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Swamps are very prone to having their delicate balances upset by outside influences

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Environmentalists Arrested Following Barley Barber Swamp Protest

They are held on trespassing and resisting arrest charges

Seventeen members of the Everglades Earth First! environmental group were arrested Saturday on charges of trespassing and resisting arrest, after camping out near the Barley Barber Swamp in Florida for more than a week. Their action was prompted by growing concerns that the Florida Power & Light (FPL) utility company is draining the swamp of its water. Independent scientific studies have shown that the levels are dropping below the danger zone, threatening iconic cypress trees, some more than 1,000 years old. FPL denies any such charges, saying that water levels within the swamp are held at the levels agreed on with the South Florida Water Management District. The company uses the waters to fill a 17-mile cooling pond, needed for the operations of a 3750 megawatt power plant. But, over the past years, reports from unofficial sources pointed out the fact that the swamp was quickly losing its ability to support the ecosystems inside, including animal and plant species. Seeing how the activists are still detained, Everglades Earth First! released an appeal to the public, urging people to take action and pressure the authorities for a non-legal solution to this problem. The communicate, posted [here](#), reads that "Direct action is a community effort that goes well beyond the risk of arrest. It requires broad support from those who wish to see grassroots efforts succeed. We hope to go to the jail on Monday with the funds to bail all seventeen activists out. We know times are tough but if everyone pitches in we can ensure that these folks don't sit in jail for the next thirty days." "Another form of support that we would like to ask for is that those concerned call FPL and demand that they drop all charges against the Barley Barber 17 and that they reopen the Barley Barber Swamp to scientific and public scrutiny. Call 305-552-3888," the paper also says. According to the group, the bail was set at \$18,000 for all the members of the group, who are accused of resisting arrest, besides trespassing, as the place is considered to be FPL property. In truth, all the protesters did was chain themselves to trees, attempting to observe the state of the swamp. The group also urges authorities to allow public access on the premises, and argues that if FPL has nothing to hide, it will not object this demand.