

RIVERWATCH NEWSLETTER

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRCA)

January, 1996

Editor: John Capece

STORM DRAIN STENCILING DAY

The CRCA/Riverwatch will host a storm drain stenciling day and all of our members are encouraged to participate. Last summer, the Fort Myers News-Press covered stories in which students from area Lee County schools painted approximately 300 drains in the downtown area. Well, now it is OUR turn.

Please join us on Saturday, January 27, 1996. We will meet at the front (or west) parking lot of the City of Palms Park on Broadway in downtown Fort Myers. We need two teams of people - one beginning at 8:30 am and the other beginning at 9:30 am. We will be finished at approximately 12:00 noon. Please call Pamela Bowman at 332-8266 or Laura Church at 772-2072 for more information or to sign-up.

COMMUNITY FORUM

Were you one of the approximate 500 people in attendance at the November 1994 Forum that was sponsored by Edison Community College and the Fort Myers News-Press? The Forum was held at the Barbara B. Mann Performing Arts Center and included some wonderful presentations and small group discussions. In conjunction with the 1996 Annual CRCA Member's Meeting, Riverwatch is planning to hold another Community Forum! The tentative date is Saturday, March 9, 1996. More detailed information will follow.

If you would like to participate in organizing and preparing for the Forum or if you have an idea for a speaker or topic, please contact the co-chairs of the Projects & Events Committee. Call Pamela Bowman at 332-8266 or Laura Church at 772-2072. We would really appreciate your input! It is very important that our members let us know their problems, concerns, and even the joys concerning OUR Caloosahatchee River.

RIVER CRUISE

On Sunday, March 24, 1996, the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association is joining the Calusa Nature Center and the Ostego Bay Foundation for a cruise of our beautiful Caloosahatchee River. As part of the annual Caloosahatchee River Basin Festival, sponsored by the Calusa Nature Center, the boat tour of the river promises an afternoon of networking with people who care about our river. Plan to hear from experts about the oxbows, species diversity, estuarine ecology, and the general health of the river. During the three-hour tour you will enjoy a delicious meal of soup de jour, green salad, baked chicken, top round beef, rice pilaf, vegetable, roll and butter, coffee, tea and dessert. Boarding time is at 3:30 pm on the JC River Cruise boat at the Ft. Myers Yacht Basin. For only \$18.50 you can spend a delightful day on the Caloosahatchee relaxing with friends and learning more about our river. If you would like to attend the cruise, you may send a check made out the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association for \$18.50 to CRCA, Box 08004, Fort Myers, FL 33908.

THANK YOU

Pamela Bowman and Laura Church, co-chairs of the Projects & Events Committee, want to express a big thank you to our loyal and hard working committee members. You play a vital part in the success of Riverwatch by continuing to promote projects which protect our river and raise awareness of our organization. A special thanks to Charles Foster, Don Skiba, and Laura Wewerka! We appreciate your input and your help!! Thanks.

MEETING NOTICE

The Project and Events Committee of Riverwatch meets the second Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are held at the Calusa Nature Center at 3450 Ortiz Avenue. For information, please call the CRCA hotline at 433-INFO. Dial #4 and leave a

message for the Projects & Events Committee. Someone will gladly return your call. We welcome ALL members - please attend.

In case you have forgotten which committee you signed up for, the following people signed up for the Projects & Events Committee:

Neil Ayers	Dan & Linda Mattos
Virginia Bissell	Bill McGrath
Pamela Bowman	Linda Nordling
Mike Calinski	Ruth Rigby
Laura Church	Peter Sarkisian
Phil Croke	JoAnne Schweinfurth
Michael Dove	Henry & Rhoda Spang
John Durkin	George Marilyn Stout
Charles Foster	Steve & Lynn Thompson
Steve Franks	Michael Verwest
Jim Garrett	Bob & Betty Wells
Harry Green	Shapon Page West
Dan Haunert	Dave & Luli Westra
Jolie Kaytes	Laura Wewerka
Greg LaBlanc	Rita Zimmer
Donald Leppert	

CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER CITIZENS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ County _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Fax _____

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

Student \$5. _____ Other \$ _____ Individual \$10 _____ Family \$20 _____

RIVER Friend \$50. _____ RIVER Guardian \$100. _____ RIVER Sponsor/Corporate \$250. _____

RIVER PROTECTOR \$500. _____ RIVER CHAMPION \$1000. _____

INTEREST: Technical _____ Education _____ Projects/Events _____

Membership/Fund Raising _____ Public Relations _____

Please mail to: Box 08004, Fort Myers, FL. 33908-0004 --- If you have any questions or want additional information, you can call 941-433-INFO (4636) and CRCA (2722). Thanks for your interest.

Tek Notes

Riverwatch Technical Committee Reports

OXBOW INVESTIGATION

In December, the Technical Committee began a study of the 35 Caloosahatchee oxbows between Franklin and Ortona Locks in Lee, Hendry & Glades Counties.

Oxbows are meanders or bends in a river which represent the original outline of the river. When the Caloosahatchee (and Kissimmee River) were channelized-straightened for flood control, the outer bends of the River, the oxbows, were left jutting out from the new river channel. The straight, deep channel created by the dredging provided an effective flow-way which allows the water to drain off the land and to the Gulf of Mexico much faster than when the river followed its original serpentine contour. Since most of the water in the river travels through the channel, very little water is circulated in the old oxbows. As a result of lower water flow through the oxbows, silt is deposited in the oxbows which restricts water from flowing through the oxbows causing them to silt in further. Eventually, oxbows that fully silt become wetlands which perform different functions than their aquatic predecessor.

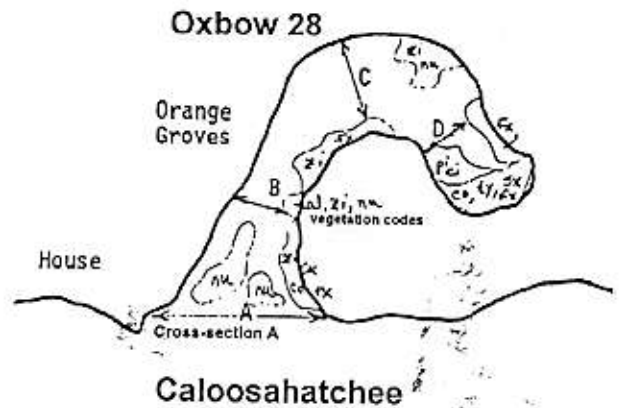
Our study is a physical and biological assessment of each oxbow - designed to determine the current functions being performed by each system by measuring depth, configuration, water quality, sedimentation, and wildlife uses. The information gathered in this study will be compared to a 1978 study which characterized the oxbows at that time. This information will be used to formulate a recommendation to the SFWMD regarding the productivity and health of the oxbows and whether some form of intervention is needed.

Our study depends on volunteer labor with supervision by professional scientists. The effort will continue for the next few months resulting in a recommendation to the SFWMD. The Volunteer Scientific Research Team (VSR) is helping perform the field work. Participants are welcome to join the research--we are in need of participants with small boats and canoes from which to work within the oxbows. Call Rae Ann Scholle @ 731-6602 or John

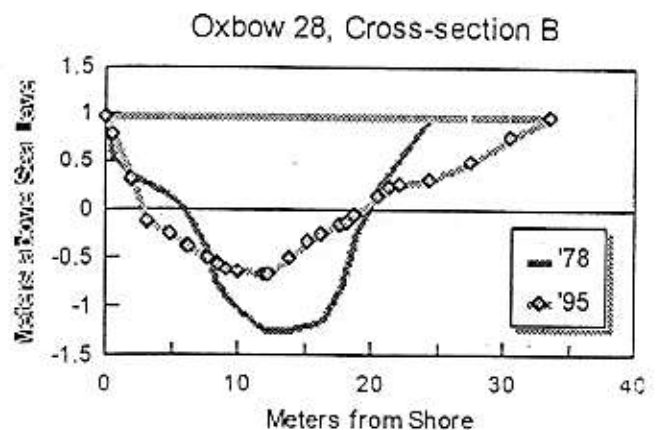
Capece @ 657-5221 if you are interested in participating.

Example Results from Oxbow Survey

Shown below is the 1978 drawing of oxbow 28. This particular oxbow is closed at one end. The sketch identifies the 4 cross-sections (A-D) and the location of aquatic vegetation patches within the oxbow.



The graph presents the cross-section profiles at location B as measured in 1978 and again in 1995. The top line represents elevation of the water surface and the two lower lines represent the contour of the oxbow bottom. It appears that over the past 17 years this oxbow cross-section has widened and become more shallow. However, slight errors in relocating



the 1978 cross-section may account for the apparent difference. It is also quite possible that the measurement accurately reflects sediment accumulation in the oxbow and erosion of the channel bank. Hopefully we can better answer these questions as data collection and analysis continue

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

SMALL AND MIGHTY WE ARE---

As so often happens in volunteer organizations, a big share of the work of CRCA is being done by just a few people. My special thanks are due to these stalwarts for the contributions they made in 1995.

Pamela Bowman and Laura Church for organizing our projects and activities;

Rae Ann Scholle and John Capece for their leadership of the Technical Committee;

Connie Holsinger (ably supported by her husband Jerry) for her service as Secretary-Treasurer, and for designing our membership database;

Bill McGrath for taking over as Treasurer when Connie Holsinger had to turn her energies to other conservation activities;

Laura Church for filling in for the President while he was studying for the bar exam;

University of Florida, through John Capece, for lots of help with our technical and scientific activities and especially for editing and this newsletter.

And to **Bill Hammond** for his advice and inspiration along the way. We can all be very proud of what our group has accomplished in its first year of existence.

---BUT WE'D REALLY LIKE TO BE A LITTLE LESS SMALL, AND A LITTLE MORE MIGHTY!

We are very much in need of leadership in the following areas:

Membership: Expanding our membership; maintaining our membership records; supervising membership renewals. Energy, imagination, communication skills, and an hour or two each week are needed. Basic computer skills would be helpful.

Public affairs: Part of our mission is to monitor the activities of public bodies whose decisions affect the good health of our River. We need people who can familiarize themselves with the issues that come before these bodies, monitor their action, and/or appear before them as advocates of the River.

Communications: The level of our success depends on our ability to deliver reliable information about the River, and the events that affect it, to as many citizens as possible. We need more people with good communications skills for this very important work.

Secretary: We need someone who can keep our corporate affairs in order by being responsible for preparing the minutes of our Board and Executive Committee meetings, being sure that public reports are filed on time, etc. Legal and technical skills are *not* required.

If you have any of these skills, and want to play a key role in an organization that has such great potential, please call me at (941) 466-6694. We'll find a place for you.

Best wishes for happiness and good health in the New Year.

Jim Haggart, President

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