



# *Everglades Coalition*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

DATE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JULY 30, 2008

CONTACT SARA FAIN, National Co-Chair, Everglades Coalition, 305.546.6689  
KIRK FORDHAM, CEO, The Everglades Foundation, 202.744.2292  
LISA INTERLANDI, Everglades Law Center, 561.310.2772  
MARK PERRY, State Co-Chair, Everglades Coalition, 772.486.3858

RELEASE **EVERGLADES COALITION, EVERGLADES FOUNDATION RELEASE PLAN FOR EAA PURCHASE TO ACHIEVE MAXIMUM RESTORATION BENEFITS**  
*Coalition calls on state and federal government to work towards moving more clean water through the Everglades*

Miami, Fla.—In response to Governor Crist’s announcement to purchase land in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA), the Everglades Coalition and the Everglades Foundation today released its recommendations for plans moving forward with this land to benefit Everglades restoration. These science-based recommendations address the need for storing, cleaning, and moving water through the greater Everglades ecosystem.

“The announcement of this purchase is monumental. As negotiations are underway with landowners, we must ensure that enough lands in the right areas are protected to help restore our River of Grass,” said Sara Fain, National Co-chair of the Everglades Coalition and Everglades Restoration Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association. “We urge the state to consider our recommendations as it proceeds in negotiations to achieve full restoration benefits.”

In 2000, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan envisioned a restored Everglades without incorporating the EAA. This land acquisition now gives decision makers a singular opportunity to improve this plan.

**Among the Coalition’s and Foundation’s immediate recommendations for the EAA purchase include:**

- Expand existing Storage Treatment Areas for water quality improvements by at least 12,000 acres, and increase overall treatment capacity by 45,000 acres;
- Provide at least 1–1.5 million acre feet of storage to alleviate drought conditions in the Everglades and mitigate damaging pulses to the estuaries;
- Look to maximize the natural connection between Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades and consider all options for restoring flow through the EAA

"With this land acquisition, we have the opportunity to design a new regional master plan that restores the Everglades and provides new job opportunities for the communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee," said Kirk Fordham, CEO of the Everglades Foundation.

"Local and state officials should avoid reckless and premature decisions that could limit our options for both Everglades restoration and economic development."

The Coalition and Foundation say the health of the Everglades is not only vital to the environment, but also the economy and quality of life in South Florida. However, the group remains sympathetic to concerns in the community that this may have on the local economy. The Coalition and Foundation recommend that State and local governments promote sustainable agriculture and maintain the region's economic viability in a way that is compatible to restoration.

"It is critically important to ensure that economic development initiatives are compatible with restoration objectives," said Lisa Interlandi, Senior Counsel for the Everglades Law Center. "Thus, we are asking local governments to refrain from making land use changes or approving new development until restoration plans for the region are completed."

"As the state of Florida continues to provide great leadership and initiative for the Everglades, we look to our federal partners for a sustained commitment to support and fund the plan that will restore the health and natural sheetflow of America's Everglades," said Mark Perry, State Co-Chair and Executive Director of the Florida Oceanographic Society. "Only with a strong federal-state partnership can we truly achieve our goals."

**To view the list of full recommendations for the EAA purchase, please visit [www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org) or [www.evergladesfoundation.org](http://www.evergladesfoundation.org).**

**The Everglades Coalition** is an alliance of 49 local, state and national conservation and environmental organizations dedicated to full restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem, from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes into Lake Okeechobee, through the "River of Grass", out to Florida Bay and the Keys. We represent millions of our members. For more information about the Everglades Coalition, please visit [www.evergladescoalition.org](http://www.evergladescoalition.org).

**The Everglades Foundation, Inc.** is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit, charitable organization dedicated to fostering an understanding of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem and its irreplaceable environmental and economic value. Since 1993, the Everglades Foundation has been playing a leadership role in advancing Everglades restoration through, the funding of exceptional science and research, advocacy, public education and awareness.

###