



December 12, 2013

**Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission**

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Rachel Jacobson (Chair)
Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish
Wildlife and Parks
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW, MS 3156
Washington, DC 20240

Dear: Madam Secretary

In an effort to be a more effective partner in Everglades restoration, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has developed a position regarding water level management throughout the Everglades ecosystem, particularly in the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area (EWMA). Water level management in EWMA is key to restoring and conserving the fish and wildlife diversity associated with this ecosystem. Over the last sixty years, FWC staff has documented how water levels managed outside of the desired range of conditions have negatively impacted vegetation communities, wildlife diversity, and both state- and federally listed species. We have been working with our partners to provide scientific-based guidance for establishing and managing water levels in the Everglades, particularly in regard to Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)-related activities. The purpose of this position paper (enclosed) is to establish hydrologic requirements for EWMA wildlife and habitats. We are sharing this information with our partners in Everglades restoration and will utilize this Commission-approved position as the foundation for the FWC's future recommendations regarding the planning and implementation of CERP and CEPP.

Involvement from our partner agencies has been key in developing this position, and we will continue to engage in discussions regarding the effects of artificially regulated water levels on fish and wildlife resources in EWMA and the Everglades ecosystem (EWMA, Everglades National Park, and Big Cypress National Park). We acknowledge this document may need to be refined further as we continue to work with other agencies, researchers, and stakeholders to evaluate subsequent CERP and other CEPP-related activities. We truly appreciate your continued involvement and assistance in conserving Florida's fish and wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Nick Wiley
Executive Director

nw/jdg
Enclosure

Name of Addressee

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Date

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