



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

Total Clips: 5

Headline	Date	Outlet	Reporter
<a href="#"><u>U Saving the Everglades means busting some political dams</u></a>	11/23/2009	Providence Journal	JOSEPH Z. DUKE III
<a href="#"><u>U Next Phase of River of Grass Restoration Public Planning Begins</u></a>	11/20/2009	TCPalm.com	
<a href="#"><u>U County commission decision ends urgent need for landfill</u></a>	11/19/2009	Sun Sentinel - Online	
<a href="#"><u>U Everglades: North Florida is committed</u></a>	11/19/2009	Florida Times-Union	
<a href="#"><u>WATER DISTRICT SUPPOSED TO PROTECT, NOT SELL OUT, LAKE O</u></a>	11/19/2009	Palm Beach Post	

## Saving the Everglades means busting some political dams

11/23/2009

[Return to Top](#)

Providence Journal

JOSEPH Z. DUKE III

PALMETTO BAY, Florida -- My family connection to South Florida and the Everglades began with my grandparents, so when Nathaniel Reed asked me to join the Everglades Foundation to help with restoration, I was honored to say yes.

Albert Gammage, my grandfather, was a circuit preacher in South Florida. In 1921, soon after my mother, Alice, was born in Tarpon Springs, he moved his wife and eight children to Miami to start a permanent church there.

The Everglades were, for the most part, in a natural state when they arrived and created a wilderness boundary to the west of Miami. But change was coming quickly to the Everglades. The drainage project that would transform the "River of Grass" into productive agricultural land was under way, along with construction of the Tamiami Trail, which would cross it. Soon the shallow and slow-flowing, 100-mile-wide river from Lake Okeechobee to Florida Bay would be strangled.

The Glades weren't widely regarded as beautiful or wondrous then. They were "God-forsaken," "hellish" and "mosquito-infested" in the common sentiment of the time.

When I was a young boy, in the 1950s, my father and uncles would take me fishing in the mangrove creeks and backwater sloughs of the Ten Thousand Islands. We launched our wooden skiffs from Chokoloskee, Everglades City and Marco Island. We fished for snook and spent at least part of the day lost in a confusing but beautiful natural maze.

To get there, we crossed the Everglades on the Tamiami Trail west from Miami. I didn't know at the time that the road we traveled was blocking the water flow and backing it up to the north, drowning ancient tree islands and wildlife. The Trail, along with miles of dikes and canals, was choking off the life-giving flow of fresh water supplying Florida Bay, to the south.

By then, Lake Okeechobee was firmly under man's control and no longer flooded its banks to the south as it had forever; most of its waters were diverted through canals east and west to the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

As a child, nature seemed to me immense and indestructible. As an adult, I've come to know how vulnerable it is.

I've learned that without a flow of fresh water, Florida Bay, the sprawling estuary at the southern tip of the state, has become too salty. The bay historically had a mix of fresh water from the Everglades and salt water from the Gulf of Mexico and was the perfect nursery for shrimp, lobsters and reef fish of the Florida Keys. The entire ecosystem now teeters on collapse.

I've joined with my fellow board members of the Everglades Foundation who share my commitment to restore the flow of fresh water.

The engineering to do it is not technically difficult: Build water-storage facilities to amass enough water to replenish the ecosystem and construct filtering marshes into which the floodwaters of Lake Okeechobee would be directed and cleansed. At the same time, build a bridge over part of the Tamiami Trail to let that water flow south.

The actual work is simple. The hard part is convincing some of our policy makers that it must be done.

You may have heard a lot lately about the plan for the South Florida Water Management District to buy U.S. Sugar Corp. land. If you fly over the land south of Lake Okeechobee, you'll understand why Gov. Charlie Crist so strongly favors the plan. Where once were only Everglades, today is mostly sugar-cane fields.

The plan would take some 73,000 acres of agricultural lands out of sugar-cane production and convert them into water storage and filtering marshes. The marshes would be flooded, allowing the natural process by which plants take up nutrients to remove the high levels of pollutants. The clean water would then flow south out of the marshes, eventually ending up mixing with the salt water of Florida Bay, as it did for eons before man interfered.

To realize this goal, we have to cross a political minefield. Opposition to the plan comes from a handful of powerful interest groups. The role of the Everglades Foundation is to counter the opposition with science-based advocacy. Our mission is to engage and motivate people to restore the Everglades, the only natural system of its kind in the world and America's only subtropical national park.

We have a briefly opened door to acquire the land we need and should do so. If we miss the opportunity, we risk losing one of the last great places on Earth.

Joseph Z. Duke III, a member of the board of the Everglades Foundation and president of Jacksonville-based Off Road Holdings, is an industrial designer and entrepreneur.

---

## Next Phase of River of Grass Restoration Public Planning Begins

11/20/2009

TCPalm.com

[Return to Top](#)

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board has approved taking the next step in the public planning process for Everglades restoration on land being acquired from the United States Sugar Corporation. The second phase of planning involves the in-depth analysis of data generated during 15 project planning workshops to determine the most beneficial restoration project features.

"The extensive public participation so far in this planning process is helping to ensure that the U.S. Sugar property can provide maximum benefit to America's Everglades, South Florida's environment and residents," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. "The public input will help us move forward with this opportunity to restore the Everglades on a scale never before envisioned."

The first phase in evaluating conceptual project configurations began in January 2009 with a series of SFWMD Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) Issues Workshops. A broad range of agricultural, environmental, governmental, tribal and public interests came together with the goal of determining viable configurations for constructing a managed system of water storage and treatment to support ecosystem restoration.

Working collaboratively with SFWMD engineers and hydrologists, the stakeholders generated nine conceptual configurations identifying specific water storage, water quality treatment and conveyance features. Each configuration was evaluated for its performance in meeting Everglades restoration goals.

"The public process is a critical component of the District's efforts to maximize the environmental benefits offered by

this historic acquisition," said Ken Ammon, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects.

"Acquiring this land offers water managers the unprecedented opportunity to protect Florida's coastal rivers and estuaries while improving the delivery of cleaner water and reducing phosphorus deliveries from entering America's Everglades."

The second phase of the public planning process seeks to build on the work done so far by achieving several goals, including:

- Identifying the best performing features from the nine configurations.
- Developing optimized configurations based upon the best performing features.
- Refining evaluation tools to better test the performance of the optimized configurations.
- Utilizing all data collected to develop preferred/recommended conceptual plans for consideration by the SFWMD Governing Board.

Phase II began with an Everglades Science Workshop hosted by the District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) this week. The forum reviewed the latest science associated with hydrologic stage and flow targets and presented modeling results and ecological data that support restoration of the greater Everglades ecosystem.

The next River of Grass public planning meeting of the WRAC Issues Workshop will be held on December 18 in West Palm Beach.

For more information about the project planning process and the acquisition, visit [www.sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass](http://www.sfwmd.gov/riverofgrass).

---

## County commission decision ends urgent need for landfill

11/19/2009

Sun Sentinel - Online

They agree to build waste-to-energy plant capable of burning up to 3,000 tons of trash daily

By Jennifer Sorentrve, The Palm Beach Post

Palm Beach County commissioners tentatively agreed Wednesday to build a waste-to-energy plant capable of burning up to 3,000 tons of trash a day, eliminating for decades the need for a new western landfill.

The Solid Waste Authority has already sold \$70 million in bonds to buy land and build a new landfill and has begun paying interest on the money.

That money cannot be used to build the new plant, which could cost \$600 million to \$700 million. County Commissioner Karen Marcus, chairwoman of the Solid Waste Authority's governing board, said it was unclear what the authority will do with the bond money now that there's no immediate need for the landfill.

"Basically, the construction of this mass burn facility will increase the life our existing landfill and diminish the immediate need for a new landfill," said Dan Pellowitz, assistant to the authority's executive director. "We can defer construction of a landfill for some time."

As recently as last month, Solid Waste Authority managers said the landfill off of Jog Road, just north of 45th Street, would run out of room in 2024.

Commissioners were considering purchasing land west of 20-Mile Bend for a new landfill, but dropped the idea Oct. 7. They hoped instead to save their money by swapping land they already had for land owned by the South Florida Water Management District that was more suitable.

The water district is poised to purchase 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar Corp. for Everglades restoration. But since much of that land may not be needed for restoration, commissioners said they would explore trading for some of that land.

[Return to Top](#)

The authority owns 1,600 acres next to the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, the northernmost remnant of the Everglades. It once planned to build a landfill on the property, but county commissioners agreed in 2007 to pursue alternate locations. The decision came after environmentalists objected to the site.

Marcus said she still hopes to swap the authority's site with the district, but there is no longer a pressing need to finalize the deal, since plans for a new waste-to-energy plant will buy time.

"We have time right now," Marcus said. "A lot of time, as opposed to the push we were under."

A consultant working for the authority told county commissioners on Wednesday that the county won't need a new landfill until 2045 if it builds a plant that can burn 3,000 tons of trash a day, Marcus said.

The unit creates energy as it burns the trash, which can then be sold by the authority.

The new facility would almost eliminate the need to put unburned or unprocessed trash in the landfill, Pellowitz said.

---

## Everglades: North Florida is committed

11/19/2009

Florida Times-Union

[Return to Top](#)

In a September statewide poll, 79 percent of North Florida voters indicated that Everglades restoration was personally important to them.

The top reasons for support included ensuring the freshwater drinking supply, saving jobs in the tourism, boating and fishing industries, and protecting wildlife like the Florida panther and bald eagle.

With the pending historic purchase of 73,000 acres of sugar cane land by the state of Florida, Floridians' hopes of witnessing substantial Everglades restoration were raised considerably. Environmental restoration efforts have been remarkable.

Along the Kissimmee River, which is halfway through its restoration process, there has been an immediate rebound of wildlife.

The progress achieved along the Kissimmee has been a bonanza for individuals and families who relish the fishing, paddling, camping and hunting opportunities made possible by this successful effort.

In Southwest Florida, where 55,000 acres of former wetlands known as the Picayune Strand are being restored, there are deer, wood stork, black bear and Florida panthers moving back into their original habitat.

To build on these successes, Everglades restoration must take the next steps:

- We must complete several spans of bridging over portions of Tamiami Trail — a roadway which currently serves as a dam to water that once flowed freely into Everglades National Park.
- The state should move forward with a critical project to fix the C-111 Canal, which will direct freshwater to the southern Everglades and northeastern Florida Bay.
- Gov. Charlie Crist's bold proposal to purchase land from U.S. Sugar Corp. must move forward. This achievement will protect the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and their estuaries from damaging freshwater releases, while providing an enormous new supply of clean water to sustain the Everglades and 7 million Floridians' drinking water supply.
- The state must restore water quality in the highly polluted Lake Okeechobee watershed. The abundance of nitrates and other pollutants poses great risks to the Everglades.

Florida is running out of time to salvage what is left of the Everglades. Working on a bipartisan basis, lawmakers should secure funding and implement key Everglades restoration projects.

Our children will judge us harshly if we fail in our responsibility to protect this spectacular, God-given natural resource

---

## WATER DISTRICT SUPPOSED TO PROTECT, NOT SELL OUT, LAKE

O

[Return to Top](#)

11/19/2009

Palm Beach Post

Lake Okeechobee is often referred to as the liquid heart of South Florida. However, for businesses like mine that directly rely on the lake as its economic engine, it's more than just the heart but the entire respiratory system.

My family has operated Slim's Fish Camp on Torry Island near Belle Glade for the past 70 years. We have survived many natural events such as droughts, tropical storms and hurricanes. However, we hadn't factored in the political risk of being sold out by the very agency (South Florida Water Management District) that has a mandate from the Legislature to protect Lake Okeechobee.

Two years ago, the Legislature adopted the Northern Everglades Plan that was designed to improve water quality and timing of water releases into the lake. The implementation of this plan has been shelved in favor of buying some of U. S. Sugar Corp.'s land, just because it's an "opportunity."

The water managers have said they made a good deal when they agreed to pay a contractor \$13 million to put a half-finished reservoir intended to feed water to the parched Everglades, which they also have a mandate to preserve, on hold for six months and now another \$12 million to walk away from it. This reservoir should have been the priority, as it could have been completed in 2011 or 2012. It was one of the projects that could have been used to store some of the water that they will be dumping into the ocean for the next 30 years as they buy land that is encumbered with 20-year leases.

The water managers tout eco-tourism as part of the economic transition for the Glades community, yet they rip the very foundation from under this plan by shelving plans to protect the lake.

Water managers and visionaries: It's time to get the priorities straight. A comprehensive plan should be developed that will resolve the underlying political struggles associated with the often conflicting demands that impact water supply and quality between our region's cities, agriculture and environmental interest.

CHARLES L. CORBIN, president, Slim's Fish Camp Inc.

Belle Glade

Copyright © 2009 Palm Beach Newspapers, Inc.

