

ENVIRONMENT **FLORIDA** Your Fall Report

The EPA announced plans to repeal the ‘Dirty Water Rule.’ Here’s what’s next.

Ready to say goodbye to the Trump administration’s Dirty Water Rule? So are we. Thankfully, we took a big step in that direction.

This summer, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its plan to repeal and replace the “Dirty Water Rule”—a Trump administration policy that left the drinking water of millions of Americans at risk from polluters.

It’s the latest round in a decades-long debate over the Clean Water Act—and for our research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, it’s progress years in the making.

Decades-old protections restored

Fifty years ago, water pollution ran virtually unchecked, putting public health and the environment at risk. The solution? The 1972 Clean Water Act, which set enforceable, clear limits on what polluters could dump into our waterways.

For decades, the Clean Water Act yielded progress toward cleaning up and protecting our waters. But in 2006, a Supreme Court ruling left 20 million acres of wetlands and more than half our nation’s streams without clear protection under the Act.

From the Chesapeake Bay to Puget Sound, streams and wetlands protect our larger waterways, filtering out pollutants and providing wildlife habitat. Plus, the streams put at risk by the 2006 ruling help provide drinking water to 117 million Americans.

In the face of this dirty ruling, our national network got to work.



Senior Director of our Clean Water for America Campaign John Rumpler preparing to testify before Congress on behalf of our clean water protections in early 2020.

Environment America Research & Policy Center and the rest of Environment Florida’s national network worked to bring the Clean Water Act back to its full water-saving potential.

We assembled more than 1 million supporters and 1,000 influential voices, including business owners, elected officials and more. Our research partners issued reports on the necessity of water protections while our advocates lobbied 50 congressional offices and advocated in front of Congress and the EPA.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

59,000 supporters, 40 lawmakers tell Whole Foods to put 'planet over plastic'

A massive environmental crisis requires a massive call to action.

That's why our national research partners at Environment America Research & Policy Center, along with our friends at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and the Student PIRGs, delivered a letter to Whole Foods on May 6, 2021—signed by nearly 60,000 supporters,

On June 29, the Florida Wildlife Corridor Act was signed into law. The act earmarks \$300 million for the “wildlife corridors” that offer a lifeline to our imperiled wildlife, including the fewer than 130 endangered Florida panthers. Through overpasses, lowered fences and strips of connective land, wildlife corridors provide access to whole habitats and repair some of the damage done to wildlife by the division and fragmentation of critical lands.

“When an animal’s home is sliced in half, it loses access to food and breeding grounds,” said our national network’s Conservation America Campaign Advocate Alex Peterson. “Development has left wildlife with broken homes, but if we stitch habitats back together, we can do a lot more to protect our most vulnerable species.”

Environment Florida and our national network now call on Congress to advance similar conservation legislation at the national level.

Report: After years of advancement in clean energy technology, it's clear that 'We Have The Power'

It's time for Florida to move beyond fossil fuels, and fortunately, we have the power to realize our renewable energy potential.

That was the finding of the “We Have The Power” report, released in June by our national research partner, Environment America Research & Policy Center. The report found that Florida has the technical potential to meet all its electricity needs 20 times over with wind and solar energy.

“To a visitor from an earlier century, America in 2021 would be unimaginably advanced in all ways but one: We still rely on dirty and dangerous fossil fuels to meet our energy needs,” said Susan Rakov, chair of our partner Environment America Research & Policy Center’s Clean Energy program.

“But it doesn’t have to be that way. This report shows that we have the potential to run our society on clean energy, today and in the future.”

Get more updates on our work online at <http://environmentflorida.org>.

Staff



Our national network’s Oceans Associate Reino Hyyppa (top, center) joined legislators and supporters for a virtual rally against plastic waste.

including 40 state lawmakers—calling on the grocer to phase out single-use plastic packaging in its stores. Once an environmental leader that stopped providing plastic bags to its customers at checkout in 2008, Whole Foods recently earned an “F” for its plastic policies in a report by environmental group As You Sow.

“Nothing we use for just a few minutes should pollute our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years,” said Kelsey Lamp, Protect Our Oceans campaign director for Environment America Research & Policy Center, our national research partners. “That’s why the companies that rely on single-use plastic to package their products must adopt more sustainable packaging options or eliminate single-use plastic packaging altogether.”

“Change is possible, and Whole Foods should lead the way to a future where we put the planet over plastic.”

Florida to bridge together broken habitat with wildlife corridors

Much of Florida’s wildlife habitat has been fractured by development. A new law promises to help stitch some of it back together.



Toward a greener future

Support our work to build a cleaner, greener, healthier future by including a gift to Environment Florida or Environment Florida Research & Policy Center in your will, trust or retirement accounts.

For more information call 1-800-841-7299 or send an email to: PlannedGiving@EnvironmentFlorida.org



Page 1 story continued: Repealing the Dirty Water Rule

And in 2015, we won: The Obama administration enacted the Clean Water Rule, which protected our waterways once more.

Restoring hope after attacks

Then, the Trump administration vowed to repeal the Clean Water Rule on day one—and it even planned on replacing it with a policy known as the Dirty Water Rule.

So, Environment America Research & Policy Center stepped up again—organizing thousands to stop the Dirty Water Rule.

Despite our best efforts, the Dirty Water Rule was finalized in 2020 and reopened the floodgates for polluters. This new rule has left half our remaining wetlands and thousands of streams without federal protection.

But all hope was not lost: That same grassroots support—yours included—fueled our campaign to repeal the Dirty Water Rule.

First, we joined other groups in suing the Trump administration’s EPA. Second, we made sure the incoming Biden administration saw the overwhelming public support for stronger clean water protections.

Then, we saw progress: The EPA announced its intention to reverse the Dirty Water Rule.

But intention is not implementation—our work is far from over. Many of our waterways are still at the mercy of polluters. So we’re calling on the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to permanently protect our waterways.

The Clean Water Act turns 50 next year—and with your support, we will work to ensure that all our nation’s waters are protected under this bedrock environmental law.

By John Rumpler, Clean Water for America campaign director

In 2014, a coalition led by our national network delivered more than 700,000 comments from Americans to the EPA in support of restoring protections to the nation’s streams and wetlands.



Thank you for supporting our work to take on the vast environmental challenges we face and to create a greener, healthier, more sustainable world. In these pages, you’ll find the stories of the advocacy you made possible.

Your action and support allow us to keep working for a better world. Thank you.

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Your Fall Report

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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, Inc., a project of Environment America. 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.

Over 47,000 supporters tell Amazon: Stop selling bee-killing pesticides

To save the bees, our staff have asked the world's largest online retailer to stop selling the pesticides that kill them. And we're not alone.

In March, Environment Florida and our national network kicked off our campaign to convince Amazon to take neonicotinoid pesticides (or "neonics")—the substances linked to a troubling decline in bee populations—off its (virtual) shelves.

By August, campaigners with our network had collected more than 47,000 petition signatures online and in 10 communities across the country.

"We need to reduce the use of this pesticide that's contributing to the collapse of our most important pollinators," said Malia Libby, our national Save the Bees campaign associate. "Amazon should join other retailers in doing the right thing and taking it off its shelves."

Our ask is far from unprecedented: The Home Depot and Lowe's have already pledged to phase out the use of neonics on their live plants, and Lowe's has committed to taking the pesticides off its shelves altogether.

Our national network's summer canvassers talked to tens of thousands of people across the country about our campaign to get Amazon to stop the sale of bee-killing pesticides.



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