

# Federal EPA Agrees to Act to Protect Florida's Public Waters

October 14, 2009

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At long last, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is agreeing to set legal, enforceable limits on such nutrients as phosphorous and nitrogen, which are poisoning Florida's public waters. EPA's historic decision settles the lawsuit we filed in July 2008.

David Guest has written an article in "unEARTHED" which follows. You can read the original article which appeared Oct. 14, 2009, [HERE](#).

## [Algae Isn't The Only Slime in Florida Water War](#)

*Polluters join ag commissioner in fighting against clean water*



*Algae slimes Christopher Point Creek*

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*Now the state's biggest polluters are trying to block the settlement. Big Agriculture, sewage plants, utilities, and phosphate miners have filed legal challenges to try to force the EPA to back down. And the state's Agriculture Commissioner, Charles Bronson, is using taxpayer dollars to side with the polluters and against clean water.*

*Our suit righted a wrong: the unacceptable, decade-long delay by the state and federal governments in setting limits for nutrient pollution. We filed the suit on behalf of the Florida Wildlife Federation, the Conservancy of Southwest Florida, the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida, St. John's Riverkeeper, and the Sierra Club. Our consent decree with EPA is available [here](#).*

*When we finally win a victory for clean water, the polluters always come out with the same stock arguments: Number One, they say, "If we have to protect clean water, it will cost too much and we'll go broke." Number Two: "If we want to do anything to stop ourselves from polluting water, we'll have to do 20 years of studies and plans." And Number Three: "The fish like it!"*

*That third argument is being peddled by a lobbyist for the Florida Farm Bureau, who claims that stopping fertilizer and animal waste discharges into Florida lakes will hurt fish populations. Huh? Florida was teeming with fish before fertilizer and cow manure spewed daily into our lakes and rivers, turning them pea-soup green.*

*A Florida DEP report last year found that half the state's rivers and more than half of its lakes had poor water quality. When nutrient-poisoned waters are used as drinking water sources, disinfectants like chlorine react with dissolved organic compounds, contaminating drinking water with harmful chemical byproducts.*

*Exposure to blue-green algae toxins—when people drink the water, touch it, or inhale vapors from it – can cause rashes, skin and eye irritation, allergic reactions, gastrointestinal upset, serious illness, and even death. In June 2008, a water treatment plant serving 30,000 people shut down after a toxic blue-green algae bloom on the Caloosahatchee River threatened the plant's water supply.*

*Remember, polluters said the Clean Water Act would kill business. They said the Clean Air Act would bankrupt companies. Florida developers said the state's Growth Management Act would stop development. It wasn't true about those laws and it isn't true about this one either.*

*Nutrient poisoning is Florida's worst water pollution problem. We've got contaminated drinking water, beaches closed by dangerous bacteria, rivers fouled with green slime, dead fish, dead lakes, and excess nutrients bubbling out of our crystal springs.*

*It's time to clean it up. It's time to hold polluters accountable for what they are washing into our rivers, lakes, bays and springs. The EPA is ready to do it, and so are Floridians.*

*The challenges to the settlement will go to a court hearing next month. We will keep you posted as events unfold.*