



Everglades Coalition

April 7, 2008

1000 Friends of Florida
Arthur R. Marshall Foundation
Audubon of Florida
Audubon Society of the Everglades
Broward County Audubon Society
Caloosahatche River Citizens
Association
Clean Water Action
Clean Water Network
Collier County Audubon Society
Conservancy of Southwest Florida
Defenders of Wildlife
Ding Darling Wildlife Society
Earthjustice
Environment Florida
The Environmental Coalition
Everglades Coordinating Council
Everglades Foundation
Everglades Law Center
Florida Defenders of the
Environment
Florida Keys Environmental Fund
The Florida Native Plant Society
Florida Oceanographic Society
Florida Sierra Club
Florida Wildlife Federation
Friends of Arthur R. Marshall
Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge
Friends of the Everglades
Izaak Walton League
Florida Keys Chapter
Florida Division
Izaak Walton League of America
Manrove Chapter
Last Stand
League of Women
Voters of Florida
Loxahatchee River Coalition
Martin County
Conservation Alliance
National Audubon Society
National Parks
Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources
Defense Council
The Ocean Conservancy
The Pegasus Foundation
Sanibel-Captiva
Conservation Foundation
Save It Now, Glades!
Sierra Club
Sierra Club Broward Group
Sierra Club Central Florida Group
Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group
Sierra Club Miami Group
Tropical Audubon Society
The Urban Environment League
World Wildlife Fund

Senator JD Alexander
412 Senate Office Building
404 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Re: Proposed budget cuts to the Department of Environmental Protection's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas program, specifically Florida's Aquatic Preserves

Dear Senator Alexander,

Florida's Aquatic Preserve program was founded in 1966, and for 43 years has provided necessary protection of the waters our state is famous for. The Senate's current budget proposes significant operating cost cuts to this vital program, which will necessitate Aquatic Preserve office closures.

Florida's Aquatic Preserves are economic drivers, empowering multi-billion dollar industries including recreational and commercial fisheries and tourism. The support offered to these industries by healthy and productive aquatic habitats is crucial during the current economic downturn. A sampling of the species targeted for resale and subsistence includes pink shrimp, spiny lobster, blue crab, and snappers. These and a multitude of other species Floridians depend on are supported by the habitats in our Aquatic Preserves.

Aquatic Preserve office closures will result in elimination of scientific monitoring and stewardship programs that enhance the economic contribution of these preserves to our state's economy, as well as eliminate Florida jobs at a time when each and every job is needed.

Florida's Aquatic Preserves represent the best of planning for future generations. The first Aquatic Preserve in Florida was founded eight years before the first National Estuarine Research Reserve and nine years before the first National Marine Sanctuary. In March of this year, the Florida Coastal and Ocean Coalition listed "strengthening the management of the state's Aquatic Preserves" as a needed improvement. Aquatic Preserve office closures are contrary to this recommendation. The state's 41 Aquatic Preserves are already regionally managed, with thirty-two of them administered from just twelve field offices statewide. Any closures of Aquatic Preserve offices would impact the quality of scientific interpretation the public currently receives, resulting in less dissemination of local resource knowledge and expertise.

Florida's Aquatic Preserves established the model for the nation to better protect its coastal resources. We respectfully request office closures of any Aquatic Preserves be eliminated from the Senate's budget.

Sincerely,

Sara Fain, Co-Chair

Mark D. Perry, Co-Chair

cc: Florida Legislature

www.evergladescoalition.org

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