



Florida Everglades photo © iStockphoto.com/mcpix

Everglades Protection

“Audubon lobbyist Tom Adams walked the halls of Congress arm-in-arm with [Robert] Dawson. ‘If we can agree to support the Everglades,’ they told members, ‘Then you should too.’” – From *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* by Michael Grunwald

“Dawson & Associates’ ability to marshal analytic resources and to access the shapers of the CERP legislation was a remarkable demonstration of the vital importance of effective government representation to anyone with major resources at risk.”

– George H. Wedgworth
President, Sugar Cane Growers
Cooperative of Florida

CLIENTS

The Florida Sugar Cane Industry and a coalition of other agricultural interests including citrus growers and the Florida Farm Bureau Federation.

BACKGROUND

After 6 years of study, and at an estimated cost of eight billion dollars, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), the largest environmental project in US history, was proposed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the State of Florida as a solution to restore and protect the south Florida ecosystem and supply water to the region for the next 50 years.

When the project proposal moved to Washington, substantive changes were made that went far beyond what was agreed upon in the original plan including procedural shortcuts, undefined requirements, and construction projects not supported by Corps of Engineers studies. Dawson & Associates, and other stakeholders, recognized that the proposed legislation was not based on restoration science or the sound planning necessary to achieve the ecological and economic benefits sought by agriculture, water utilities and the environmental community.

RESPONSE

Our team immediately planned and implemented an issues-identification and education initiative with supporting technical analyses and position papers addressing its clients’ concerns. Over a 12-month period, working with the Executive Branch, key members of the Senate and House, a bipartisan staff group from the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, we helped shape the final, improved legislation. To ensure passage of the bill, Dawson & Associates also established and maintained an on-going dialogue with members of the environmental community and other interest groups which helped develop a consensus on controversial issues.

The landmark legislation — now a model for future restoration projects — was signed into law in December of 2000 and continues to guide restoration and water planning for south Florida and to promote productive use of both public and private resources. The Dawson team of experts continues to advocate for The Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida and actively monitors authorization, appropriations and planning issues, making certain that legislative requirements are met while maintaining the balance between economic and ecological concerns.