

Alachua Audubon Society**Audubon of Florida**Audubon of Martin County
Audubon of Southwest Florida**Audubon Society of the Everglades
Apalachee Audubon Society**Broward County Audubon Society**Choctawhatchee Audubon Society
Collier County Audubon Society** Duval Audubon Society**Florida Keys Audubon Society
Four Rivers Audubon Society**Hendry-Glades Audubon Society** Hernando Audubon Society
Highlands County Audubon Society**Kissimmee Valley Audubon Society
Peace River Audubon Society**Pelican Island Audubon Society**Ridge Audubon Society
St. Johns County Audubon Society**St. Petersburg Audubon Society**Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society
Sarasota Audubon Society**Southeast Volusia Audubon Society**Tampa Audubon Society
Tropical Audubon Society** West Volusia Audubon Society

April 4, 2007

The Honorable Alcee Hastings
U.S. House of Representatives
2353 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
U.S. House of Representatives
328 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Re: Everglades Restoration Authorizations and Appropriations

Dear Representative Hastings and Representative Diaz-Balart:

Thank you for your leadership as Chairmen of the Everglades Caucus and your continued support of America's Everglades. We are the Florida state office and local chapters of the National Audubon Society, representing over 32,000 members. The undersigned organizations praise your leadership for moving restoration forward and support your efforts to request critical provisions to the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. We also support your FY 2008 Everglades funding request urging supplemental funding to the Presidents proposed 2008 budget for Everglades Restoration.

Restoration of the Everglades is at a critical juncture and keeping restoration on schedule requires the passage of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 and significant federal investment in 2008. We respectfully request the following provisions and funding be provided for Everglades restoration this year:

Water Resources Development Act of 2007

We strongly support the inclusion of the Indian River Lagoon and Picayune Strand Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, as well as the clear authority for the Modified Water Deliveries project to be funded through the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of the Interior. These projects have undergone extensive planning and scientific design and review to ensure optimal restoration for the taxpayers' investment.

Before WRDA 2007 is finalized, we urge you to request a Section 902 adjustment for the Broward County Water Preserve Areas, in addition to the Site 1 Impoundment. The Broward County Water Preserve Areas project is comprised of three project components that were conditionally authorized in WRDA 2000 – Water Conservation Area 3A/3B Levee Seepage Management, C-9 Impoundment and Stormwater Treatment Area, and C-11 Impoundment and Stormwater Treatment Area. Updated cost estimates for both projects are included in the Chief’s Report for the Site 1 Impoundment Project and the Final Project Implementation Report for the Broward County Water Preserve Areas. The project cost estimates increased since WRDA 2000 because of the combined effects of inflation; rapid escalation of land values in South Florida; significant increases in the cost of fuel, steel and concrete; and significant changes in the impoundment designs that were necessary to meet Federal dam safety criteria. Including the 902 provisions is critical to the continued success of the State – Federal partnership on Everglades restoration

Appropriations for Everglades Restoration

Keeping Everglades restoration on schedule will require significant federal investment in 2008. Specifically, increases over the President’s proposed budget of \$17.5 million for Kissimmee River Restoration, \$36 million for Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Planning and Science efforts, and construction funding of \$35 million for Indian River Lagoon and Picayune Strand, both priority CERP projects included in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (HR 1495). Also in HR 1495 is crucial clarification of authority to fund the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park (Mod Waters) project through both the US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Department of the Interior. The long anticipated completion of Mod Waters will require \$35 million for the Corps of Engineers and \$14.526 million for the Department of Interior.

Kissimmee River Restoration

Authorized in 1992, the restoration of the Kissimmee River has become a showcase of success for Everglades restoration. So far 7.5 miles of the canal have been filled, the river has recreated its natural meandering flow and the wildlife has returned. While the President’s request of \$32.5 million is a step in the correct direction, it falls short of keeping the Kissimmee River Restoration project on schedule. We support your request for an additional \$17.5 million, for a total of \$50 million to keep the project on schedule for completion in 2010.

CERP Planning and Science

To ensure optimal restoration for the taxpayer’s investment, each of the 40 or more major CERP projects must undergo extensive planning and scientific design and review before being submitted to Congress for authorization. Only two of these major projects have undergone full planning and design – Indian River Lagoon-South and Picayune Strand. The President’s request of \$64 million for CERP Planning and Scientific is insufficient to keep the remaining projects on schedule. We support your request for an additional \$36 million, for a total of \$100 million for CERP Planning/Science.

CERP Project Construction of Indian River Lagoon-South and Picayune Strand

The Indian River Lagoon-South and Picayune Strand projects have been included for authorization in HR 1495 for the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. To begin construction of these two priority CERP projects, we support your request an initial \$35 million in FY 2008.

Project Construction of Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park

Authorized in 1989, Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park (Mod Waters), will provide sufficient water to Everglades National Park. It was originally estimated to be completed in 1997. The WRDA 2000 legislation, which authorized the CERP, provides that Mod Waters must be completed before several CERP projects that restore water flows to the Everglades can move forward. With full funding, the project should be completed by 2010. Without full funding, the completion of Mod Waters would be delayed and will threaten the future of the Everglades restoration project. We support the President's budget request of \$35 million for the Corps of Engineers and \$14.526 million for the Department of Interior to ensure this vital project moves forward.

Audubon members thank you again for your invaluable leadership for America's Everglades and the State of Florida. The nation and the world are watching the Everglades as a model for restoration. Restoring America's Everglades will restore natural ecosystems, for birds and other wildlife, and benefit both humanity and the earth's biological diversity. We look to the Florida Congressional Delegation to be a strong and united voice on behalf of Everglades restoration.

Sincerely,

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West Volusia Audubon Society

(signatures waived to expedite delivery)

C: The Honorable Bill Nelson, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Mel Martinez, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Jeff Miller, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Allen Boyd, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Corrine Brown, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Ander Crenshaw, Florida Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Ginny Brown-Waite, Florida Congressional Delegation
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The Honorable Ron Klein, Florida Congressional Delegation
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