



Fall Report

Everglades and manatees wait for protection

Polluters pressure EPA to delay action

Phosphorous pollution from agribusiness and uncontrolled development has long been linked to the decline of the Everglades. Earlier this year, scientists theorized that the pollution could have claimed another victim, when record numbers of manatees died from toxic algae.

Despite the clear need to reduce phosphorous pollution, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has dragged its feet for more than two years in finalizing two rules to control runoff pollution from agriculture and development and ensure all waters of the U.S. are protected under the Clean Water Act.

Protecting Florida's treasures

The Everglades, composed of sawgrass marshes and lush mangrove forests, are one of the world's most diverse ecosystems. Home to endangered wildlife including panthers, crocodiles and alligators, the Everglades attract millions of Floridians and other visitors every year. But more than half of the historic Everglades have been paved over or drained, and nutrient pollution threatens more than 25 percent of what remains, triggering algae blooms, spurring invasive plant growth, and threatening the wildlife that depend on the "river of grass" for their habitat.

Manatees die in record numbers

Nearly 270 of Florida's 5,000 endangered manatees died this spring from a toxic red algae bloom that appears each year off the state's west coast, according to estimates from the state Fish and Wildlife Research



▲ Florida manatee

Institute. Experts are uncertain why this year's algae bloom was so lengthy and toxic. Phosphorus runoff from fertilized farms and lawns may have contributed, because algae thrive on a phosphorus diet.

Pushing for new pollution rules

For years, Environment Florida and its allies have been pushing for new rules to reduce the phosphorous pollution that

threatens our waters. We've gathered comments and enlisted the support of public officials, farmers, and recreation businesses.

This fall, as the court-ordered deadline for the EPA to announce new rules approaches, Environment Florida is continuing to make the case to protect our waters.



take action

To learn more about our work to protect the Everglades and take action, visit www.EnvironmentFlorida.org

◀ Park ranger kayaks the Everglades



To our members

When it comes to global warming, there's a lot at stake for Florida, and all that makes it special—from the Everglades, to our wildlife, to Miami Beach.

That's why I was so thrilled to see President Obama announce an ambitious plan to tackle the single largest source of the carbon pollution warming the planet, invest in energy efficiency, and promote more clean power, like wind and solar.

The president's plan wasn't happenstance. It came after years of organizing on the part of Environment Florida and our allies. And most of all, it came because of you. Your contributions, your emails and letters all made a difference in getting the president to announce such an ambitious plan.

Getting this plan finalized and enforced will be even harder—the polluters have already declared war on the very idea of taking action. And that's why your support in the future will be so critical.

Thanks for being with us.

Elizabeth Ouzts
Regional Director

Recent action

Energy efficiency programs deserve funding

When the House Energy and Commerce hearing on the Department of Energy's budget took place, Anna Aurilio, director of Environment America's D.C. office, released a statement advocating for funding two important energy efficiency programs. According to Aurilio, the Weatherization Assistance and State Energy Programs help many families, and are a step in the right direction in the plan to tackle global warming. However, in the past year, Congress has slashed both budgets. The Weatherization Assistance Program helps low-income families, seniors and individuals with disabilities make energy efficiency improvements to their homes. The State Energy Program (SEP) provides financial and technical assistance to states for developing strategies to address their energy priorities and adopt energy efficiency and renewable energy programs. SEP also saves \$256 million annually in reduced energy bills.

"Clean energy and energy efficiency programs are vital global warming solutions we need right now," said Aurilio. "We're counting on Congress to protect and strengthen these programs, and in so doing, also protect Americans' health and environment."

Cuts to park funding on the table

In June, the National Park Service released a memo planning for cuts to parks across the board—from Yosemite to the Everglades. In 2012, more than 10 million people visited Florida's 11 national parks—bringing more than \$608 million in economic benefit to the state. The recently announced cuts will leave our parks and parks across the country with reduced hours of operation, fewer services and in some cases, even closure. At the time of this newsletter going to print, the park funding proposals were headed to our Sens. Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio.

"Our parks provide critical habitat for species and keep our air and water clean," said Elizabeth Ouzts, Environment Florida regional program director. "They provide us with so many memories. Now is not the time to cut funding. Now is the time to stand up for them."

The climate is changing – are your investments?

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Chancey Davis

▲ Turner River in the Everglades

What Obama's climate plan means for Florida

On June 25, President Obama announced a climate plan that will set limits on carbon pollution from power plants, advance energy efficiency and increase the nation's commitment to renewable energy. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, record drought, sea level rise and wildfires, the president's plan to address global warming was loudly applauded by Environment Florida and many others.

Sea level rise, hot days, severe storms

"For Florida, global warming means severe sea level rise, hotter temperatures, and more intense storms," said Environment Florida's Regional Program Director Elizabeth Ouzts. "That's why when President Obama made a plan and commitments to tackle the sources of this severe problem, it was a big victory."

To respond to this threat, the president's plan contains several key components. It will:

- **Limit carbon pollution from new and existing power plants.** The president directed the Environmental Protection Agency to set limits on carbon pollution from new and existing power plants, which currently lack any such federal limits, despite being the largest single-source of the carbon pollution fueling global warming.
- **Invest in energy efficiency.** New efficiency measures for buildings and new appliances will cut carbon pollution by reducing our overall energy demand.
- **Build more renewable energy.** The plan focuses on expanding production of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar, especially on public lands.
- **Support affected communities.** The president's plan will help ensure that communities are better equipped to prepare for and recover from the impacts of global warming.
- **Rebuild U.S. leadership internationally.** The president's plan calls for the

U.S. to actively engage in international efforts to address global warming.

Focus on cutting carbon pollution

Environment Florida offered special praise for the president's pledge to cut carbon pollution from existing power plants. Environment Florida, alongside our national federation Environment America, helped submit 3.2 million public comments last year in support of the president setting limits on carbon pollution from power plants. Hundreds of organizations and local leaders from our state and across the country have also spoken out in support of limiting global warming pollution from power plants.

"Carbon pollution from power plants is a huge part of the global warming problem," said Ouzts. "But we also know that the plan to cut this pollution is just one important step in a multi-year effort, and that the proof of the plan's success will be in the pudding. Environment Florida stands ready to assist the president in following through on this critical commitment."



Daniel Borman

more online

To learn more about our work to curb global warming, visit:
www.EnvironmentFlorida.org

▲ President Obama speaks to a group of students about the need for alternative energies.



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Sunshine State lags behind others for solar potential

Environment Florida Research & Policy Center released "Lighting the Way: What We Can Learn from America's Top 12 Solar States," a new report highlighting a solar energy boom across the country. The report outlines the 12 states with the most solar per capita. Despite being the Sunshine State, Florida ranks only 16th in the nation for per capita solar installed through 2012. Last year, solar capacity in Florida grew by 13 percent bringing it to a total of 186 megawatts through the end of 2012.

Even though Florida still trails behind leading solar states, the report points out how the city of Gainesville is an exception.

"Gainesville accounts for only 0.6 percent of Florida's population, but the city accounts for 8.1 percent of the state's total installed solar energy capacity," said Peyton Allen, with Environment Florida. "Gainesville is a bright light in Florida's solar future. The city is a great example of how local policies can help move state action and national action towards pollution-free solar energy."

Solar is on the rise across the country. America has more than three times as much solar photovoltaic capacity as it did in 2010, and more than 10 times as much as it did in 2007. Environment Florida attributed the solar boom to the leadership of state officials, especially those in states profiled in the report.

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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.

Jewell takes steps to keep drilling off our shores

In June, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell rebuffed the oil and gas industry's latest effort to bring offshore drilling to the Atlantic Coast. Her comments came after hearings in House and Senate committees in which Republicans pushed to overturn the Obama administration's decision to keep the Eastern Seaboard free from deepwater drilling damage. John Rumpler, senior attorney with Environment Florida, issued a strong statement in response:

"We commend Secretary Jewell for standing up to those who would subject our beautiful Atlantic Coast to dirty drilling. BP's massive spill in the Gulf showed us the tragedy that offshore drilling can bring—for wildlife, fishermen, and coastal communities alike. And then there are the 'ordinary' impacts of offshore drilling—pollution, accidents, and miles of coastal lands packed with pipelines and the other ugly infrastructure of the oil and gas industry. Sally Jewell did what Americans rightfully expect from our Interior Secretary: She refused to sacrifice more of our natural heritage to dirty drilling."



more inside

Everglades and manatees wait for protection; Obama tackles global warming, and more.

◀ *Deepwater Horizon oil spill response crews gathering and burning oil in the Gulf of Mexico*