

## **WATER, A COMMON ENEMY: FLORIDA & WATER IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

***Steven Noll***

Department of History, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL, USA

This paper examines the struggle of Floridians to “tame” their environment over the past century and a half. This battle has been waged mostly over turning Florida’s wetlands and coastal regions into areas suitable for human habitation and agricultural pursuits. By looking at how business and agricultural interests as well as local, state, and federal governments have drastically reshaped Florida and its relationship to water, we can examine past mistakes and hopefully not make them in the future (before it is too late to save Florida’s unique water environments). The paper looks particularly at Everglades drainage, coastal dredge and fill operations, the threat to springs and the Floridan aquifer, and the Cross Florida Barge Canal in their relation to the broader issue of Florida water policy and the destruction of natural ecosystems.

**PRESENTER BIO:** Dr. Noll is a master lecturer in the history department at the University of Florida. His interests focus on Florida history and environmental policy. He is currently writing a book on the continuing controversy over the removal of the Rodman (Kirkpatrick) Dam on the Ocklawaha River.