for water storage is the better option for the Everglades plan, costing a lot less and providing more natural storage. It will also let nature help amass water and recharge the aquifers south of the lake. Above-ground storage is far better than pumping underground ASR wells which do nothing to create habitats where both man and wildlife can experience timely benefits.



Obama Appoints Floridians to Key Posts

Carol Browner

Environmental activists have applauded the selection of Carol Browner to fill the White House post dubbed "climate czar" to coordinate energy and climate policy. Her background and experience with the Everglades should serve her well.

Born in Miami in 1955 to two professor parents, Browner grew up hiking in Florida's Everglades and credits that experience with helping her develop a close connection to the natural world.

The University of Florida law school graduate served as Senator Al Gore's senior legislative aide from 1989 to 1991, before heading up the Department of Environmental Regulation in Florida. Her greatest achievement: settling a lawsuit the government had brought against Florida for environmental damage done to Everglades National Park and launching the largest ecological restoration project ever attempted in the U.S., to purify and restore the natural flow of water to the Everglades.

Browner, an attorney who's worked as an environmental consultant for businesses, told Congress in September 2008 that climate change is "one of the greatest environmental, social, and economic challenges our country has ever faced," but also "a tremendous opportunity" to move toward energy independence and new clean jobs. She said it was in the nation's best economic and environmental interests to act quickly.

Browner, herself a member of Obama's transition team, mentioned that the new position would not change the duties of the Secretaries of Energy and Interior or the Environmental Protection Agency administrator. Her role seems to be that of an overseer, promoting smooth cooperation among the different energy and climate entities.

Terrence "Rock" Salt

The Obama administration has named Col. Terrence "Rock" Salt, who has spent 18 years overseeing federal Everglades restoration efforts, as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Works.

"It's a good day for the Everglades," said Kirk Fordham, chief executive officer of The Everglades Foundation. "Finally, the federal government is stepping up to the plate."

The appointment of Salt to this new post could have long-term payoffs for Glades projects moved to the back burner during the Bush administration.

"It is huge to have someone who really understands Everglades issues," Fordham said.

Salt, most recently an advisor to the multiagency South Florida Ecosystems Restoration Task Force, based at Florida International University, spent much of his career restoring the Kissimmee River and the Glades, holding key posts for both the Corps and the Department of Interior.

Sanibel-Captiva Residents Learn About U.S Sugar Deal

More than 150 people recently attended an event in Sanibel sponsored by the Everglades Foundation and the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) recently that featured a panel with South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board Vice Chair, Shannon Estenez, discussing the impact of the U.S. Sugar land acquisition on Southwest Florida estuaries.

"U.S. Sugar, Local Aquatic Preserves and the Everglades: How Getting the Water Right in the Everglades Agricultural Area Helps Our Estuary," also included Dr. Thomas Van Lent, senior scientist, Everglades Foundation and Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF natural resource policy director. Kirk Fordham, CEO, Everglades Foundation, moderated the panel discussion.

Estenez gave a brief overview of the status of the purchase. Van Lent presented a program on restoration alternatives after the land purchase, including the science of storing one million-acre feet of water in the EAA (Everglades Agricultural Area) and positive benefits for Southwest Florida resulting from the acquisition of 180,000 acres south of Lake Okeechobee from U.S. Sugar Corp.

Everglades Foundation Welcomes Senior Communications Director and Water Quality Scientist as New Team Members

Richard Gibbs, a public relations professional with more than 15 years of experience in the field of communications, recently joined the Everglades Foundation as senior director of communications. In addition, **G. Melodie Naja, Ph.D.**, an environmental scientist focused on water quality research was welcomed as a member of the science staff.

Gibbs has lived in South Florida for more than 27 years and prior to joining the Everglades Foundation, Gibbs—a Miami Beach resident and graduate of the University of Florida—held the position of public relations and public affairs manager at DHL's U.S. corporate headquarters in Plantation, Fla. In addition, Gibbs worked for several public relations agencies in the South Florida area.

In his new role, Gibbs will be responsible for advancing the organization's singular mission and priority — restoring America's Everglades through public education and media outreach.

Naja is an environmental scientist with extensive experience as both a private sector consultant and academician in the field of water quality

science. She will lead research initiatives focusing on solutions to address water pollution in the Everglades watershed.

Prior to joining the science team, Naja—a former resident of Montreal, Canada, and graduate of University Henry Poincaré in Nancy, France—was a research officer at the National Research Council of Canada and visiting professor at McGill University in Montreal. She holds a bachelor's degree in physical chemistry, a master's degree in molecular and physical chemistry and her doctorate in environmental physical chemistry and chemical engineering, all from the University Henry Poincaré. Naja has conducted research as a consultant for government institutions, non-governmental organizations and the corporate sector.



Foundation Scholarships Advance Restoration

At last year's Everglades Foundation ForEverglades benefit held at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, several supporters contributed generously to the science scholarship auction item. After appraising scholarship applications and proposals from students at some of the top research institutions in Florida and from across the country, the Foundation's science department selected four highly qualified applicants for the 2009 scholarship program.

These graduate students will work on a number of projects that should contribute significantly to Everglades restoration.

The University of Miami's **Xin Wang** will tackle research focusing on the factors that allow tree island habitats to flourish in the Everglades ecosystem. Wang explains "tree island habitats are nutrient and biodiversity hot spots in the Everglades ecosystem" that are maintained by two key factors: wet and dry periods and nutrient redistribution.

Gregory Koch of Florida International University will delve into how the Everglades landscape influences the carbon cycle and the manner in which carbon is transported through the ecosystem. The study of carbon is critical because of its impact on climate change. "The southern Everglades is marked by a ridge-and-slough hydrologic-drainage pattern and the way this affects the fate of carbon is of significance not only to local managers, but also to worldwide climate change," said Koch.

Shradha Prahbulkar has a nemesis and its name is phosphorus. The Florida International University researcher will attempt to develop a low-cost, electromagnetic sensor to detect phosphorus in Everglades water. High phosphorus levels have been the bane to the health of the Everglades ecosystem, impacting water quality and drastically altering the physical landscape. She intends to add a healthy dose of nanoparticle technology research to help her zero in on the phosphorus invasion.

As an indicator of bay health, sea grasses have been in danger for some time and suffer greatly from elevated water temperature, severe fluctuations in water salinity and oxygen depletion, according to the University of Virginia's **Jennifer Romanowich**. The Virginia Cavalier goes on to explain, "My study proposes comprehensive and novel field studies of combined hydro-sediment and nutrient dynamics in sea grass meadows within Florida Bay under variable wave and tide conditions. With the data gathered, we can begin to predict how sea grass meadows will evolve in light of climate change and how we can best protect and maintain them."

The Everglades Foundation thanks the contributions of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Z. Duke, Gloria and Douglas Pitts, Sr., Sonia and Paul Tudor Jones, The Donald J. Trump Foundation, Deborah and Bjorn Nielsen, Sheila and Karl Wickstrom and Lillian and Thomas O'Malley, Jr., for supporting these young researchers in their efforts to contribute to Everglades restoration.



From left to right: Jennifer Romanowich; Gregory Koch; Rosanna Rivero, GIS Scientist, Everglades Foundation; Xin Wang; Shradha Prahbulkar.

Obama Signs Bill Funding Everglades Restoration

President Obama recently signed into law a bill that features funding for key Everglades restoration projects designed to improve conditions in Everglades National Park, the Kissimmee River Basin and Florida Bay.

This stream of funds will jump-start several major projects and translate into jobs for hundreds of Floridians. This means that industries associated with the health of the Everglades ecosystem and a critical source of clean water — from hotels and tourism to commercial nurseries and fishing — stand to benefit.

"This is great news for the millions of Americans who benefit from the recreational and economic benefits provided by the Everglades. Our congressional delegation and President Obama deserve our thanks for their leadership in reinvigorating the federal commitment to Everglades restoration," said Kirk Fordham, CEO, Everglades Foundation.

The highly anticipated restoration projects that are part of the bill include:

Modified Waters Delivery Tamiami Trail Bridging	\$60 million
C-111-South Dade/Florida Bay Recovery	\$4.4 million
Kissimmee River Restoration	\$28 million
Hoover Dike Reinforcement Project	\$74 million
Seminole-Big Cypress	\$3.5 million
Picayune Strand Restoration	\$24 million
Indian River Lagoon Project Design	\$4.5 million

Everglades Foundation Staff: Kirk Fordham, Chief Executive Officer ~ Mark L. Kraus, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer ~ Stanley Boynton, Vice President of Development ~ Mitzi Moody, Administrative Assistant ~ Melissa Ray, Development Assistant ~ Tom Van Lent, Ph.D., Senior Scientist ~ G. Melodie Naja, Ph.D., Water Quality Scientist ~ Richard Gibbs, Senior Director of Communications ~ Ana Blanco, Program Coordinator ~ Rosanna Rivero, Ph.D., GIS Scientist

The Everglades Foundation is dedicated to ensuring a restored Everglades by creating relevant and creative solutions to complex restoration issues.

www.evergladesfoundation.org



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