



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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Audubon Honors Buermann, Estenoz as Champions of the Everglades *Audubon of Florida award recognizes bold action and leadership at SFWMD*



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West Palm Beach, FL — Audubon of Florida on Friday honored South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board members Eric Buermann and Shannon Estenoz as champions of the Everglades for their leadership in acquiring land to revive the *River of Grass* and their commitment to restore and protect Florida's natural habitats, resources and wildlife.

"This honor reflects the commitment of the entire South Florida Water Management District to restore the Everglades and, most notably, recognizes the successful acquisition of 42 square miles of agricultural land to improve water quality and the environment in the *River of Grass*," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. "An occasion such as this also serves as a reminder to Ms. Estenoz and me that we must build on the successes and continue moving forward with new ideas to meet the complex challenges of Everglades restoration."

Mr. Buermann and Ms. Estenoz received the award at the 2010 Audubon Assembly in St. Petersburg, which notes 110 years of connecting people with conservation. With chapters in 44 communities, Audubon of Florida strives to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife for the benefit of humanity and the

earth's biological diversity. The organization's Champion of the Everglades Award recognizes individuals whose long-term commitment to the Everglades have moved restoration forward.

"We have learned a great deal about restoring America's Everglades, and I for one am honored that the efforts of this agency and my colleagues are being recognized by those who are equally as passionate about protecting our environment," said SFWMD Governing Board member Shannon Estenoz. "Along with Chairman Buermann, I feel we must advance the commitment to restoration so that the Everglades are improved for future generations."

Mr. Buermann and Ms. Estenoz join the ranks of environmental advocates such as Gov. Charlie Crist, former senator Bob Graham and the Everglades Foundation's Mary Barley in winning the award.

"To successfully restore the Everglades, we need champions," said Eric Draper, Executive Director of Audubon of Florida. "The strong leadership and tough decisions Eric Buermann and Shannon Estenoz have made in favor of the *River of Grass* over the last four years demonstrate that they truly are champions of the Everglades."

Mr. Buermann and Ms. Estenoz were also honored in 2009 for their leadership in Everglades restoration. Mr. Buermann was recognized by the Everglades Coalition with the James D. Webb Award, given each year to a public official who has made an outstanding contribution to the Everglades. The award is named for James Webb, who worked as the Florida representative of The Wilderness Society from 1986 to 1995 and was instrumental in expanding Everglades National Park and Big Cypress National Preserve.

Ms. Estenoz was honored again in 2009 by the Everglades Coalition with the George M. Barley Conservationist of the Year Award, which the coalition gives to an individual who has made a great contribution to Everglades restoration and protection. George Barley, a seventh-generation Floridian, founded the Save Our Everglades Foundation and advocated for the cleanup of water flowing into the Everglades and Florida Bay.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.