



Compiled by: South Florida Water Management District
(for internal use only)

Total Clips: 7

Headline	Date	Outlet	Reporter
U.S. Sugar settles class action	10/02/2009	South Florida Business Journal	
Everglades Contractor Suing Water District	10/02/2009	Southeast Ag Network	
U.S. Sugar Corp. begins harvest, expects 6.4 million tons of cane	10/02/2009	Palm Beach Post - Online	SUSAN SALISBURY
St. Lucie County's salivating over this proposed new campus	10/01/2009	Port St. Lucie News Tribune	Westbury, Anthony
St. Lucie River looks good on surface, but still has problems	10/01/2009	Stuart News	Samples, Eve
We steal for sugar or the silent heist!	10/01/2009	Naples Daily News - Online	Naples Daily News
Everglades reservoir halt leads to lawsuit	09/30/2009	Palm Beach Post	Quinlan, Paul

U.S. Sugar settles class action

10/02/2009

[Return to Top](#)

South Florida Business Journal

U.S. Sugar Corp. said Friday it has agreed to settle a class action lawsuit brought by shareholders and members of its Employee Stock Ownership Plan for an \$8.4 million payment to members of the settlement class.

An additional payment of \$7.5 million, less plaintiffs' attorneys' fees, will be made if U.S. Sugar closes its pending land sale with the South Florida Water Management District, according to a news release.

The company said the settlement was filed with the U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida.

Upon approval by the court, all actions against all defendants will be dismissed with prejudice, which means that the court ruling is final and the claims cannot be refiled.

This settlement was reached without any party admitting any liability.

"All of the defendants in this case have denied and continue to deny any wrongdoing, and indeed, most of the claims have already been dismissed by the court," said Robert Coker, U.S. Sugar's senior vice president of public affairs.

In the settlement, U.S. Sugar said it entered into the settlement solely to avoid the cost, disruption and uncertainty of continued litigation.

Upon court approval, settlement payments will be shared by the classes of shareholders and ESOP participants.

Payments will be made directly to shareholders and deposited into the ESOP accounts of ESOP participants. Federal

laws and regulations regarding retirement funds will apply to the payments for ESOP participants.

Everglades Contractor Suing Water District

10/02/2009

[Return to Top](#)

Southeast Ag Network

Everglades Contractor Suing Water District

by Gary – October 1st, 2009

(From News Service Florida, Sept 30) South Florida taxpayers already on the hook for millions in Everglades restoration may end up paying for some work that is not being done. That's because a contractor whose project was cancelled to make way for the purchase of 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar Corp. is crying foul. Worse for regional water managers, Kansas-based Black & Veatch is filing suit in West Palm Beach asking for at least \$2.4 million for revenue not received when the retention pond project the company was working on got cancelled to pay for the \$536 million U. S. Sugar deal. South Florida Water Management officials have been pretty tight-lipped about the suit, but said Wednesday the complaint didn't hold water. "The South Florida Water Management District has met and exceeded all its financial obligations to Black & Veatch under the mutual contract both parties agreed upon," district spokesman Gabe Margasak said.

U.S. Sugar Corp. begins harvest, expects 6.4 million tons of cane

10/02/2009

[Return to Top](#)

Palm Beach Post - Online

SUSAN SALISBURY

CLEWISTON — U.S. Sugar Corp. kicked off Florida's 2009-10 sugar cane harvest early Thursday and will begin processing the first railcars of cane at the Clewiston Sugar Factory today.

The harvesting and processing operations run 24/7 during the October through April harvest season.

"The drought broke in May, and with more normal rainfall over the summer growing season, we are anticipating a slightly better crop than the weather-shortened crops of the last few years," said Judy Sanchez, director of corporate communications.

Sanchez said the company plans to harvest 165,000 acres, which should yield about 6.4 million tons of sugar cane and 680,000 tons of refined sugar.

"Both the cane and beet sugar harvests are now under way across the country, and this should continue to ensure that the market has adequate sugar supplies. Market rumors of domestic sugar shortages over the past few months have proved groundless. While there currently is a world shortage of sugar, the USDA is currently projecting a sugar surplus in the U.S. for this crop year," Sanchez said.

Like other Florida growers, U.S. Sugar's 2008-09 crop, 5.65 million tons of cane, was affected by freeze, drought and lack of irrigation water. U.S. Sugar imported 75,000 tons of raw sugar from Mexico during May to August for refining - enabling the Clewiston Refinery to set numerous production records with 674,000 tons of refined sugar.

All of the company's refined sugar products are marketed by United Sugars Corp., a cooperative that includes U.S. Sugar and beet sugar farmers and processors American Crystal Sugar and Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative.

In May, the South Florida Water Management District approved a \$536 million deal to purchase 73,000 acres of U.S. Sugar's farmland for Everglades restoration.

Florida's other two sugar producers, Florida Crystals Corp., West Palm Beach, and the Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Belle Glade anticipate starting their harvests later this month.

St. Lucie County's salivating over this proposed new campus

10/01/2009

Port St. Lucie News Tribune

Westbury, Anthony

St. Lucie County's salivating over this proposed new campus

[Return to Top](#)

By Anthony Westbury

Posted September 30, 2009 at 7:27 p.m.

Most people wouldn't know a "regional intermodal logistics campus" if one hit them in the face.

And yet two St. Lucie cities have given their blessing to one.

Allow me to translate.

Think of the intermodal whatsit as a gargantuan freight yard and distribution center.

Now that we're talking the same language, a little history is in order.

For years, state and regional transportation planners have sought to reduce truck traffic congestion in South Florida, especially on Interstate 95.

Many of those trucks come out of the ports of Miami, Port Everglades and Palm Beach.

If the ports are to expand without adding to traffic congestion, some of their activities could be moved to an inland site, a inland port.

The Port of Palm Beach is looking for suitable sites and hopes to examine candidates by mid-October.

Three of the six sites submitted are in Palm Beach County: Belle Glade and two sites straddling the Beeline Expressway. Another site is Moore Haven in Glades County and another is near Lake Placid, northwest of Lake Okeechobee.

And then there's "ours" — a 7,000-acre piece of land that fronts Glades Cutoff Road and the rail line in western St. Lucie County — a few miles west of Tradition and Torrey Pines.

The land is owned by three separate agricultural and rock mining interests. It has direct rail access, plenty of space for expansion and is accessible from I-95 and the turnpike.

The inland port concept can be split into two parts, according to Fort Pierce attorney Johnathan Ferguson, who represents one of the landowners.

The Port of Palm Beach would have sovereignty over a fenced 500-acre parcel that would include Customs and other port-related uses. A further 3,500 acres outside the fence would be set aside for warehousing, off-loading and possibly manufacturing facilities to support the port. It's this larger area that has local politicians salivating over jobs, jobs and more jobs — maybe 25,000 of them.

But hold your horses. As you might expect with a prize this big, there's a whole lot of politics involved.

The sites nearest Lake Okeechobee may have problems because they're also close to the Everglades Restoration area; one could impinge on Gov. Charlie Crist's controversial land deal with U.S. Sugar.

The cities of Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce, however, have officially embraced the concept in principle, ahead of seeing any details. A couple of county commissioners I've spoken to seem less certain.

Port St. Lucie is entertaining the prospect of the site being annexed into the city, believing it could become a gigantic economic engine to fuel our ailing economy. Indeed an earlier proposal from the three landowners made assets out of our high foreclosure and unemployment rates. Plenty of affordable housing nearby. Workforce ready to go!

We're at the beginning of what will certainly be an extremely long process. In addition to annexation, the city's comprehensive plan would have to be amended. And there will be hundreds of hours of discussion and argument

about a proposal this huge.

And that's only if we're taken seriously by a group of port officials who might prefer this thing to stay well to our south.

Ferguson is trying to remain realistic.

"Candidly, we're probably not at the top of the list. However, a couple of the other sites have environmental or access issues. It'll be a long process, but if we're in position to go ahead, some of the others may fall away. We're positioning ourselves to be the logical location."

We should know if we are that logical by Oct. 16. Then the fun will really begin. I'll keep you posted.

St. Lucie River looks good on surface, but still has problems

10/01/2009

Stuart News

Samples, Eve

St. Lucie River looks good on surface, but still has problems

By Eve Samples

Posted September 30, 2009 at 7:29 p.m.

[Return to Top](#)

I'm kneeling on the bow of a 22-foot twin hull, staring at the Gates of Hell.

At least that's what Karl Wickstrom calls them.

They're the St. Lucie Locks — the spouts where hundreds of billions of gallons of polluted freshwater from Lake Okeechobee have poured into the St. Lucie River over the years.

It's a pleasantly cool morning (by September-in-Florida standards), and the sky is the color of plumbago blooms.

But we don't spot much wildlife.

We don't see mullet leaping, and there aren't many birds in sight — except for the 100 or so turkey vultures sunning themselves near the locks.

These birds flock to death.

It makes me wonder why they're so interested in the our river.

"Get out of here!" Wickstrom yells at the grumpy flock.

They don't budge. They barely glance at us.

So we turn around and make our way back up the South Fork, spotting few boats — and one big "For Sale" sign parked on the lawn of a riverfront home. It's a reminder that living on the river in Martin County isn't as appealing as it was decades ago.

I'm on the boat with Wickstrom — the founder and editor-in-chief of Florida Sportsman magazine — and his daughter, Holly, to get an up-close look at the condition of the St. Lucie River.

It's not encouraging.

Wickstrom, who knows Florida's waters as well as just about anyone, talks about the damage the Lake O discharges have wreaked as they carried silt to the river's floor and suffocated marine life.

Over the years, the freshwater influx has killed sea grass and oysters and driven away species such as the spotted sea trout.

Smaller fish that feed dolphin, turtles and eagles can't survive either.

You may not think about this dearth of life when you're driving over the Roosevelt Bridge or enjoying the views from downtown Stuart's Riverwalk — but it's there. It's under the surface.

"It's the unseen horror," Wickstrom said. "If it had been on ground, it would have been stopped years ago."

Talking to Wickstrom is a reminder of the importance of a lawsuit, filed by the Rivers Coalition in 2006, against the Army Corps of Engineers.

As the case — which aims to stop the discharges and collect some \$50 million in lost property values — moves toward a hearing in federal court this year, it's easy to get complacent about our river's suffering.

This year's dry weather has meant Lake O has stayed at levels that don't threaten the dike that encircles it. That means the Army Corps hasn't discharged water from the lake to the river since December, according to a corps spokeswoman.

We're not seeing the neon-green algae blooms that choked the river after heavy discharges in 2005.

The health department signs warning people to avoid contact with the water are long gone.

It's easy to think, "It looks OK, so it must be OK."

But our river is not OK.

Wickstrom has been watching the deterioration of the river for the decade he has been in Martin County. He talks about it with his rare strain of salty optimism.

He mourns the loss — but he believes the Rivers Coalition lawsuit has already done some good by influencing the state's decision to buy 73,000 acres of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s land for Everglades restoration. That massive undertaking would send Lake O's excess water south — instead of into our backyards.

And if the discharges stop, Wickstrom thinks our river will ultimately return to health.

Maybe someday we'll all be able to take a trip down the South Fork of the river without looking at the locks in horror. Maybe they won't be the Gates of Hell anymore.

Maybe they'll be gates to our past.

Eve Samples is a columnist for Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers. This column reflects her opinion. Contact her at (772) 221-4217 or eve.samples@scripps.com

We steal for sugar or the silent heist!

10/01/2009

Naples Daily News - Online

Naples Daily News

[Return to Top](#)

Posted October 1, 2009 at 1 p.m.

Collier County residents are being "left out of the sunshine" by the appointed board of the SFWMD!

The Governing Board of the SFWMD out of West Palm Beach has chosen to "quickly and stealthily" reorganize and dissolve the Big Cypress Basin in Collier County before the residents are aware of what they are doing.

The Governing Board is doing this so that they can get their hands on the tax dollars generated in Collier County to purchase the Big Sugar Lands around Clewiston.

In 1977 through the efforts of Mary Ellen Hawkins, legislation was created to form the Big Cypress Basin in Collier County. This was done so that the money generated from Collier County stayed here and benefitted the residents of Collier County.

Mary Ellen Hawkins saw early on that if the SFWMD Governing Board was on the east coast they would be biased about the expenditure of money for the needs of the residents on the east coast.

Since June 2009 the SFWMD Governing Board out of West Palm Beach has been on an "accelerated agenda" to dismantle the staff of the Big Cypress Basin so that they are "absorbed" by the West Palm Beach staff.

The next step would be to then transfer all the money collected from Collier County to the east coast SFWMD operations.

Why is this important? Based on the drainage and ecology of Collier County, the purchase of the US Sugar Lands would never in any way shape or form help the residents of Collier County economically or hydrologically.

If this is allowed to proceed then flooding of homes and loss of personal property will increase in Collier County beginning this year.

Big Cypress Basin is critical to the residents of Collier County and its ecology. The Governing Board of the SFWMD needs to know that an appointed board cannot "on a whim" repeal legislation approved by the people.

The Governing Board of the SFWMD in West Palm Beach needs to know this is a "gross misuse of public funds."

Tweet: <http://twitter.com/dennisvasey> or Email: dennisvasey@collierswcd.org/

Everglades reservoir halt leads to lawsuit

09/30/2009

Palm Beach Post

Quinlan, Paul

Everglades reservoir halt leads to lawsuit

By PAUL QUINLAN

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, September 29, 2009

WEST PALM BEACH — Even after the state pulled the plug on construction of a massive Everglades restoration reservoir, a new lawsuit threatens to add to the nearly \$280 million South Florida taxpayers have spent on the cancelled project.

One of the contractors, the Kansas-based company Black & Veatch, says that the South Florida Water Management District's slow decision-making caused their 11-month portion of the job - which included design of pumps, bridges and other waterworks - to stretch approximately two years.

"There was indecision on what exactly they wanted," said attorney Mike Piscitelli. That cost Black & Veatch money, the company says.

[Return to Top](#)

They wrote the water agency last October, asking for \$2.4 million on top of the contract's agreed-upon \$3.4 million price tag. The district refused to pay more.

The water district declined to comment in detail on the suit, which was filed Sept. 14 in Palm Beach County Circuit Court.

"It's in litigation, and the district is preparing to file the responsive pleadings," said spokesman Randy Smith.

The agency killed the reservoir project in December so that the larger Everglades restoration plan could be reworked to include the 73,000 acres of farmland Gov. Charlie Crist has proposed buying from U.S. Sugar Corp. for \$536 million. The change-of-course has proven expensive. The district paid about \$25 million in fines and penalties to the primary contractor, Barnard Parsons Joint Venture, to have them put the project on hold and, ultimately, walk away.

About 200 workers who say they were promised several years' work were suddenly laid off and also are suing, alleging that Barnard Parsons owes them for unpaid overtime.

