



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

Total Clips: 8

Headline	Date	Outlet	Reporter
Supporters say Crist's Everglades land deal not dead, despite judge's ruling	04/01/2010	Sun Sentinel	Reid, Andy
Preserve Everglades purchase: Editorial	04/02/2010	News Press - Online	
Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling	04/02/2010	KHOU-TV - Online	
Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling	04/02/2010	KWCH-TV - Online	
Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling	04/02/2010	Gainesville Sun - Online, The	BRIAN SKOLOFF
Judge puts Everglades deal at risk	04/01/2010	Orlando Sentinel	Skoloff, Brian
U.S. Sugar: Deal's Not Dead	04/02/2010	Sunshine State News	Lane Wright
Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling	04/01/2010	Tampa Tribune - Online	

Supporters say Crist's Everglades land deal not dead, despite judge's ruling

[Return to Top](#)

04/01/2010

Sun Sentinel

Reid, Andy

Despite a federal judge's ruling threatening to torpedo Gov. Charlie Crist's stalled Everglades land deal, supporters contend they aren't beaten yet.

U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno surprised the environmental community Wednesday by ordering the South Florida Water Management District to resume work on a massive Everglades restoration reservoir that was shelved by Crist's proposed \$536 million land deal with U.S. Sugar Corp.

The district, which leads Everglades restoration, said it couldn't afford to finish building the \$800 million reservoir and buy the 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar that would reshape old restoration plans. The unfinished reservoir in western Palm Beach County already cost taxpayers almost \$280 million.

But on Thursday, district board Chairman Eric Buermann said the judge's ruling does not have to mean the end of the U.S. Sugar deal.

In addition to appealing the judge's ruling, the district could try to rework the restoration agreements that the judge is charged with enforcing.

"I don't think it's the death knell for the sugar transaction by any means," Buermann said. "The judge left some

openings for future discussion. ... We need to carefully assess what it all means."

The district has argued for building reservoirs on the U.S. Sugar land, closer to Lake Okeechobee, and using the unfinished reservoir property to build a less-expensive treatment area to filter pollutants from water headed to the Everglades.

Buermann said that if the district does end up having to finish the reservoir, the timing of completing the U.S. Sugar deal and getting the reservoir project up and running again could allow for paying for both.

Representatives for Audubon of Florida and the Everglades Foundation both called for keeping alive the U.S. Sugar land deal, which they see as a better alternative for restoration.

"I don't think this is the end of the saga," Kirk Fordham, CEO of the Everglades Foundation, said about the judge's ruling.

The Miccosukee Tribe, which opposes the U.S. Sugar land deal, persuaded the federal judge to call for restarting the reservoir project.

Miccosukee attorney Dexter Lehtinen said he doesn't expect the district board, appointed by the governor, to give up on the land deal that the tribe blames for stalling the reservoir and other overdue Everglades restoration projects.

"I don't know that they will do anything" about the reservoir, Lehtinen said about district officials. "I don't think the law matters to these guys."

The 16,700-acre Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir in western Palm Beach County was intended to hold water that could be used to replenish the Everglades, which is suffering from decades of draining for agriculture and development.

But the district board in 2008 stopped the project, blaming a lingering legal challenge filed by environmental groups. Yet a few weeks after construction was put on hold, Crist's proposed U.S. Sugar land deal became public.

The deal calls for using U.S. Sugar's land — once off limits to restoration — to reconnect water flows from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades.

Since stopping the reservoir, cost concerns and legal fights with the Miccosukee Tribe and U.S. Sugar-competitor Florida Crystals have stalled the U.S. Sugar deal. It was twice downsized because of the economic downturn and faces a hearing before the Florida Supreme Court on Wednesday.

Buermann said Lehtinen, the Miccosukee Tribe and Florida Crystals, owned by the politically connected Fanjul family, shouldn't get too excited about the ruling.

"Mr. Lehtinen and the Fanjuls seem to be dancing some kind of victory jig," Buermann said. "That may be a little premature."

Andy Reid can be reached at abreid@SunSentinel.com or 561-228-5504.

Preserve Everglades purchase: Editorial

04/02/2010

News Press - Online

[Return to Top](#)

The News-Press Editorial news-press.com April 2, 2010

The troubled plan to purchase U.S. Sugar property to help restore the Everglades is worth saving; it's that important to Southwest Florida to repair damage done to one of America's great natural systems.

The \$536 million plan to buy 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar has run into heavy financial, legal and political flak. It has already been trimmed back twice, and may need further cuts, among other modifications.

It has become a political hammer for Gov. Charlie Crist's political opponents.

A federal judge has now ruled that the state must restart an \$800 million reservoir construction project designed to store and clean water. It was probably postponed in part to free up money for the U.S. Sugar purchase.

However, the purchase should take priority. The Legislature should stick by plans to appropriate the necessary money and fight whatever legal battles are needed to make the land buy happen.

The purchase is the opportunity of a lifetime to re-establish the natural southerly flow of summer floodwaters through marshes and reservoirs where they can be stored and cleansed for release into Everglades National Park and other areas starved of water by irrigation projects.

That's what gives: Everglades restoration a chance of real success.

It can help prevent the release of polluted water into our Caloosahatchee River when Lake Okeechobee rises too high. Those releases, laden with agricultural nutrients, have devastated the river and Lee County's priceless coastal estuary, a nursery for marine life. A healthy estuary is critical to our seafood and tourism industries, as well as our residents' cherished recreation.

The deadline for closing on the purchase has been extended to allow the legal challenges to be resolved, and perhaps to permit more modifications of the deal. Critics say it's too favorable to U.S. Sugar.

Urge our legislators to do what's necessary to preserve the essence of this epic project.

Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling

04/02/2010

KHOU-TV - Online

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Gov. Charlie Crist's grand plan to revive the dying Florida Everglades by buying back the land is in jeopardy after a federal judge Wednesday ordered the state to resume construction on a multimillion-dollar restoration project.

Work on the 25-square-mile reservoir — the largest of its kind in the world — was halted in 2008 after water managers said a lawsuit from environmentalists could hinder their ability to complete the project.

The decision to stop work came just a month before Crist announced a plan to spend \$1.75 billion to buy all of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s 180,000 acres and assets in the Everglades.

Crist's plan has since been scaled down, because of the economy, to \$536 million for 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar, the nation's largest cane sugar producer.

U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno's ruling on Wednesday could now end it all.

Moreno granted a motion from the Miccosukee Indians, who live in the Everglades, to force the South Florida Water Management District to resume construction of the massive reservoir with an estimated cost of up to \$800 million.

The district oversees the state's Everglades restoration efforts and has said previously it likely couldn't afford both the U.S. Sugar deal and the reservoir.

"The court is now uncertain as to what role the downsized land purchase will play in Everglades restoration," Moreno wrote in his ruling. "Meanwhile, the projects devised years ago ... are waiting in standstill."

[Return to Top](#)

The judge agreed with the Miccosukee that halting the reservoir project "despite the best efforts of Governor Crist" would further pollute the tribe's land.

Crist's office said it was reviewing the ruling to determine the next step. The district also said it was reviewing the ruling.

"This puts Everglades restoration back on track," said tribe attorney Dexter Lehtinen. "If they're going to do the land deal, it's got to now be in addition to the restoration projects they promised, so they've got a huge problem."

U.S. Sugar spokeswoman Judy Sanchez said the ruling does not preclude the state from purchasing lands that would allow for more effectively designed restoration projects.

The sugar land deal also faces legal challenges. The state Supreme Court is set to hear the case next week.

If the deal falls through, it could serve up another blow to Crist's campaign for U.S. Senate. He is locked in a close contest for the GOP nomination, and the U.S. Sugar purchase was set to be a cornerstone of his legacy.

The Everglades have been dying for decades from the intrusion of farms and development, dissected by dikes, dams and canals, effectively draining much of the swamp and polluting it with fertilizers and urban runoff. The state and federal governments' efforts to restore the wetlands have been stymied for years by funding shortfalls, legal challenges and political bickering.

Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling

04/02/2010

KWCH-TV - Online

[Return to Top](#)

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) - Gov. Charlie Crist's grand plan to revive the dying Florida Everglades by buying back the land is in jeopardy after a federal judge Wednesday ordered the state to resume construction on a multimillion-dollar restoration project.

Work on the 25-square-mile reservoir - the largest of its kind in the world - was halted in 2008 after water managers said a lawsuit from environmentalists could hinder their ability to complete the project.

The decision to stop work came just a month before Crist announced a plan to spend \$1.75 billion to buy all of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s 180,000 acres and assets in the Everglades.

Crist's plan has since been scaled down, because of the economy, to \$536 million for 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar, the nation's largest cane sugar producer.

U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno's ruling on Wednesday could now end it all.

Moreno granted a motion from the Miccosukee Indians, who live in the Everglades, to force the South Florida Water Management District to resume construction of the massive reservoir with an estimated cost of up to \$800 million.

The district oversees the state's Everglades restoration efforts and has said previously it likely couldn't afford both the U.S. Sugar deal and the reservoir.

"The court is now uncertain as to what role the downsized land purchase will play in Everglades restoration," Moreno wrote in his ruling. "Meanwhile, the projects devised years ago ... are waiting in standstill."

The judge agreed with the Miccosukee that halting the reservoir project "despite the best efforts of Governor Crist" would further pollute the tribe's land.

Crist's office said it was reviewing the ruling to determine the next step. The district also said it was reviewing the ruling.

"This puts Everglades restoration back on track," said tribe attorney Dexter Lehtinen. "If they're going to do the land deal, it's got to now be in addition to the restoration projects they promised, so they've got a huge problem."

U.S. Sugar spokeswoman Judy Sanchez said the ruling does not preclude the state from purchasing lands that would

allow for more effectively designed restoration projects.

The sugar land deal also faces legal challenges. The state Supreme Court is set to hear the case next week.

If the deal falls through, it could serve up another blow to Crist's campaign for U.S. Senate. He is locked in a close contest for the GOP nomination, and the U.S. Sugar purchase was set to be a cornerstone of his legacy.

The Everglades have been dying for decades from the intrusion of farms and development, dissected by dikes, dams and canals, effectively draining much of the swamp and polluting it with fertilizers and urban runoff. The state and federal governments' efforts to restore the wetlands have been stymied for years by funding shortfalls, legal challenges and political bickering.

Copyright 2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling

04/02/2010

Gainesville Sun - Online, The

BRIAN SKOLOFF

AP Nation

[Return to Top](#)

Gov. Charlie Crist's grand plan to revive the dying Florida Everglades by buying back the land is in jeopardy after a federal judge Wednesday ordered the state to resume construction on a multimillion-dollar restoration project.

Work on the 25-square-mile reservoir - the largest of its kind in the world - was halted in 2008 after water managers said a lawsuit from environmentalists could hinder their ability to complete the project.

The decision to stop work came just a month before Crist announced a plan to spend \$1.75 billion to buy all of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s 180,000 acres and assets in the Everglades.

Crist's plan has since been scaled down, because of the economy, to \$536 million for 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar, the nation's largest cane sugar producer.

U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno's ruling on Wednesday could now end it all.

Moreno granted a motion from the Miccosukee Indians, who live in the Everglades, to force the South Florida Water Management District to resume construction of the massive reservoir with an estimated cost of up to \$800 million.

The district oversees the state's Everglades restoration efforts and has said previously it likely couldn't afford both the U.S. Sugar deal and the reservoir.

"The court is now uncertain as to what role the downsized land purchase will play in Everglades restoration," Moreno wrote in his ruling. "Meanwhile, the projects devised years ago ... are waiting in standstill."

The judge agreed with the Miccosukee that halting the reservoir project "despite the best efforts of Governor Crist" would further pollute the tribe's land.

Crist's office said it was reviewing the ruling to determine the next step. The district also said it was reviewing the ruling.

"This puts Everglades restoration back on track," said tribe attorney Dexter Lehtinen. "If they're going to do the land deal, it's got to now be in addition to the restoration projects they promised, so they've got a huge problem."

U.S. Sugar spokeswoman Judy Sanchez said the ruling does not preclude the state from purchasing lands that would allow for more effectively designed restoration projects.

The sugar land deal also faces legal challenges. The state Supreme Court is set to hear the case next week.

If the deal falls through, it could serve up another blow to Crist's campaign for U.S. Senate. He is locked in a close

contest for the GOP nomination, and the U.S. Sugar purchase was set to be a cornerstone of his legacy.

The Everglades have been dying for decades from the intrusion of farms and development, dissected by dikes, dams and canals, effectively draining much of the swamp and polluting it with fertilizers and urban runoff. The state and federal governments' efforts to restore the wetlands have been stymied for years by funding shortfalls, legal challenges and political bickering.

Judge puts Everglades deal at risk

04/01/2010

Orlando Sentinel

Skoloff, Brian

[Return to Top](#)

WEST PALM BEACH -- Gov. Charlie Crist's grand plan to revive the dying Florida Everglades by buying back the land is in jeopardy after a federal judge Wednesday ordered the state to resume construction on a multimillion-dollar restoration project.

Work on the 25-square-mile reservoir -- the largest of its kind in the world -- was halted in 2008 after water managers said a lawsuit from environmentalists could hinder their ability to complete the project.

The decision to stop work came a month before Crist announced a plan to spend \$1.75 billion to buy all of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s 180,000 acres and assets in the Everglades.

Crist's plan has since been scaled down, because of the economy, to \$536 million for 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar, the nation's largest cane sugar producer.

U.S. District Judge Federico Moreno's ruling on Wednesday could now end it all.

Moreno granted a motion from the Miccosukee Indians to force the South Florida Water Management District to resume construction of the reservoir, estimated to cost up to \$800 million.

The district oversees the state's Everglades restoration efforts and has said previously it likely couldn't afford both the U.S. Sugar deal and the reservoir.

"The court is now uncertain as to what role the downsized land purchase will play in Everglades restoration," Moreno wrote in his ruling. "Meanwhile, the projects devised years ago ... are waiting in standstill."

The judge agreed with the Miccosukee that halting the reservoir project "despite the best efforts of Governor Crist" would further pollute tribe land in the Everglades.

Crist's office and the water district said they were reviewing the ruling.

"This puts Everglades restoration back on track," said tribe attorney Dexter Lehtinen. "If they're going to do the land deal, it's got to now be in addition to the restoration projects they promised, so they've got a huge problem."

The sugar land deal also faces legal challenges. The state Supreme Court is set to hear the case next week.

Copyright © 2010 Orlando Sentinel Communications

U.S. Sugar: Deal's Not Dead

04/02/2010

Sunshine State News

Lane Wright

[Return to Top](#)

A spokeswoman for giant U.S. Sugar said Thursday the \$536 million deal between her company and Gov. Charlie Crist to sell the state 73,000 acres of mostly-citrus land in the Everglades is far from dead.

U.S. Sugar spokesperson Judy Sanchez wasn't fazed by the fact that a federal judge Wednesday overturned Crist's decision to put the massive A-1 reservoir project on hold while the state and U.S. Sugar worked on the land purchase.

"This does not preclude the state from moving forward with the U.S. Sugar purchase," Sanchez said.

While federal Judge Federico Moreno did rule that the A-1 reservoir project, started under the Jeb Bush administration, should be resumed, Sanchez says he did not set a specific timetable to get that done, opening up the possibility of more delay.

Add to that the fact that it was turned over to the Special Master to consider different remedies, and Sanchez says U. S. Sugar is swimming in the familiar waters of continued litigation and delays.

"The judge's ruling simply directs the state to get the restoration going," said Sanchez.

Aside from this lawsuit brought by the Miccosukee tribe and won Wednesday, there is another involving U.S. Sugar waiting to be heard in the Supreme Court that could have a more direct impact on the deal.

In that case, the Supreme Court has to decide whether the deal has a valid public purpose and if it's possible for the South Florida Water Management District to fund it and still be able to maintain its mission of flood control and water supply.

Crist's office has said the governor's staff is reviewing the court's ruling and looking into the next steps for the state.

The Florida Supreme Court hearing is scheduled for April 7.

Contact Lane Wright at lane@sunshinestatenews.com or (561) 247-1063.

Everglades deal in jeopardy after judge's ruling

04/01/2010

Tampa Tribune - Online

WEST PALM BEACH - Gov. Charlie Crist's grand plan to revive the dying Florida Everglades by buying back the land is in jeopardy after a federal judge today ordered the state to resume construction on a multimillion-dollar restoration project.

Work on the 25-square-mile reservoir — the largest of its kind in the world — was halted in 2008 after water managers said a lawsuit from environmentalists could hinder their ability to complete the project.

The decision to stop work came just a month before Crist announced a plan to spend \$1.75 billion to buy all of U.S. Sugar Corp.'s 180,000 acres and assets in the Everglades.

Crist's plan has since been scaled down, because of the economy, to \$536 million for 73,000 acres from U.S. Sugar, the nation's largest cane sugar producer.

U.S District Judge Federico Moreno's ruling could now end it all.

Moreno granted a motion from the Miccosukee Indians, who live in the Everglades, to force the South Florida Water Management District to resume construction of the massive reservoir with an estimated cost of up to \$800 million.

The district oversees the state's Everglades restoration efforts and has said previously it likely couldn't afford both the U.S. Sugar deal and the reservoir.

"The court is now uncertain as to what role the downsized land purchase will play in Everglades restoration," Moreno wrote in his ruling. "Meanwhile, the projects devised years ago ... are waiting in standstill."

The judge agreed with the Miccosukee that halting the reservoir project "despite the best efforts of Governor Crist" would further pollute the tribe's land.

[Return to Top](#)

Crist's office said it was reviewing the ruling to determine the next step. The district also said it was reviewing the ruling.

"This puts Everglades restoration back on track," said tribe attorney Dexter Lehtinen. "If they're going to do the land deal, it's got to now be in addition to the restoration projects they promised, so they've got a huge problem."

The sugar land deal also faces legal challenges. The state Supreme Court is set to hear the case next week.

If the deal falls through, it could serve up another blow to Crist's campaign for U.S. Senate. He is locked in a close contest for the GOP nomination, and the U.S. Sugar purchase was set to be a cornerstone of his legacy.

The Everglades have been dying for decades from the intrusion of farms and development, dissected by dikes, dams and canals, effectively draining much of the swamp and polluting it with fertilizers and urban runoff. The state and federal governments' efforts to restore the wetlands have been stymied for years by funding shortfalls, legal challenges and political bickering.

