

**Audubon of Florida • Audubon of Southwest Florida • Audubon Society of the Everglades
Clean Water Action • Collier County Audubon Society • Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Ding Darling Wildlife Society • Defenders of Wildlife • Everglades Foundation
Florida Keys Chapter of the Izaak Walton League • Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Wildlife Federation • Friends of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife
Refuge • Friends of the Everglades • Izaak Walton League of America
National Audubon Society • National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation • National Wildlife Refuge Association • 1000 Friends of Florida
Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation • South Florida Audubon Society**

**Joint Resolution of Support
Picayune Strand Restoration--Merritt Canal Component Groundbreaking
January 7, 2010**

WHEREAS the Everglades ecosystem, spanning from the Kissimmee River Valley to Florida Bay, is an unparalleled national resource and international treasure,

WHEREAS restoration of the Everglades has commenced, through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and many other complementary efforts and projects, to return the abundance of wildlife once found in the Everglades, to recover thousands of acres of marshes and estuarine habitat, and to benefit Florida and National Parks and ecosystem-based economies and communities,

WHEREAS 55,000 acres of wetland sloughs and upland habitat next to the Big Cypress Swamp were heavily impacted decades ago by 227 miles of roads and 42 miles of drainage canals in a failed attempt to build part of the “world’s largest subdivision”, called Golden Gate Estates,

WHEREAS many citizens, conservation groups, sportsmen and the local, state and federal governments expended enormous effort to locate and buy back properties from landowners residing all over the world,

WHEREAS the Picayune Strand restoration project was commenced to return that failed subdivision in Collier County to its natural state, recharging the desiccated wetlands and reviving the connectivity and functions of wildlife habitat for species such as the Florida panther and black bear, the bald eagle, wood stork, gopher tortoise, snail kite, and many others,

WHEREAS the Picayune Strand project will also improve estuarine water quality and habitat in the downstream Fakahatchee Estuary by increasing groundwater recharge and reducing large and ill-timed, unnatural freshwater inflows,

WHEREAS breaking ground on the Merritt Canal component of the Picayune Strand Restoration Project will build considerably on the ecological success of the first phase of the Picayune Strand restoration implemented by the South Florida Water Management District on the Prairie Canal,

Therefore, now be it resolved, that

The organizations signing this resolution are dedicated to protecting and restoring the Everglades ecosystem, and hereby strongly support the state and federal efforts to complete the Picayune Strand project, and commend and celebrate the groundbreaking on the Merritt Canal component, marking the

first occasion of a restoration project navigating the entire CERP implementation process with both the state and federal partners.

In addition, these many organizations hereby urge the U.S. Congress to continue its full financial commitment to the Picayune Strand Restoration Project at sufficient levels to complete the planned project, the largest habitat restoration in the entire CERP program.

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