

Feds failing to fix the Everglades

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The National Research Council has issued a U.S. Congress-mandated report that criticizes the \$10.9 billion campaign to restore Florida's Everglades.

The council said costs are escalating and deadlines are passing without the completion of a single project, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported.

While praising planning and scientific work being put into the project, the council said none of the 10 components scheduled for completion in 2005 has been finished.

"The good news is a firm basis has been laid for the plan," wrote Wayne Huber, professor of civil engineering at Oregon State University and chairman of the 12-member committee. "The bad news is it has taken longer than originally thought. And as a result it will just take that much longer to see an actual restoration benefit to the Everglades."

The report attributes the delay primarily to insufficient spending, by the federal government.

The restoration is being done by the Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District.

Once encompassing 3 million acres, the Everglades has lost about half its land to farms and urban development, the Sun-Sentinel said.

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