

Editorial

Another Kind of Invasion
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Our federal government invaded. At first it looked like a positive step with quick victory at hand. But the invasion turned sour, degenerating into disaster supreme.

Looking back, most experts agree the invasion was a colossal mistake, knowing what we do now.

Today, it's impossible to get out quickly.
No Exit Strategy.

That may sound like a summary of our Iraq adventure. But, no, I'm writing about another physical invasion by that same federal government, an invasion from Lake Okeechobee into our east and west estuaries.

The result has been a different variety of disaster supreme, sickening and killing tons of marine life and plants year after year while bewildered and numbed citizens find themselves helpless in the face of bogus promises that help is just around the corner. It isn't. No real Exit Strategy exists.

Ironically, the polluted water gushed to the coasts (855 billion gallons in '05) grew out of a plan to develop our own sugar industry, with government help, and thereby supposedly ruin Fidel Castro's sugar economy.

Instead, the water diverted to the coasts in order to keep sugarland dry ruined our own Everglades, using our own money, and perpetuated with federal subsidies for a crop we don't even need. Is that amazing, or what?

As a sour dessert, the government and state water management district now spend more of our own millions for slick public relations projects to fool citizens into thinking the discharge woes are being addressed.

Fortunately, the "physical invasion" as the attorneys call it, is the subject of a new federal lawsuit filed against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which partners with the water management district to shunt the massive amounts of fresh water to the estuaries and into the ocean.

Recreational fishing depends to a large extent on the health of the estuaries, where so much life is created. (That's why you don't see certain species such as trout and snook in the Bahamas, for instance.)

The federal lawsuit is based on a position that waterfront property owners (in effect, everyone) have a constitutional riparian right to enjoy water free of pollution.

Our own government is thus in the embarrassing position of arguing that we have no such right to unpolluted water.

There appear to be good solid precedents for our “takings” case, but anyone who’s ventured into the legal jungles knows how costly and convoluted a seemingly simple point can become.

The lawsuit is time-consuming and expensive, but our much-maligned estuaries deserve militant support.

The invaders can be repelled; they must be.

The text of the lawsuit and information about it are available at RiversCoalition.org
Support our troops now.