

South Florida Ecosystem Education Project

Background

The south Florida ecosystem, including the Everglades, covers 18,000 square miles from Orlando through the Chain of Lakes, Kissimmee Valley, and Lake Okeechobee, to the coastal areas of the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers, Florida Bay, Biscayne Bay, and the Florida Keys. Human activities, including flood control, use of fertilizers, irrigation, and extraction of drinking water stress this valuable ecosystem. Part of managing these stresses involves a 30-year restoration plan with three main goals: 1) 'get the water right'; 2) restore, protect, and preserve the natural system; and 3) foster compatibility between the built and natural systems. The success of efforts to restore and manage the south Florida ecosystem ultimately relies on the awareness, understanding and participation of all who live in or visit south Florida.

Project description

The Florida Sea Grant College Program and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Cooperative Extension Program announce a new project focusing on the south Florida marine ecosystem, which includes Florida Bay, the waters and coral reefs of the Florida Keys and the Tortugas Ecological Reserve. The South Florida Ecosystem Education Project will focus on potential changes to coastal systems arising from South Florida Ecosystem Restoration, particularly the 30-year effort to restore the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water flow through the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The goals of the project are to: 1) foster two-way communication between south Floridians and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) research community; 2) provide Florida's upland and coastal communities with outreach, education and general information about water quality and other issues affecting their coastal ecosystems; and 3) empower citizens to participate in science-based decisions that affect their local marine ecosystems. The anticipated result of these efforts is a community that better understands how South Florida Ecosystem Restoration affects coastal waters and how residents and visitors can participate in regional and local management of water quality and other key aspects of the south Florida ecosystem.

The Project is administered and supported by the Florida Sea Grant College Program, NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program, and three NOAA offices in south Florida, i.e., the Atlantic Oceanic and Meteorological Laboratory (NOAA/AOML), the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (NOAA/FKNMS) and the Southeast Fisheries Science Center (NOAA/SEFSC).



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WHERE DO I GET INFORMATION?

There are many agencies and organizations participating in south Florida's restoration efforts. Here is a brief list of websites that can help you learn more about efforts to restore the uplands, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and coastal areas that make up the south Florida ecosystem.

General Information

- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan: www.evergladesplan.org
- South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force: www.sfrestore.org

Educational Resources

- Everglades Education Consortium: www.evergladeseducation.net/
- Everglades National Park: <http://www.nps.gov/ever/home.htm>
- Everglades Village: www.evergladesvillage.net/
- Florida Bay Education Project: <http://www.floridabay.org/>
- Florida Earth Foundation: www.floridaearth.org
- Florida International University: www.eng.fiu.edu/evrglads/
- Florida Museum of Natural History South Florida: www.flmnh.ufl.edu/fish/southflorida/pisces.html
- Florida Sea Grant: www.flseagrant.org
- Florida Photographic Collection: www.floridamemory.com/PhotographicCollection/
- Museum of Discovery Science: www.flh2o.com
- Save the Everglades: www.saveoureverglades.org
- The Living Everglades: glades.sfwmd.gov
- University of Florida Cooperative Extension Program: <http://extension.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Research Information

- Everglades Research and Education Center: <http://erec.ifas.ufl.edu/>
- NOAA's South Florida Ecosystem Research & Monitoring Program: www.aoml.noaa.gov/sfp/
- Florida Bay and Adjacent Marine Systems Science Program: www.aoml.noaa.gov/flbay/
- Florida Center for Environmental Resources: <http://www.ces.fau.edu/>
- Southeast Environmental Research Center: <http://serc.fiu.edu>
- US Geological Survey South Florida Information Access: sofia.usgs.gov/

Agencies

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: www.noaa.gov
 - Atlantic Oceanographic and Atmospheric Laboratory: www.aoml.noaa.gov
 - Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary: www.fknms.nos.noaa.gov
 - South East Fisheries Science Center: www.sefsc.noaa.gov
- State of Florida
 - Department of Environmental Protection: www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/everglades
 - Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: www.floridaconservation.org
- South Florida Water Management District: www.sfwmd.gov
- National Park Service
 - Big Cypress National Preserve: <http://www.nps.gov/bicy/>
 - Biscayne National Park: www.nps.gov/bisc/
 - Everglades National Park: www.nps.gov/ever/
- US Army Corps of Engineers - Jacksonville District: www.saj.usace.army.mil/
- US Geological Survey: www.usgs.gov
- US Environmental Protection Agency Region 4: www.epa.gov/region4
- US Fish and Wildlife Service: www.fws.gov

Tribal Groups

- Miccousekee Tribe of Florida: <http://Miccousekee.casinocity.com>
- Seminole Tribe of Florida: www.semtribe.com

