



Everglades Initiative

2013 Progress Report

EI

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Photograph by Becca Tucker.



Photograph by Becca Tucker.

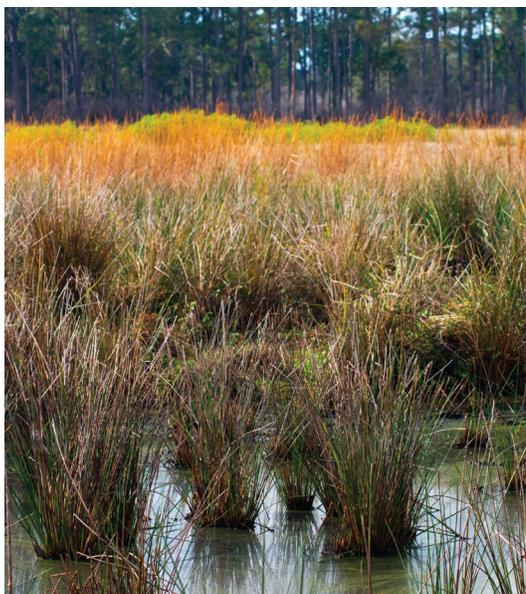


Overview

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) established the Everglades Initiative (EI) in Fiscal Year 2012 to build upon efforts to restore the Everglades. Through the EI, the NRCS and partners work with agricultural producers and other landowners to voluntarily carry out conservation practices that improve water quality, control invasive plant species, benefit wildlife and fish habitat, and support rural economies in the Florida Everglades region.

Funding

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) fund EI. In fiscal years 2012-2013, NRCS dedicated about \$140 million in financial assistance to approximately 200 producers who carried out conservation systems and entered into easements on 153,500 acres.



Results

In Fiscal Year 2013, NRCS invested more than \$57 million to fund 78 contracts and easements covering nearly 43,000 acres.

- In 2013, NRCS demonstrated its continued commitment to restoring and protecting wetlands in the critically important Northern Everglades Watershed. NRCS provided \$60 million through WRP to help agricultural producers restore existing wetlands and to enroll 12,500 acres in new easements. These funds supported the creation and enhancement of 16,800 wetland acres that now provide habitat for diverse species, including the federally listed Woodstork, Crested Caracara and Eastern Indigo Snake. In addition, many of these wetland acres are located within a well-documented wildlife corridor for the Florida panther.
- Agricultural producers Shane and Carol Platt received the Florida Commissioner's Agricultural Environmental Leadership Award in 2013 for carrying out successful conservation practices through EI. The Platts established a grazing livestock system and installed a high efficiency irrigation system for their 1,200-acre citrus operation. NRCS staff provided financial and technical assistance to help the Platts implement conservation practices that improve water quality and water quantity, control invasive plants and improve wildlife habitat.
- Through EI, NRCS staff also provided assistance to the Seminole Tribe of Florida to address resource concerns on their grazing operations. NRCS obligated about \$1 million to fund four contracts on 1,203 acres for tribal agricultural producers to address invasive plant species and to improve forages for livestock.

Fiscal Year 2013 Everglades Initiative
NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts

State	Program	Number of Contracts and Agreements	Funding	Contract Acres
Florida	EQIP*	71	\$4,473,839	29,966
Florida	WRP**	7	\$53,000,000	12,500
Totals		78	\$57,473,839	42,466



Photograph by Becca Tucker.

For More Information

For more information and updates about EI and other NRCS conservation efforts, please visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull//?cid=stelprdb1048276>

Data source:
*Protracts for new enrollment 10/25/13.
**Florida NRCS, 10/28/13.