

Congressional Authorization of Everglades Projects

The Key to Advancing Restoration



The restoration of America's Everglades depends on Congressional authorization of projects to continue the measurable progress that is reaping enormous benefits for wildlife that call the Everglades home while creating new jobs. These important pieces of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) are ready to continue restoration success:

- C-111 Spreader Canal Phase 1
- Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1
- C-43 Caloosahatchee River Storage Reservoir
- Broward County Water Preserve Areas



Photo by Mac Stone

C-111 Spreader Canal (Phase 1):

Constructing the C-111 Spreader Canal project is essential for improving the health of Florida Bay. Utilizing almost a century of Roseate Spoonbill nesting data, Audubon science staff have found that the C-111 Spreader Canal restoration project can have an immediate impact to benefit this iconic species, and all wildlife in Florida Bay. The C-111 is a massive canal that was once planned to transport rockets between Florida Bay, the Atlantic Ocean and the Everglades. The immense size of the canal

causes vast water diversions that severely impact the health of Florida Bay. By improving the quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of water delivered via Taylor Slough in a more natural pattern, conditions that allowed these wading birds to thrive can return.

Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands:

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands (BBCW) project will re-hydrate wetlands and restore the freshwater flow and proper salinity of Biscayne Bay. As the only CERP project dedicated to benefiting Biscayne Bay, a highly productive estuary that provides for commercial fisheries, and Biscayne National Park, these efforts will enhance nearshore wildlife habitat and help to reestablish productive nursery habitat for shrimp and shellfish, including oyster reef communities. This project is important not only for its ecological benefits, but is also necessary to protect South Florida's water supply. Through re-hydrating these important wetlands and re-establishing freshwater flow into Biscayne Bay, increasing threats from salt water intrusion can be reduced.



Caloosahatchee C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir:

Management of Lake Okeechobee has serious impacts on the health of the Everglades ecosystem and is one of the biggest restoration challenges. When Lake Okeechobee reaches a certain high level, large pulses of nutrient-rich freshwater are released to the east and west of the Lake and out to coastal estuaries. The releases can cause algal blooms and other problems because of the high nutrient loads, and greatly disrupt the delicate balance of freshwater and saltwater resources needed to maintain estuarine health. To benefit the C-43 basin, which spans Hendry, Glades, Charlotte, Collier, and Lee counties, the C-43 storage reservoir will retain some of this freshwater rather than discharging it directly through the Caloosahatchee River and estuary in Southwest Florida, home to nearly 40% of Florida's rare, threatened and endangered species. In addition to benefiting estuarine health, the reservoir may also help alter South Florida's harmful cycle of seasonal water releases and droughts.

Broward County Water Preserve Areas:

This project, originally proposed by Audubon in the mid-1990s, has an important wetlands buffer and two reservoirs that provide system-wide benefits to the Everglades. The spatial extent of wetlands will be expanded, and existing wetlands known for high intrinsic ecological functions will be protected. Increased water storage is achieved through the capture and storing of rainwater, which also helps prevent water from seeping out of the Everglades into urban areas. Water treatment marshes help to reduce phosphorus and other harmful nutrients from entering the Everglades. This multi-faceted project also benefits Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade county citizens by recharging wellfields.

Conclusion:

The above projects play an important role in Everglades restoration, and the authorization of these projects is a crucial step toward achieving ecological benefits from restoration and improving Florida's economy. Only by moving these projects forward can the Everglades' abundance of wildlife and water resources be realized once again.



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