



ENVIRONMENT  
**FLORIDA**

Clean Air. Clean Water. Open Spaces.

# Annual Report

A recap of our work for our members in 2012



# To our members

***“As developers encroached closer and closer to wetlands and power plants fought to continue spewing pollution into our air, we never backed down.”***



**Bob Sargent**  
Federal Energy  
Program Director

*Dear Environment Florida members,*

*As developers encroached closer to wetlands and power plants fought to continue spewing pollution into our air, we never backed down. In 2012, Environment Florida worked hard to stave off the many threats to the places we love and the values we share.*



**Sarah Hyman**  
Canvass Director  
& Clean Water  
Associate

*While there was a lot to deal with this year, hearing about why you cared about Florida’s environment really kept us going. You inspired us to be successful.*

*We won historic standards to limit carbon pollution—keeping our air free of toxic pollutants and safe to breathe. And we worked to halt development that could have destructive impacts on precious wetlands.*



**John Rumpler**  
Senior Attorney

*Please take a moment to read more about the accomplishments you helped us achieve and what we’ll keep working on in 2013. As more threats to our environment emerge this next year, it’s good to know you’ll be by our side, no matter what comes up. Thank you.*

*Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Ouzts*

# Repowering Florida

Over the past several years, Environment Florida has enlisted new support for wind and solar power by promoting the many benefits that repowering could bring to our state and its citizens. In 2012, through reports and citizen outreach, we documented and shared the many environmental and economic impacts of making our buildings more efficient and expanding the solar industry.

## Promoting incentives for going solar

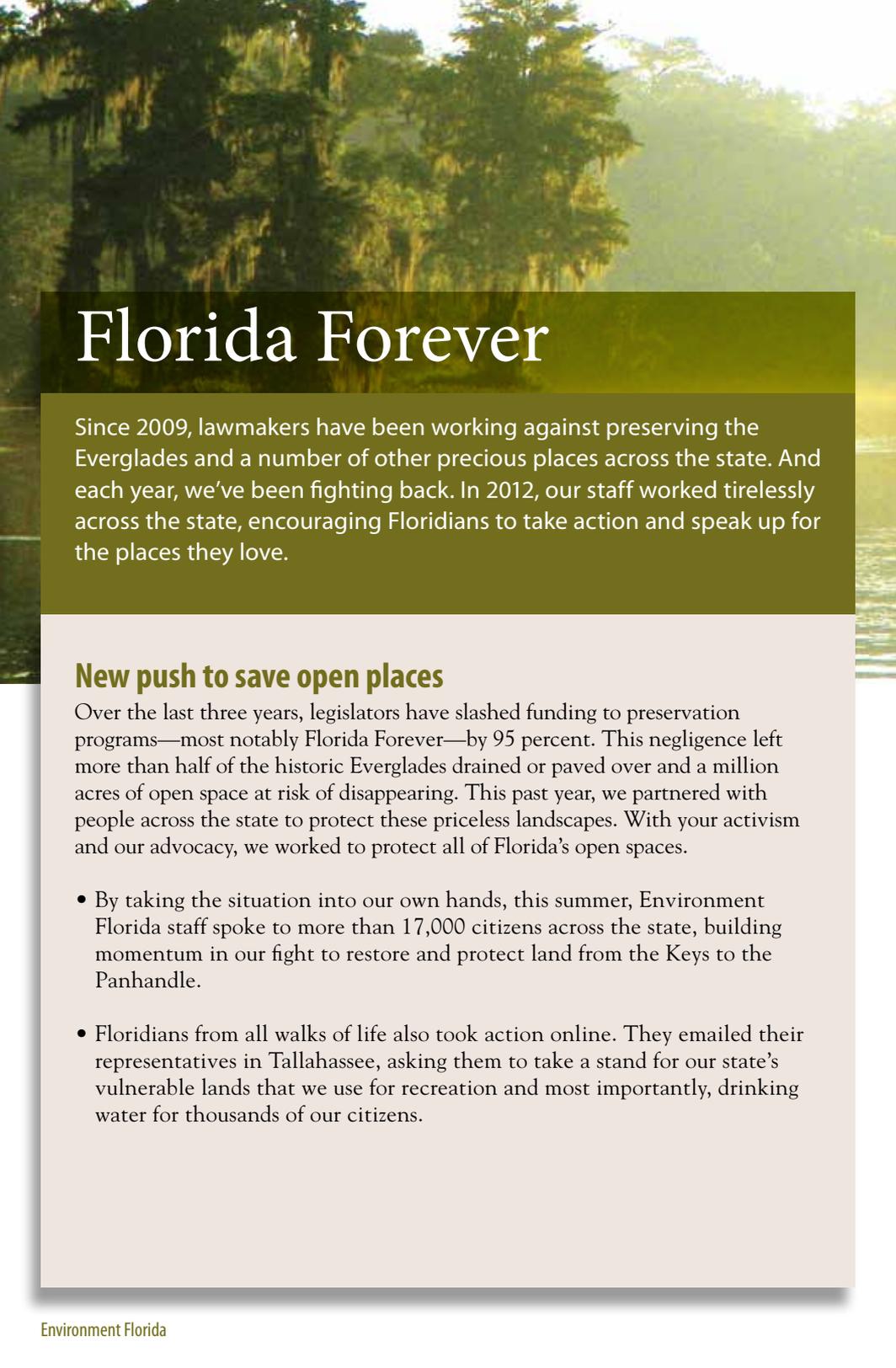
By installing solar panels on homes and businesses and making all buildings more efficient, we'll be saving money, increasing jobs and limiting pollution. And Florida's potential for clean energy is immense. We have everything we need to make these changes and each year, we encourage the use of those resources so we can see the clean energy future we've always envisioned.

- Our report, "Building a Better America," highlighted the many changes that would come from making Florida's buildings more efficient. Energy-efficient buildings could reduce energy use 27 percent by 2030—an amount equivalent to taking 12.6 million cars off the road.
- Today, more than 4,000 Floridians work in the solar industry. As Environment Florida continues to urge leaders in Tallahassee to promote solar power in our state, we'll see that number rise dramatically.



Energy-efficient buildings could reduce energy use in Florida by 27 percent.





# Florida Forever

Since 2009, lawmakers have been working against preserving the Everglades and a number of other precious places across the state. And each year, we've been fighting back. In 2012, our staff worked tirelessly across the state, encouraging Floridians to take action and speak up for the places they love.

## **New push to save open places**

Over the last three years, legislators have slashed funding to preservation programs—most notably Florida Forever—by 95 percent. This negligence left more than half of the historic Everglades drained or paved over and a million acres of open space at risk of disappearing. This past year, we partnered with people across the state to protect these priceless landscapes. With your activism and our advocacy, we worked to protect all of Florida's open spaces.

- By taking the situation into our own hands, this summer, Environment Florida staff spoke to more than 17,000 citizens across the state, building momentum in our fight to restore and protect land from the Keys to the Panhandle.
- Floridians from all walks of life also took action online. They emailed their representatives in Tallahassee, asking them to take a stand for our state's vulnerable lands that we use for recreation and most importantly, drinking water for thousands of our citizens.

## Keeping developers in check

State law requires developers to replace all wetlands their projects may destroy. One way they can do this is to purchase “credits” from landowners with wetlands on their property. In May, the Scott administration moved to grant a company hundreds of “credits” for a project that has yet to promise it will keep wetlands healthy. Knowing that this simply wasn’t right, we found supporters around Florida who would keep developers in compliance.

- This summer, more than 1,300 Environment Florida supporters sent emails to the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection and Gov. Rick Scott urging them to deny the permit.
- Our efforts influenced the DEP to reinstate a wetlands expert who had the courage to speak out against the permit. So far, Environment Florida’s support has stalled the project and prevented it from moving forward.



Left: Unprotected areas around Wakulla Springs provide habitat for egrets, blue herons and other critical wildlife.



# Clean Air, Healthy Families

With the powerful influence of big polluters working against us, fighting to keep our air clean and clear was a challenge this year. But we overcame polluter influence to see 2012 go down as one of the most monumental for clean air. Thanks to some bold moves by Environment Florida and our national federation, there will now be less mercury, carbon pollution and toxic chemicals in the air.

## New EPA standards cover various air pollutants

We all should be able to breathe clean air. We shouldn't have to worry about mercury in our bodies or soot in our lungs. This year, we made sure the EPA considered our health and environment when creating air standards. And in several ways, our voices were heard loud and clear.

- In April, with our enthusiastic backing, the EPA finalized new standards to curb dangerous air pollutants—like cancer-causing benzene, toxic chemicals, and smog-forming pollution—from gas drilling operations. These pollutants not only harm our health but also cause global warming.
- In late 2011, the EPA finalized the first-ever nationwide standard for mercury and toxic pollution from power plants, cutting power plants' mercury emissions by 90 percent. In July, the EPA finalized the Cross-State Air Pollution Rule, which once implemented will cut deadly smog and soot pollution forming in the eastern half of the U.S.
- The new rules follow the receipt of 1,400 signatures from Environment Florida and allies, delivered over many months. Our staff went door-to-door urging that our families have clean air to breathe and global warming pollution is reduced.

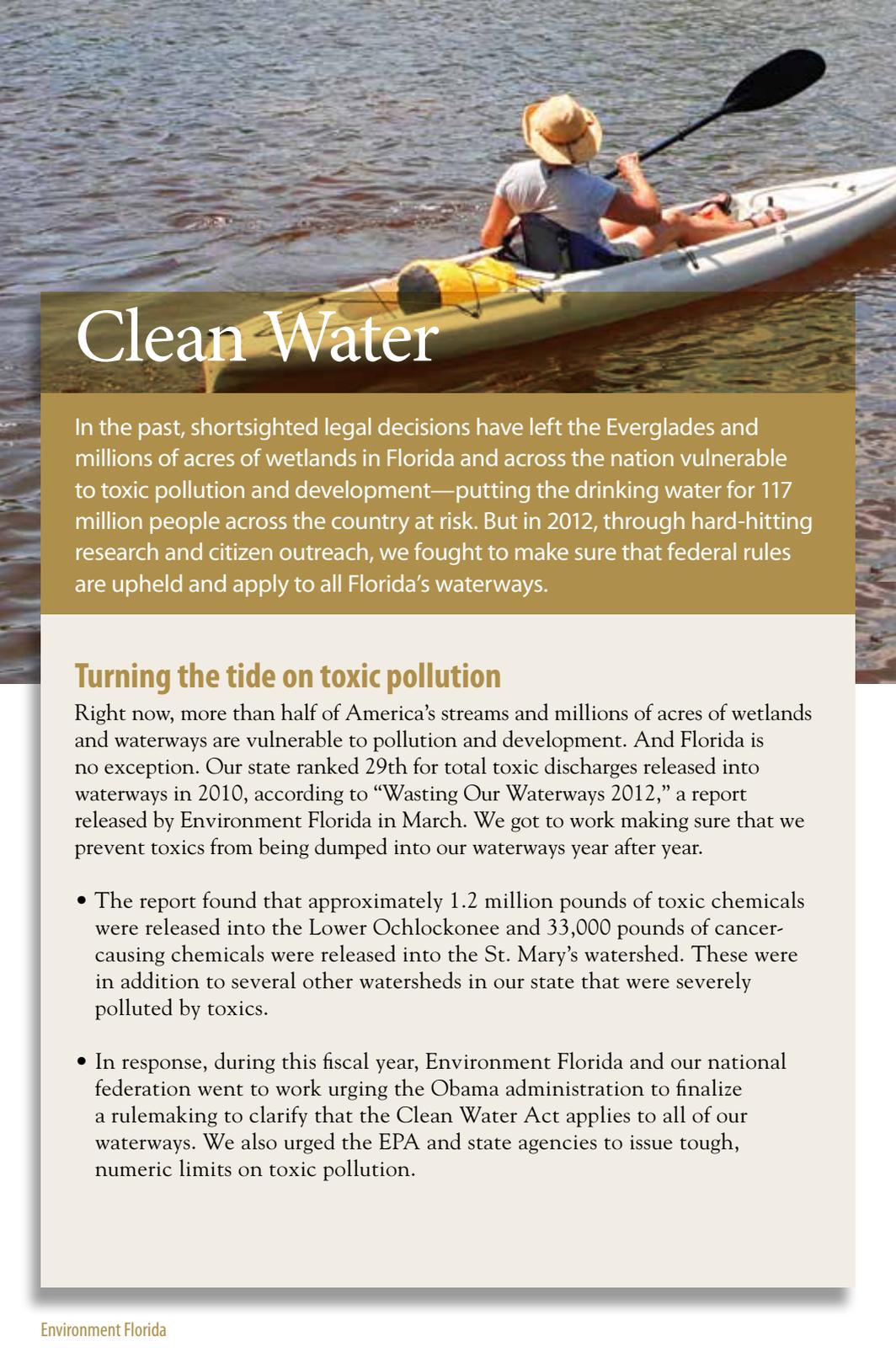
## Two huge moves to reduce carbon

Doctors, nurses and scientists warn that carbon pollution fuels global warming, triggers poor air quality, and contributes to thousands of asthma attacks, heart attacks and other fatal diseases. Knowing threat posed by carbon to our environment and health, we tackled these pollutants from all angles. Ultimately, we were successful in winning standards for two of the largest dirty energy sources of this pollution.

- Environment Florida, our affiliates around the country and a coalition of other environmental groups made history by delivering 3 million comments to the EPA in support of new carbon standards for power plants. This was the largest number of comments ever submitted to the EPA during a public comment period.
- In August, the Obama administration finalized historic clean car standards that will double the fuel efficiency of today's vehicles by 2025. The standards, which require vehicles to meet a 54.5 miles-per-gallon standard, will cut carbon emissions by 270 million metric tons.



Left: Environment Florida press conference in front of Florida's Historic Capitol Building releasing the report, "The Way Forward on Global Warming."; Right: TECO Power Plant in Apollo Beach.



# Clean Water

In the past, shortsighted legal decisions have left the Everglades and millions of acres of wetlands in Florida and across the nation vulnerable to toxic pollution and development—putting the drinking water for 117 million people across the country at risk. But in 2012, through hard-hitting research and citizen outreach, we fought to make sure that federal rules are upheld and apply to all Florida’s waterways.

## Turning the tide on toxic pollution

Right now, more than half of America’s streams and millions of acres of wetlands and waterways are vulnerable to pollution and development. And Florida is no exception. Our state ranked 29th for total toxic discharges released into waterways in 2010, according to “Wasting Our Waterways 2012,” a report released by Environment Florida in March. We got to work making sure that we prevent toxics from being dumped into our waterways year after year.

- The report found that approximately 1.2 million pounds of toxic chemicals were released into the Lower Ochlockonee and 33,000 pounds of cancer-causing chemicals were released into the St. Mary’s watershed. These were in addition to several other watersheds in our state that were severely polluted by toxics.
- In response, during this fiscal year, Environment Florida and our national federation went to work urging the Obama administration to finalize a rulemaking to clarify that the Clean Water Act applies to all of our waterways. We also urged the EPA and state agencies to issue tough, numeric limits on toxic pollution.

## Blocking special interests and dirty water bills

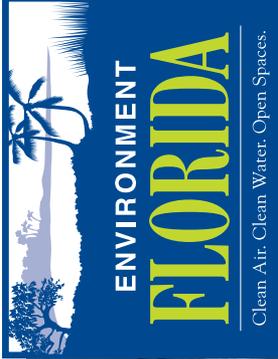
Pollution from large ranches and farms spurs algae blooms and invasive plant growth in Lake Okeechobee and the rest of the Everglades, but large agricultural operations have fought state efforts to restore these waters. Long-overdue protections have yet to be finalized, due to partisan politics and push back from polluters like ExxonMobil and Big Agriculture.

- To counter their efforts, Environment Florida staff pounded the pavement across the country, inspiring Floridians to stand up for their waterways.
- Despite several separate attempts to block Clean Water efforts in Congress, our efforts paid off. Our work demonstrated enough public support this summer to help convince leadership in the Senate to stop one of the dirty water bills from even coming up. It's clear that our voices are being heard.



Left: Federal Clean Water Advocate Shelley Vinyard releases a report on threats facing our waterways. Right: Water pollution doesn't just affect our drinking water. It affects critical habitat for Florida wildlife, such as manatees.

Environment Florida  
310 N. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301



Clean Air. Clean Water. Open Spaces.

# 2012 Annual Report

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