

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas speaks about pollution caused by growing sugar in Florida*

Marjory Stoneman Douglas: So, they put their sugar fields there. Now when you plant sugar, you have to have water to plant the small canes in, then you run the water off. You have to irrigate, then you run the water off, for the plants...for the canes to grow. The cane sugar is really a tropical product. The cane really belongs in the West Indies. They tell me it's a chemical...sugar is a chemical action of the sun and water, within the cane, itself. Now, down there, on the southern slopes of Cuba, where...which are ideal for sugar raising, they plant the canes in the rainy season, when the rains have runoff, then the canes grow. They don't have to bother. But, up here they irrigate to plant and then they back pump that irrigated water, with the ash and old boots and human waste and everything like that, into Lake Okeechobee, which let me remind you again, is a reservoir for our drinking water. And, that dirty water got into the Conservation Areas and stood there. Now, standing water does not purify itself. They diked the areas, so they created pond conditions, in which they got an eighty percent evaporation. That may be all right. Maybe we'll get more rainfall on that account, but it's not good enough. But, the pollution stays there; drops to the bottom in a kind of sticky ooze. It doesn't clean up, the bacteria that's there, and so that's what's in our drinking water! And, that is why our drinking water tastes so bad, not because of the bacteria taste, but because of the chemicals. They've got it all full of chlorine, they've got a lot of new chemicals in there, they're putting in it. It's terrible water, you know, because it's filthy, you couldn't drink it otherwise. The whole thing is just plain crazy. And nobody, see, not the Water Management District, cause the water management district had to deal with this system, which is a bad system. And I never heard of anybody in the Water Management District ever objecting to it. The objection has to come from the environmentalists on the outside. But now we are beginning to realize the system is bad, and we've got to change it. And I'm delighted that the Water Management District is finally getting on with the job of correcting many of the mistakes in the lower Everglades or all up and down the Everglades area and they're doing it listening to the suggestions of the Everglades National Park. That's all good, but it's not enough.