



Fall Report

A summer spent fighting for clean water

Closing polluter loopholes with grassroots action

Late this spring, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a rule to close loopholes in the Clean Water Act that leave too many of Florida's waters, from the Apalachicola River to Tampa Bay, without the protection they need.

On the heels of the EPA's announcement, this summer, Environment Florida put boots to the ground to build the public support necessary to get the rule across the finish line. Over the course of several months, our staff talked to thousands of people across the state, collected hundreds of public comments to the EPA, and built a coalition of small business owners, local elected officials and farmers.

"Legal warfare"

Not surprisingly, shortly after the EPA's announcement big polluters ramped up their efforts to block the rule, lobbying in Congress, spreading misinformation, and threatening "legal warfare."

Environment Florida responded by releasing a report shining a spotlight on the fact that the polluters have been using our waterways as their own personal sewers for far too long.

"Florida's waterways should be clean—for swimming, drinking and supporting wildlife," said Jennifer Rubiello, field organizer with Environment Florida. "But too often, our waters have been used as a dumping ground for polluters."



Staff

▲ Environment Florida campaign staff canoed along the Hillsborough River.

Farmers, small businesses joined us

When polluters launched a misinformation campaign targeting farmers and lobbied in Congress saying the rule would negatively impact small businesses, we also hit the streets and gathered the signatures of small business owners and collected comments from farmers to call on the EPA to restore protections.

"With the public comment period closing this fall, we're doing whatever it takes to make sure that the Clean Water Act works for all our waterways," said Rubiello. "We're confident that our efforts are making a huge difference in this fight."



David Hawkins/Creative Commons

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To learn more about our work to protect Florida's waters, visit: www.EnvironmentFlorida.org

◀ Great Blue Heron



To our members

This past summer was a whirlwind. Environment Florida citizen outreach staff talked to people across the state and collected thousands of petition signatures to restore Clean Water Act protections to our waters. We've made so much progress, and we owe that success to members like you.

Now, as fall gets underway, it's important to remember another important aspect of the movement for a cleaner, greener Florida: Electing leaders who will do the right thing for our environment. Elections can have huge implications, and if our elected officials are willing to stand up for clean air, clean water and open spaces, we stand a far better chance of winning lasting improvements.

So, if you haven't done so already, I encourage you to make plans to vote, and to bring family and friends with you to the polls. It's our environment and our future—let's get out there and vote!

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Ouzts
Regional Director, Environment Florida

Recent action

Milestone in the fight to keep Florida frack-free

In July, Collier Resources terminated all but one of their leases to frack in Florida with Dan A. Hughes Co.—the dirty energy company that was recently caught illegally acid fracking. The Texas-based oil company announced that it has terminated its 115,000-acre oil and gas drilling lease, and relinquished all its permits.

Environment Florida staff and volunteers have been calling attention to the dirty drilling practice, inviting supporters to protests and news conferences, and advocating for a ban on fracking.

Earlier this year, our coalition delivered more than 100,000 petitions to the Environmental Protection Agency in support of protecting the Everglades and Big Cypress National Preserve.

Coalition unites for “Solar Day of Action”

On June 21, Environment Florida, together with its national federation and other coalition partners, celebrated the summer solstice by organizing a “Solar Day of Action” to expand solar in communities across the country.

Our combined outreach efforts generated more than 17,000 emails to President Obama urging him to put solar on federal buildings, and more than 230 people shared our “Put Solar on It” image on social media. Our partner organizations also held events to celebrate new installations and workshops to educate the public about installing solar, and generated social media shares and donations.

Thanks in part to our advocacy, 2014 has been a breakout year for solar, with more solar installed in the last year and a half than in the past 30 years combined. The United States now generates enough solar energy to power more than 2.5 million homes, and in many states, solar is now competitive with other sources of energy—without emitting dangerous gases that fuel global warming.

**Invest fossil fuel free.
Because her future matters.**



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Report highlights need to restore Clean Water Act

Polluters dumped 206 million pounds of toxic chemicals

Industrial facilities dumped more than 206 million pounds of toxic chemicals into America's waterways in 2012, including more than 1.3 million pounds into Florida's waterways, according to a report by Environment Florida Research & Policy Center released in June.

The "Wasting Our Waterways" report was released as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considered a new rule to restore Clean Water Act protections to thousands of waterways in Florida and across the nation.

"Florida's countless rivers and springs should be clean—for swimming, drinking and supporting wildlife," said Ally Fields, federal clean water advocate. "But too often, our waters have become a dumping ground for polluters. The first step to curb this tide of toxic pollution is to restore Clean Water Act protections to all our waterways."

The toxic truth

The Environment Florida Research & Policy Center report on toxic pollutants discharged in America's waters is based on data reported by polluting facilities to the EPA's Toxics Release Inventory for 2012, the most recent data available.

The report found that corporate agribusiness facilities were responsible for approximately one-third of all direct discharges of nitrates to the nation's waterways, which can cause health problems in infants and contribute to "dead zones" in our waters.

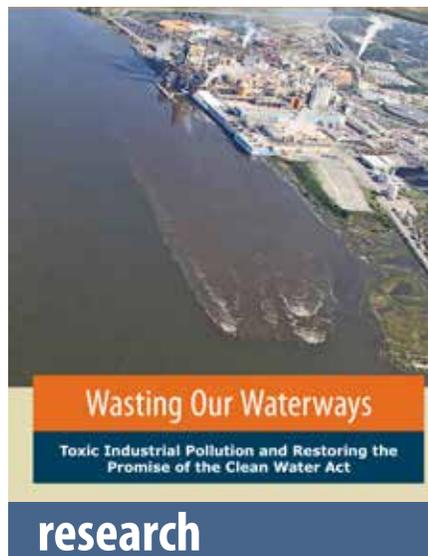
Tyson Foods Inc. is the parent-company reporting dumping the largest discharge of toxic chemicals into our waterways, with a total of 18.5 million pounds—10 percent of the nationwide total of toxic discharges. Of the top ten parent-companies by total pounds of toxics released,

four are corporate agribusiness companies: Tyson Inc., Cargill Inc., Perdue Farms Inc., and Pilgrims Pride Corp.

An opportunity for action

Following years of advocacy by Environment Florida Research and Policy Center and its allies, this spring, the EPA finally proposed a rule to close the loopholes that have left America's waterways at risk and restore Clean Water Act protections. But corporate agribusiness is vigorously opposing these critical clean water protections.

"Looking at the data from this report, you can see why polluters might oppose any efforts to better protect our waters," said Fields. "That's why we are working with farmers, small businesses and hundreds of thousands of ordinary Americans to make sure our voices for clean water are heard in Washington, D.C. The future of the waterways we love hangs in the balance."



research

To learn more about our work on clean water visit:
www.EnvironmentFloridaCenter.org

THREATENING OUR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Industrial facilities dumped **206 million pounds** of toxic chemicals into American waterways in 2012.



According to the EPA, industrial pollution has left more than **17,000 miles of rivers** and about **210,000 acres of lakes, ponds or reservoirs** unable to support drinking, swimming, fishing or other uses.



Toxic chemicals dumped into waterways have the potential to seriously and adversely impact human health, from **developmental harm to cancer.**



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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.

Groundbreaking step to tackle global warming

On June 2, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed a Clean Power Plan that sets targets for states to reduce global warming pollution by limiting carbon from dirty power plants, and shifting to clean energy. Following the announcement, Environment Florida launched a nationwide "Global Warming Solutions" campaign together with our national federation. Active in 24 states, the \$2.4 million campaign will help Americans connect the dots between the consequences of global warming and the meaningful impact of the plan.

"Once implemented, this will be the biggest step the U.S. has ever taken to cut global warming pollution," said Environment Florida Field Organizer Jennifer Rubiello. "This is a huge deal. But it's not yet a done deal. Polluters are spending millions to oppose the EPA's commonsense action. We need to ensure this critical step is taken."



Staff

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Take action and join our fight against global warming at: www.EnvironmentFlorida.org

Environment Florida Field Organizer Jennifer Rubiello urged the EPA to move forward with limits on power plant pollution.