



The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

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Conservancy Backs SFWMD Approval of US Sugar Buyout

The Nature Conservancy applauds Governor Crist and South Florida Water Management District Deal.

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, FL — June 30, 2008 — The Nature Conservancy applauds the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) governing board for its approval today of a plan to acquire with the state of Florida U.S. Sugar Corp. and its 187,000 acres of land in the [Everglades](#).

"This is the boldest action anyone has taken in years to restore the critically important Everglades," said Jeff Danter, The Nature Conservancy's state director. "This is a historic moment, a time of tremendous opportunity for environmental progress. We praise Governor Crist, SFWMD Board Chair Eric Buermann, Vice-Chair Shannon Estenoz, Executive Director Carol Wehle and their staffs for the vision and leadership in taking this monumental step."

The Nature Conservancy has helped acquire, with its partners, 355,000 acres over the last 50 years in the [Everglades](#) watershed, which extends from Orlando through Florida Bay to the Florida Keys. To continue to add to the water storage needs for the Everglades system, the Conservancy has been working north of Lake Okeechobee to restore wetlands on ranchlands.

"The Conservancy has been working for many years to help improve the flow of water into Lake Okeechobee. This landmark purchase will provide more opportunities for water storage thereby reducing the potential for harmful discharges into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers," Danter said. **The purchase will make possible the reconnection of Lake Okeechobee to the remnant Everglades system and bring much closer to reality the historic flow of the Everglades.**

"Restoring one of the world's largest wetland systems takes big thinking like this. The action by the SFWMD board today makes me think we have a fighting chance to succeed."

The Nature Conservancy is a leading conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. To date, the Conservancy and its more than one million members have been responsible for the protection of more than 15 million acres in the United States and have helped preserve more than 102 million acres in Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific. [Visit The Nature Conservancy on the Web at www.nature.org.](#)

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