

Essential #9

Restore the federal-state partnership

The Problem

The federal government and the State of Florida share responsibility for managing and restoring the greater Everglades ecosystem. From the jurisdictional wetlands and farmlands to the coastal estuaries, there are overlapping duties, powers and programs. For Everglades restoration to succeed, the various state and federal agencies—and their respective laws, rules and programming—must operate in synchrony.

The Essentials for Everglades and Estuaries Restoration—all of them—can only be achieved by the renewal of a full working and funding partnership between the federal government and the State of Florida.

The Everglades restoration is suffering from a lack of leadership in the Congress and within the Administration. Effective leadership is critical to maintaining consensus while implementing restoration programs within an ever-changing political and physical Florida landscape.

The Solution

We need to rebuild public and bipartisan support to implement the federal-state partnership in Tallahassee and Washington. The CERP is of such size and scope that the President and the Governor need to take joint public responsibility for its execution:

- **The President and Governor should each appoint one individual who will be accountable for the federal and state roles and responsibilities, respectively, to lead renewed efforts to implement CERP and other aspects of Everglades restoration.** Additionally, the President and Governor must entrust their representatives on the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force with the authority to raise and address the challenges of Everglades restoration in an open and publically accessible forum. With this strategy, full partnership can be restored and essential actions necessary to move Everglades restoration forward can be developed.
- **A new recognition that important federal assets are at stake, including: Everglades National Park, Biscayne National Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Loxahatchee and several other National Wildlife Refuges, and North America’s only coral reef.** Federal funding for South Florida restoration efforts will need to increase to protect these significant federal interests.
- **Active land acquisition efforts need to be continued and expanded.** The livability of South Florida is at stake--its coastal estuaries, its water supplies, its bordering oceans, gulfs and bays, and the human values dependent on those. The State of Florida should continue to pursue the acquisition of those areas critical to the success of CERP and encourage local and private partnerships to secure protection of these lands.

Pictured here are the national, state, and local staff from the over 20 environmental organizations that form the Everglades Foundation's Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)...

