

Wetland Destruction



What's Happening?

- Many factors are causing the loss of wetlands. Some examples are:
 - non-native invasive plants
 - removal of native vegetation
 - pollution and dumping
 - welling and overpumping
 - draining
 - farming and grazing
 - construction and developmental projects
 - recreational activities
 - logging
 - mining

Plants

- Humans have brought in and planted exotic plants around the wetlands.
- These plants grow very quickly and invade the space of the plants who naturally grow in the wetlands.
- As people clear land around the wetlands, they take out some native plants. This hurts the wildlife who depend on these plants and also allows the exotic plants to take over.



Pollution

- Many household materials including garbage have polluted the wetlands.
- Too much fertilizer causes algae to grow and plants can overtake the community.
- Oil, gas, and pesticides enter the wetlands and kill small aquatic animals and cause negative changes in the food chain.



Welling, Overpumping, and Draining

- Overpumping and welling reduces the water level of many wetlands areas.
- As the area loses water, the native plants and animals begin to disappear and exotic plants can take over.
- Sometimes salt water can begin to replace the freshwater and disturb the habitat.



Farming and Grazing

- Farmers use pesticides that harm the plants and seep into the water.
- Animal waste can cause some plants to grow too much.
- Animals that graze in the wetlands can severely reduce the plant population.



Construction and Development

- New housing and shopping developments are being constructed daily.
- As the land is cleared to make room for these structures, entire wetlands areas can be destroyed.
- The food chain is also interrupted.



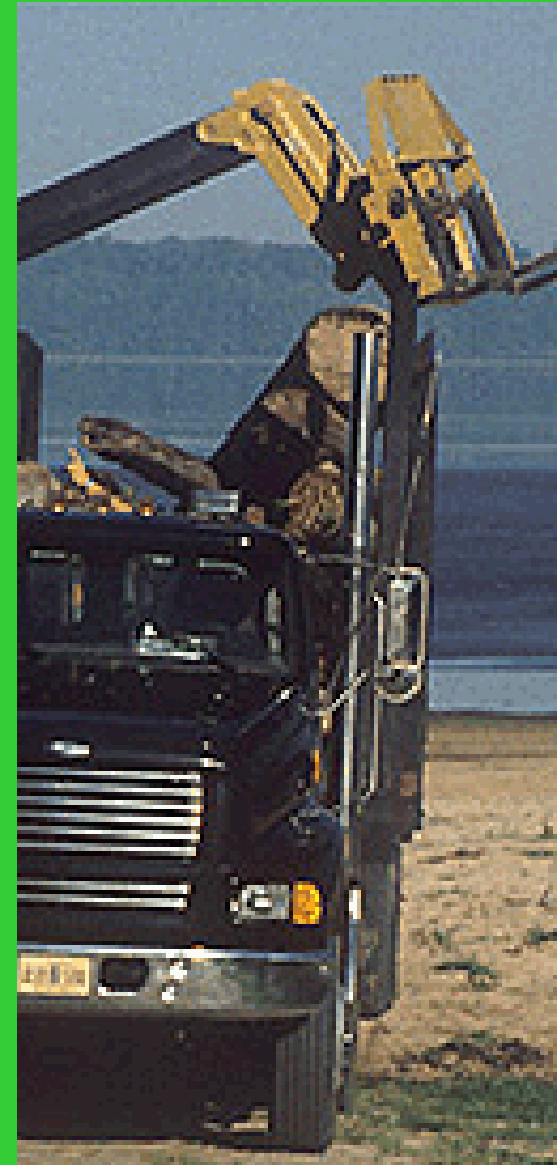
Recreational Areas

- As visitors make their way to wetlands area for tubing, canoeing, swimming, and fishing, the habitat is disturbed.
- People trample and stir up the soil causing the water to become murky.
- Animals are frightened and begin to leave the environment.
- These animals have difficulty finding food elsewhere and plants begin to overpopulate the wetlands.



Logging

- Swamp areas contain many trees. Trees are a valuable source of wood needed in the construction and development of new areas.
- As trees are cut down to make wood, natural habitats of wetlands areas are destroyed.



Mining

- Phosphate and peat are found in abundance in wetlands areas.
- The mining of these products destroy the habitats and allow invasive plants to take over.



Bibliography

- Plant Management in Florida Waters by Vic Ramey. IN: *Plant Management in Florida Waters Web Site*, <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/guide>, edited by V. Ramey. Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, University of Florida, Gainesville, and Bureau of Invasive Plant Management, D.E.P., Tallahassee. 2003.