More polluter attacks on the Everglades

This summer, as the Everglades faced increased pollution from nearby developments, polluters and their allies in Congress fought hard to dismantle the law that has cleaned and protected our wetlands, rivers and lakes for 39 years: The Clean Water Act.

**Pollution plagues the Everglades**
The Clean Water Act has been extremely successful in limiting pollution across the country. But polluted runoff from farms, cities and construction sites is flowing straight into our waters. Legal loopholes are allowing developers to pave over wetlands and farms to pollute our streams and lakes, which for several municipalities around Lake Okeechobee provide the main source of drinking water. And now, Congress has attempted to revoke the Environmental Protection Agency’s ability to step in when states aren’t protecting their own waters.

More than half of the historic Everglades has already been drained and either developed or converted to industrial-sized farms. Nutrient pollution plagues a quarter of what’s left—causing algae blooms, spurring invasive plant growth and threatening the wildlife that depend on the “river of grass” for their habitat.

For the past several years, Environment Florida has been working with our national federation, Environment America, to close these loopholes and restore the Clean Water Act’s ability to protect our waters.

In April, following state laws spearheaded by Environment Maryland and Environment Rhode Island, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced plans to set national standards that will prevent polluted runoff from entering our streams and lakes.

**“Legal warfare”**
Polluting industries have already sprung into action, urging their friends in Congress to stop the EPA—ExxonMobil even threatened “legal warfare.”

We saw this coming, and had already begun building a campaign to defend the EPA’s clean water initiatives. Our field organizers talked face to face with thousands of Floridians about the attacks on clean water. Citizens wrote to their local newspapers and sent comments to Washington, D.C., urging the EPA to stand strong for clean water.

Go online to take action for our water. www.EnvironmentFlorida.org/action
Anyone who’s lived in or visited Florida knows it’s a special place. Growing up, I found adventure in local parks and beaches and along our mangrove-canopied trails.

After going away for college and law school, I returned to be an advocate for Florida’s environment. At first, I worked with nonprofits on a variety of issues, from drinking water to Everglades protection. Later, I worked with the state’s Department of Environmental Protection, in the legal department.

Recent events in our state, such as last year’s damaging legislative session, have made it clear we need the power of engaged citizens most. That’s why I’m thrilled to be a part of Environment Florida.

Please feel free to contact me directly about the environmental issues that matter to you most, and help spread the word about Environment Florida to your family, friends and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Aliki Moncrief
State Director

Global warming: Florida must change its course

It should come as no surprise that global warming will affect Florida: The question is not “if,” but rather “how,” and to what degree. Two years ago Florida’s “Energy and Climate Commission” report warned that with our 1,200 miles of coastline and low-lying topography, our state “is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.”

Unfortunately, in the last legislative session, instead of heeding the Commission’s warnings, the Legislature eliminated it, delegating the Commission’s functions to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, which will likely shift focus away from climate change and greenhouse gas reductions. In the months ahead, Environment Florida will urge the Legislature to change course and adopt meaningful solutions to climate change. “Many states are making progress on plans to address global warming,” said Environment Florida’s Aliki Moncrief. “With so much at stake, it’s time for Florida to join them.”

EPA moves to cut mercury and toxic air pollution

This year the Environmental Protection Agency took major steps to cut toxic air pollution from power plants, despite intense opposition from industrial polluters and their allies in Congress.

In March, the EPA proposed the first-ever nationwide limits on mercury pollution from power plants. Further, in July, the EPA finalized a rule to protect communities from dangerous smog pollution, which could prevent as many as 34,000 premature deaths annually by 2014. Here in Florida, which ranks third in the nation for pollution by power plants, the new rules play a particularly important role. Today, power plants account for almost 70 percent of Florida’s air pollution.

Polluters and their allies in the Senate fought back with proposals to block the EPA. Our staff and activists helped defeat the measures. But with new attacks coming every month, our staff is building support for the next fight.

How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as a someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Florida.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentFlorida.org.

The EPA wants to cut mercury emissions by 91 percent—an important step to protect children and pregnant women.
Obama announces new fuel standards

As President Obama negotiated with auto companies over fuel efficiency, Environment Florida and our national federation advocated a 60-miles-per-gallon standard—a move that would slash our nation’s oil consumption by 44 million barrels per year. That’s the equivalent of taking 70 million cars off the road.

Environment Florida helped gather more than 10,000 petition signatures urging the president to adopt this ambitious but achievable standard. This July, the administration announced the outline of new clean car standards, which will require cars and light trucks to meet the equivalent of a 54.5 miles per gallon fleetwide average by 2025—roughly twice as strong as the current standard.

The new standards represent the single biggest step this country has ever taken to end our addiction to oil and reduce global warming pollution. And once they go into effect, the standards will cut our annual gasoline use by as much as 23 billion gallons—the equivalent of the United States’ current imports from Saudi Arabia and Iraq each year.

Of course, the president’s announcement is only the first step in a rulemaking process that will last through next year. In the months ahead, Environment Florida will again join forces with our national federation to push these guidelines across the finish line.

Tips to save energy

1. Replace incandescent light bulbs, once they burn out, with CFLs to cut your lighting costs by up to 75 percent.
2. Wash your laundry using cold water only.
3. Plug appliances into power strips, and turn them off when not in use.
4. Put aluminum foil behind radiators to reflect heat back into the room.
5. Scrape—don’t rinse—dishes, and only run the dishwasher when you have a full load.
6. Turn lights and appliances off when you leave the room. It only takes a second, and those savings can really add up.
7. Turn your hot water heater down to 120 degrees (or the “low” setting).

New Report: Plug into clean energy

Efficiency is the cheapest and cleanest way to cut our fossil fuel use and pollution. It seems intuitive enough: Use less energy. Save fuel, and save money.

America’s homes are like cars that only get 10 miles to the gallon. Buildings consume 40 percent of America’s energy, and much of that energy is literally flying out the window rather than heating or cooling our homes and businesses. What’s worse, energy-wasting buildings are responsible for nearly half of our nation’s greenhouse gas emissions.

State, federal incentives waiting to help

Unfortunately, while energy efficiency investments save money in the long run, some of them can involve relatively hefty upfront costs.

But with the numerous federal, state and local organizations and agencies ready to help you retrofit your home or business—offering rebates, discounts, financing and other kinds of incentives—it can be tough to figure out where to start.

Environment Florida Research & Policy Center designed our “Plug Into Clean Energy” guide to help you cut through the clutter and pick what works for you, so you can get on the path toward a more efficient home or business, one step at a time.

In addition to many low- to no-cost things you can do today to cut your energy use, you can also visit www.EnvironmentFlorida.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy for a list of several Florida utilities that provide home energy audits and financial incentives for installing more energy-efficient appliances.

To read our “Plug Into Clean Energy” guide, visit our website at: www.EnvironmentFlorida.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy.
Last year, as oil from the sunken BP rig washed ashore at Pensacola Beach, Environment Florida organizers and members turned out to Hands Across the Sand rallies to show support for clean beaches and green energy. Late this June, amidst new discussions of drilling in Atlantic waters, 10,000 Floridians flocked to their beaches once again, in protest of offshore drilling.

Participants came wrapped in black plastic to symbolize the crude oil that could once again wash ashore on Florida coasts in the event of another accident. But even absent a tragedy like last year’s Gulf oil disaster, oil dependence is taking a heavy toll on Florida.

“This year, our oil dependence is taking a toll on our bank accounts and our economy, with gas prices as high as four dollars in Miami,” said Environment Florida’s Alejandra Cabrera. “We cannot lower gas prices or meet our own energy needs with more drilling, and so today, we stand opposed to efforts to put the immense environmental and economic value of Florida’s coastline at risk for a negligible reward.”

Hundreds gathered at Hands Across the Sand events throughout Florida, lining up hand-in-hand to stand up for protecting our shores against offshore oil drilling. Read more online at:

www.EnvironmentFlorida.org