whether the issue is phosphorus or mercury, it's increasingly clear that specific goals for water quality will have to be addressed in the coordinated restoration plan. "We have some movement on the hydrology," says Salt. "But we haven't yet looked at water-quality issues holistically—and we need to."

Supporting the swamp

The depth of the political backing for the plan also concerns planners. In the current political climate, it's hard to count on ongoing federal commitments. Webb of the Wilderness Society worries that popular support is "like the River of Grass itself—miles wide and only a few inches deep." There's also the small matter of aligning dozens of government agencies and interest groups, from sugar-cane growers to Indian tribes. For example, sugar-cane researcher Barry Glasz of the Department of Agriculture says he doesn't even like the word "restore," because to him it suggests turning the clock back to a time before agriculture. Indeed, many environmental groups would like nothing better than to reduce the sugar industry's presence in South Florida. "The EAA has about half a million acres of sugar. We'd like to see maybe one third of that taken out of production and become wetland or water-retention areas," says Ron Tipton of the World Wildlife Fund.

On the other hand, surveys have shown strong public support for saving the Everglades, says Davis of the SFWMD. And urban planners and utility officials—who want to guard the water supply—agree with environmentalists that some hydrological restoration is needed. In the historic system, wetlands cached rainfall for months and so recharged the ground water of the Biscayne Aquifer, which supplies the thirsty cities of Florida's southeast coast, explains Tom Teets, water supply planner for the SFWMD. Now much of the rainfall is shuttled out to sea long before it seeps into the ground. Water supplies are adequate for the 4.1 million people who lived in Florida's urban southeast coast in 1990, but Teets and others worry about the 6 million expected to live there by 2010. "We get 60 inches of rainfall, but we can't retain it because the water has been managed poorly," says Jorge Rodriguez, deputy director of the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department. "So we feel everyone can benefit from restoration."

Adjacent to the test fill in the central Kissimmee, water is once again flowing through the ancient oxbow turns. The area affected is too small to see a large influx of wildlife, says Louis Toth of the SFWMD, the Kissimmee's resident biology expert. But vegetation is slowly colonizing the filled-in canal, and game fish are spawning in the newly restored flood plain. Whether uncertain science and precarious political support can engineer a similar recovery for the whole Everglades, however, is still too far downstream to see clearly.

–Elizabeth Culotta

CENTRAL EUROPE

State Department Lifeline to Be Cut

BUDAPEST—Immediately after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, Western countries were quick to set up programs of collaborative research to aid scientists in the former Soviet bloc. Half a decade later, official enthusiasm for these efforts has cooled considerably: George Soros' International Science Foundation is finding it hard to recruit new donors and has been criticized by some factions in Russia, and the European Union's INTAS program has had its funds severely cut after being attacked by politicians for excessive bureaucracy. Now a program run by the U.S. State Department to finance cooperative research with scientists in Central Europe is in danger of being axed entirely.

That would be "a tremendous loss," says Mary Agocs, a former grantee of the program who now teaches epidemiology in Hungary, funded by Atlanta's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The amount of money per grant is not that large ... compared to the amount that came out of it," she says.

The research programs were set up during 1989–90 after the United States signed joint science and technology agreements with Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, and the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The program was imperiled last year and was cut from $4.3 million to $3.5 million. (These funds are matched by the Central European nations themselves.) But it now looks certain that the State Department will not ask for a continuation of the program in its fiscal 1997 budget proposal, which will go to Congress early next year. Three State Department officials contacted by *Science*, who asked not to be named, confirmed that the program would be dropped. A reprieve would come only if Congress restores the funds—an exceedingly unlikely event.

"The State Department was under a lot of budget pressure," says a department official familiar with the program. "There was a feeling among people not on the science side of things" that the program was dispensable, he says. American embassy officials here, who manage the program, are dismayed at the cuts, pointing out that it benefits U.S. researchers too. "It's very unfortunate. It's not a give-away program," says Steve Taylor, science attaché at the Budapest embassy.

> **"It will be a heavy loss for the Hungarian scientific community and research in general."**
>
> **—András Székács**

But it's a greater hardship for the Central European researchers who have benefited from the program. "It's very upsetting that it should happen now, when it is running so smoothly," says Dora Groo, program manager of the U.S.–Hungarian Science and Technology Joint Fund Secretariat in Budapest, which reviews applications and disburses the grants. Hungary and Poland have the biggest pieces of the program, this year receiving $1.25 million and $900,000, respectively. Research grants were distributed for studies in basic sciences, environmental protection, biomedical research and health, agriculture, engineering, and energy and natural resources. The fund's managers are scrambling for ways to keep the program alive, hoping that the U.S. government will reinstate the money in the future. One option is to solicit corporate sponsors for the project.

The planned cuts would hit Hungary particularly hard. Hungary has a strong reputation for science and innovation in Central Europe, particularly in atomic energy and medicine. Environmental scientist Géza Kovács of Hungary's Research Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry says the planned cut in the program comes at a crucial time in his research. Kovács and his American collaborator just completed a study simulating the reaction of crops to various environmental conditions, such as heat, humidity, and carbon dioxide levels. Kovács had planned to apply for a new grant to apply this basic research to real-life problems. "But of course, without support, it cannot go anywhere," he says.

Hungarian researchers say the program provided the first opportunity they had to conduct studies without the interference of the state. "That's quite important in a country where connections and hierarchy have been more important," says environmental researcher András Székács of the Plant Protection Institute. The impending program cuts "are more of an amputation," he says. "It will be a heavy loss for the Hungarian scientific community and research in general," he says.

–Susan Milligan

Susan Milligan is a writer in Budapest, Hungary.