

RIVERWATCH NEWSLETTER

Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association (CRCA)

March, 1996

Editor: John Capece

CALUSA CRUISE Sunday, March 24

Riverwatch is joining the Calusa Nature Center and the Ostego Bay Marine Science Center for a fun and educational cruise of the Caloosahatchee on Sunday, March 24th. Exhibits and speakers will be on hand to explain the history, current research, and flora and fauna of the river. Topics include bio-control of aquatic vegetation and insect, a history of the Caloosahatchee, birdwatching along the shores, computer maps of the river basin, oxbow research, and treated wastewater discharges into the river.

Plan to join the people who care about the river while you enjoy a full-course dinner aboard the Captain J.P. for only \$18.50 a person. Boarding will be at 3:30 to 4:00 PM at the Fort Myers Yacht Basin. The boat will return to port at 7:00 PM. For reservations make your check payable to the Caloosahatchee River Citizens Association and send it to CRCA, P.O. Box 08004, Ft. Myers, FL 33908.

WELCOME TO LAURA WEWERKE *Our New CRCA Secretary!*

Laura Wewerke recently assumed the post of Riverwatch Secretary making her the newest of the CRCA officers. Laura is employed at the Calusa Nature Center and is also a member of the Riverwatch Technical Committee.

CALOOSAHATCHEE
RIVER
Citizens Association

Community Forum Saturday, April 20

The Caloosahatchee Community Forum, originally set for March 9, has been rescheduled to the afternoon of Saturday, April 20, 12:30-4:30 PM. This date change allows us to reserve the spacious and comfortable Barbara B. Mann Center. The event is free and open to the public and CRCA members are encouraged to attend. We guarantee a great program!

The forum will celebrate CRCA's first year of service to the river community through an assortment of discussions, presentations, and exhibits. As in last year's forum, you will be able to view a wide variety of information displays as you enjoy refreshments in the Barbara B. Mann foyer. Among the exhibitors will be scientists, governmental agencies, motivated citizens, and bright young students. The inclusion of student science fair projects on Caloosahatchee related topics is a new addition to the program, one which is sure to add energy and ideas to the meeting.

The program will also include eight concurrent sessions, assuring you an opportunity to learn about and discuss topics of special interest to you. A list of discussion session topics, along with the complete program schedule will be mailed to you in early April.

Co-sponsoring the CRCA Community Forum are the News-Press and University of Florida. Check your schedule today and reserve the afternoon of April 20 for this important annual event!

RIVERWATCH To Watch Researchers

CRCA now has a formal role in the review of Caloosahatchee scientific research projects. The governing board of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) recently voted to include CRCA as a formal reviewer of SFWMD-sponsored research to be conducted by University of Florida (UF) and other contractors. By seeking such a role, CRCA has improved the public accountability of our tax-funded agencies, ensuring they act in the best public interest.

The SFWMD will continue to require all its projects to undergo "peer review" by other, independent scientists. The duty of CRCA will be that of "non-peer review" meaning CRCA will check over the general priorities and conduct of the projects. To meet this new responsibility CRCA will receive briefings from the University of Florida and other researchers on a regular basis. Riverwatch will assess progress and suggest new directions and priorities. For the past year, Riverwatch has been acting in a review capacity under its own mandate and authority, however we are now a formal part of the SFWMD and UF scientific research process.

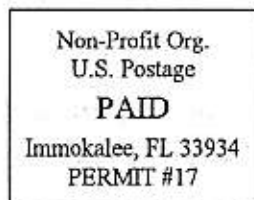
Work to Begin Soon

Due in large part to the active involvement of Riverwatch members and Bill Hammond, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) funded three new Caloosahatchee research and planning projects, with a total budget of over \$600,000. Originally, only one of the three projects was expected to be funded. However the SFWMD governing board decided to revise its budget to include all three projects after seeing the high degree of community interest.

The first result of this new funding will be the reassignment of Dr. Eric Flaig from the SFWMD headquarters in West Palm Beach to the University of Florida research station in Immokalee. There Dr. Flaig will work with UF water quality scientist Dr. John Capece on Caloosahatchee projects. At the November meeting in Ft. Myers, SFWMD representative Dan Haurert briefed the CRCA Executive Committee on the workplan. It includes refinement of computer maps of the river basin, establishment of twenty new monitoring locations on tributaries to the river, and development of computer simulation models of the river's flow and water quality. While some of the work will be done by Drs. Flaig and Capece, most components will be assigned to other agencies, non-profit organizations, or private companies.

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