



## **Nutrient Reduction Case Study**

### ***Cattle Grazing Land Leasing Program***

### **Everglades, South Florida**

For more than 20 years, private landowners and government agencies have been working to restore the Everglades in South Florida. As part of these efforts, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) manages the Cattle Grazing Land Leasing Program. The Cattle Grazing Land Leasing Program helps SFWMD manage land acquired for future water management and ecosystem restoration projects.

Under this program, lease holders temporarily keep public land in production and pay taxes and local assessments, control exotic vegetation, and implement best management practices (BMPs) for nutrient management and other water quality improvements. SFWMD and each lessee negotiate a contract that identifies site-specific BMPs and technologies that the lessee will implement. These BMPs help reduce phosphorus and pesticide pollution while protecting drinking water wells, springs, and wetlands. Revenues generated by the leases are used to support land management activities throughout the SFWMD.

In addition, SFWMD offers an innovative financing program that helps meet goals established through the Everglades Forever Act and the Clean Water Act through careful private management on lands bought for future public restoration projects, while simultaneously raising funds to support ongoing land management activities.

Over the last 20 years, Florida invested \$1.8 billion in phosphorus control programs that have significantly improved Everglades water quality. Scientific monitoring shows at least 90 percent of the Everglades now meet water quality standards. The SFWMD's Cattle Grazing Land leasing Program continues to be an important tool for this restoration, with farming BMPs responsible for removing 3,058 metric tons of phosphorus.

#### **Additional Information**

**South Florida Water Management District:** <https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/wq-stas> and <https://www.sfwmd.gov/doing-business-with-us/real-estate>

**Restoration Strategies Regional Water Quality Plan:** [https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rs\\_waterquality\\_plan\\_042712\\_final.pdf](https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/rs_waterquality_plan_042712_final.pdf)

**Improving Everglades Water Quality:** [https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/infographic\\_everglades\\_wq.pdf](https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/infographic_everglades_wq.pdf)

**Leased Lands Database:** <https://apps.sfwmd.gov/iris/LeaseSearchAction.lease?param=load>