



Coming together for the best of Florida

Push for full conservation funding continues

At the headwaters of the Everglades, north of Lake Okeechobee in the Kissimmee River Valley, conservation advocates, military leaders, and wildlife scientists have been working to set aside and permanently protect up to 150,000 acres of ranchlands, wetlands, and other open spaces to protect wildlife, help restore Lake Okeechobee and to protect the water quality in the “River of Grass.”

The project, which would help protect the Florida Panther, the Florida black bear and other endangered wildlife, could get a portion of the funds it deserves this year if Congress acts to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a program that provides crucial funding to protect our land from development.

\$900 million each year

Together with our national federation, Environment Florida has been pushing Congress to increase the LWCF. Funded from offshore drilling leases in federal waters, the program is meant to set aside \$900 million each year to buy and preserve special places in Florida and across the country.

In the past, the fund has helped protect and restore treasured places, such as the Big Cypress National Preserve and Biscayne National Park.

Unfortunately, Congress raids the fund every year. And 2012 saw the most drastic, reckless cut yet. House leaders moved to slash a full 93 percent of the it.



Photo: atphoto, Flickr

▲ Great blue heron

A key player in our fight

In response, Environment Florida and the rest of our national coalition of state environmental groups have sprung into action, calling on Congressional members to provide the LWCF with the funding our parks and other natural areas deserve.

Sen. Bill Nelson, a long-time champion of the Land and Water Conservation

Fund, is a crucial player in the fight to restore full appropriations to the Fund. With his support and the support of other Congress members, we hope to get full funding to preserve some of the best places in Florida.

“We are asking our leaders to stand up for the places that make our state special,” said Elizabeth Ouzts. “If we lost these places, Florida wouldn’t be the same.”



Photo: NASA

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Moving forward on Everglades protection; Heeding Superstorm Sandy’s wake up call; Report on harnessing Florida’s wind energy potential, and more.

◀ Superstorm Sandy



To our members

This time of the year, we're in transition. Much of the winter has passed, and we're right on the brink of spring—full of change, new possibilities and new beginnings.

From my perspective as Regional Director for Environment Florida, I'm looking forward to seeing the Land and Water Conservation Fund protect the Everglades and the rest of Florida's treasures, moving closer to repowering our state with renewable energy and continuing to protect our shores.

Now is the time for change.

We're closing the book on practices that pollute the environment we love and care about and opening a new chapter for a cleaner, greener future.

Thanks for being with us.
Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ouzts
Regional Director

Recent action

Applause for life-saving soot standards

On Dec. 14, we applauded the Obama administration for strengthening air quality standards for particulate matter or “soot” pollution by approximately 20 percent.

Soot pollution is the deadliest of the common air pollutants, causing thousands of premature deaths every year across the country through a variety of cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses. It also contributes to haze that hangs over many cities, towns and parks. Sources of soot pollution include power plants and diesel trucks and buses.

The strengthened standards, which were supported by Environment Florida, better reflect the latest scientific research. The new standard will outline how much soot pollution can be in the air and still be safe to breathe.

In Sandy's wake, urgency on global warming

Hurricane Sandy was a wakeup call on global warming for all of us across the country. Dozens of people are dead; thousands of homes have been damaged or lost; entire communities have been submerged under water; lives have been disrupted; the costs have been estimated to be as high as \$50 billion.

Most of us understand that more extreme weather is becoming more common, the planet is warming, and pollution is behind much of it. America can do better. We can reduce the pollution that's behind global warming. We can rely more on energy efficiency, solar power and wind power and less on foreign oil and dirty coal.

We can no longer allow Big Oil and King Coal to hold America's clean energy future hostage. It's time for our leaders to heed Hurricane Sandy's wake-up call and embrace clean energy, clean air and a safer future.



Photo: Roger Blood, Creative Commons

▲ Erosion on Melbourne Beach after Superstorm Sandy

Wind power for a cleaner, greener Florida

Photo: Vattenfall, Flickr

In response to Hurricane Sandy and the questions brewing about the connections to global warming, Environment Florida released a new report this December showing how current power generation from wind energy prevents as much global warming pollution as taking 13 million cars off the road each year.

The report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America: Reducing Global Warming Pollution, Cutting Air Pollution, and Saving Water,” touts wind energy’s huge environmental and health benefits to date, as well as future benefits if wind power continues to grow.

“Wind power is already replacing the dirty and dangerous energy sources of the past and creating a cleaner, healthier future for Americans,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, regional program director of Environment Florida. “We must continue to promote these huge benefits across our state and the nation.”

Like taking 11 million cars off the road

America has more than doubled its use of wind power since the beginning of 2008.

Over the next three years, at the current rate of expansion, power generation from wind energy would double, and with that, wind energy would then prevent as much global warming pollution as taking an additional 11 million cars off the road. On January 2, as part of the fiscal cliff deal, critical tax credits for offshore wind were extended for the year—a huge step forward to growing wind power across the U.S.

Wind saves water

Wind energy can also contribute to water conservation. Our report shows that wind could save enough water to supply the annual water needs of a city the size of Boston.

More water is withdrawn from lakes, rivers, streams and aquifers in the United States for the purpose of cooling power

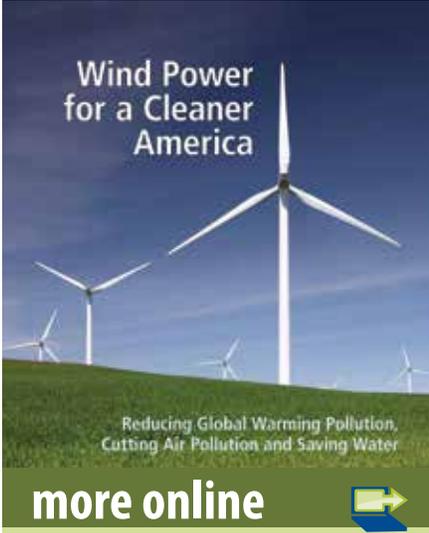
plants than for any other purpose.

This is especially important on the heels of the U.S. Department of Agriculture finding that 80 percent of agricultural land was impaired by drought in 2012 – the most extensive drought in the United States since the 1950s.

...and your health

Wind power can also save lives by avoiding 137,000 pounds of smog-forming emissions and 91,000 pounds of soot-forming emissions every year. This is good news for the almost 30 million Americans suffering from asthma, and many more suffering from other respiratory conditions.

“For the sake of both our environment and health, there’s no time to wait,” said Ouzts. “We must move forward on clean energy. We must move forward on wind.”



Wind Power for a Cleaner America

Reducing Global Warming Pollution, Cutting Air Pollution and Saving Water

more online 

Visit our website at www.EnvironmentFloridaCenter.org and learn more about our efforts to repower the sunshine state.



Photo: DDE, NREL

Living up to our solar potential

Unlike much of the country this past winter, Florida hasn’t had to worry about not seeing the sun. Here, the sun shines all year long—more than 300 out of the 365 days.

Even in the “dead of winter,” and we have clear skies and sun, while many other states have long been shrouded in grey. This fact alone has given us more fodder for continuing our campaign to get to work using the sun.

We were also particularly inspired to move forward on clean, renewable energy this winter, given the many consequences of global warming we saw this summer and fall, such as the extreme drought across the country and Superstorm Sandy.

We’ll continue to build support to bring solar power to the Sunshine State from citizens, businesses and allies, and urge our leaders to support programs and incentives to make it easier for Floridians to harness the power of the sun.

“We’re called the Sunshine State for a reason,” said Elizabeth Ouzts, regional program director for Environment Florida. “It’s time we start living up to our nickname.”

▲ Photo: Florida Solar Energy Center.

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Photo: Rachel Kramer, Creative Commons

Environment Florida

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Florida. We focus exclusively on protecting Florida's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Florida waters wait for deserved protections

Tampa Bay is Florida's largest open-water estuary. Composed of saltwater marshes, mangrove forests, and seagrass beds, the bay provides habitat for more than 200 species of fish, habitat for birds like the white ibis and great blue heron, and endless opportunities for boating. Time fishing and exploring in Tampa Bay is a legacy we want our kids to inherit and enjoy.

Unfortunately, loopholes in the Clean Water Act have allowed industrial polluters to treat Florida's waters like Tampa Bay like sewers or garbage dumps: Each year, pollution from development, large ranches and farms spurs algal blooms and invasive plant growth.

In April 2011, the Obama administration proposed new guidelines to close these loopholes so that all of Florida's rivers, lakes and streams get the protections they deserve. But developers, agribusiness, and oil companies have been working to stall new rules ever since. Environment Florida will continue working with its national federation to finalize new guidelines to protect our waters.



Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

more online



For more information on our efforts to keep the Clean Water Act working for all Florida's waterways visit:
www.EnvironmentFlorida.org

◀ *Brown pelicans on Egmont Key, at the mouth of Tampa Bay.*