

FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES  
 SPRING 2004  
**EVERGLADES REPORTER**

*FRIENDS ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 28, 2004*

**CERP OR SLURP? CONSTRUCTING THE FUTURE**

**THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT'S ANNEXATION OF THE EVERGLADES**

If anything is clear it is that nothing is ever clear. So it is with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan ("CERP") and its erstwhile overseers: the Corps and the SFWMD.

For several years, the SFWMD and US Army Corps of Engineers worked on a "comprehensive plan" to fix the giant drainage project that, during the past 50 years, had dramatically damaged the Everglades ecosystem. The declared purpose of that plan was to "restore" the Everglades. The CERP, as the plan has come to be known, proposes a very complex, very

expensive plumbing system, then proposes a thirty year implementation schedule for that plan.

Initially, Friends of the Everglades, like others in the environmental community, enthusiastically supported the concept of a comprehensive plan, because it seemed to focus state and federal agencies on the need to protect and restore the Everglades.

Unfortunately, while it is not clear what the goals of the CERP architects really were, it is becoming clearer that restoration was not one of them.

Everglades "restoration" as

currently planned will not work. It will, however, sustain agriculture, sustain urban growth, sustain water management jobs and the Corps' involvement and budget and lead to the eventual destruction of the Everglades as we know it.

**Why?**

The CERP system is entirely artificial. It rejects outright the natural processes that have been crucial to the creation and maintenance of the Everglades for thousands of years. These critical processes, abandoned by the current plan, include the movement of water by gravity, maintenance of sheet-flow through

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**FRIENDS OF THE EVERGLADES ANNUAL MEETING**

It is time again for our Annual Meeting. This year, we are pleased to have as our speaker, John E. Chide, Esq., our long-time legal advisor and litigation specialist, who will talk about the challenges of Everglades restoration, past and present. Mr. Childe, who has

spearheaded environmental protection in Pennsylvania for decades, and most recently navigated Friends' Clean Water Act litigation through the U.S. Supreme Court, will give us a glimpse of the process and a sense of the implications of the outcome.

On hand will also be current and future Friend's of the Everglades Board members to talk about our achievements this last year and our goals for the next.

We will also be electing officers for the next year and discussing how you can help. (See page 4 for details)

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*Officers & Directors*

- David P. Reiner*
- Juanita Greene*
- John Cunningham*
- Polly Edwards*
- Bianca de la Fuente*
- Johnny Jones*
- Tom Sadler*
- Susan Wilson*
- Cindy Lerner*
- Jim Wellington*
- Nancy Brown*
- Joe Browder*
- Lara L. Reiner*
- Karen Mashburn*
- Janet Launcelott*
- Connie Washburn*
- Frank Peterman*
- Herb Zebuth*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**2003** was a difficult year for Everglades restoration. The year began with a postponement of pollution deadlines by the Florida State Legislature at the urging of polluters, a forecast by the SFWMD of a pending drought, which failed to materialize, leading to the destruction of the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. The U.S. Supreme court accepted the SFWMD's appeal in the S-9 case and the Corps issued a blueprint for the \$8 billion dollar Everglades restoration that included precious little restoration - as we had all forecasted.

On the bright side, the ground swell of public indignation over these missteps is growing. The efforts of environmental groups to "connect the dots" for public officials and legislators has intensified and pressure is being brought to bear on those same politicians to ditch the relatively few environmentally insensitive donors in favor of throngs of concerned voters, their children and the future of South Florida.

Friends of the Everglades has continued to press its litigation strategy - forcing governmental agencies to live up to their long term environmental responsibilities. We are currently involved in one State and two Federal pollution lawsuits and have sent notices of intent to sue in three other instances.

We have worked hard to forge alliances with small grassroots environmental groups across South Florida and to push or pull other large and well funded environmental groups into fulfilling their mission, promise and potential.

Friends has continued to build its internet outreach welcoming over 100,000 visitors to our website last year alone. We have just recently launched a public meetings web calendar for all of South Florida and an online web board as a forum for discussions, questions and answers.

Young Friends of the Everglades, under the direction of Educational Outreach Director Jim McMaster, has entered its seventh year of bringing the Everglades to underprivileged inner city children.

Our Conservation Chair, Juanita Greene, mere days from her eightieth birthday, continues to set a pace and path for us to follow.

Vice President, John Cunningham, has recently retired from teaching and has dedicated himself to Everglades issues full time.

We welcomed - and are welcoming - environmental legend Johnny Jones, former state representative Cindy Lerner,

environmental expert Herb Zebuth and former Friends activist Karen Mashburn to the Board this year.

Our future plans include stepped up lobbying activities, establishment of local Friends' chapters, and expansion of our membership and base to high schools and colleges throughout the State - it is after all their future we're fighting for too.

All of these initiatives require your help, in time, and funding and ideas. Now more than ever we need your continued support. There is still hope for the River of Grass.

Finally, I'd like to give my personal thanks to Terry Pruitt who stepped up when we needed it most. It is the unexpected support, like that of Sara Fain last year, that renews our faith that this is a cause worth fighting for. Thank you Terry.

Thank you to all.

**David P. Reiner, President**

## CERP OR SLURP - SFWMD'S ANNEXATION OF THE EVERGLADES (CONT.)

saw-grass marshes, and the primary role of evaporation and rainfall in maintenance of the "Rain Machine" to deliver clean water to the Everglades and south Florida. The SFWMD and Corps planners have rejected these processes because they can't "control" them. It is, after all, about control - isn't it?

The CERP cuts the remnant Everglades ecosystem into pieces and treats each piece as a "tank" which the SFWMD will manage for storage not nature. The completed sys-

tem will restore the Everglades in the same way putting a saltwater aquarium in your living room restores the Pacific Ocean.

There has been no adequate consideration of the water quality at any point in the system. A large percentage of the massive expenditures for the system are dedicated to preserving the very industries that have been systematically poisoning and drying out the Everglades for the last 50 years, particularly agriculture in the EAA.

SLURP! Is the sound we all hear now as agricultural and urban development interests suck up the restoration dollars to feed future growth - growth which will inevitably outpace expectations and again stall restoration in the years to come.

If we allow the state and federal governments to spend \$8 billion dollars, or more, on a project that doesn't restore the Everglades now, it is getting clearer that those governments won't be willing to pay more for another restoration

effort later. CERP, like the Everglades Forever Act, is a stall - the environmental equivalent of Muhammad Ali's infamous "rope-a-dope"

If this all seems too obvious, *or all too clear*, please note that this is what Friends of the Everglades said four years ago when things weren't so clear - or were they?

*See Everglades Reporter*

*Spring 2000*

[www.everglades.org](http://www.everglades.org)

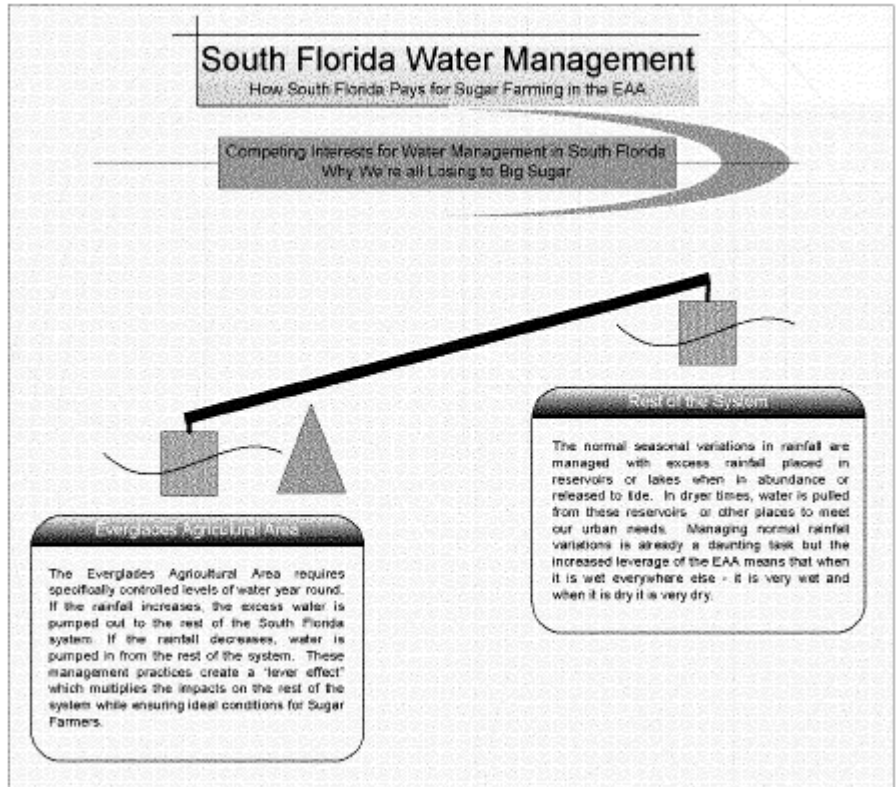
## IT'S NOT JUST THE AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION

For years the battle on the Everglades Agricultural Area ("EAA") front has been phosphorus pollution pouring from the hundreds of thousands of acres of sugar cane growing south of Lake Okeechobee. To be sure the pollution is a critical issue (and not just phosphorus but nitrogen as well) but the ecosystem wide consequences of water management practices came to the fore in 2003.

Confidently predicting a drought year, the SFWMD held Lake Okeechobee at high levels going into the rainy season last year. Mother nature, eschewing the notion of predictability (the very notion the entire Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is predicated upon) unleashed a long and wet summer. Everyone paid for that miscalculation - everyone, that is, except the sugar cane growers whose water levels were strictly controlled.

The Lake swelled to unprecedented levels backing up water throughout the Kissimmee River system delaying long planned drawdown and restoration of Lake Tohopekaliga. Miles of delicate shoreline, replanted and recovering from the last miscalculation three years ago were inundated and destroyed. Millions of gallons of polluted water was dumped into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers blowing out the estuaries and spurring oyster die-offs, fish deformities and deadly algal blooms.

Millions of dollars were lost to the local



tourist and sports fishing economies on both coasts and years of restoration efforts were washed away. Urban areas remained relatively safe though some flooding did still occur. And millions of gallons of precious fresh water was lost to the seas.

Miraculously (or not) the sugar industry had a banner year. Thanks to the SFWMD, water levels in the EAA remained constant and idyllic. The cost of maintaining this sugar Shangri-La fall on the environment, and the economies

that rely on it for survival.

It is a great enough challenge for the Corps and SFWMD to keep us all high and dry on the banks of the Everglades without having to store or dump millions of gallons of water for the EAA.

It is time for us to make a choice between the practicalities of providing flood and drought protection to sugar, the wrong crop in the wrong place, and cyclically destroying the Everglades and its associated systems.

## HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP LATELY?

All of the good things we're able to do are thanks to your commitment and generosity. Friends of the Everglades does not take money from special interests, does not spend money on parties or gifts and its Board of Directors and legion of activists are all volunteers! Still, the lights, phones and computers at the office, the worldwide reach of our website and even the paper on which this newsletter is published will not pay for themselves.

**\$10**   **\$20**  
**\$50**

**If you have renewed - thank you!**  
**If you haven't had the time - please do so now. There is hope - with your help.**  
**An envelope - a check - and your signature is all as it takes to keep us alive.**

**\$100**   **\$250**  
**\$500**

## ERC 10 PPB PHOSPHORUS RULE CHALLENGE

On August 7, 2003, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, in concert with Friends of the Everglades, filed an administrative challenge to the Environmental Regulation Commission's proposed phosphorus pollution reduction rule. The powerful Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Flor-

ida quickly intervened in support of the ERC rule.

The ERC crafted proposed rule made an absolute joke of the 10 ppb pollution standard by delaying any real pollution abatement for years.

The Tribe and Friends withstood a grueling legal blitz of

depositions and discovery battles, culminating in a marathon four week trial, delaying a determination on the challenge until after the December 31, 2003 statutory deadline for adoption of a phosphorus rule has passed. This was at least a moral victory for Friends & the Tribe.

A ruling in this case is expected shortly but, if nothing else, testimony from the trial reveals complicity between FDEP and the sugar industry to delay Everglades restoration indefinitely. For further information and updates go to our website at:

[www.everglades.org](http://www.everglades.org)

## ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 28, 2004 - MIAMI



FAIRCHILD TROPICAL GARDEN is one of the world's preeminent botanical gardens, with extensive collections of rare tropical plants including palms, cycads, flowering trees and vines. Established in 1938, the 83-acre Garden is among the region's most popular visitor attractions and offers a variety of programs in environmental education, conservation and horticulture. An international leader in tropical plant research, Fairchild Tropical Garden plays an important part in preserving the biodiversity of the tropical environment.

For the second year, Friends

of the Everglades will be holding its Annual Meeting in the beautiful new conference facility above the gift shop.

Come spend the day at Fairchild and spend an hour or two with us learning about Friends and the Everglades.

Another event worth checking out this weekend is the Palm & Cycad Show and Sale, March 27 and 28, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. presented by the South Florida Palm Society.

Friends of the Everglades' Annual Meeting is the time when the Board of Director's is introduced to and confirmed by the members at large. The Board of Direc-

tors nominations for the coming year are:

- David P. Reiner
- Juanita Greene
- John Cunningham
- Polly Edwards
- Bianca de la Fuente
- Johnny Jones
- Tom Sadler
- Susan Wilson
- Cindy Lerner
- Jim Wellington
- Nancy Brown
- Joe Browder
- Lara L. Reiner
- Karen Mashburn
- Janet Launcelott
- Connie Washburn
- Frank Peterman
- Herb Zebuth

The Board of Directors are all unpaid volunteers who have pledged to continue the mission of our founder, Marjory Stoneman Douglas,

to protect, restore, and preserve the Greater Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades Ecosystem.

Fairchild Tropical Garden is located at 10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables (Miami), FL, 33156 USA. 305/667-1651 - [www.ftg.org](http://www.ftg.org)

