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Gov. Crist proposes \$2.1 billion for environment

01/22/2010

Associated Press (AP)

SKOLOFF, BRIAN

NAPLES, Fla._Gov. Charlie Crist on Friday proposed including \$2.1 billion in the state's 2010-2011 budget to protect Florida's environment, including \$50 million for Everglades restoration.

Crist made the announcement at the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, one of several stops he planned Friday in southwest Florida.

The governor also said he wants to devote \$50 million to the Florida Forever program to purchase and preserve land throughout the state. Florida Forever wasn't funded last year because of budget constraints.

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"Florida's present and future economy depends on the stewardship our natural resources and our continued efforts to set aside land," Crist said. "As we continue restoring America's Everglades and investing in renewable energy, Floridians will gain a cleaner and safer environment that will endure for generations."

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Crist now must submit his budget to the Legislature, which will decide final details in what is expected to be another tight year. State economists estimate a gap of up to \$3.2 billion between estimated income and spending levels needed to maintain high-priority programs including public schools and Medicaid.

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01/22/2010

Bradenton Herald - Online

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Forbes - Online

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MSNBC.com

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Gov. Crist proposes \$2.1 billion to fund environmental projects in 2010 budget

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01/22/2010

Washington Examiner - Online

BRIAN SKOLOFF Associated Press

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Gov. Crist Proposes \$2.1 Billion For Environment

01/22/2010

WKRG-TV - Online

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Florida Forever on Crist's budget

01/23/2010

Sarasota Herald-Tribune - Online

BRIAN SKOLOFF The Associated Press

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Gov. Crist proposes \$2.1B for environment

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St. Augustine Record, The

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The governor also said he wants to devote \$50 million to the Florida Forever program to purchase and preserve land throughout the state. Florida Forever wasn't funded last year because of budget constraints.

"Because of our challenging economy of last year, we held back on continuing that important legacy," Crist said. "This year, I'm honored to revive it."

According to the governor's office, since 1963, the state has committed \$7.5 billion to preserve about 3.8 million acres of land in Florida.

Eric Draper, director of Audubon of Florida, called the resurrection of Florida Forever "good news," noting the state lost momentum by not funding it last year.

"I think he's right on target," Draper said. "The big news here is that he's not going to let Florida Forever lapse another year."

The Republican governor, who is running for U.S. Senate, called it an "investment we want to restore."

Crist also said he'd like the budget to include \$10 million in rebates for installing solar energy panels, \$283.4 million for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and \$319 million for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

He said an additional \$176 million in federal funding received last year would go, in part, to state agencies, local governments and businesses interested in installing renewable energy components and more efficient technologies. The governor said the move could also spur economic development and job growth.

"Florida's present and future economy depends on the stewardship our natural resources and our continued efforts to set aside land," Crist said. "As we continue restoring America's Everglades and investing in renewable energy, Floridians will gain a cleaner and safer environment that will endure for generations."

Among the world's largest wetlands recovery efforts, the state and federal governments have been entrenched in a decades-long effort to clean pollutants and restore some natural water movement through the Everglades after years of diversions to make way for farms and development.

The state is working to buy 73,000 acres of farmland from U.S. Sugar Corp. in the Everglades in a \$536 million deal. Officials hope to use that land to build reservoirs and marshes to clean the water before it heads south into the rest of the ecosystem.

Crist now must submit his budget to the Legislature, which will decide final details in what is expected to be another tight year. State economists estimate a gap of up to \$3.2 billion between estimated income and spending levels needed to maintain high-priority programs including public schools and Medicaid.

US Sugar Some sugarcane crop damaged from cold

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at 4:16 p.m. CLEWISTON, Fla. - U.S. Sugar Corp. said that half of its unharvested sugarcane crop was badly damaged by the cold weather in Florida earlier this month. The company on Friday said it had harvested just over 50 percent of its cane prior to the freeze.

Judy Sanchez, U.S. Sugar's director of corporate communications, said in an e-mail it will take four to six weeks to harvest and process the most severely damaged cane. Moderately damaged fields might also be further degraded as temperatures rise.

Freeze damage in mature cane can result in increased harvesting and processing costs and in decreased sugar yield.

Southern Gardens Citrus, owned by U.S. Sugar Corp., found damage in one citrus grove in northern Hendry County. The impacted fruit has been harvested. All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be re-published without permission. Links are encouraged. Add a Comment on this topic. Events Sponsored by: Most ed leaders hope new ownership respects Cypress Gardens brand news briefs Archive More AP es Photo s Copyright © 2010 Chief.com All rights reserved. Restricted use only.

Crist Proposes \$2.1 Billion For Environment

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JustNews.com

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Gov. Crist proposes \$2.1 billion for environment

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BusinessWeek - Online

BRIAN SKOLOFF

NAPLES, Fla.

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