



### State Director's Message

Dear Friend,

Did you know TNC continues to use conservation easements to conserve important lands in perpetuity? Across the United States, TNC holds conservation easements covering more than 3.2 million acres. Easements protect natural resources and prevent development, while maintaining private ownership.

We've just completed Phase 3 of a 5,200-acre easement in Highlands County. Rafter T Ranch will continue to be an active cattle operation, preserving its traditional land use while protecting the environment. The ranch provides water recharge to the headwaters of the Everglades and is home to threatened species like the Florida scrub jay.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Temperince Morgan".

Temperince Morgan  
Florida State Director

#### SUPPORT OUR WORK

Thank you for helping us protect the lands and waters of Florida and those across the globe. To make a gift, visit [support.nature.org/florida](https://support.nature.org/florida) or donate via check (payable to "Nature Conservancy—FL Chapter") using the envelope in this magazine. Thank you!



The only solution must address the entire Everglades ecosystem. © Carlton Ward Jr.

## Our Strategy for Florida's Blue-green Algal Blooms

This summer, South Florida's waterways were devastated by noxious blue-green algal blooms that seriously impacted wildlife and Floridians' livelihoods. Fixing the recurring algae problem is frustratingly slow for those suffering in its presence, but finger-pointing will not solve it. The only solution is smart storage and treatment of water throughout the Everglades ecosystem.

Cyanobacteria, the microorganism that comprises blue-green algae blooms, occurs naturally in freshwater and brackish habitats. Blooms erupt with high heat, sunlight, abundant nutrients and reduced water flow—summertime in Florida. Our freshwater team is advocating a three-pronged solution:

- **Fix Herbert Hoover Dike**—Temporary storage of water in Lake Okeechobee is a fast and cost-effective way to provide the estuaries with relief from excessive lake discharges. (*Read more, p. 2.*)

- **Regional storage & treatment**—

Create more water storage and treatment north of Lake Okeechobee to slow flows into the lake; east and west of the lake to address water going to estuaries; and south of the lake to move water into the Everglades and Florida Bay. Completing key reservoirs and treatment areas will store and clean water for the Everglades, while reducing impacts on our estuaries.

- **Local projects**—Address water quality and water quantity impacts from urban and agricultural stormwater and septic systems.

The situation this summer was dire, resulting in several dead zones where aquatic life could not survive because of low oxygen levels. Resolving it requires federal, state and local legislators, scientists, activists and citizens to unite firmly behind a cooperative effort to create solutions for the whole Everglades ecosystem.



Trainee Wavell Hanna handles the drip torch at Tiger Creek Preserve. © Zachary Prusak/TNC

## Bahamian Trainees' Final Exam: a Florida Fire

Three firefighters from the Bahamas who completed the Florida Forest Service's correspondence course for Certified Prescribed Burn Manager traveled in July to Tiger Creek Preserve for their final exam: taking the lead on a controlled burn.

"They're ready to apply what they've learned over the years toward the betterment of their pine forests and their communities," said Chris Bergh, South Florida program manager for the Florida chapter.

Wavell Hanna, Terrance Rodgers and Demeris Armbrister successfully completed their exam and served as leaders on a prescribed burn at the preserve, becoming the Bahamas' first certified burn bosses.

TNC in Florida began providing fire training in the Bahamas in 2004. The archipelago's northern islands share a fire-dependent landscape like our state's pine rocklands.

Although the habitat is similar, the fire challenge is very different. Here, much of our pine rockland is in urban Miami and the Keys, with nearby homes to consider. Most of the Bahamas' forests are in remote areas where there is a strong tradition of using fire for hunting and land-clearing, often leading to destructive wildfires in the dry season.

The challenges may be different for the Bahamas' new burn bosses, but the solution is the same: carefully planned and executed controlled burns.

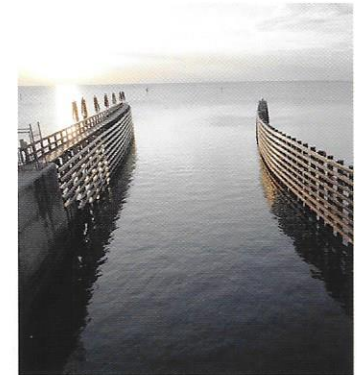
Bergh said, "They can have fire where and when it is needed to meet specific objectives: supporting wildlife, promoting pine growth for timber or reducing the danger of unplanned wildfires."

## NATURE FLORIDA

### Advocacy Works

Our mission in the Everglades depends on good government relationships. We work closely with the Florida Congressional delegation, state and federal agencies and local governments on projects essential to Everglades restoration.

It's not just staff working on behalf of the Everglades. Each year on Capitol Hill, TNC convenes its trustees for Advocacy Day. In June, our trustees met with 12 members of the Florida Congressional delegation, including Sen. Bill Nelson, Rep. Francis Rooney and Rep. Brian Mast.



Herbert Hoover Dike repairs: ahead of schedule. © Carlton Ward Jr.

Face-to-face advocacy works. Days after our trustees pushed for expedited repairs to the Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee, our Congressional delegation secured additional funding. Completion is now set for 2022, instead of 2025.

"Completing the dike means the opportunity to reduce harmful releases from the lake into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries" said Greg Knecht, Florida director of strategy and policy.

Currently, we're working with the House and Senate on the Water Resources Development Act, to authorize the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir.