<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Outlet</th>
<th>Reporter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Crist proposes $2.1 billion for environment</td>
<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>Associated Press (AP)</td>
<td>SKOLOFF, BRIAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Crist proposes $2.1 billion for environment</td>
<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>Bradenton Herald - Online</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Crist proposes $2.1 billion for environment</td>
<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>Forbes - Online</td>
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</tr>
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<td>MSNBC.com</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>Palm Beach Post - Online</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Crist proposes $2.1 billion to fund environmental projects in 2010 budget</td>
<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>Washington Examiner - Online</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF</td>
</tr>
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<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>WKRG-TV - Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>01/22/2010</td>
<td>WTVT-TV - Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>WOFL-TV - Online</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>WJXT-TV - Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida Forever on Crist's budget</td>
<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>Sarasota Herald-Tribune - Online</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF The Associated Press</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>St. Augustine Record, The</td>
<td>BRIAN SKOLOFF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Sugar Some sugarcane crop damaged from cold</td>
<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>News Chief - Online, The</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crist Proposes $2.1 Billion For Environment</td>
<td>01/23/2010</td>
<td>JustNews.com</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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NAPLES -- Gov. Charlie Crist on Friday proposed including $2.1 billion in the state's 2010-2011 budget to protect Florida's environment, including $50 million for Everglades restoration.

Crist made the announcement at the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, one of several stops he planned Friday in southwest Florida.

The governor also said he wants to devote $50 million to the Florida Forever program to purchase and preserve land throughout the state. Florida Forever wasn't funded last year because of budget constraints.

"Because of our challenging economy of last year, we held back on continuing that important legacy," Crist said. "This year, I'm honored to revive it."

According to the governor's office, since 1963, the state has committed $7.5 billion to preserve about 3.8 million acres of land in Florida.

Eric Draper, director of Audubon of Florida, called the resurrection of Florida Forever "good news," noting the state lost momentum by not funding it last year.

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**US Sugar** Some sugarcane crop damaged from cold
01/23/2010
News Chief - Online, The
CLEWISTON, Fla. - U.S. Sugar Corp. said that half of its unharvested sugarcane crop was badly damaged by the cold weather in Florida earlier this month. The company on Friday said it had harvested just over 50 percent of its cane prior to the freeze.

Judy Sanchez, U.S. Sugar's director of corporate communications, said in an e-mail it will take four to six weeks to harvest and process the most severely damaged cane. Moderately damaged fields might also be further degraded as temperatures rise.

Freeze damage in mature cane can result in increased harvesting and processing costs and in decreased sugar yield.

Southern Gardens Citrus, owned by U.S. Sugar Corp., found damage in one citrus grove in northern Hendry County.

Crist Proposes $2.1 Billion For Environment
01/23/2010
JustNews.com

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