

Florida's
Beautiful Waters...

...Are Dying.

How is nutrient pollution
killing our water resources,
threatening our economy
and harming public health?



CONSERVANCY
Of Southwest Florida



In 1513, Ponce de Leon searched for the Fountain of Youth in the waters of Florida...

Today, a similar quest occurs as the state's population has boomed with people seeking a warm climate, natural beauty and tranquil waters.

But Florida has some of the nation's poorest water quality.

- Over 97 percent of bays and estuaries are impaired;
- Over 42 percent of streams are in poor shape and do not meet federal standards for swimming and/or fishing;
- Beachgoers will find 22 major beaches are unsafe for swimming at least two weeks each year;
- EPA estimates that almost 2,000 miles of rivers and streams have been negatively affected by nutrient pollution; and
- Florida's drinking water is fourth worst in the nation.



The Reach of the Green Monster

Every day, thousands of pounds of nutrient pollution are dumped into our waters.

This contamination chokes oxygen from rivers and streams causing fish and bird kills, spring and oyster bed death, and green slime that coats our waters and shores.

The reach of the Green Monster is extending further into our most pristine areas than ever before, harming our wildlife, economy and the health of our residents.

"The number of oxygen-starved "dead zones" in the world's seas and oceans has risen more than a third in the past two years because of fertilizer, sewage, animal waste, and fossil-fuel burning. The damage is caused by explosive blooms of tiny plants known as phytoplankton, which die and sink to the bottom, then are eaten by bacteria, which use up the oxygen in the water. Those blooms are triggered by too many nutrients – particularly phosphorous and nitrogen."

From a United Nations Report

Florida's Economy and the Value of Clean Water



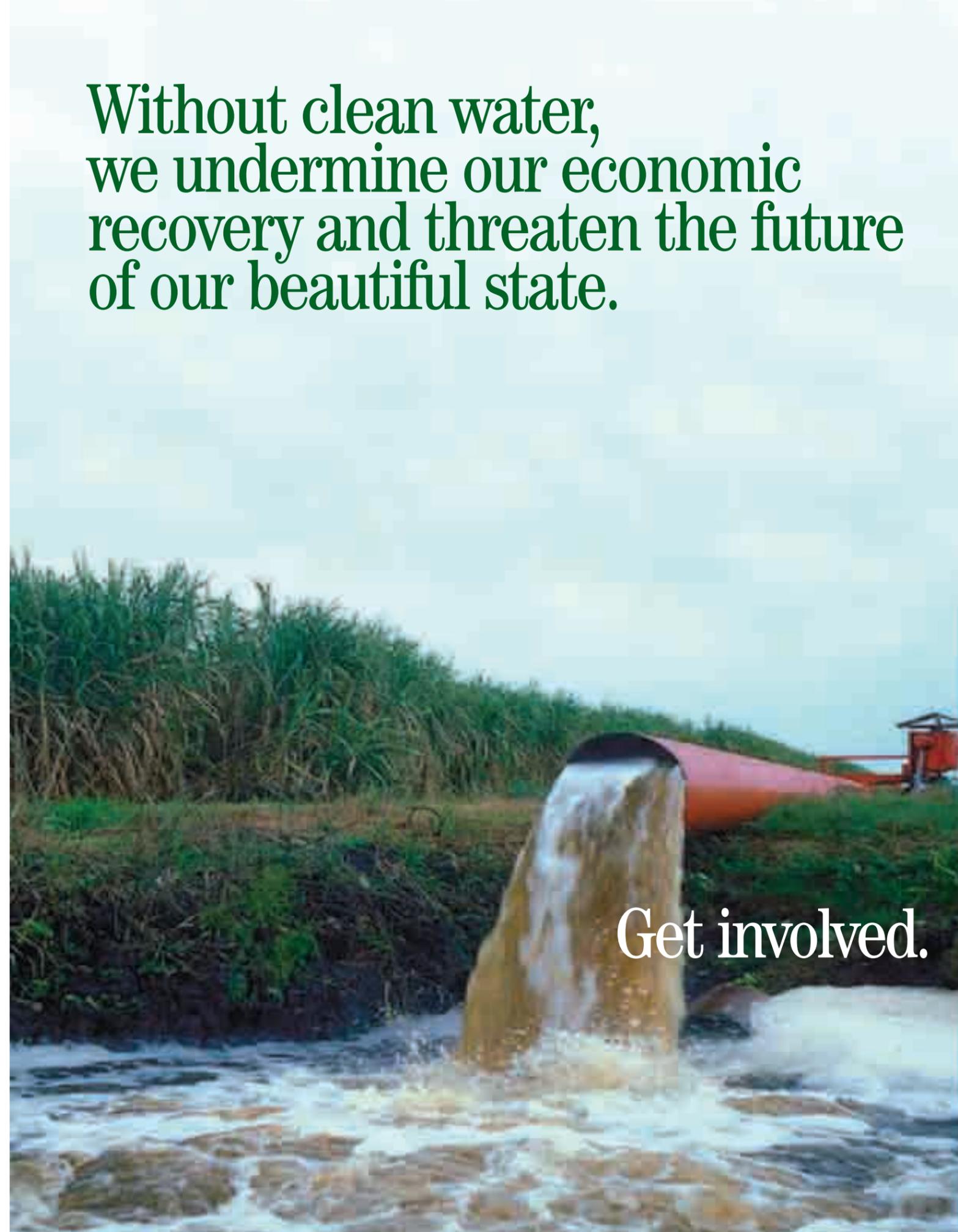
Clean water is the centerpiece of Florida's economy through travel and tourism, commercial and recreational fishing and real estate.

- *Over 80 million tourists visit Florida each year, spending more than \$60 billion and generating 22 percent of the state's sales tax revenue.*
- *Beach tourism creates over 275,000 jobs and contributes over \$24 billion to the state's economy. The tourism industry employs nearly 1 million Floridians.*
- *Florida's recreational saltwater fishing contributes over 50,000 jobs and over \$5 billion to the state.*
- *In 2005, Florida's coastal counties contributed about \$562 billion in direct real estate revenue – 79 percent of Florida's economy.*
- *Real estate values are higher for property located on or near high quality water and water quality improvements can have up to a seven percent impact on real estate values.*



Without clean water, we undermine our economic recovery and threaten the future of our beautiful state.

Get involved.





Tell Congress to Protect our Water.

In 1972, the federal Clean Water Act was established to govern and protect our nation's waters.

When the Florida DEP failed to impose clean water standards and take action on pollution, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida and other environmental groups filed suit against the EPA. The groups reached a settlement for the federal EPA to set the standards in lieu of Florida DEP.

Congress is now acting to block implementation of the settlement agreement, which requires Florida to limit the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that infiltrates our waters.

After a 15-month implementation delay granted by the EPA, Florida officials and polluters have until 2012 to meet the new limits for nutrient pollution.

There are many disputes over the cost of compliance with the EPA rule.

But the ultimate cost of not cleaning up Florida's polluted waterways is immeasurable and would be felt for generations.

Contact your Congressional representatives and Senators Bill Nelson and Marco Rubio and tell them to let EPA do its job!

It is vital that our elected officials and industry leaders outline steps to restore Florida's waters, including:

- ***Uphold water quality standards as set by the U.S. EPA and the Clean Water Act***
- ***Implement numeric nutrient pollution standards for our waterways***
- ***Adopt Sustainable and Best Management Practices for fertilizer and pesticide use***
- ***Create On-Site Stormwater Management Systems***
- ***Enhance Wastewater Treatment and Sewage Sludge Disposal***
- ***Install backup systems in municipal water treatment plants***
- ***Replace leaking septic tank systems***
- ***Utilize "Constructed Wetlands" to filter pollutants***
- ***Offer incentives for sustainable tourism, especially those in close proximity to threatened wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas.***
- ***Create policies that credit development practices that reduce runoff and protect natural wetlands***

Our environment, economy and public health are all inextricably linked to clean water.

Join the Fight for Clean Water



CONSERVANCY
Of Southwest Florida

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The Estuaries Report Card

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida has documented the expanding range of water quality impairments in our water bodies in its Estuaries Report Card. This report utilizes scientific information from many sources and applies consistent indicators for which data exists throughout the region and converts this information into grades that represent Southwest Florida's estuarine health.

View the Conservancy of Southwest Florida Estuaries Report Card at:
<http://www.conservancy.org/Document.Doc?id=31>