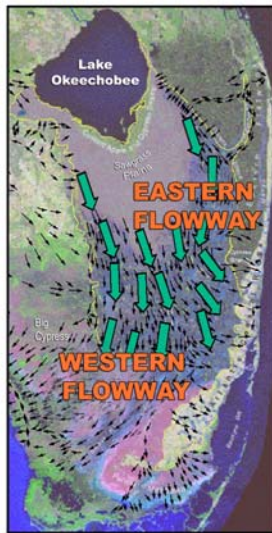


Essential #6

Restore historic sheetflow within the Everglades by removing artificial impediments to flow

The Problem

The concepts of storage and flow are linked, and during wet years three actions are needed. First, sufficient water must be stored in a surface reservoir to supply the Everglades with water during droughts (Essential #3). Next, as much water as possible needs to be treated to remove pollutants, and that water must be conveyed South to the Everglades.



The historic flow of the Everglades has been truncated by a series of canals and dikes that have compartmentalized the remaining Everglades' habitat.



While attempts to modify the Everglades landscape date to the 1800s, the construction of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control Project starting in the late 1940s was unprecedented in scale. The Everglades, once a slow-moving, broad, shallow sheet of water was dammed and ditched until it became a series of reservoirs--with only the Everglades National Park remaining free-flowing. The flow of this sheet of water (“sheetflow”) is recognized as one of the defining characteristics of the Everglades. Nearly all of the basic processes of the Everglades, such as nutrient cycling, wetting and drying patterns, fire, soil formation, and vegetation patterns are dependent on flowing water.

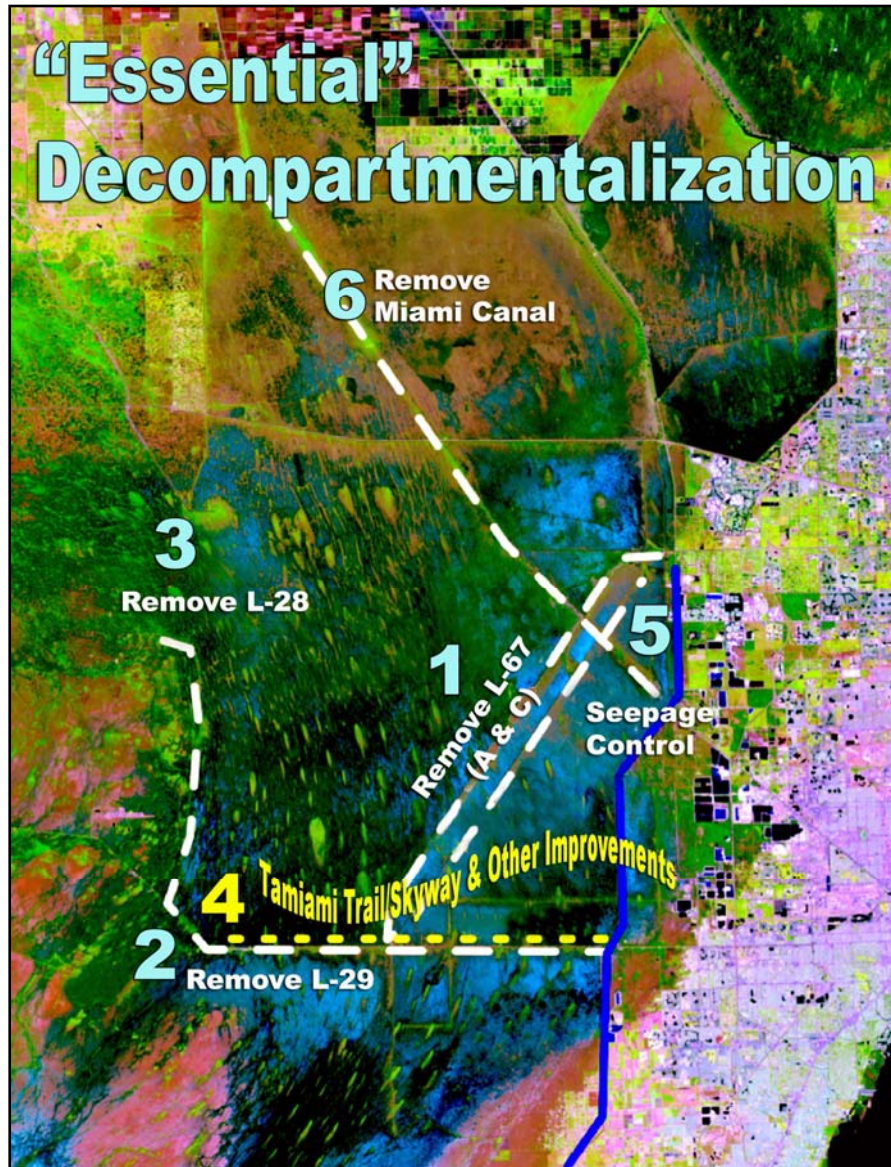
Not all of the remaining Everglades can be restored to a flowing sheet of water. But sheetflow can be recovered in the largest remnant tract of Everglades. By reconnecting the State-owned Water Conservation Area 3 to the federally-owned Everglades National Park, the southern-most piece of the River of Grass can be restored.

This recovery of sheetflow is especially critical to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. Unless the barriers to sheetflow are removed, it will not be possible to put large, wet year flows from Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades. The only alternative is releases to the estuaries. Unless these dams and diversion canals are removed, large flows will simply pile up, obliterating the Everglades. The key to improving the health of the estuaries is the removal of these barriers.

The Everglades cannot be restored without restoring sheetflow. The Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries cannot be protected without restoring sheetflow. Freshwater flows to Florida Bay cannot be restored without restoring sheetflow.

Essential #6

Restore historic sheetflow within the Everglades by removing artificial impediments to flow



The Solution

1. Remove the L-67A and L-67C levees and canals
2. Remove the L-29 levee
3. Remove the L-28 levee
4. Bridge the Tamiami Trail and remove the existing Tamiami Trail (SR 41) as an impediment to sheetflow
5. Implement seepage control along the east side of the Everglades
6. Remove the Miami Canal

The goal of Decompartmentalization is to reconnect large segments of the remaining Everglades, allowing for sheetflow to once again be the predominant hydrologic feature.