

Celeste De Palma

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Work Experience

Audubon Florida

Miami, FL

Director of Everglades Policy

February 2018– present

- Coordinate the team of professionals involved in Audubon’s public policy, advocacy and science in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem.
- Develop strategies, messaging and communications to implement Audubon’s Everglades conservation priorities.
- Create, edit, and write Audubon’s State of the Everglades semi-annual publication, in coordination with Everglades Policy team.
- Build and maintain relationships with state and federal agencies, elected officials, and appointed decision-makers to advance Audubon’s Everglades priorities. Serve as Audubon’s lead liaison with the South Florida Water Management District, the local sponsor for Everglades restoration.
- Coordinate with National Audubon staff on Audubon’s federal efforts to achieve funding for and implementation of Everglades restoration projects.
- Build and maintain relationships with conservation allies, including Audubon chapters and participate in meetings, workshops and conferences with those allies.
- Established as the Everglades expert for Spanish-speaking media. Quoted on Everglades issues across both English and Spanish media.
- Organized the “2019 Everglades Action Day” in Tallahassee, FL to lobby for Everglades restoration funding. Event resulted in 60 participants from across the State to visit with 70 lawmaker’s offices. Result of Action Day led to Florida legislature approving a record \$360 million budget for Everglades restoration surpassing Legacy Florida Act requirements.
- Led the campaign to amend President Trump’s FY2020 budget to include higher funding levels for Everglades restoration during 2019. Worked with Florida Congressional Delegation to pass the FY2020 budget securing record funding of \$200 million for Everglades restoration in the federal budget.
- Led effort to pass Senate Bill 10 at the Florida Legislature in 2018, which accelerated a major Everglades project to begin planning 4 years ahead of schedule (EAA Reservoir).
- Led effort to approve EAA Reservoir by Congress in the 2018 Water Resources Development Act. This victory allows this project to receive federal funding to match Florida’s funding commitment.

Audubon Florida

Miami, FL

Everglades Policy Associate

April 2015 – February 2018

- Led effort to pass the Legacy Florida Act at the Florida Legislature that established a dedicated & recurrent source of funding for Everglades restoration (\$200 million per year).
- Led campaign to save the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge from State threats to take back the Refuge, risking loss of protections to more than 140,000 acres of remnant Everglades ecosystem in Palm Beach, FL granted only by a National Wildlife Refuge designation.
- Rebuilt relationships with the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board and staff and established as a reliable source of science-based information.
- Developed and implemented outreach and engagement strategies to expand Audubon’s network of Everglades advocates, with emphasis on non-traditional constituencies.
- Produced Everglades communications tools in English and Spanish including fact sheets, position statements, articles, newsletters and press releases.
- Used social media tools to educate and mobilize people and serves as a spokesperson for Audubon to the news media.

Tropical Audubon Society

Miami, FL

Conservation Outreach Coordinator

October 2011 – March 2015

- Revitalized the “Hold the Line Campaign” by adding new and diverse partner organizations. Organized phone banks and neighborhood canvassing efforts to prevent modification of the Urban Development Boundary in Miami-Dade County, and succeeded in 2013.

- Created, organized, and executed the “Miami Design Charrette” which brought together experts on resiliency and sustainability and local residents to shape a vision for smart and sustainable growth across Dade County. 200 participants.
- Represented TAS at the Miami-Dade Board of County Commission meetings to address Land-Use and Growth Management issues; built and maintained relationships with Miami-Dade County and Florida’s elected officials.
- Managed Miami-Dade volunteers for the Amendment 1 campaign during the petition-gathering and voting phases.
- Communicated with the public with special attention to the inclusion of Hispanic and Black communities into the environmental movement; represented TAS in all conservation issues in Spanish-speaking media.
- Developed a neighborhood awareness program about the Porter-Russell Pine Rockland Preserve.

Education

Florida International University	Miami, FL
Bachelor of Science in Biological Science	August 2011

Board Memberships

Everglades Coalition	April 2016 – present
South Florida Water Management District Water Resources Advisory Commission	August 2017 – August 2019

Awards and Fellowships

National Wildlife Refuge Association Advocate of the Year Award, first inductee of new award	May 2018
Outstanding Friend of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge	January 2018
Everglades Coalition George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year	January 2017
Audubon Florida Staff of the Year	October 2017
National Audubon Diversity & Inclusion Change Agent	August 2016
2016 Mandela Washington Fellowship Peer Collaborator	July 2016
Toyota Together Green Fellow	October 2013
National Audubon Society’s Hog Island’s Sharing Nature: An Educator’s Week Scholarship	June 2013
New Leaders Council Miami 2013 Fellow	January 2013

Conferences and Presentations

35th Everglades Coalition Conference in Captiva, FL, January 2020

- o Organized and moderated the plenary “Restoration Ready: Removing Barriers to Sending Water South.” Panelists included U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District Lt. Colonel Todd Polk, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board Member Cheryl Meads, and Dr. Evelyn Gaiser, Florida Coastal Everglades Long-Term Ecological Research Lead Investigator.

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Leadership Conference in Washington, DC, September 2019

- o Panelist at “Future of Water for Better Environment & Economy” session with Politico’s Annie Snider, Congressman Jim Costa, and Congresswoman Grace Napolitano

34th Everglades Coalition Conference in Duck Key, FL, January 2019

- o Coordinated the plenary “Where’s the Water? Achieving Restoration for Everglades National Park and Florida Bay”
- o Organized the breakout “What Should the Future Schedule for Lake Okeechobee Management Look Like?”

National Audubon Society Board of Directors, Naples, FL, January 2019

- o Presented on the history of Everglades restoration, successes, and current challenges for 2019

33rd Everglades Coalition Conference in Hutchinson Island, FL, January 2018

- o Panelist at the breakout “Power of Grassroots to Influence Growth Decision Makers”
- o Coordinated the plenary “Can Hurricane Recovery Efforts Build Resiliency for All? Lessons Post-Irma”
- o Honored with the 2018 George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year Award.

32nd Everglades Coalition Conference in Sanibel Island, FL, January 2017

- Organized and moderated the plenary “Combatting Climate Change with Everglades Restoration”

31st Everglades Coalition Conference in Coral Gables, FL, January 2018

- Panelist at the breakout “Emerging Voices: Engaging Youth and Diverse Leaders to Advance Restoration”

Selected Publications

- “Removing Roadblocks to Break Ground on the EAA Reservoir.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Winter 2019 issue.
- “Send Water South. It Works for Florida Bay, Everglades National Park, and the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow!” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2019 issue.
- “Florida Steps Up in Everglades Funding, D.C., Not So Much.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2019 issue.
- “Audubon-Championed Everglades Reservoir Passes State and Federal Hurdles.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Winter 2018 issue.
- “Wading Birds Give Hope to America’s Everglades.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2018 issue.
- “2018 Everglades Restoration Funding By The Numbers.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2018 issue.
- “Audubon Advocates and Partners Save the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2018 issue.
- “Full Speed Ahead on Audubon- Supported Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Winter 2017 issue.
- “Wading Bird Nesting Decline Continues in America’s Everglades.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2017 issue.
- “South Florida Waters Win as State Approves Everglades Reservoir.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2017 issue.
- “South Florida Water Management District Takes Steps To Evict The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Fall/Winter 2016 issue.
- “Legacy Florida Bill to Boost Everglades Restoration Efforts.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Spring 2016 issue.
- “Audubon Advocates Fight Drilling Proposal in the Everglades Wetlands.” Audubon Florida’s State of the Everglades Report, Fall 2015 issue.

Grants

Everglades Foundation 6-Month Transition Grant.

Jan-Jun. 2020

Secured \$187,500 for a six-month grant, representing a 4% increase over 2019 funding levels. First time funding levels increase for this program since 2014.

Everglades Foundation Grant.

2019

Secured funding to expand the team and bring onboard a conservation organizer to focus on grassroots outreach. \$360,000 awarded

Everglades Foundation Grant.

2018

Secured base funding for the program upon taking leadership of the program in 2018, reflecting a vote of confidence from our largest funder. \$375,000 awarded

Selected Media Appearances

- [Restauración de los Everglades](#). *Voice of America*. January 20, 2020.
- [US Senate follows House, OKs budget with \\$200 million for reservoir, Everglades projects](#). TC Palm. December 19, 2019
- [Farm runoff leaks into Everglades: This report card shows how our farms are doing](#). Palm Beach Post. August 20, 2019.
- [Hearing adds doubt to future of Kendall toll road extension](#). *Miami Herald*. July 30, 2019
- [Rising seas may swamp Everglades restoration plan](#). *United Press International – UPI*. June 24, 2019.
- [Cleaner Water Freer Flow Expected with Everglades Fixes](#). *Engineering News Record ENR*. June 19, 2019.
- [Lake O drought concerns called ‘inaccurate and misleading.’](#) *Palm Beach Post*. April 9, 2019.
- [JUST IN: Federal oversight of Everglades clean up to continue](#). *Palm Beach Post*. February 11, 2019.
- [Rubio promete luchar contra autopista dado que Miami-Dade no comprará tierras de los Everglades](#). *El Nuevo Herald*. September 29, 2018.
- [OPINION: Deep injection wells are not a remedy for water management](#). *News-Press*. July 7, 2018.
- [New Funding for Lake Okeechobee Dike as Algae Bloom](#). *WLRN, All Things Considered*. July 6, 2018.
- [\\$500 million pledged to fix Lake O's aging dike. The algae crisis is another matter](#). *Miami Herald*. July 6, 2018.
- [Feds say they're moving more water south](#). *POLITICO*. July 3, 2018.
- [Miami-Dade wants to pave 13 miles of wetlands for highway](#). *E&E News Greenwire*. June 11, 2018.
- [Florida's Wading Birds Are Nesting In Droves This Year](#). *National Audubon Magazine*. April 6, 2018.
- [Florida's Everglades under threat](#). *Living Planet Deutsche Welle Podcast*. December 20, 2017.
- [Project to alleviate algae outbreaks on fast track](#). *Palm Beach Post*. November 15, 2017.
- [How a neon green fern almost ended a 65-year relationship \[at the ARM Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge\]](#). *Palm Beach Post*. November 17, 2017.
- [OPINION: Yes, the Everglades protected us from Hurricane Irma](#). *Miami Herald*. September 22, 2017.
- [Senate Bill 10 Aprobada y De Palma Explica](#). Radio Caracol. May 3, 2017.
- [Palm Beach Town Council to hear about Loxahatchee Refuge dispute](#). *Palm Beach Daily News*. January 10, 2017.
- [Algas tóxicas](#). *Alerta Verde, Telemundo Noticias*. July 12, 2016
- [Denuncian “crisis ecológica” en Florida por el vertido masivo de agua en dos estuarios](#). *El Nuevo Herald*. June 10, 2016.
- [Ave Chokolatera](#). *Alerta Verde, Telemundo Noticias*. March 11, 2016.
- [Pesca Sostenible](#). *Alerta Verde, Telemundo Noticias*. February 3, 2016.
- [El Cigüeñón, los Everglades y Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary](#). *Alerta Verde, Telemundo Noticias*. September 29, 2015.
- [Los Everglades “zona cero” contra el cambio climático](#). *El Nuevo Herald*. September 26, 2015.
- [Officials scrap plans for controversial air show in Everglades](#). *Latino Fox News*. July 8, 2015.
- [Biscayne National Park](#). *Alerta Verde, Telemundo Noticias*. April 7, 2015.
- [Obama lanza advertencia sobre el cambio climático](#). *Univision Noticias23*. April 22, 2015.
- [Lawmakers want up to \\$200 million annually for 20 years to clean Everglades \[via Legacy Florida Act\]](#). *Tampa Bay Times*. January 28, 2016.

Research

FIU Honors College Amazon Study Abroad Program

Peruvian Amazon

Project Title: “Water quality assessment for indigenous and mestizo communities in the Orosa, Arambassa, and Matahuayo River Watersheds, Loreto, Peru.”

Summer 2011

- Collected baseline data to assess the concentration levels of heavy metals commonly associated with mining and oil exploration in the Amazon area, which will serve to monitor the environmental impact of these activities on the health of the local people and the ecology and biodiversity of the region.
- Published in *Saraswati: The Journal of Advanced Research and Creativity in Honors*, FIU Honors College, June 2012.

Additional Skills and Volunteering

Languages: Native proficiency in Spanish; basic Italian.

Volunteer: Extractor and Bander-in-training at Cape Florida Bird Banding Station.