

**Everglades
Law Center, Inc.**

Annual Report 2013



Letter from the Executive Director 2

Everglades Restoration and Other Regional Issues 4

 Monroe County 6

 Miami-Dade County 8

 Palm Beach County 10

Financial Report 12

Statement of Activities For the Year Ended December 31, 2013 14



"Good Morning Wetlands" by pcowanimages

2013 Accomplishments



Defending Florida's Ecosystems and Communities

Board of Directors

Richard Hamann, Esq.
Robert N. Hartsell, Esq.
Laurie Ann Macdonald
Joel A. Mintz, Esq.
David White, Esq.

Executive Director

Sara Fain, Esq.

General Counsel

Jason Totoiu, Esq.

Senior Staff Counsel

Lisa Interlandi, Esq.

Program Attorney

Julie Dick, Esq.

1172 S. Dixie Hwy., #246
Miami, FL 33146

Phone: (786) 942-7680
evergladeslaw.org

Letter from the Executive Director



ELC is a small organization, but we make a big impact. We take on the biggest, toughest issues and our accomplishments rival those of much larger law offices.

“Screech” by pcowanimages

“It’s a big victory for the Everglades.”

That was attorney Lisa Interlandi’s quote in the Sun-Sentinel on the third court denial of mining permits.

And it’s a big victory for the Everglades Law Center. The courts have now invalidated all three rock-mining permits we’ve been challenging in the Everglades Agricultural Area since 2008.

The proposed mines could have been significant obstacles with wide-reaching detrimental effects, including interfering with Everglades restoration efforts.

We also successfully culminated our 10-year fight to defeat the commercial development of Mecca Farms. The South Florida Water Management District finally purchased this parcel from Palm Beach County to restore flows to the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River.

These two wins underscore the importance of the Everglades Law Center, but also the challenges. Both will have huge benefits for our Florida environment. Both show how the public can have a voice in protecting our special places. And both take many years to reach success.

Our attorneys consistently ensure that our partners receive legal support throughout every step of a project or plan, not just in litigation. This has required a range of expertise, an intimate knowledge of many different stakeholders and decision-makers, and a constant focus on the end-goal.

The work we’ve done over the last decade is ensuring we save Florida’s special places for the next generations. But we can’t rest now. We must continue to lay the groundwork today for the future. We thank our funders, partners, and donors for supporting our work.

Sara Fain, Esq.

Everglades Restoration and Other Regional Issues



"Before the Storm" by pcowanimages

Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule

ELC successfully urged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to re-initiate consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service on the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule. Through this process the agencies must closely examine how the water management decisions are adversely affecting the critically endangered smalltooth sawfish and other federally protected species, and identify ways of avoiding and minimizing potential harms.

Opposing Transmission Lines in Everglades National Park

Representing National Parks Conservation Association, ELC participated in a summer-long state certification hearing on where to site FPL's proposed transmission lines. We are still awaiting a final decision from the Siting Board, but have already pressured FPL to remove its proposed corridor inside Everglades National Park, and stipulate with others to prioritize a corridor that lies partially outside Everglades National Park. We will be working hard in 2014 to finalize this issue in a way that most benefit the Park and Everglades restoration initiatives.

Supporting Regional Planning through Seven50

The Seven50 Final Plan was released in January 2014, with a strong emphasis on Everglades restoration, regional transportation, regional climate change adaptation, and protection of natural and agricultural lands by keeping new development within existing development. Sara Fain was prominently featured as one of 12 essayists included in the plan, where she discusses the economic value of the environment. Sara was also highlighted in the Seven50 video used to publicize the plan, and was a panelist at the final summit on the next steps for implementation. We look forward to using this plan in future advocacy efforts to push climate change, transportation, growth, and restoration initiatives.

"If we hope to increase the economic prosperity and quality of life that draws people to southeast Florida, we must make sure our growth patterns are sustainable."

Excerpt from Sara Fain's essay in the Seven50 Prosperity Plan.

Monroe County



"Mr. Pink" by pcowanimages

We assisted our clients in advocating against a proposed amendment to the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan that would have lifted the County's long-standing prohibition on dredging in near-shore waters. Healthy, productive fisheries are critical to the local economy and future dredging would have threatened many sensitive seagrass and hardbottom habitats. We worked with our past Executive Director, Richard Grosso, and the law students in his environmental law practice clinic at Nova Southeastern University, to secure a 5-0 Commission vote against the proposed amendment.

County rejects proposed 700-foot channel dredge

A controversial proposal to dredge a boating channel through a Florida Keys seagrass flat sank like a stone Thursday.

"This is plowing up the ocean bottom. There's no nicer way to put it," Monroe County Commissioner Sylvia Murphy said in rejecting a plan forwarded for a 700-foot channel into private Walker's Island near Duck Key.

County commissioners unanimously agreed that a re-dredging plan laboriously crafted over several years by Little Conch Key Development Corp. does not mesh with current environmental protections and awareness. Opponents of the dredging contend approval would have set a precedent to allow dredging anywhere in the Keys.

"Conservation, preservation and restoration" has been the goal for decades, Commissioner Danny Kolhage said. "Approval of this sends a message that we're reversing what we've been doing for the last 30 years." ...

The proposal to create a special comprehensive land-use amendment would "allow deeper-draft boats than [the channel] ever accommodated," said Nova Southeastern University law professor Richard Grosso, who brought a contingent of legal interns to speak at the hearing at the Marathon Government Center.

Dredging in the Keys during the 1950s "seemed to make sense then but it's viewed as barbaric now," said Grosso, who used to be a county planner and helped write Monroe's land-use plan.

Fishing-guides associations submitted letters against destroying habitat needed for sportfish species.

"Fishing is our most important asset. People don't come here to play golf," environmental activist Charlie Causey said. "Absolutely every chance we get to protect seagrass and water quality, we should do it."

Excerpt Of Florida Keys Keynoter
Kevin Wadlow - April 20, 2013

Miami-Dade County

Protecting the Urban Development Boundary

The central feature of the Miami-Dade County Comprehensive Plan's growth management policy is its Urban Development Boundary (UDB), which is consistently under pressure from builders seeking cheaper land in the County's rural areas. Maintaining that line in Miami-Dade County is one of the most important tasks necessary to restore the Everglades.

This year, ELC led successful community efforts to ensure the Miami-Dade amendments to the Comprehensive Development Master Plan benefitted restoration efforts and environmental protections. This included thwarting a developer-driven effort to expand certain natural and rural areas for future expansion.

ELC also led efforts to stop the expansion of the UDB for a water theme park; we successfully forced the applicant to withdraw in the face of a losing Commission vote.

Preventing Road Expansions

ELC continues to fight the expansion of SR Krome Ave outside the UDB in southern Miami-Dade County. This proposed expansion would lead to impacts on wetlands and endangered species, as well as induce growth. We provided comments to the Army Corps of Engineers and the FDOT regarding permitting, and we are currently reviewing the entirety of the regulations and permits.

Climate Change Adaptation

Our Executive Director was appointed to the Miami-Dade Sea Level Rise Task Force, which seeks to analyze Miami-Dade's need to prepare and adapt for coming change. This is an opportunity to input new initiatives into the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, and strengthen natural solutions to climate change.

Turkey Point Power Plant Expansion

Florida Power & Light continues to seek approvals of its nuclear plant expansion on the edge of Biscayne Bay, which will have significant harmful impacts to Biscayne National Park and the surrounding wetlands. In 2013, ELC represented our partners to oppose FPL's proposal on local, state, and federal permitting and licensing proceedings.

Palm Beach County

Preventing Commercial Mining in the EAA

ELC recently concluded several years of litigation in opposition to large-scale commercial mining in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) of Palm Beach County with the third of three victories. This stopped nearly 20,000 acres of mining that could have caused serious environmental impacts, including harming water quality, and impeding the restoration of water flows. ELC continues to monitor plans for mining within the EAA to ensure that projects comply with the strict requirements of Palm Beach County's comprehensive plan.

Saving Critical Lands for Restoration

We culminated a 10-year fight over Mecca Farms, the former proposed site of the Scripps Research Institute in Palm Beach County. In a landmark deal, the South Florida Water Management District purchased the land from Palm Beach County to construct a water reservoir to restore flows to the federally designated Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee River.

ELC also worked with local government and media to oppose an ill-advised major development proposed on the Vavrus Ranch, a critical area in western Palm Beach County. We hope to preserve much of this land for restoration.

Protecting Wetlands

After substantial review and analysis, ELC prepared a white paper, "Prior Converted Cropland and the EAA: A Call to Action." We believe extending agricultural permitting exemptions to non-agricultural uses will become a critical issue in upcoming months and years as landowners seek to convert their lands from agriculture to mining or residential.

Saving Wildlife

ELC is leading efforts to oppose a planned deepening and widening of the Lake Worth Inlet and Palm Beach harbor. The expansion threatens endangered species, fishing, and recreation, and could severely impact the surrounding reefs and seagrass beds. Endangered manatees could be threatened by the impacts of blasting, increased vessel strikes, and potential loss of their warm water refuge adjacent to the Port.

"It has been a long time coming."

Lisa Interlandi after Palm Beach County Commission gave final approval to sell Mecca Farms to the state of Florida for restoration.

Financial Report



For almost 20 years, your support has allowed ELC to represent the public interest in environmental and land use matters throughout the Everglades region, as well as other parts of Florida.

“Rainy Day in the Wetlands” by pcowanimages

We gratefully acknowledge and thank our major 2013 supporters:

Foundations and Organizations

\$50,000+

- Everglades Foundation*
- United Way of Miami-Dade*

\$25,000-\$49,999

- Tsunami Foundation*

\$10,000-\$24,999

- Elizabeth Ordway Foundation*
- Dunn Foundation*
- National Parks Conservation Association*

\$5,000-\$9,999

- Sierra Club Miami Group*
- Tropical Audubon Society*
- Last Stand*

\$1,000-\$4,999

- Conservancy of Southwest Florida*
- Sierra Club Loxahatchee Group*
- Kirby Family Foundation*

\$100 - \$999

- Indian Riverkeeper*
- Conservation Alliance of St. Lucie County*

\$235,199

Individual Donors

\$5,000+

- Judy Buechner*
- Charles Causey*
- Francis Hatch*
- Tatiana and Keith Kopp*
- Sally O'Connell*

\$100-\$4,999

- Gwen Burzycki*
- Cynthia Guerra*
- Gil and Jacqueline Haddad*
- John Hammerstrom*
- Dirck Holscher*
- James and Maggie Hurchalla*
- Donna Melzer*
- Joel Mintz*
- Alicia Putney*
- Janet Reno*

\$25-\$99

- Nina Griswold*
- Margaret Ketter*
- Justine Thompson*
- Barbara Youngblood*

\$39,510

TOTAL: \$274,709

Everglades Law Center, Inc.
Statement of Activities For the Year Ended
December 31, 2013

Total Expenses: \$153,317

Staff Salaries and Benefits
\$126,960

Office and Organizational Overhead
\$11,010

Professional Services and Consultants
\$2,460

Litigation Expenses
\$9,407

NOTES



"Egret on Green" by pcowanimages



**For more information about the ELC, visit us at
www.evergladeslaw.org**

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state at 1-800-435-7352. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.