

## **Environmental Law Enforcement: Meeting the Challenge**

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In the late 1980's officers of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission noticed a dramatic increase in criminal environmental violations, including illegal dumping, dredge and fill, and other forms of pollution. At that time no state law enforcement agency was actively conducting criminal investigations of environmental crimes. Instead, violations were handled through the civil process by regulatory agencies.

In October 1989 the Commission's Division of Law Enforcement dedicated 39 sworn officers to establish an Environmental Enforcement Section (EES). These positions were existing positions, not new positions appropriated by the legislature. The Division restructured the supervisory level and removed the Sergeant position from the chain of command. This Sergeant position was redirected toward full-time criminal environmental investigations. This redirection actually increased productivity in traditional resource enforcement within the Division, as well as the EES, averaging 1000 cases per year since implementation.