

# A Conceptual Ecological Model for the Everglades Agricultural Area

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For the EAA to be a functioning agroecosystem, it should be sustainable, contribute to Everglades restoration and support local communities and wildlife



The Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) is a 700,000 acre agricultural area on former marsh habitat in southern Florida located south and east of Lake Okeechobee, north of Everglades remnant natural habitat and west of the large metropolitan area of Palm Beach County. Sugarcane is the primary crop and is rotated with rice. Vegetables and sod are also grown in the area. Wildlife is diverse and abundant in the agricultural fields, edges and associated habitat. The EAA has been identified as an important component of Everglades restoration beginning with the Everglades Forever act that established water quality standards in the area and more recently with the proposed purchase of 73,000 acres for water treatment, water storage and habitat restoration. This landscape is heavily managed for economic benefit and provides income for local communities and residents. It is also a large acreage agroecosystem with unique attributes and wildlife communities.

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