



Friends *of the* Everglades

May 19, 2023

Nicole Morgan
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
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Re: Draft St. Lucie BMAP 2023 5-Year Review

Ms. Morgan:

Friends of the Everglades, founded in 1969 by Marjory Stoneman Douglas and now based in Stuart, offers the following comments on the Draft St. Lucie BMAP 2023 5-Year Review.

We are disappointed with the apparent inability to meet the 10- or 15-year milestones for Total Nitrogen (TN) and Total Phosphorus (TP) reduction in the basin. We're also concerned these reductions may ultimately prove unattainable without significant nutrient reductions from the agricultural community, which accounts for the vast majority of excess TN and TP in the basin.

Unfortunately it does not appear there are additional projects lined up to address this agricultural nutrient pollution. According to data in the draft report, agriculture has completed 12 projects, 8 are ongoing, and zero are planned.

This is utterly inadequate to achieve the massive TN and TP reductions still required from the agricultural sector. Indeed, even if all other stakeholders achieved their reductions, if agriculture fails to do so, nutrient pollution in the basin may continue to exceed the TMDL.

As such, we object to the recommendation to extend the deadline to meet the TMDL for another 5 years, as we are unconvinced "kicking the can down the road" will be enough to solve this problem. The solution lies not in more time, but in aggressive efforts by agriculture to meet the required reductions. The sooner these efforts get underway, the better.

Sincerely,

Eve Samples, Executive Director
Friends of the Everglades