Restoring America's Everglades
Leadership·Partnership·Results

"The miracle of the light pours over the green and brown expanse of saw grass and of water, shining and slow-moving below, the grass and water that is the meaning and the central fact of the Everglades of Florida.

It is a river of grass."

— Marjory Stoneman Douglas

First Things First

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First Things First

Where is the Everglades?

Click here and find out.

What does the Everglades do for you?

A healthy economy is vital to the wellbeing of the region's 8.1 million residents. In South Florida, the Everglades **IS** the economy.

The Everglades is an unparalleled natural economic engine, supporting multi-billion dollar agriculture, tourism, and recreation industries.

What does restoration do for you?

50% of the historic Everglades has been converted to development. That development can prosper only if the remaining natural Everglades survives.

Construction of restoration infrastructure will provide additional jobs and economic benefits throughout the region while insuring that residents will have clean drinking water and flood protection in the future.

What is the Everglades?

Scroll down or click on the buttons at the left and find out.

*To fully enjoy the story, use the **blue text** as you read to discover additional images, maps, and multimedia.*

The Everglades: It's More Than You Think

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Twice the size of New Jersey, the Everglades provides drinking water for more than 8 million people. The Everglades also supports the multi-billion dollar economies of agriculture, recreation, and tourism of South Florida. The Everglades is home to two Native American tribes and boasts one of the highest levels of biodiversity in the country.

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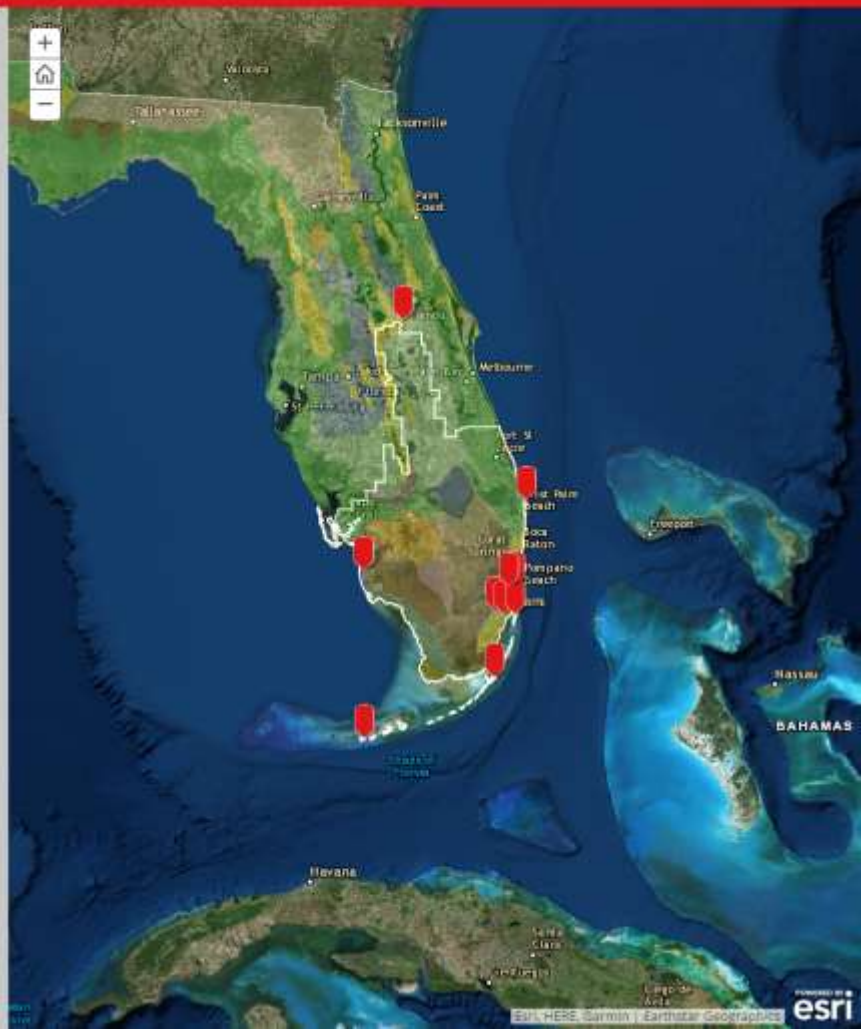
The Historic Everglades Prior to 1880

The South Florida Ecosystem

Urban | Agriculture | Recreation | Tourism | Native American | Habitats



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A combination of connectivity and spatial extent created a broad range of habitats and supported diverse and abundant native plants and animals.

The South Florida Ecosystem

Edit

Urban | Agriculture | Recreation | Tourism | Native American | Habitats


Livestock


Citrus

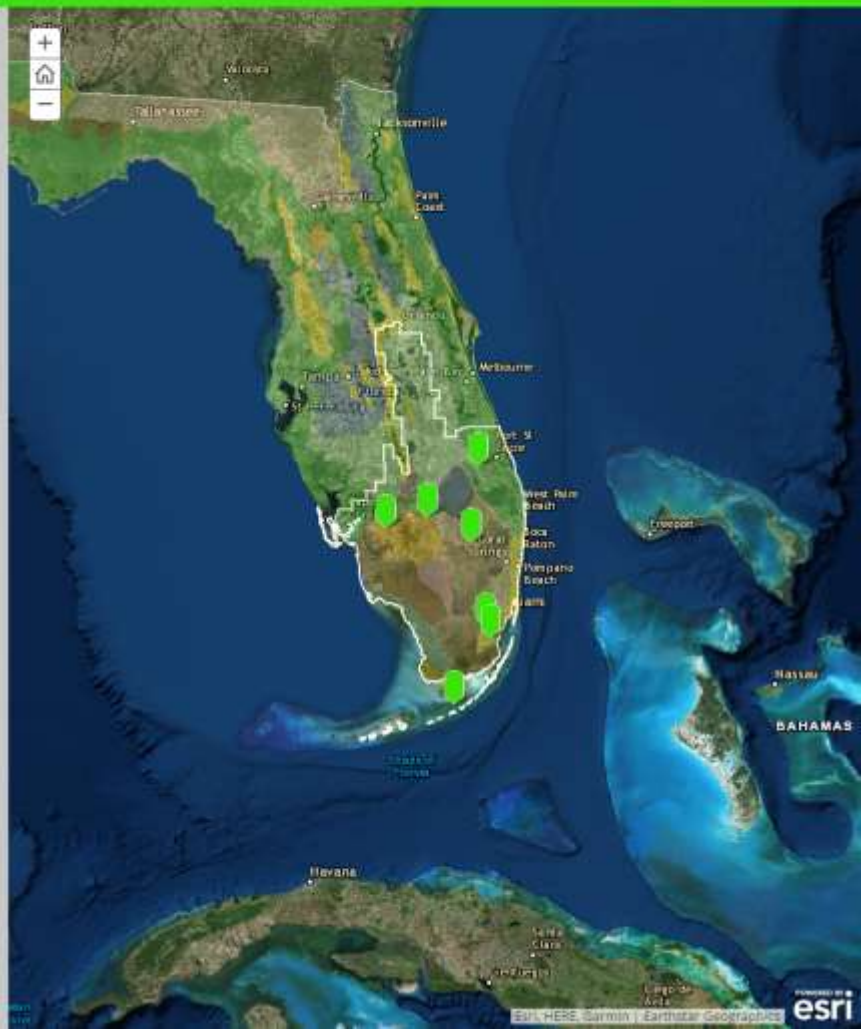

Fruit


Field Crops


Vegetables


Horticulture


Seafood



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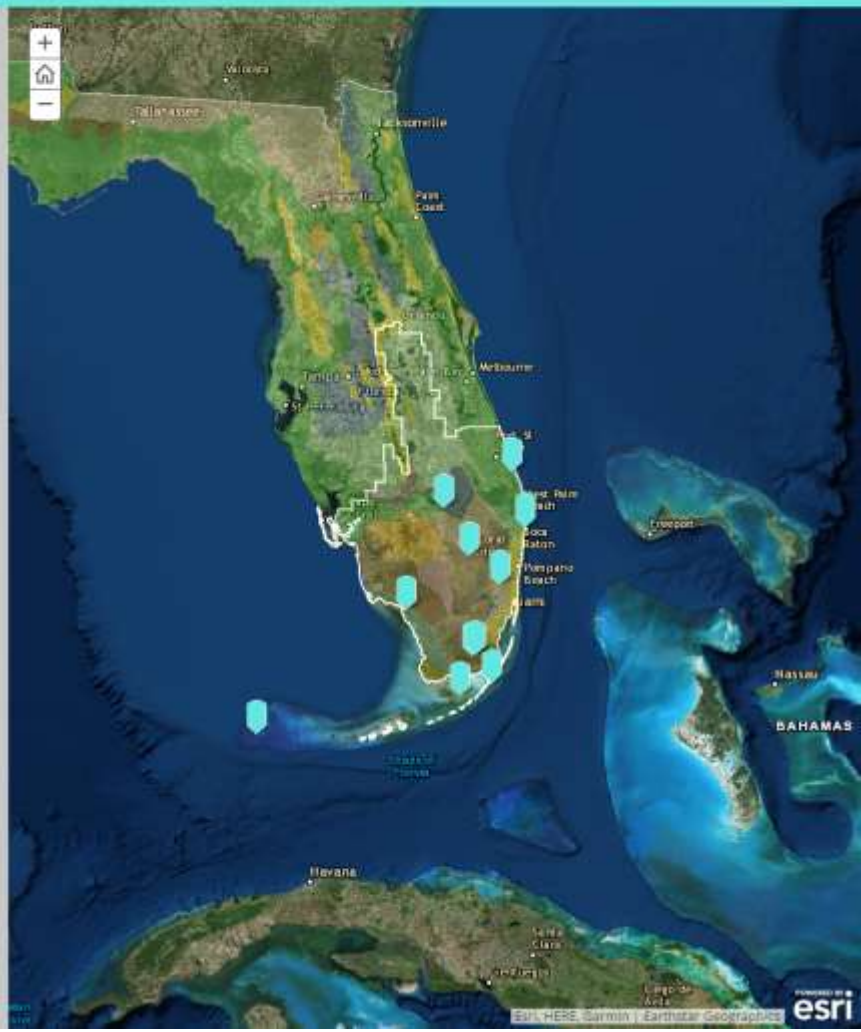

Everglades Restoration

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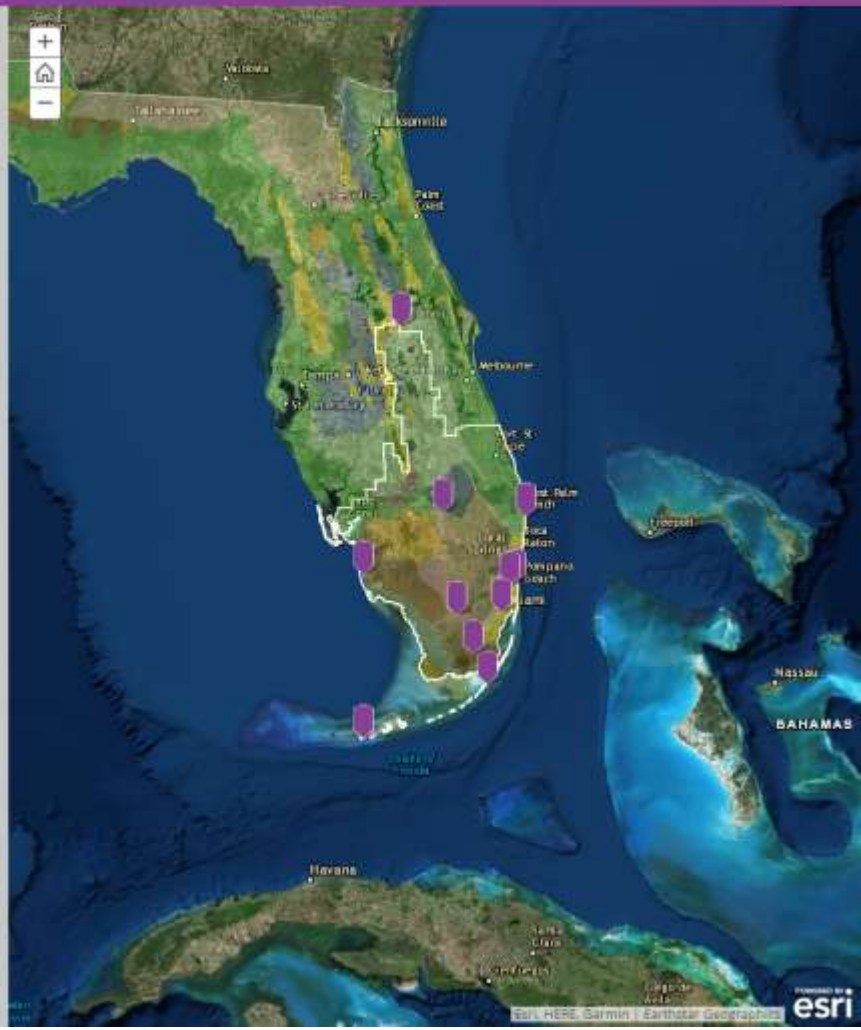

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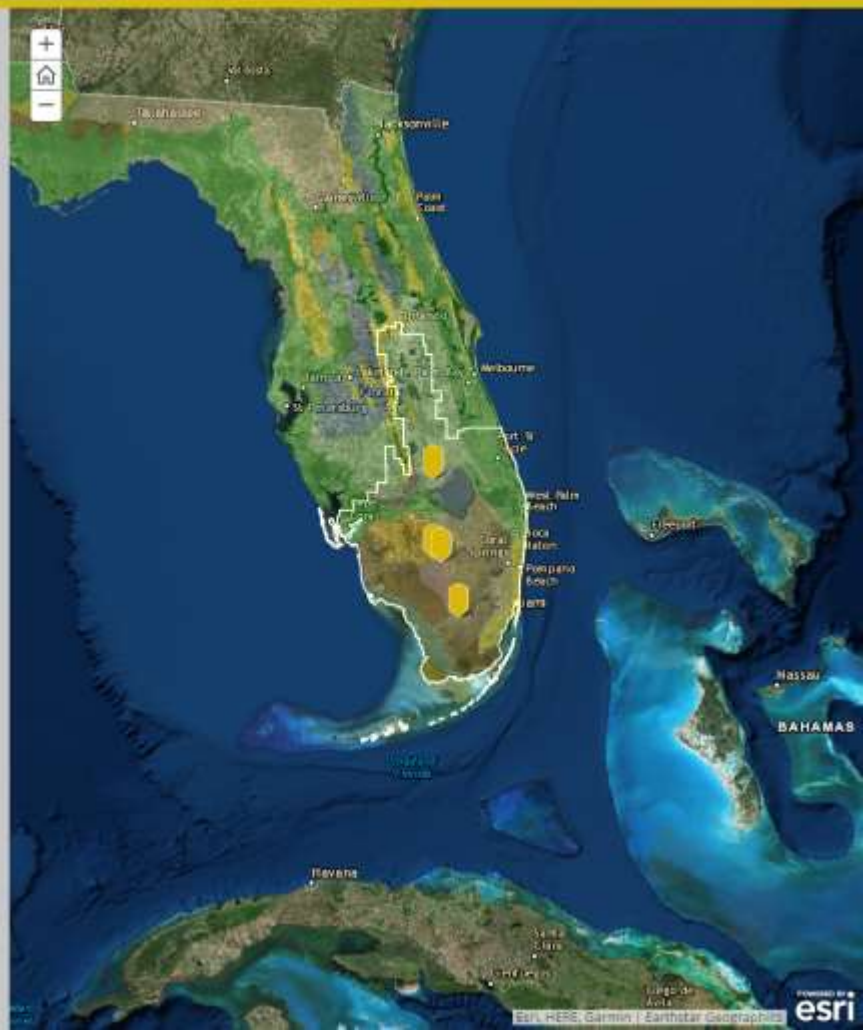
Seminole Tribe of Florida Billie Swamp

Seminole Tribe of Florida Big Cypress Reservation

Seminole Tribe of Florida Brighton Reservation

Miccosukee Tribe of Florida



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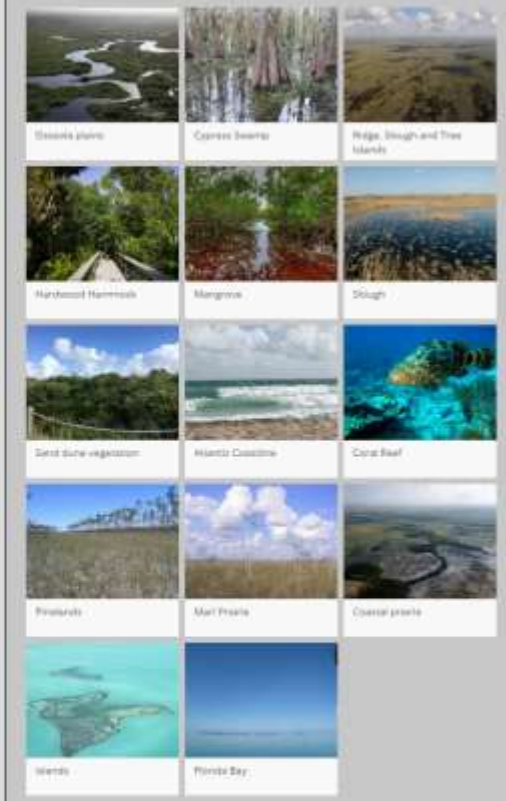

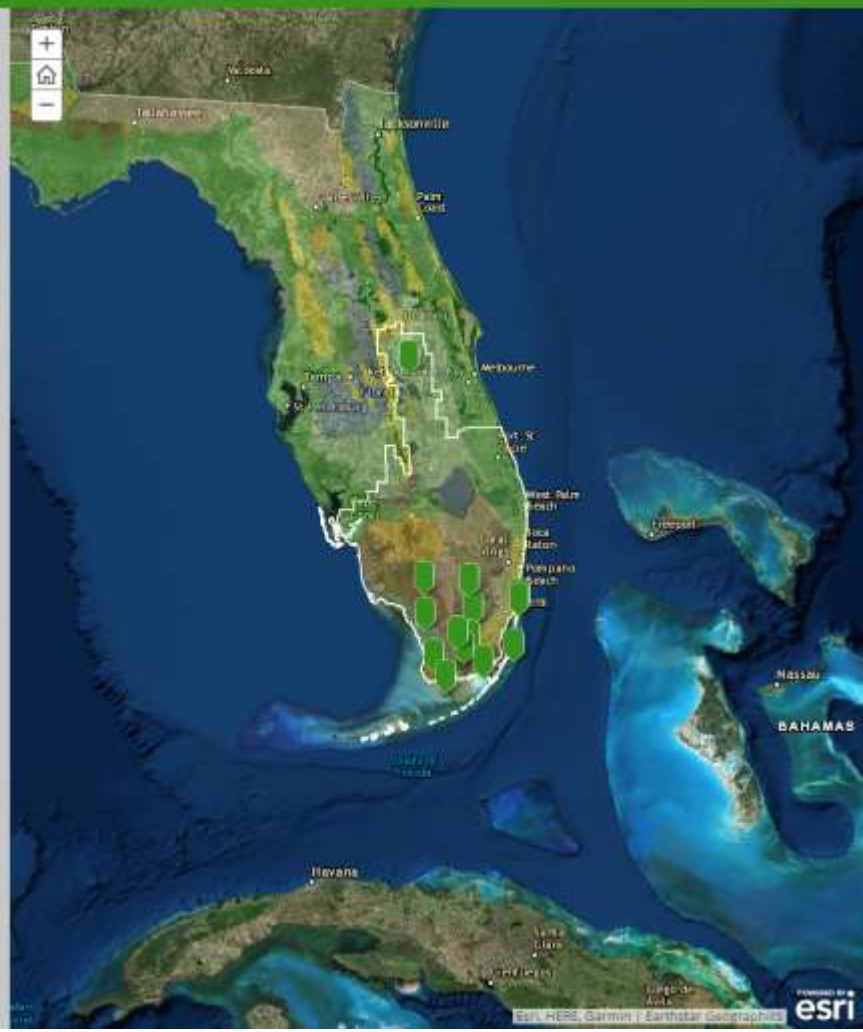

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Ridge and Slough Landscape

Roseate spoonbills and other shorebirds hunt on the mud flats during low tides

Restoring America's Everglades
Leadership·Partnership·Results

Draining the Everglades 1880 - 1972

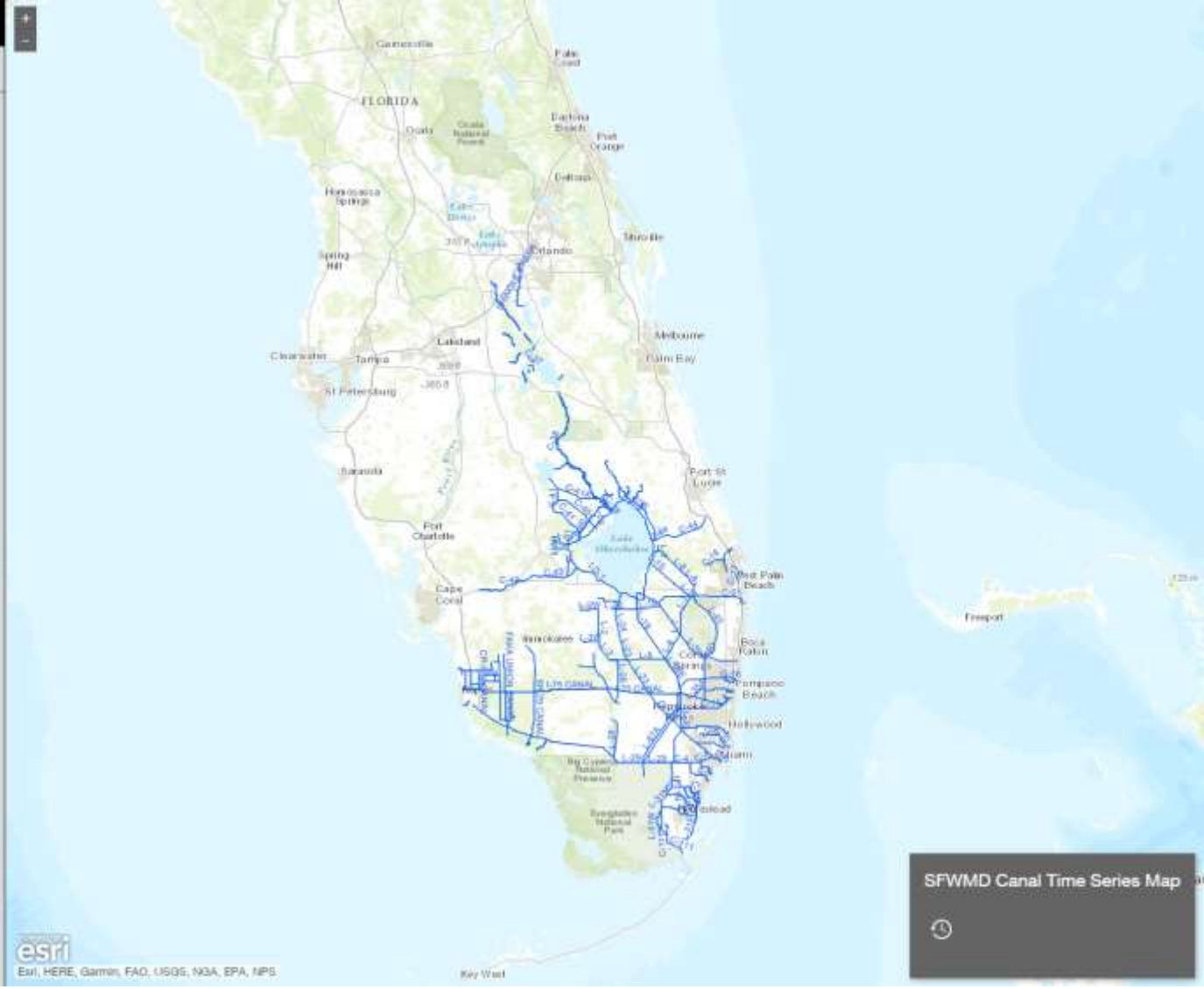
Time Series Map at right of the Central & South Florida Flood Control Project. Click on the Clock at the bottom right corner of the map to open the Time Slider control box. Press the Play Arrow to start the animation.

Efforts began in the late 1800s to drain the Everglades for agricultural, residential, and commercial development. Wetlands were drained or filled, and canals, roads, and buildings began to displace native habitats and disrupt historical water flows.In 1948 Congress authorized the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project, a huge system of water management infrastructure that drained half of the original Everglades and allowed south Florida to develop into one of the most important economic regions in the country.

Modern South Florida, including famous places like Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, and West Palm Beach, would not exist as we know it today without the C&SF Flood Control Project.

To see how the C&SF Flood dcontrol Project changed the way water flows in the Everglades, click on **Current Flow Map animation**.

Landcover Change Swipe Map



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Landcover Change Swipe Map

Urban and suburban growth in Palm Beach County

Legend

Landsat 8 Analytic - Year 1975	Landsat 8 Analytic - Year 2013
Red: Nearinfrared	Red: Nearinfrared
Green: Red	Green: Red
Blue: Green	Blue: Green

The Unintended Consequences

Everglades Restoration

Water Quality Degredation | Loss of Native Species | Drought | Flood | Fire | Invasive Species | Saltwater Intrusion | Habitat Loss

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The Unintended Consequences

Unfortunately, South Florida's growth and prosperity came at a high price. The very water management system that created modern south Florida threatens to destroy the Everglades. Ironically, the tourism, agriculture, and fishing industries that form the backbone of the regional economy rely on clean water from a living Everglades. That is why efforts began in the 1980s to find ways to balance the needs of people and the Everglades. Those efforts were the beginning of the Everglades Restoration era.

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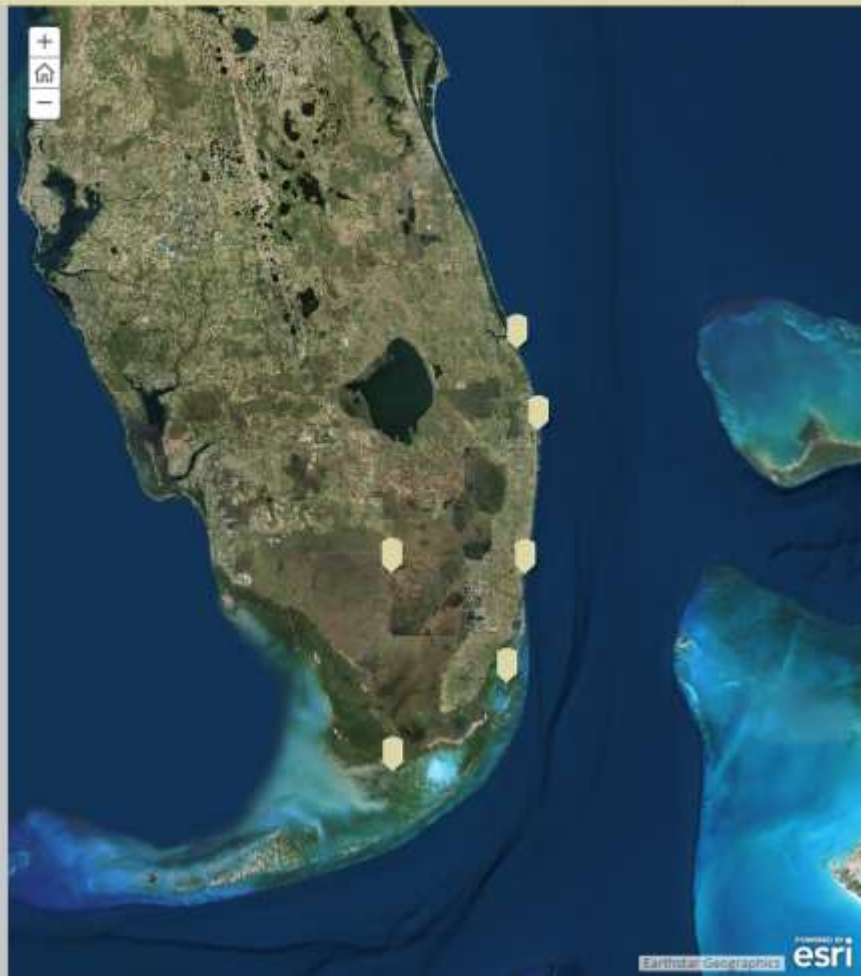
EDDMaps



Restoring the Everglades
1983 to Present

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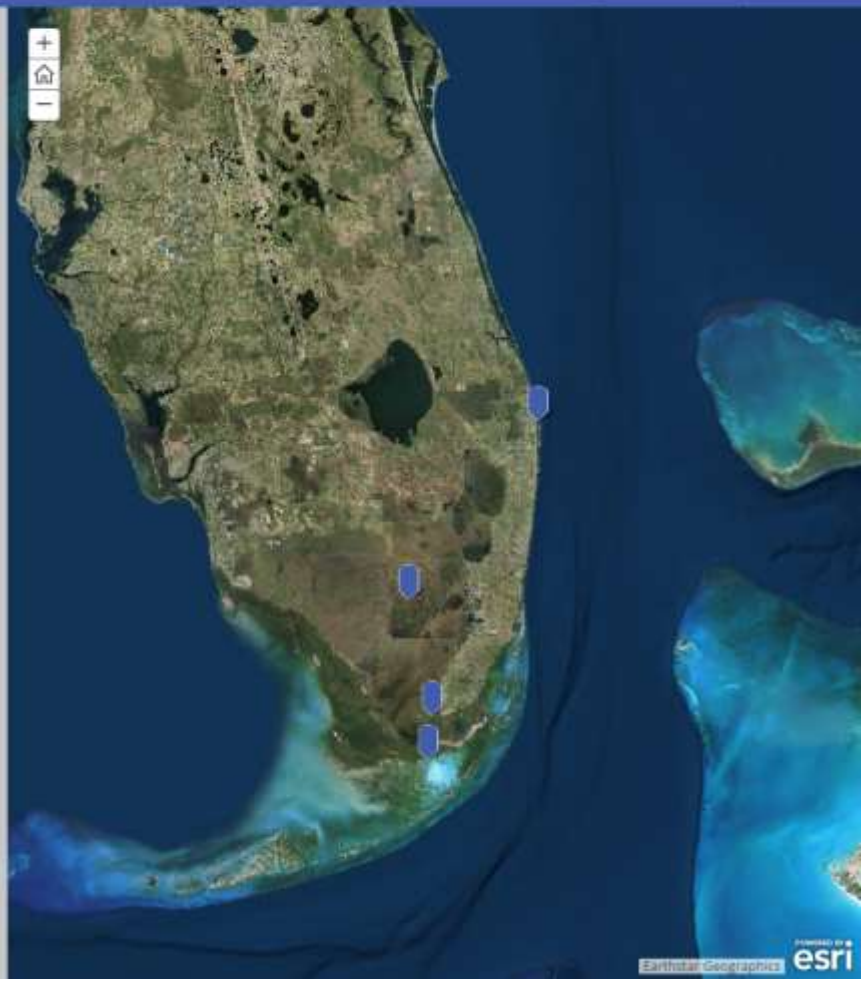
EDDMaps

Roseate spoonbill

Snail kite

Otter

Leatherback sea turtle



Restoring the Everglades
1983 to Present

In recognition of the magnitude of the restoration effort and the critical importance of partnerships with state, tribal, and local

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Leadership·Partnership·Results

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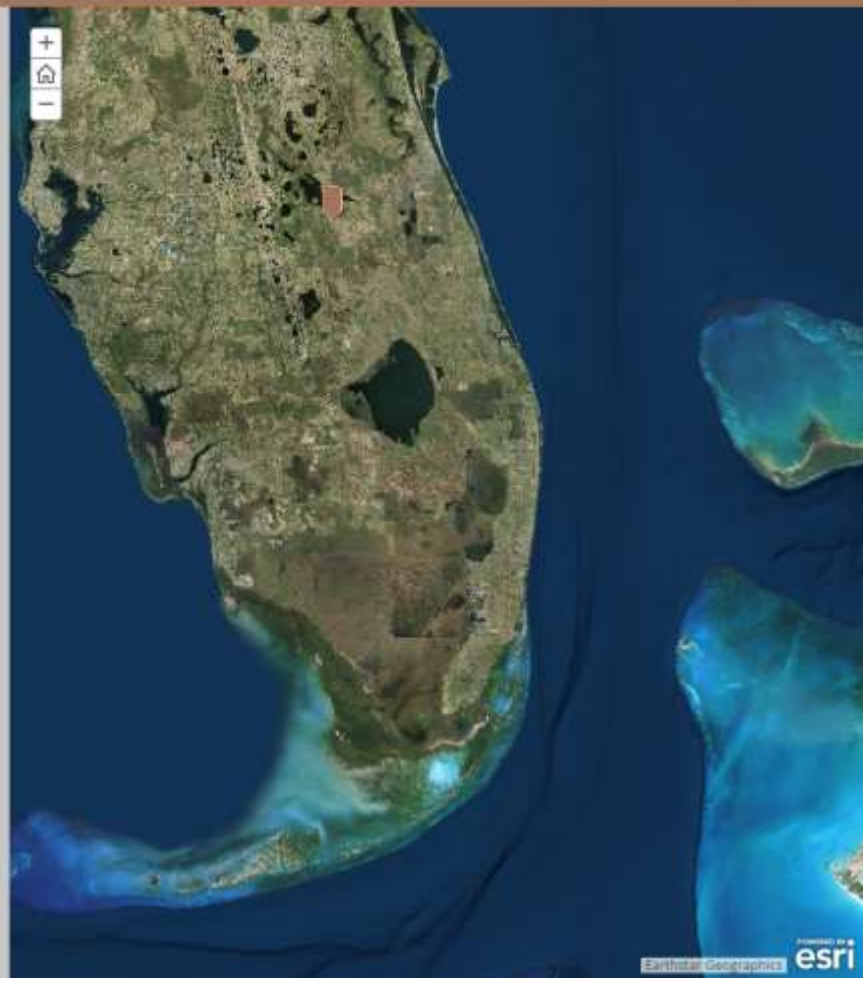

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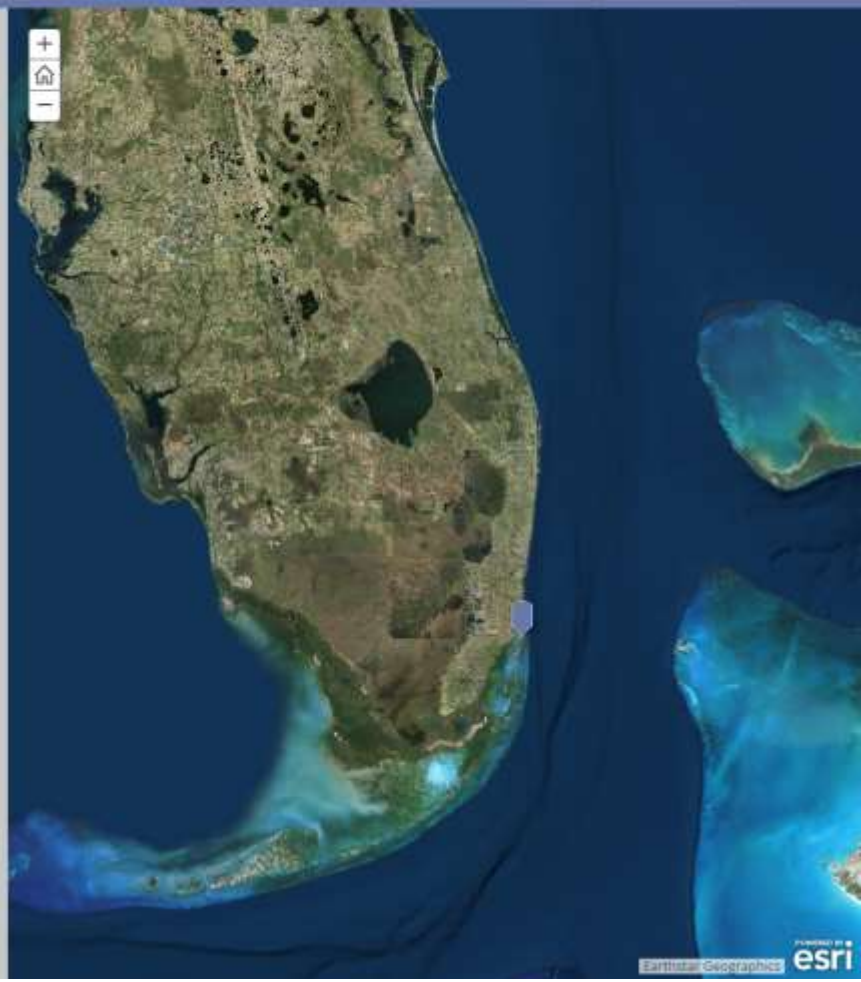
flooding



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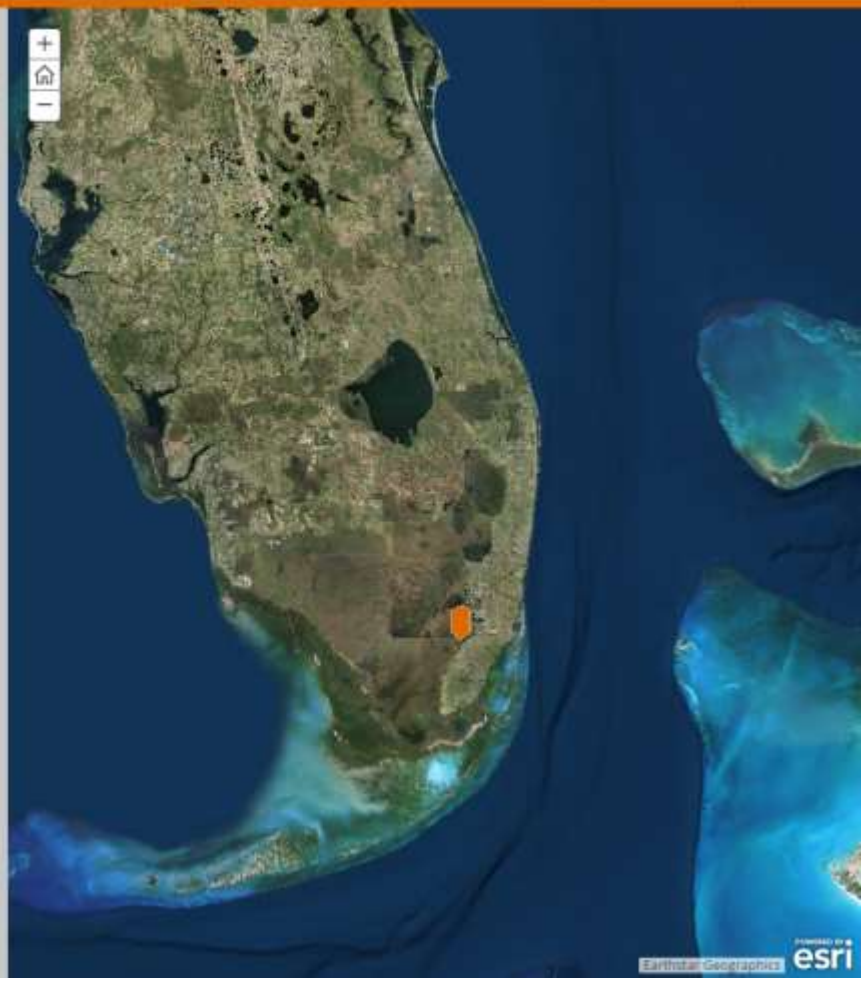

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The Unintended Consequences

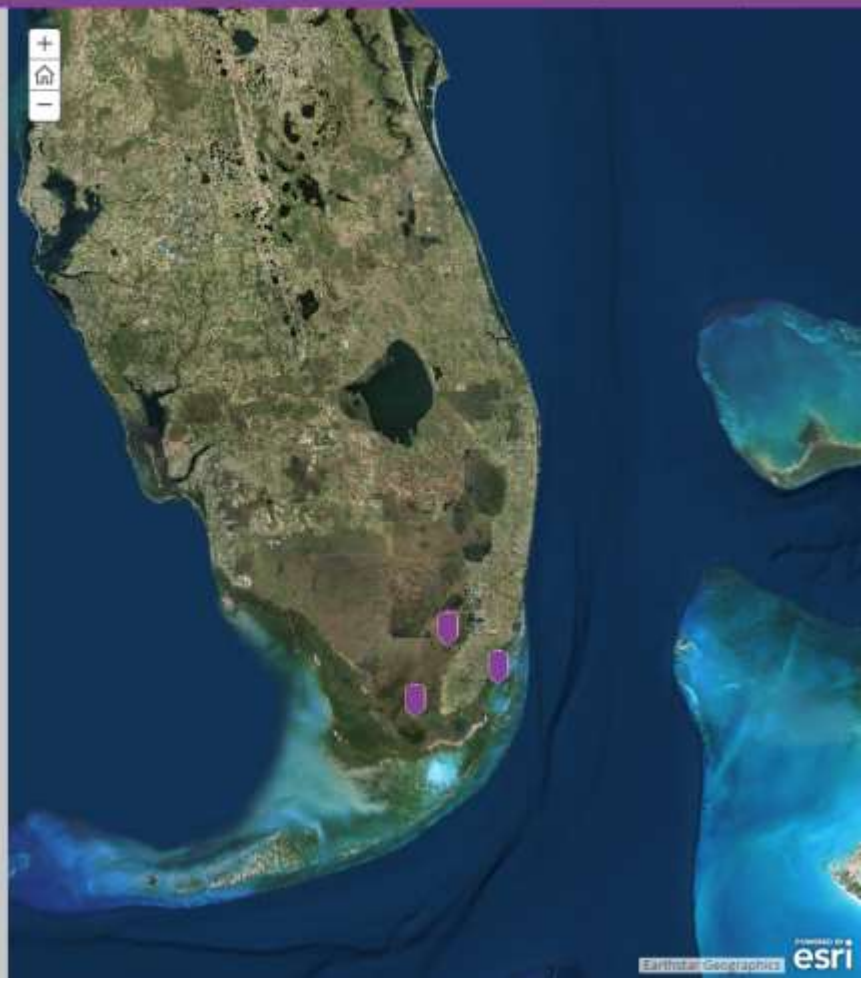
Everglades Restoration

Water Quality Degredation | Loss of Native Species | Drought | Flood | Fire | Invasive Species | Saltwater Intrusion | Habitat Loss

Burmese python casualty

Brazilian pepper

Lionfish



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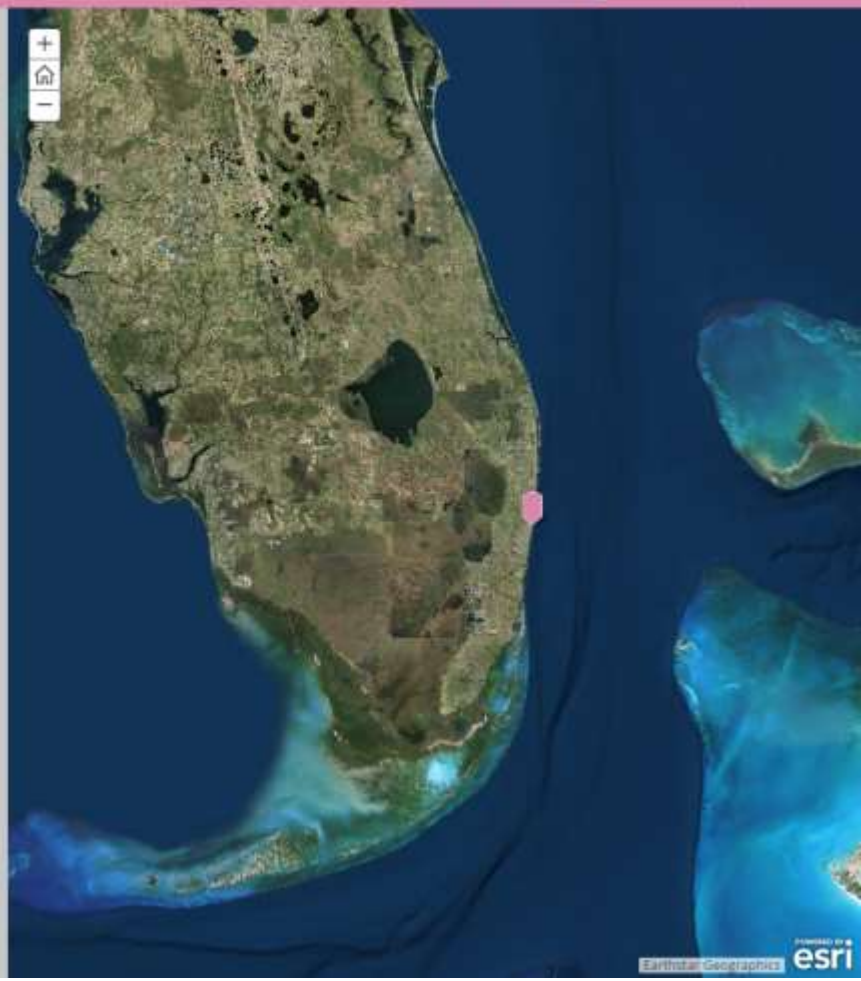

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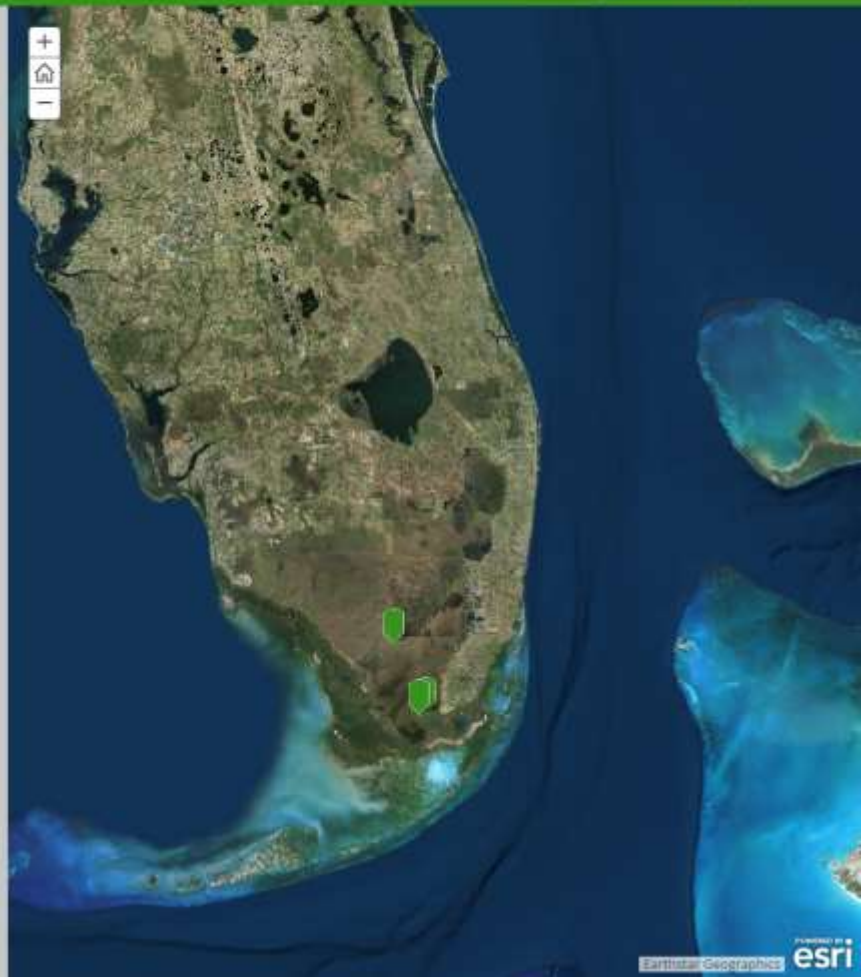
Water Quality Degredation | Loss of Native Species | Drought | Flood | Fire | Invasive Species | Saltwater Intrusion | Habitat Loss

Pine rockland habitat

Habitat loss of native species

Miccosukee Tribe Tree Islands



Restoring America's Everglades
Leadership·Partnership·Results

Restoring the Everglades 1983 to Present

In recognition of the magnitude of the restoration effort and the critical importance of partnerships with state, tribal, and local governments, the intergovernmental South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) was established by Congress in 1996.

The Task Force uses a restoration framework to organize and assess this complex intergovernmental effort. It includes three strategic goals that address water (Goal 1), habitats and species (Goal 2), and the built environment (Goal 3). Efforts to achieve these goals include the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), a consensus plan approved by Congress specifically to reverse unintended consequences of the C&SF Project, and a host of additional projects to further restore the ecosystem's hydrology, improve water quality, restore natural habitats, and protect native species.

Goals 1, 2, and 3

Goal 1: Get the Water Right

Water is the lifeblood of the Everglades and of the vibrant urban, tourist, recreational and agricultural economies of south Florida. At its core, Everglades Restoration is about "getting the water right" again in the massive Everglades watershed for people and for ecosystem. Getting the water right means changing the configuration and operation of our infrastructure to restore the **Quality, Quantity, Timing, and Distribution** of water as it moves through south Florida. The nickname for this approach is "**Restoring QQTD**" and it is the first, and most ambitious, goal of the Everglades Restoration effort. Our hypothesis is that if we get the water right by restoring **QQTD**, the ecosystem will respond positively.

Swipe Map - Kissimmee River Restoration

Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Habitats and Species

As we work to get the water right, there are other things we need to do to ensure that Everglades habitats and species recover. We are confident that restoring **QQTD** is the most important thing we can do, but we know that some habitats and species will need more help to recover. For example, we need to combat invasive exotic species before they replace native habitats and species. We need to

Restoring America's Everglades
Leadership·Partnership·Results

restore natural habitats, and protect native species.

Goals 1, 2, and 3

Goal 1: Get the Water Right

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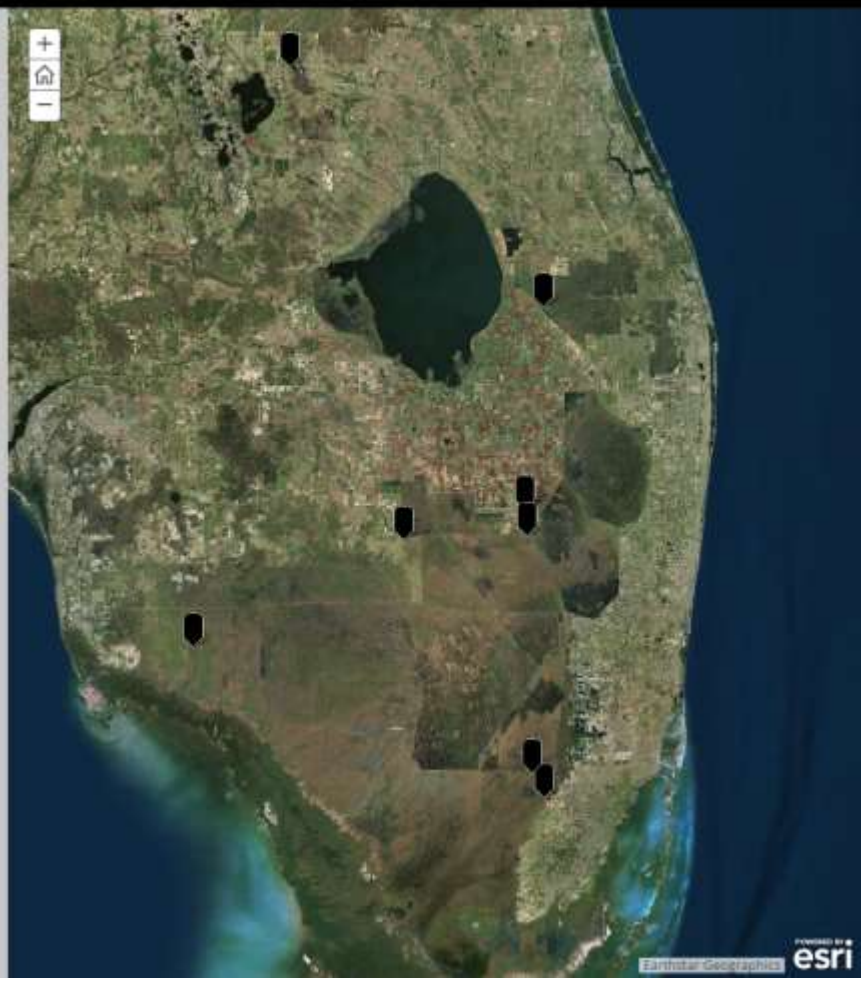
Swipe Map - Kissimmee River Restoration

Goal 2: Restore, Preserve, and Protect Habitats and Species

As we work to get the water right, there are other things we need to do to ensure that Everglades habitats and species recover. We are confident that restoring **QQTD** is the most important thing we can do, but we know that some habitats and species will need more help to recover. For example, we need to combat invasive exotic species before they replace native habitats and species. We need to assemble wildlife corridors and expand the spatial extent of wetlands to support sustainable wildlife populations. We need to rehabilitate some areas that have been damaged by decades of disrupted hydrology. Activities like these will increase the chances that the ecosystem will bounce back successfully when we restore **QQTD**.

Goal 3: Foster Compatibility of the Built & Natural Systems

Goal 3 is all about ensuring a sustainable future relationship between the built environment and the Everglades for the sake of people, habitats, and wildlife. Getting the water right means restoring the remaining Everglades while simultaneously ensuring supplies of water for drinking and irrigation, flood protection, the sustainability of land and water-based recreation and tourism, and the conservation of agricultural lands. Goal 3 recognizes that the Everglades and people are "in it together" when it comes to facing the challenges of climate change, sea level rise, and population growth. Goal 3 aims to foster a lasting compatibility between the



Restoring America's Everglades Leadership·Partnership·Results

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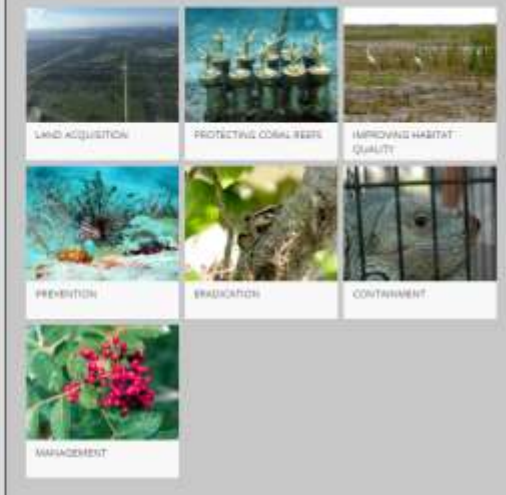

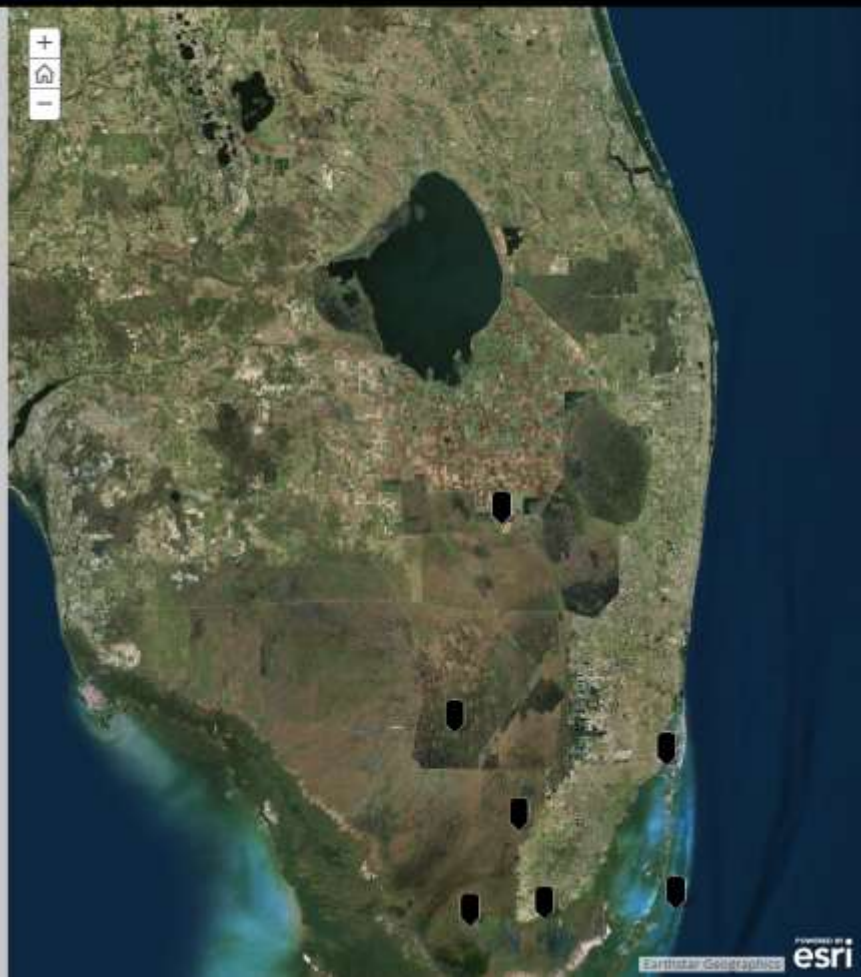

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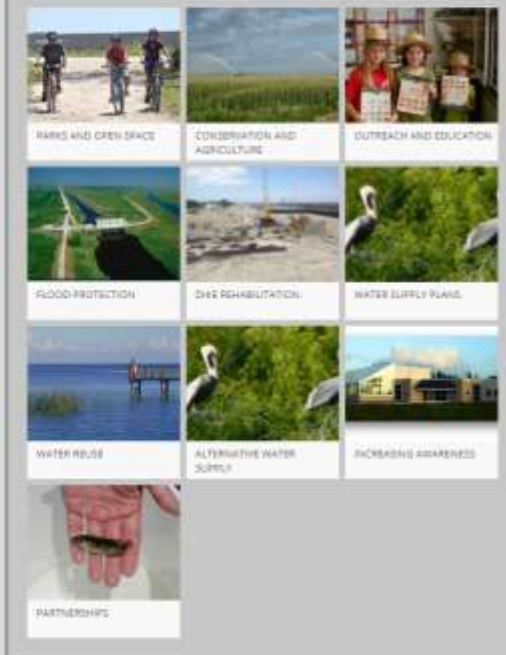

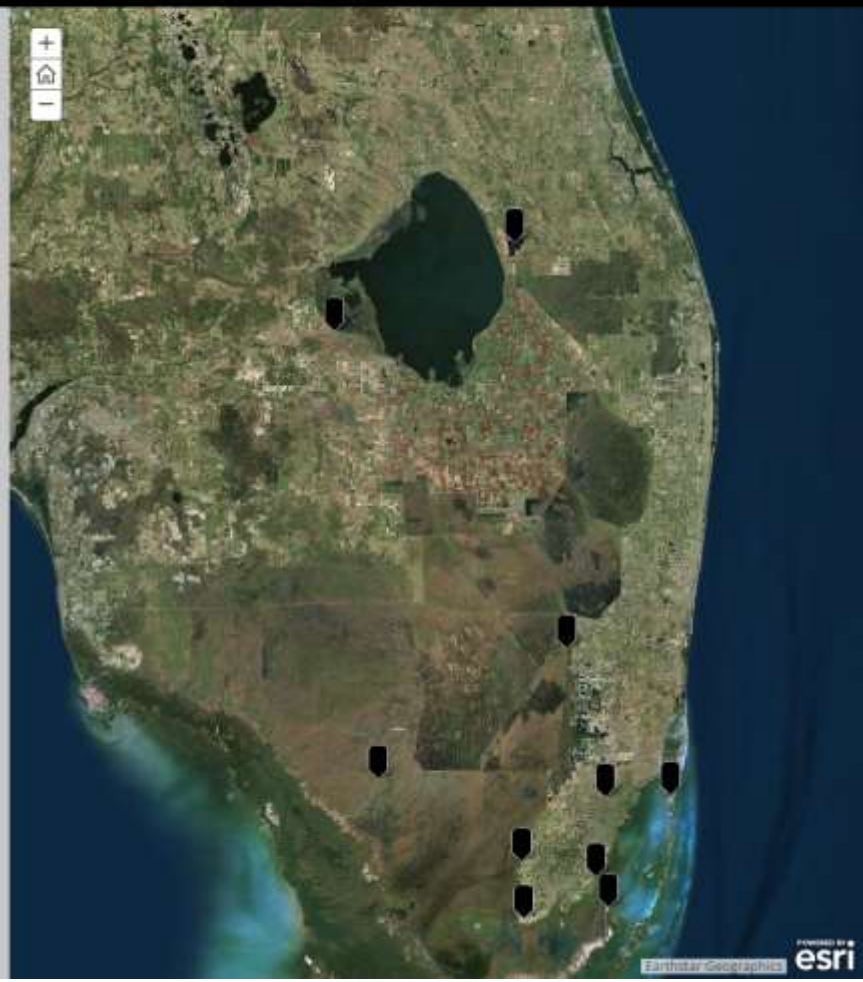

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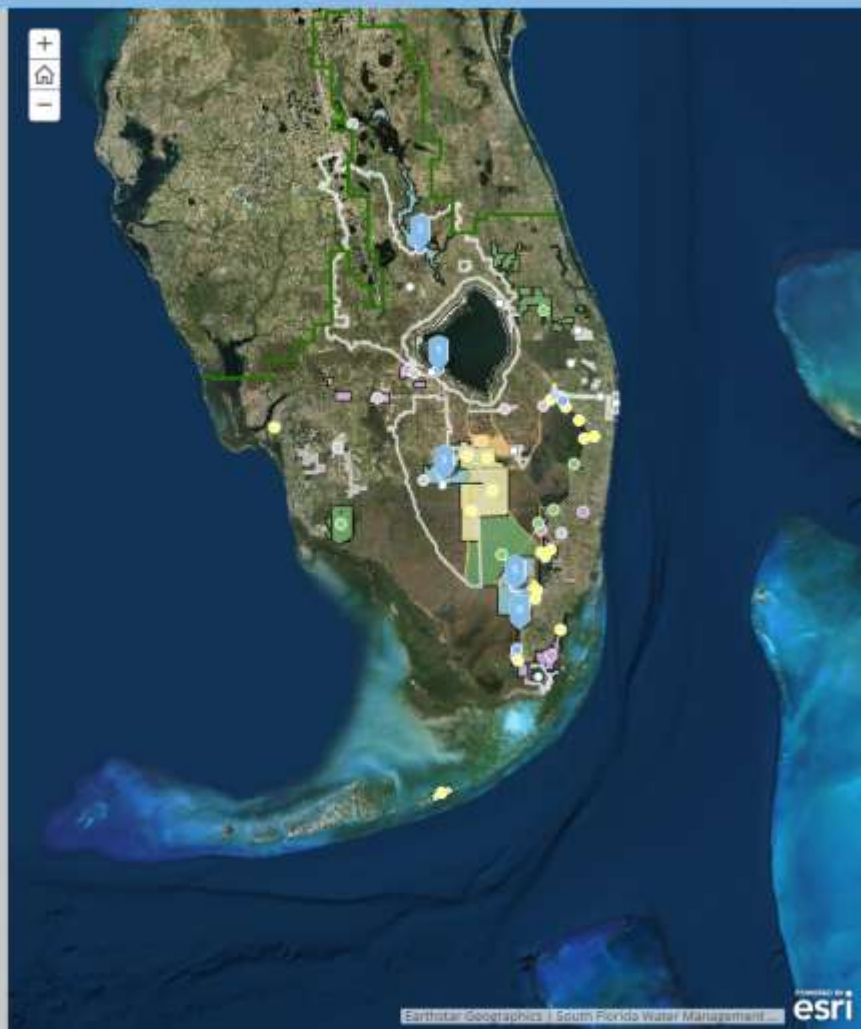
Everglades Restoration Projects

Everglades Restoration Task Force

Non CERP and Foundation | CERP Generation 1 | CERP Generation 2 | CERP Generation 3 | Planning Phase | More CERP | State of Florida



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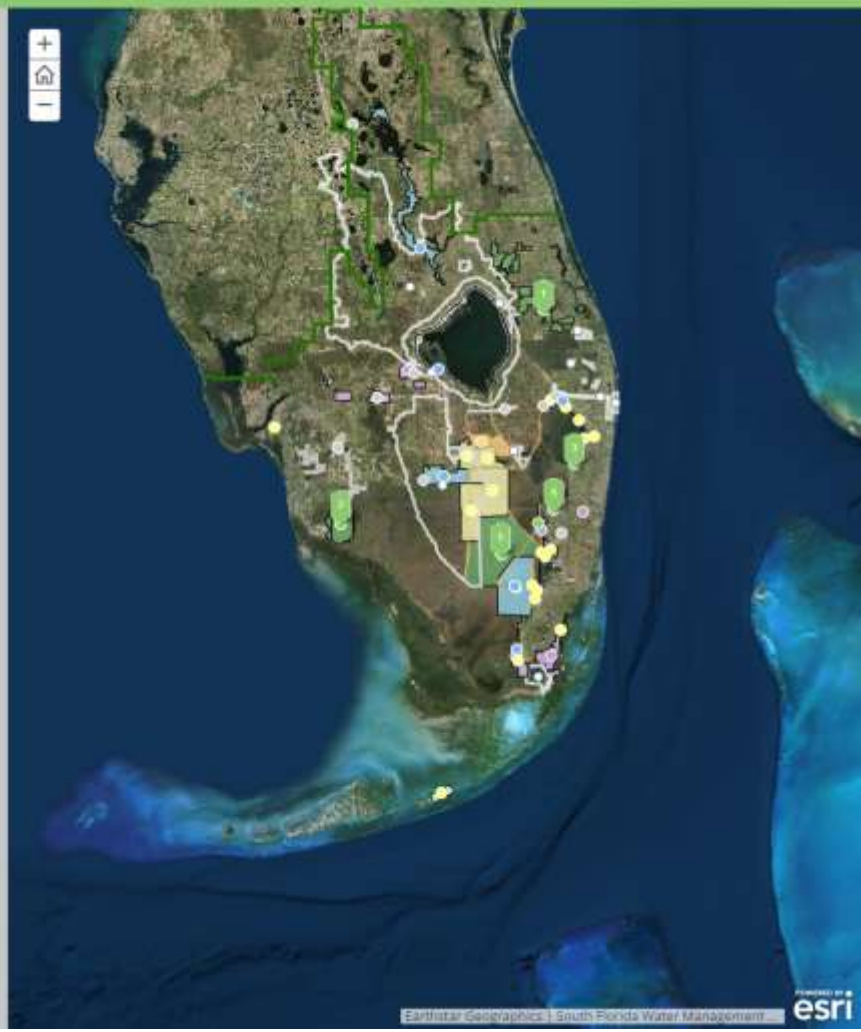
1 Indian River Lagoon - South


2 Picayune Strand Restoration


3 Site 1 Impoundment


4 WCA 3B Road to Everglades National Park


5 Water Conservation Area 3 DECOMP and...



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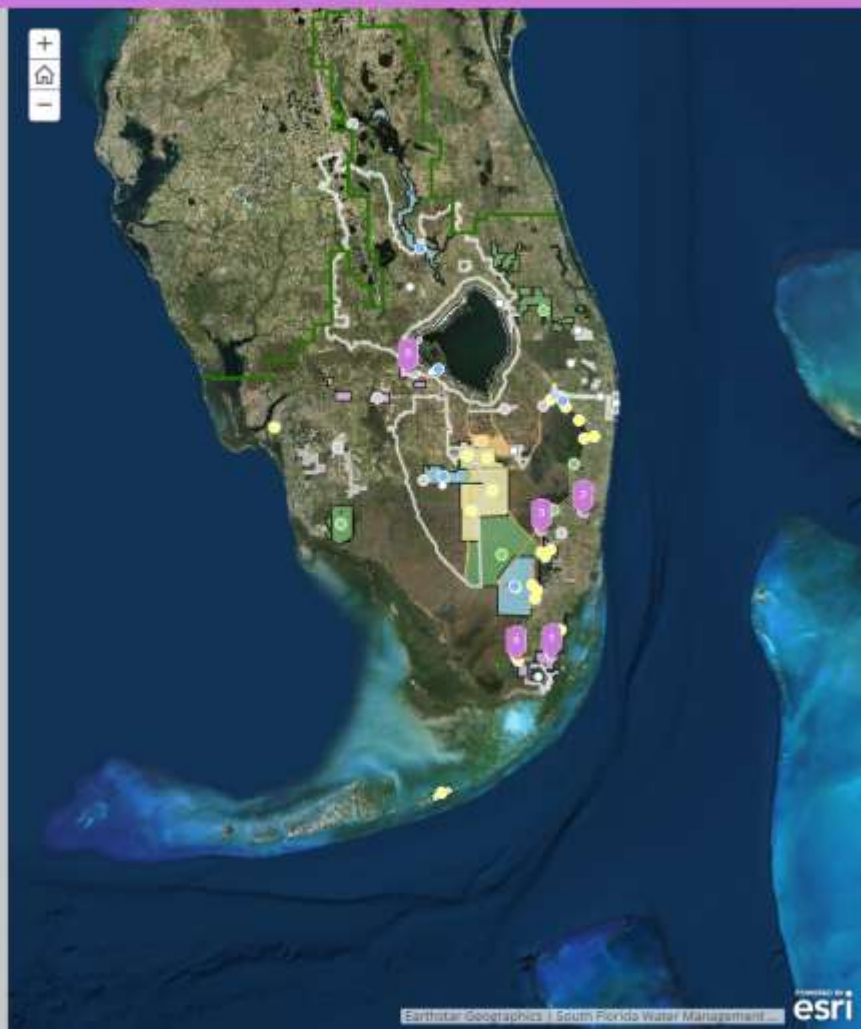

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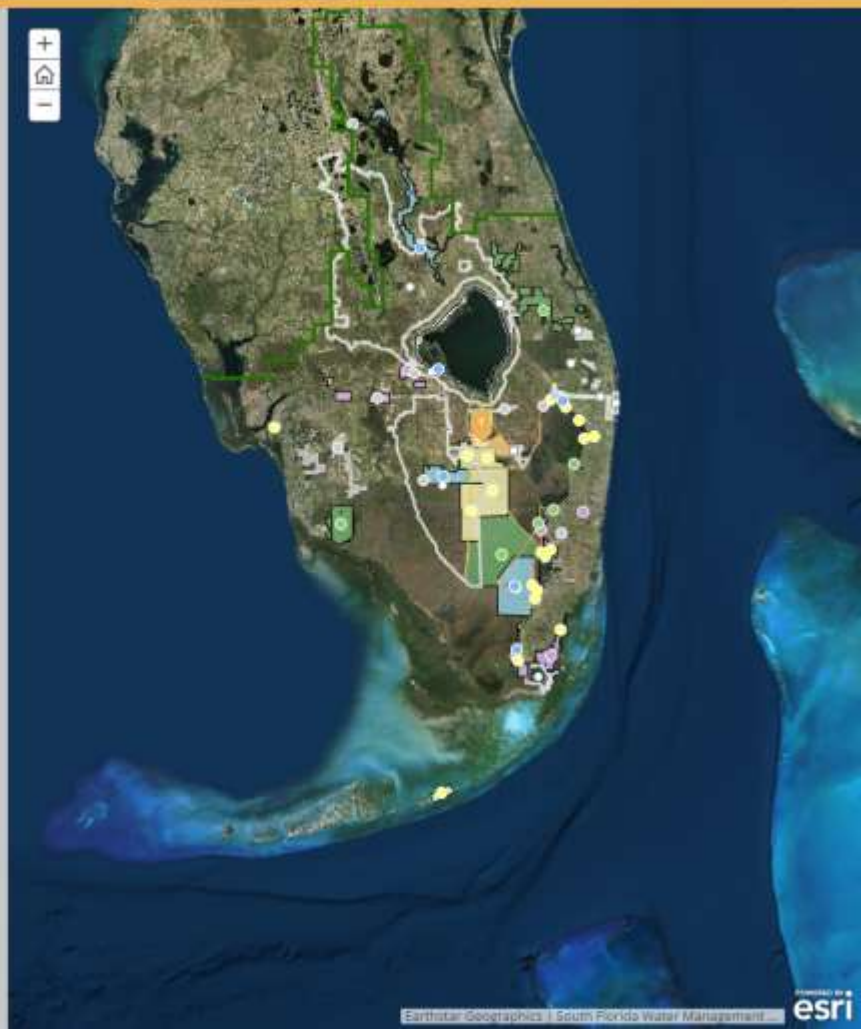

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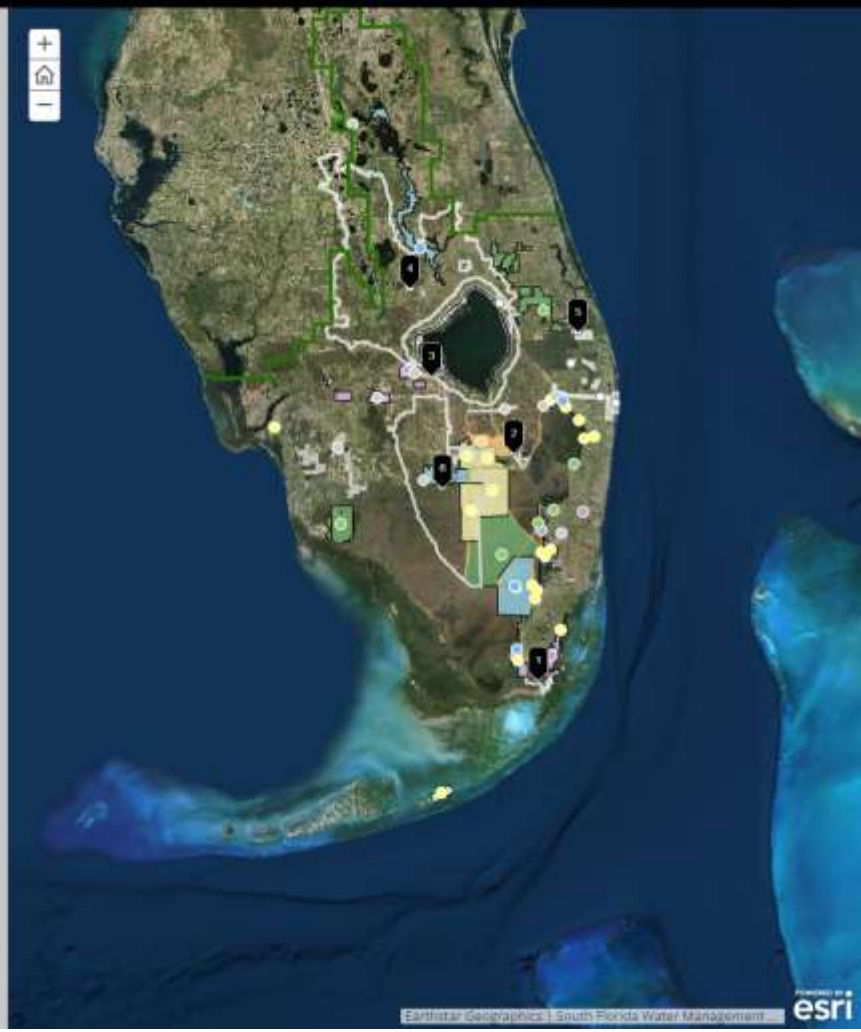

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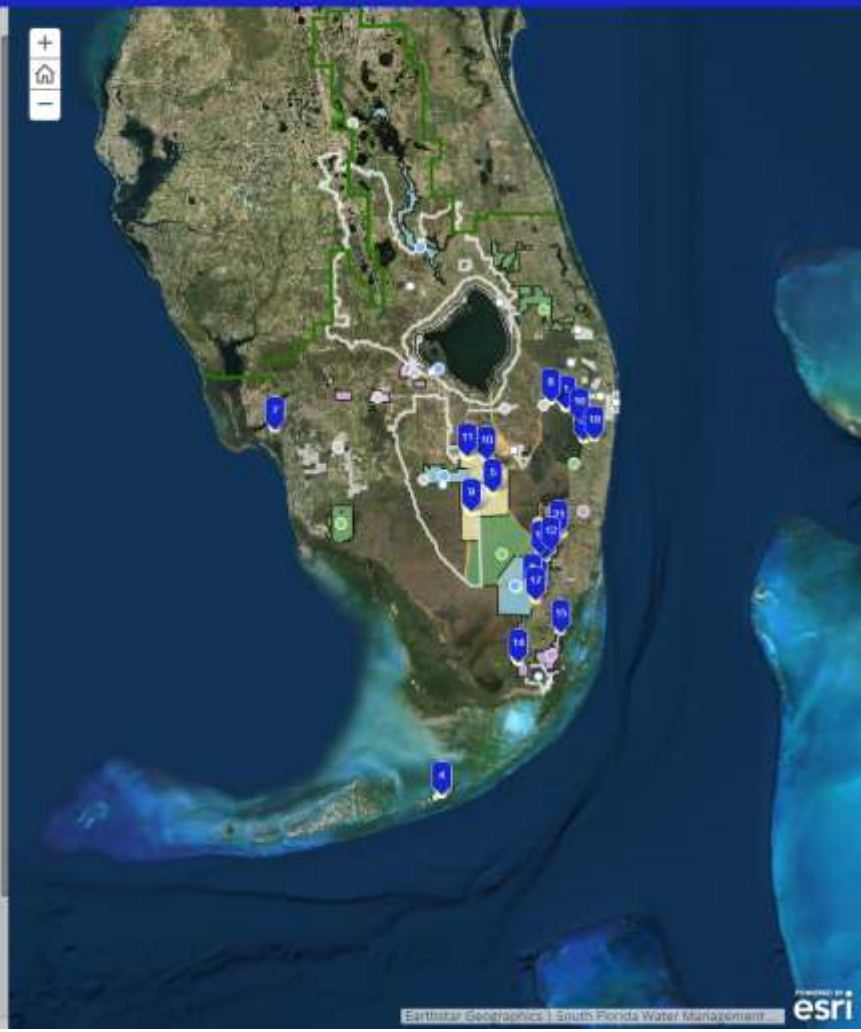

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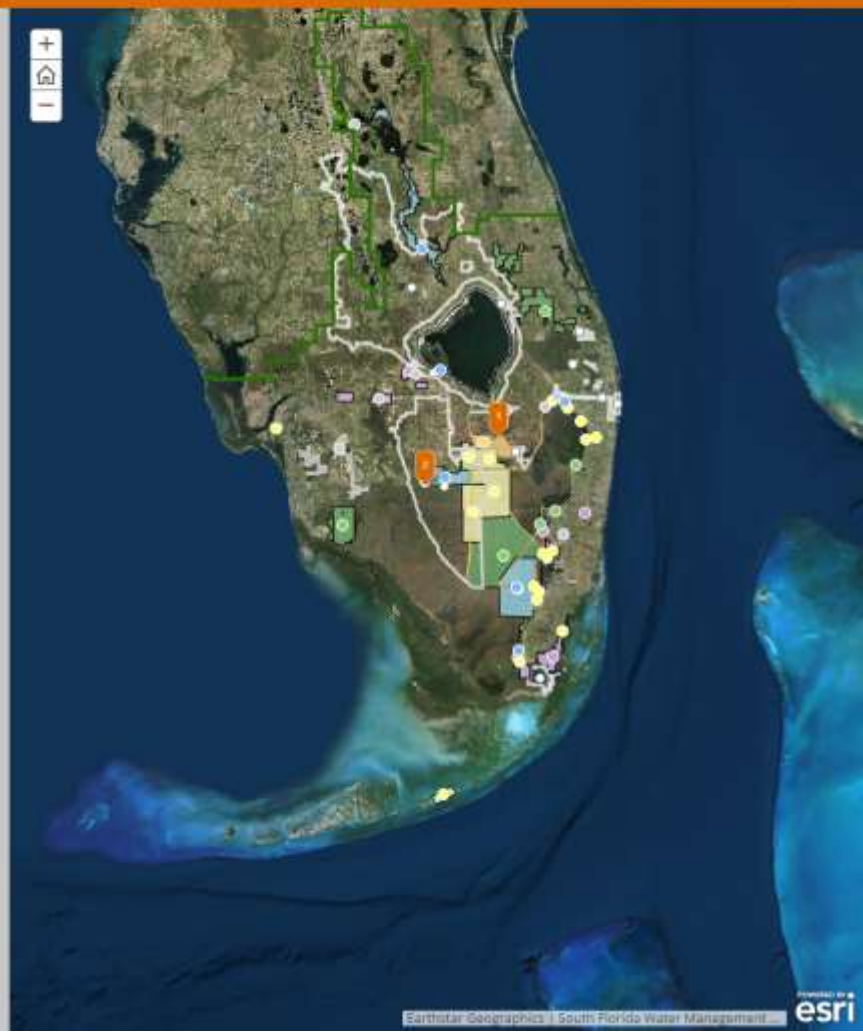

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The Florida Legislature passed the Legacy Florida Bill in 2016 that provides a dedicated funding source for 10 years to 2026 for Everglades restoration. As written, it will deliver approximately $200 million a year to restoration projects for the Everglades.

Leadership and Partnership

Restoring the Everglades and protecting South Florida's natural resources cannot be achieved by any single organization but depends upon a systematically coordinated set of federal, state, local, and tribal initiatives, funding, and partnerships. These restoration programs and projects require a long-term process for addressing key technical, management, and policy issues. The Inter-governmental South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (Task Force) was created by Congress in 1996 to provide the long-term strategic coordination and to facilitate the incorporation of new information and opportunities into the multi-decade restoration initiative.

Four sovereign entities (federal, state, and two tribes) are represented on the Task Force. Fourteen members sit on the Task Force itself, representing seven federal departments, three state agencies/offices, two American Indian tribes, and two local governments.

Task Force

Planning for Future Restoration Projects

The planning for the **Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project** was re-initiated in 2016 to restore and sustain the overall quantity, quality, timing, and distribution of freshwaters to the federally-designated "National Wild and Scenic" Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River.

Planning was initiated in 2016 on the **Western Everglades Restoration Project**. The goal of this CERP project is to improve the Quantity, Quality, Timing, and Distribution of water needed to restore and reconnect the western Everglades ecosystem, while complying with applicable water quality standards.

Planning was also initiated on the **Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project** in 2016. This purpose of this CERP project is to improve the quantity and timing of water entering Lake Okeechobee and the northern estuaries, improve regional water management operational flexibility in context of the overall Everglades ecosystem restoration, and to restore wetland habitat within the project area and Lake Okeechobee.

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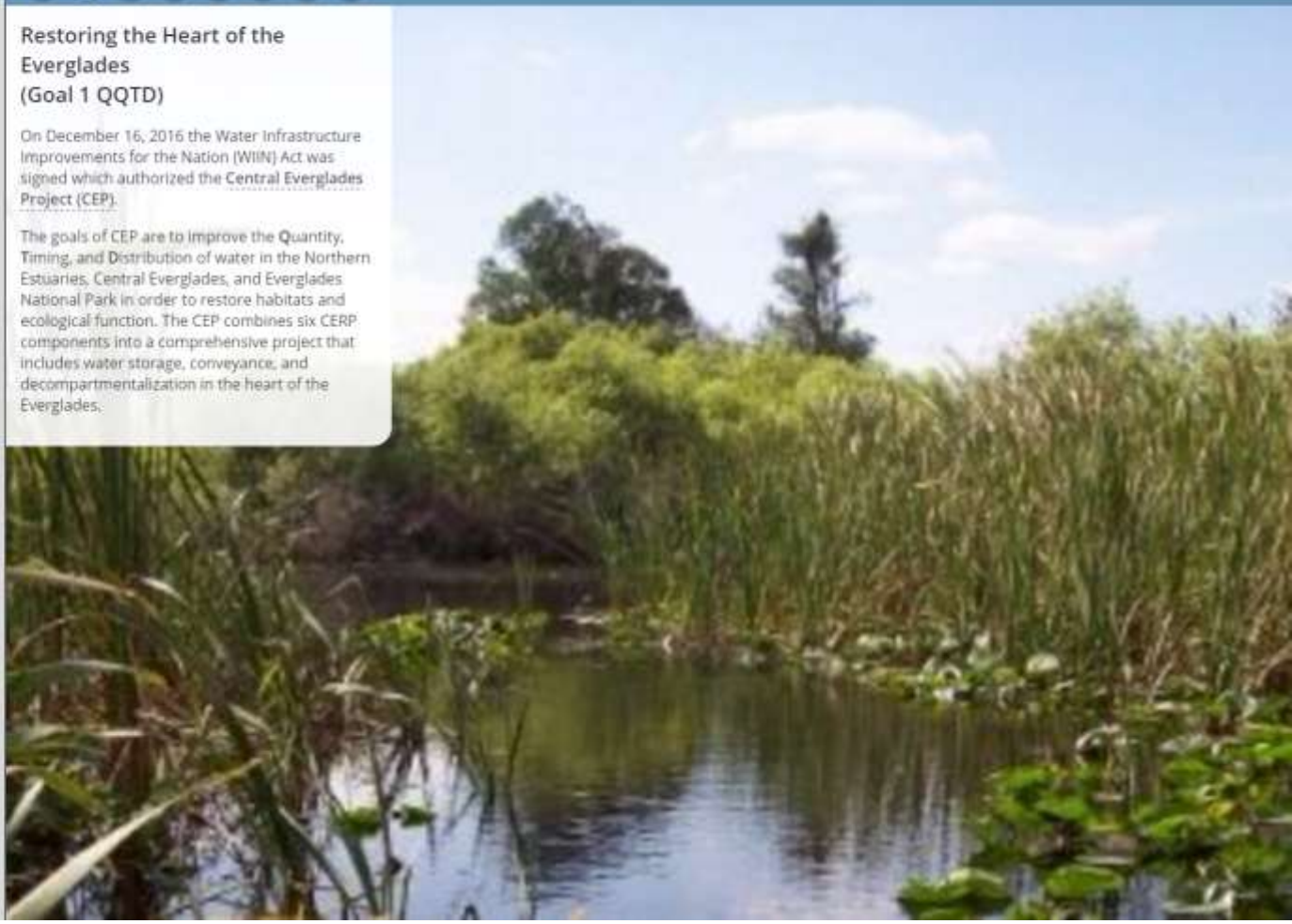
Restoring the Heart of the Everglades (Goal 1 QQTD)

On December 16, 2016 the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act was signed which authorized the Central Everglades Project (CEP).

The goals of CEP are to improve the Quantity, Timing, and Distribution of water in the Northern Estuaries, Central Everglades, and Everglades National Park in order to restore habitats and ecological function. The CEP combines six CERP components into a comprehensive project that includes water storage, conveyance, and decompartmentalization in the heart of the Everglades.



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Task Force

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Restoring Wetlands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program(ACEP)** provides agricultural and wetland easements to landowners. These easements prevent productive agricultural lands from being converted to non-agricultural uses and restore and enhance wetlands and wildlife habitat. In 2016, for the eighth consecutive year, Florida received the largest ACEP funding allocation in the nation.

The **Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands** CERP Project will improve the ecology of Biscayne National Park and Biscayne Bay by rehydrating coastal wetlands, reducing freshwater point source discharges, and redistributing surface water flows through a spreader canal system. In advance of Congressional authorization, the South Florida Water Management District completed construction on its portion of the L-31E Flowway and the Deering Estate features.

Restoring America's Everglades
Leadership·Partnership·Results

RESULTS
2014 - 2016 Highlights

Support for Restoration Remains Strong

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In 2016, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act authorized the Central Everglades Project.

The citizens of Florida passed an amendment to the Florida Constitution in 2014 that requires the Legislature to appropriate funds annually for land conservation and improvement. A portion of these funds is intended to go towards Everglades restoration efforts.

The Florida Legislature passed the Legacy Florida Bill in 2016 that provides a dedicated funding source for 10 years to 2026 for Everglades restoration. As written, it will deliver approximately $200 million a year to restoration projects for the Everglades.

Leadership and Partnership

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Task Force

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Restoring Natural Hydrology (Goal 1 QQTD)

The Picayune Strand Restoration Project involves restoring flow across an area larger than the District of Columbia in western Collier County that were drained in the early 1960s in anticipation of extensive residential development that never materialized. The first of three large pump stations (Merritt) was completed in 2014. The second pump station (Faka Union) is undergoing operational testing and the final pump station (Miller) is under construction and expected to be completed in 2017.

The full implementation of the Merritt Pump Station contract will result in 30% of the hydrologic and 38% of the biological benefits of the Picayune Strand Restoration Project. The Manatee Refugia Feature designed to provide warm water habitat is complete and fully operational.

The Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) Project will help restore the St. Lucie Estuary and southern portion of the Indian River Lagoon. The first major construction contract for the C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area (STA)component of the project was completed in July 2014. The remaining three construction contracts for the C-44 Reservoir and STA project have been awarded and are currently underway.

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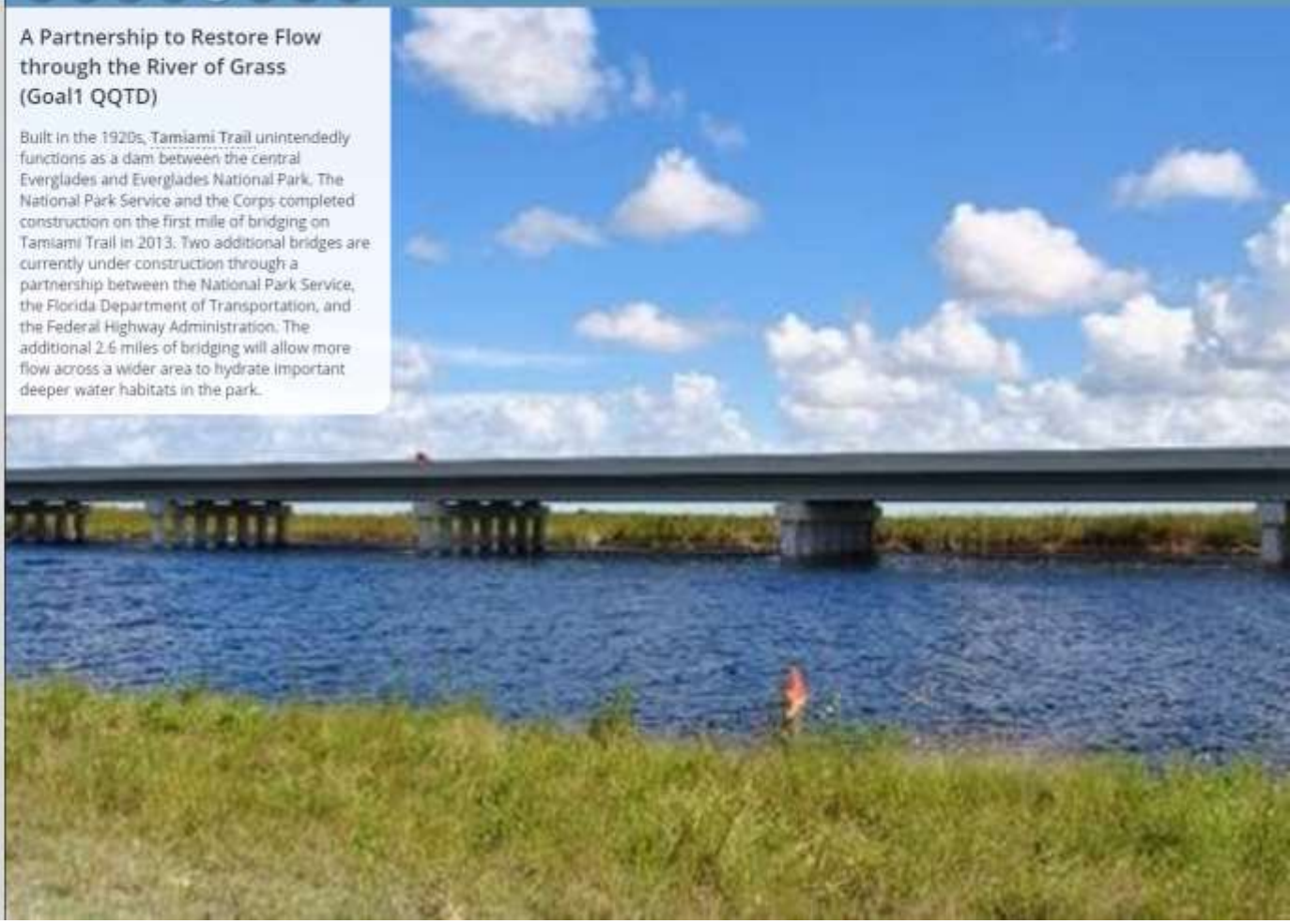
A Partnership to Restore Flow through the River of Grass (Goal1 QQTD)

Built in the 1920s, Tamiami Trail unintendedly functions as a dam between the central Everglades and Everglades National Park. The National Park Service and the Corps completed construction on the first mile of bridging on Tamiami Trail in 2013. Two additional bridges are currently under construction through a partnership between the National Park Service, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. The additional 2.6 miles of bridging will allow more flow across a wider area to hydrate important deeper water habitats in the park.



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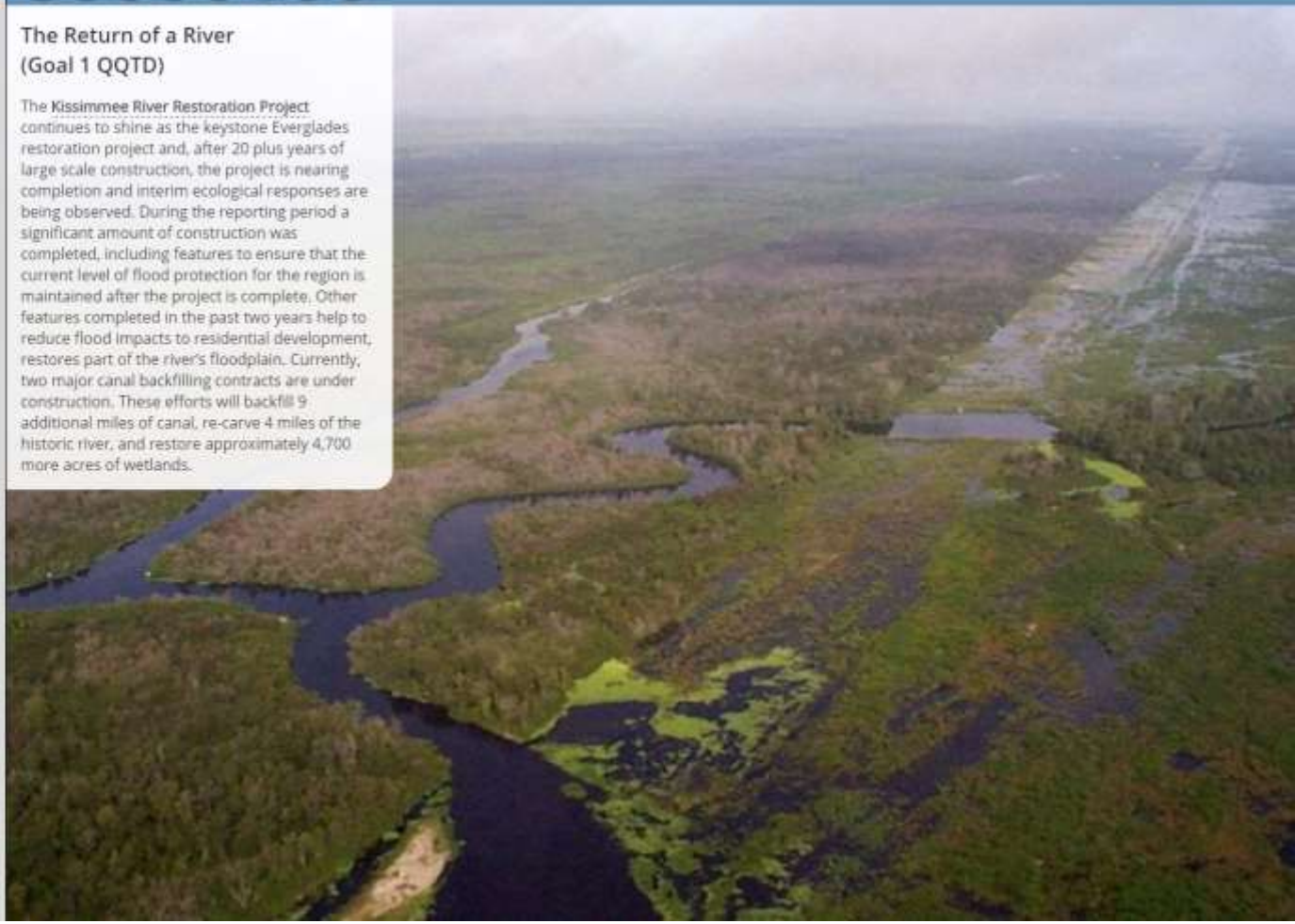
Task Force

The Return of a River (Goal 1 QQTD)

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project continues to shine as the keystone Everglades restoration project and, after 20 plus years of large scale construction, the project is nearing completion and interim ecological responses are being observed. During the reporting period a significant amount of construction was completed, including features to ensure that the current level of flood protection for the region is maintained after the project is complete. Other features completed in the past two years help to reduce flood impacts to residential development, restores part of the river's floodplain. Currently, two major canal backfilling contracts are under construction. These efforts will backfill 9 additional miles of canal, re-carve 4 miles of the historic river, and restore approximately 4,700 more acres of wetlands.



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Continuing to Invest in Water Quality Restoration (Goal 1 QQTD)

The Restoration Strategies program includes the construction of more than 6,500 acres of new STAs and 116,000 acre-feet of additional water storage through Flow Equalization Basins (FEBs). The additional storage is equivalent to enough water to fill the US Capitol rotunda 4,000 times. The State of Florida completed 3 more projects between 2014-2016, building on its existing multi-billion dollar investment in water quality improvements in the Everglades.

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Leadership and Partnership

Task Force

Putting Restoration Infrastructure to Work (Goal 1 QQTD)

Record setting rainfall in 2016 set up a scenario to test some deviations to the usual movement of water in the Everglades. The actions were viewed as highly successful and demonstrated the ability of newly completed infrastructure to move large volumes of water out of the Water Conservation Areas and into the eastern portion of Everglades National Park, while also validating the importance of completing on-going construction of the **Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park** and **C-111 South Dade** projects to enable full operational capacity.

Leadership and Partnership

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Public Participation

Public outreach and communication form an important cornerstone for support of ecosystem restoration efforts. Public outreach strategies aim to instill a broad sense of stewardship and responsibility for all stakeholders involved, including private citizens. Efforts include environmental education, small business outreach, community outreach, and project-specific local outreach.

The USACE and the SFWMD utilize web-based communication to help ensure that CERP and the Everglades ecosystem is better understood and that the public has opportunities to participate in decision-making.

The South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force has developed an enhanced public and stakeholder dialogue process. This workshop model has been very successful and has received widespread review from the public, agency staff, and decision makers.

Link to SFWMD

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Link to WRAC
Link to the calendar
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project
Western Everglades Restoration Project workshops

See it for yourself!
Visit the Everglades

It provides benefits to the local economy.

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Our estimates tell us that Everglades Restoration will generate an increase in economic welfare of approximately $46.5 billion in net present value terms that could range up to $123.9 billion. (Source).

There are many ways to see the Everglades first hand. The links below can help you plan your trip!

National Park Service

Florida State Parks

Image at right: "*Crossing the Everglades*". Photo credit, T. Howington

US Department of Interior
Everglades Restoration Initiatives

This Story Map Journal was developed in partnership with our federal partners as a means to provide a common web-based briefing tool during the administration transition.

We would like to thank the following agencies and their staff for their assistance in this effort:

US Department of the Interior
Office of Everglades Restoration Initiatives
https://www.evergladerestoration.gov/

National Park Service
Everglades National Park
https://www.nps.gov/ever

US Army Corps of Engineers

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