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For more information about
the Everglades Law Center, visit us at
www.evergladeslaw.org

Cover Photograph by
Carlton Ward

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**Everglades
Law Center, Inc.**

2014 Annual Report



Photograph by
Lisa Interlandi

Everglades
Law Center, Inc.

Defending Florida's Ecosystems and Communities

2014 Annual Report

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Letter From The Executive Director

Photograph by
Patrick Cowan

2014

was a year of change for the Everglades Law Center. We said goodbye to our Executive Director Sara Fain. A true “thought leader” and champion of our national parks, Sara played a significant role in strengthening our organization and in 2014 led a coalition of interests to protect Everglades National Park from the potentially damaging impacts of electrical transmission lines. We wish Sara and her family all the best in their new home of Berkeley, California!

After eight years with Everglades Law Center, I became Executive Director this past December. As a native Floridian who grew up along the Treasure Coast, I am excited to lead an organization that is dedicated to protecting this state’s precious natural resources. One of the things I love about our organization is the unique role we play in Florida’s environmental community. We advocate, litigate, negotiate and educate. We provide day-to-day representation and counsel to more than 30 national, state, and local environmental and conservation organizations on legal issues as they arise, as well as on long-term projects and litigation.

2014 was also a year of growth. We welcomed Staff Attorney Julie Dick to our team. Julie leads our Southern Everglades office and our Florida Keys program. We now have attorneys strategically located throughout the greater Everglades ecosystem, which enables us to collaborate closely with local partners while also coordinating efforts throughout the state.

2014 was a year of accomplishments as well. In 2014 we led a broad coalition against the proposed expansion of the Palm Beach inlet. The project remains unfunded by Congress and we have continued our advocacy to ensure protection of the area’s important aquatic resources. We released a “white paper” wherein we called on water managers to optimize state water supply planning laws to advance Everglades restoration. We hosted two scientific forums in the Keys to engage citizens in advocating for Everglades restoration. And we provided critical legal support and analysis to the larger community, leading our partners in opposing the expansion of State Road 7 in western Palm Beach County, protecting endangered species habitats on National Forest lands, and ensuring the passage of a protective well-field ordinance in Miami-Dade County.

While we are extremely proud of our work, we also know that there’s a lot more that needs to be done to restore and protect the Everglades ecosystem. Thank you to all of our supporters and collaborators, without whom none of our work would be possible!

Sincerely,

Jason Totoiu

Executive Director and General Counsel



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Photograph by
Carlton Ward

Land Use & Sustainability

Lisa Interlandi
Senior Staff Attorney

Region
*Central Everglades
Focus Area
Land Use and Sustainability*



Opposing Development in Western Palm Beach and Hendry Counties to Support Everglades Restoration

We helped build and lead a coalition of environmental groups to oppose plans to develop an area within the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) needed for Everglades restoration. We submitted extensive comments to the state in opposition to development plans and they subsequently found the developer's proposal not in compliance with state land use laws.

The Everglades Law Center continued to lead neighborhood groups and environmental organizations to oppose development on Vavrus Ranch in western Palm Beach County. Large scale development in this area could compromise Everglades restoration.

Supporting Regional Planning through Seven50 and the Sea Level Rise Taskforce

The Seven50 Final Plan for prosperity in Southeast Florida was released in January 2014. Former Everglades Law Center Executive Director Sara Fain served on the Plan's Executive Committee. Local governments adopted conservation and sustainability implementation strategies consistent with the Seven50 Plan.

Through our participation in the Miami-Dade County Sea Level Rise Taskforce, we were able to incorporate Everglades restoration aspects of the Seven50 Plan into the taskforce recommendations and set priorities for use of green infrastructure and conservation as part of the County's sea level rise resiliency planning.

Protecting Wellfields in Western Miami-Dade County

The Everglades Law Center worked on behalf of several environmental organizations to ensure that wellfield protection areas were preserved, thereby regulating, and in some places prohibiting, rock-mining activities that could threaten the region's water supply.

Advocating for Alternatives to Expanding State Road 836 in Miami-Dade County

We worked with MDX and its consultants to formulate an environmental working group to identify issues and concerns that needed to be addressed regarding the planned expansion of SR 836 outside the Urban Development Boundary.



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Photograph by
Patrick Cowan

Wetlands & Water Resource Protection

Julie Dick
Program Attorney



Region:
Southern Everglades and the Florida Keys
Focus Area:
Water Quality and Sea Level Rise Resiliency

Water Law and Policy White Paper

In 2014, the Everglades Law Center prepared a legal white paper on optimizing state water supply planning laws to advance Everglades restoration. The white paper contained a historical overview of Florida water law, several regional “stories” of water management decisions throughout the year, and five recommendations for leveraging state law to help restore the Everglades. The paper was widely distributed to national, state, and local environmental and conservation organizations, decision-makers, and the public via conferences, e-mail, and through our website.

Opposing Projects that Threaten Local Fisheries

We led local conservation groups and submitted extensive comments in opposition to a proposed dredge and fill project in Indian River County that would have removed a prolific nursery ground used by several saltwater game fish species. The County Commission later suspended its plans for the project for 3-5 years.

Stronger Growth Controls and Water Quality Protections in the Florida Keys

In 2014, we worked on behalf of our clients in the Florida Keys to secure stronger growth controls and water quality protections through changes to the County’s local comprehensive plan.

Educational Outreach in the Florida Keys

We organized 2 public forums in the Florida Keys to educate residents about the benefits of Everglades restoration. The forums were moderated by Staff Attorney Julie Dick and featured speakers from universities, other NGOs, and government.

Advocating for Conservation of Resources in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary

The Everglades Law Center was actively involved in the development of the management plan for the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. We engaged with working groups and the Sanctuary Advisory Council by writing comment letters and participating in public meetings to prioritize the protection of water quality from vessel discharges and the conservation of marine resources through best practices, including marine reserves.



Photograph by
Patrick Cowan

2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Public Lands Protection

Sara Fain
Former Executive Director



Region:
Southern Everglades
Focus Area:
Public Lands

Opposing Transmission Lines in Everglades National Park

Throughout 2014, the Everglades Law Center challenged the expansion of the Turkey Point nuclear facility in federal and state proceedings. Our litigation and advocacy helped lead to the certification of a transmission line corridor, which avoids 95% of National Park resources.

Challenging State Attempts to “Surplus” Conservation Lands

In 2014, we worked with our clients and partners to advocate against the state’s attempts to place conservation lands on a surplus list that would open them up to purchase and development. With our help, state officials were successfully persuaded not to surplus key environmental lands in Martin and Palm Beach counties.

“For more than six years, the National Parks Conservation Association has been working to protect Everglades National Park from an intrusive power line proposal by Florida Power and Light (FPL) that called for the construction of 330-foot transmission lines through Everglades National Park. Today, an agreement has been made that can keep power lines completely out of the national park and protect the park’s invaluable natural resources, endangered wildlife, and the visitor experience...”

Sara E. Fain



2014 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Photograph by
Patrick Cowan

Endangered Species & Wildlife Protection

Jason Totoiu
Executive Director and General Counsel



Region:
Everglades Headwaters
Focus Area:
Endangered Species and Wildlife Protection

Opposing the Expansion of the Port of Palm Beach

The Everglades Law Center worked on behalf of several environmental and community organizations to oppose the deepening and widening of the Lake Worth Inlet. This United States Army Corps of Engineers project threatens one of the world's largest wintering populations of the Florida manatee and will destroy acres of important seagrass and coral reef habitat. Working with manatee, seagrass, and coastal engineering experts, we submitted hundreds of pages of comments and supporting scientific analyses to the Corps and other federal agencies responsible for permitting this project. The project remains unfunded and we are advocating for a far less harmful alternative.

Protecting Endangered Species in the Headwaters of the Florida Everglades

In 2014, we represented a location conservation organization to persuade Osceola County to maintain existing wetland and snail kite protections in its comprehensive plan.

Protecting Endangered Species on Florida's National Forests

General Counsel Jason Totoiu represented conservation and environmental organizations in an appeal of a United States Forest Service decision to "clear-cut" hundreds of acres in the Apalachicola National Forest. Through our advocacy and negotiations with the Forest Service, the final project was modified to provide greater habitat protections for federally listed species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker and the flatwoods salamander.



Photograph by
Patrick Cowan

Thank you!

We gratefully acknowledge and thank our 2014 supporters:

Foundations, Organizations, & Individuals

\$50,000+

Everglades Foundation
Town of Palm Beach
Anonymous

\$25,000-\$49,999

Tsunami Foundation

\$10,000-\$24,000

Charles Causey
Francis Hatch

\$5,000-\$9,999

Michael Ainslie
Keith and Linda Beaty
Judith Buechner
David Frisbee
Tatiana Kopp

\$1,000-\$4,999

Guardians of
Martin County
Donna Melzer
Miami Foundation
Danielle Hickox Moore
Sally O'Connell
Sierra Club
Sierra Club
Loxahatchee Group
Sly Wind Foundation

\$100 - \$999

Gwen Burzycki
Lewis Crampton
Cynthia Guerra
Dirck Holscher
Key Deer Protection
Alliance
Dan Kipnis

Barbara Lange

Joel Mintz

Alicia Putney

Hermina Seiden

George Skokan

Justine Thompson

\$25 - \$99

Margaret Ketter

Clients & Partners

1000 Friends of Florida

Center for
Biological Diversity

Clean Water Action

Conservancy of
Southwest Florida

Conservation Alliance of
St. Lucie County

Defenders of Wildlife

Florida Keys Chapter of
the Izaak Walton League
of America

Florida Keys
Environmental Fund

Florida Native Plant Society

Florida Wildlife Federation

Friends of the Everglades

Haney Creek
Greenway Group

Indian Riverkeeper

Key Deer Protection Alliance

Kissimmee Valley
Audubon Society

Last Stand

Martin County
Conservation Alliance

Miami Waterkeeper

National Parks
Conservation Association

Natural Resources
Defense Council

Palm Beach Civic
Association

Pelican Island Audubon
Society

Rivers Coalition

Sanibel-Captiva
Conservation Foundation

Sea Turtle Conservancy

Sierra Club

Southern Alliance for
Clean Energy

Surfrider Foundation

Tropical Audubon
Society

Wild South



Financial Report

For the Year Ended
December 31, 2014

Photograph by
Carlton Ward

\$40,471

Program Service
Revenue

\$275,238

Total Grants &
Contributions

Total Revenue
\$315,709

Expenses
\$282,200

\$232,438

Program Expenses

\$29,856

Fundraising Expenses

\$19,906

Office & Organizational
Overhead

Current Staff And Board Members

Board of Directors

Robert N. Hartsell, Esq.
Karen Marcus
Joel A. Mintz, Esq.
David White, Esq.

Executive Director & General Counsel

Jason Totoiu, Esq.

Senior Staff Attorney

Lisa Interlandi, Esq.

Staff Attorney

Julie Dick, Esq.

Of Counsel

Ansley Samson, Esq.

Office and Development Manager

Amy Campbell

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