



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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****PRESS RELEASE****

SIERRA CLUB DEMANDS FULL REVIEW OF THE EAA RESERVOIR DESIGN
Alternatives for Water Storage, Treatment, and Conveyance South are Way Past Due

Belle Glade, FL—The recently released review of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Storage Reservoir by William J. Mitsch, Director of the Florida Gulf Coast University's Everglades Wetland Research Park, draws attention once again to the fact that the current project design is seriously lacking.

Statement by Sierra Club Organizing Representative Diana Umpierre:

“A full review of the EAA Storage Reservoir design is immediately required and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) must aggressively identify alternatives for water storage, treatment, and conveyance south.

Sierra Club has been challenging South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) since 2017 to make full use of the resources provided by state law to design a cost-effective reservoir project in the Everglades Agricultural Area that maximizes potential benefits and ensures the conveyance of clean water south to Everglades National Park and Florida Bay. The current design is a staggering betrayal of the expectations created by the legislation (SB 10) signed into law in 2017.

The South Florida Water Management District has never engaged in a concerted effort to ensure a larger project footprint to boost the project’s water treatment capacity; in fact no alternatives were ever presented that address the concerns that restricting the project’s size limits its ability to achieve optimum performance.

Dr. Mitsch’s review underlines the need to ensure that the project design is consistent with the intent and letter of the law, presents the optimal configuration to reduce discharges to Florida’s coasts and deliver clean water to the Everglades and Florida Bay, and provides these benefits cost-effectively.

SB10 required SFWMD to analyze the "optimal configuration" (subparagraph (5)(b)(1) of Florida Statute 373.4598) of the reservoir and SFWMD was not limited to acreage already in public ownership. We need land, close to 100,000 acres, to truly restore the Everglades ecosystem and protect residents from toxic harmful algae – both around Lake Okeechobee and in the northern estuaries. For two decades everything but what is actually needed has been the focus. Dr. Mitsch’s review gives the District another reason to finally make land acquisition their top priority.

It makes no sense to spend \$2 billion on a reservoir with a questionable design that is highly unlikely to provide the desperately needed benefits. Too many people have rushed to promote the implementation of the current design. Claiming victory, accepting less than what we truly need, will not ensure the restoration of the Everglades. We need to continue to demand the land needed to make restoration a reality.”

Background:

<http://www.sierraclubfloridanews.org/2018/08/sierra-club-comments-draft-eis-for-aaa-reservoir.html>
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6bfq0dFO5TtUUVkaEhyempIUF1hSVVKbkxvand4Vk5iRFI4/view>
<http://www.sierraclubfloridanews.org/2017/05/everglades-reservoir-law-is-improvement.html>

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